



City Council Meeting & Public Hearing

SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Office of the City Clerk

ALPHARETTA CITY HALL

COUNCIL CHAMBERS | 2 PARK PLAZA | 6:30 PM

OFFICIAL MINUTES

The public is advised that the following minutes are not a verbatim transcription of business presented at the Council Meeting of the date shown; but are a synopsis of pertinent information. The public is further advised that the video recording for said meeting is a matter of public record and is available to be viewed at the City Clerk's office during normal business hours or viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/alpharettagov>.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Mayor Gilvin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

• Council Members

- Mayor Jim Gilvin
- Mayor Pro Tem Dan Merkel
- Donald F. Mitchell
- Douglas J. DeRito
- John Hipes
- Jason Binder

• Council Members Absent

- Brian Will

• Staff

- Chris Lagerbloom, City Administrator
- Molly Esswein, City Attorney
- James Drinkard, Assistant City Administrator
- Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk
- John Robison, Director of Public Safety
- Kathi Cook, Director of Community and Economic Development
- Pete Sewczwicz, Director of Public Works
- Michael Woodman, Planning & Development Services Manager
- Lance Morsell, Economic Development Manager

3. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

4. PRESENTATIONS & PROCLAMATIONS

A. Proclamation: Clear Springs Missionary Baptist Church Anniversary Recognition

- Mayor Gilvin presented a proclamation to members of the Clear Springs Missionary Baptist Church to celebrate their 165 year anniversary.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Financial Management Report (Month Ending July 31, 2023)

Consideration of approval of the Financial Management Report for the month ending July 31, 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Mitchell offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
 - Council Member Hipes seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. PH-23-10 Earl Wood House – Historic Designation

Consideration of a comprehensive land use plan amendment and rezoning to allow an 'Academic School' in an existing building previously used as a day care center. A comprehensive land use plan amendment is requested from 'Low Density Residential' to 'Public, Institutional, Education' and a rezoning is requested from AG (Agriculture) to SU (Special Use). The property is located at 4665 Webb Bridge Road and is legally described as being located in Land Lot 163, 1st District, 1st Section, Fulton County, Georgia.

- Planning & Development Services Manager, Michael Woodman, came forward to present this item.
- City Attorney, Molly Esswein, read the Ordinance title aloud.
- The applicant, Paul Nocharli, requests consideration of a public hearing in order to designate a structure as historic. Zoning condition #3 related to file# PH-22-11/V-22-24 Wills Overlook required that the Earl Wood House be saved, restored and designated as historic under the City's Historic Preservation Incentive Ordinance. The subject property is located at 531 South Main Street on the north side of South Main Street and east of Wills Road.
- This item was considered by the Historic Preservation Commission at the September 14, 2023 meeting. There were no public comments. After discussion, Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval (vote 6-0).

- The submitted request, if approved, would move the property from the Contributing Historic Buildings Inventory to the Designated Historic Buildings Inventory as outlined in the Historic Preservation Incentive Ordinance. The property was approved for changes to conditions of zoning and a variance on October 17, 2022 to allow sixteen (16) 'For-Sale' townhome units. The proposal included saving and restoring the Earl Wood House for use as a single-family detached home.
- The Earl Wood House was constructed around 1919 and is over 100 years old. According to Historic Homes in Alpharetta – Our Shining Stars, Earl Wood purchased the property in 1926. The style of the home is unknown. The Wood Family is identified in Alpharetta, Milton County – the Early Years as one of the original Milton County settlers.
- The Citizen Participation Plan Report submitted by the applicant states that property owners within 500' were contacted regarding the applicant's intent. The report states that no comments were received.
- The Community Zoning Information Meeting was held on July 12, 2023. There were no public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Mitchell offered a motion to approve PH-23-10 Earl Wood House – Historic Designation, which is located at 4665 Webb Bridge Road and is legally described as being located in Land Lot 163, 1st District, 1st Section, Fulton County, Georgia.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Merkel seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

B. PH-23-13 Gardner House – Historic Designation

Consideration of a request to designate the Gardner House as historic and adopt the ordinance. The property is located at 133 Cumming Street and is legally described as being located in Land Lots 1253 & 1254, 2nd District, 2nd Section, Fulton County, Georgia.

- Planning & Development Services Manager, Michael Woodman, came forward to present this item.
- City Attorney, Molly Esswein, read the Ordinance title aloud.
- The applicant, Madewell Homes, requests consideration of a public hearing in order to designate a structure as historic. Conditions of zoning require that the Gardner House be saved, restored, and designated as historic under the City's Historic Preservation Incentive Ordinance. The subject property is located at 133 Cumming Street at the southeast corner of Cumming Street and Cricket Lane.
- This item was considered by the Historic Preservation Commission at the September 14, 2023 meeting. There were two (2) public comments in support of the historic

designation. After discussion, Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval (vote 6-0).

- Staff is recommending that Mayor and City Council approve PH-23-13 Gardner House – Historic Designation.
- The submitted request, if approved, would move the property from the Contributing Historic Buildings Inventory to the Designated Historic Buildings Inventory as outlined in the City’s Historic Preservation Incentive Ordinance. The subject property was approved on March 20, 2023 for a comprehensive land use plan amendment, rezoning and variance to allow the 1.76-acre property to be subdivided into two (2) single-family detached lots. The proposal included saving and restoring the Gardner House for use as a single-family detached home. A two (2) story garage addition is proposed on the east side of the Gardener House and swimming pool area are proposed on the west side of the home.
- The Gardner House was constructed between 1915 – 1930 and is approximately 93-108 years old. According to Historic Homes in Alpharetta – Our Shining Stars, Emiline Gardner purchased the property in 1907 and her son Sherman Gardner constructed the home from timber harvested from the property. Sherman Gardner owned a cotton gin on Milton Avenue before serving as Alpharetta Police Chief in the 1940’s. The architectural style of the home is Folk Victorian.
- The Citizen Participation Plan report submitted by the applicant states that property owners within 500’ were contacted regarding the applicant’s intent. The report states that no comments were received.
- The Community Zoning Information Meeting was held on August 9, 2023. There were public comments in support of the request.
- Staff has reviewed the applicant’s proposal against the established review criteria for a historic designation. The proposal meets the review criteria for historic designation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve PH-23-13 Gardner House – Historic Designation, which is located at 133 Cumming Street and is legally described as being located in Land Lots 1253 & 1254, 2nd District, 2nd Section, Fulton County, Georgia.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

C. V-23-21 Thompson Street Park – Waiting Period Variance.

Consideration of a variance to reduce the waiting period for City Council consideration of a public hearing request on the same property from twelve (12) to six (6) months. The property is located at 132 Brook Street and 51 Thompson Street and is legally described as being located in Land Lot 748, 1st District, 2nd Section, Fulton County, Georgia.

- Planning & Development Services Manager, Michael Woodman, came forward to present this item.
- The applicant, The Providence Group, requests a variance to reduce the waiting period for Council consideration of an application for zoning change affecting the same property from one (1) year to six (6) months. City Council took action on a public hearing request on the property for comprehensive land use plan amendment, rezoning, conditional use and variance on March 20, 2023. The subject property is located at 132 Brook Street and 51 Thompson Street at the southeast corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street.
- Council took action on a public hearing request on the property for comprehensive land use plan amendment, rezoning, conditional use and variance on March 20, 2023. The applicant is seeking a change to previous conditions of zoning to change the homes at the rear of the development from two (2) story over basement to three (3) story on slab.
- The applicant notified surrounding property owners of their application and intent for the property. The report states that no comments were received.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve V-23-21 Thompson Street Park – Waiting Period Variance from one year to six month.
 - Council Member DeRito seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

D. PH-23-18 Thompson Street Park – Change of Condition

Consideration of a public hearing to change conditions of zoning to modify home elevations to allow the rear homes to be 3 stories. The property is located at 132 Brook Street and 51 Thompson Street and is legally described as being located in Land Lot 748, 1st District, 2nd Section, Fulton County, Georgia.

- Planning & Development Services Manager, Michael Woodman, came forward to present this item.
- The applicant, The Providence Group, is requesting a change of conditions in order to change the homes at the rear of the development from two (2) story over basement to three (3) story on slab and to move the required sculpture from the corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street to in front of the Thompson Street Flats building at 71 Thompson Street. The property was approved in March 2023 to

allow for the construction of nineteen (19) 'For-Sale' single-family detached homes on 2.23 acres in the Downtown. Consideration of this request is contingent on City Council approving V-23-21 Thompson Street Park – Waiting Period Variance. The subject property is located at 132 Brook Street and 51 Thompson Street at the southeast corner of Thompson Street and Haynes Bridge Road.

- Staff is recommending that Mayor and Council approve PH-23-18 Thompson Street Park – Change Of Condition, subject to the following changes to the conditions related to file #CLUP-22-05/Z-22-15/CU-22-12/V-22-29 Story Book Builders/31 & 51 Thompson Street:

3. Architecture and materials shall be developed substantially similar to the submitted renderings prepared by Main Street Designs, dated August 23, 2023, and labeled Exhibit A, except for modifications required to comply with the Downtown Consultant's comments and in compliance with the Alpharetta Downtown Code, subject to final approval by DRB. Homes shall have 4-sided architecture, materials and details and each home facing Thompson Street shall have a unique façade.

12. Developer shall improve the corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street with decorative landscaping, brick paver hardscape, and seating and monument or sculpture, as approved by DRB. A monument or sculpture shall also be required, either at the corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street or at Thompson Street Flats (71 Thompson Street), as approved by the Thompson Street Flats Association. Sculpture shall require final approval by the Cultural Arts Commission.

- The property was rezoned to DT-LW (Downtown Live-Work) on March 20, 2023. Surrounding properties are zoned MU (Mixed Use) to the north, C-2 to the west and south, and DT-LW to the south and east. Voysey is located to the north, Publix to the west, vacant commercial properties to the south, and Thompson Street Flats to the east. The comprehensive land use plan designation of the property is 'Mixed Use Live Work'.
- The applicant requests changes to conditions #3 and #12 related to file #CLUP-22-05/Z-22-15/CU-22-12/V-22-29 Story Book Builders/31 & 51 Thompson Street. A change to condition #3 is requested to change the rear park facing homes from two (2) story over basement to three (3) story on slab. The applicant's engineer has determined that the homes facing the rear park must be three (3) story slab on grade like the homes facing Thompson Street. This is due to there not being enough grade change between the rear park grade and the alley grade to construct basement units.
- A change is also requested to condition #12 to allow the required sculpture to be located at the corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street or in front of Thompson Street Flats (71 Thompson Street). The applicant has indicated that

the change is necessary due to space limitations at the corner of Thompson Street and Haynes Bridge Road. Thompson Street Flats has an existing concrete pad for public art along Thompson Street. According to the applicant, Thompson Street Flats is agreeable with the placement of the sculpture in front of their building.

- The Citizen Participation Plan Report submitted by the applicant states that property owners within 500' were contacted regarding the applicant's intent. The report states that no comments were received.
- A Community Zoning Information Meeting was held on September 13, 2023. There were no public comments.
- Staff has reviewed the applicant's proposal to change previous conditions of zoning. The proposed changes are related to the existing topographical conditions on the property, as well as space limitations. The homes facing Thompson Street and rear park facing homes will be the same height.
- Clint Walters (with the Providence Group, 11340 Lakefield Drive, Johns Creek, GA 30097) came forward to speak on behalf of the applicant.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve PH-23-18 Thompson Street Park – Change off Condition, subject to the following changes to the conditions related to file #CLUP-22-05/Z-22-15/CU-22-12/V-22-29 Story Book Builders/31 & 51 Thompson Street:
3. Architecture and materials shall be developed substantially similar to the submitted renderings prepared by Main Street Designs, dated August 23, 2023, and labeled Exhibit A, except for modifications required to comply with the Downtown Consultant's comments and in compliance with the Alpharetta Downtown Code, subject to final approval by DRB. Homes shall have 4-sided architecture, materials and details and each home facing Thompson Street shall have a unique façade.
12. Developer shall improve the corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street with decorative landscaping, brick paver hardscape, and seating, as approved by DRB. A monument or sculpture shall also be required, either at the corner of Haynes Bridge Road and Thompson Street or at Thompson Street Flats (71 Thompson Street), as approved by the Thompson Street Flats Association. Sculpture shall require final approval by the Cultural Arts Commission.
- Council Member Binder seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

E. PH-23-11 Unified Development Code (UDC) Text Amendments – Signs, Parking, Multi-Use Trails, Downtown Architecture and Tree Preservation

Consideration of text amendments to the Unified Development Code (UDC). Amend Section 2.3 Supplementary Regulations to address fence and wall regulations along multiuse trails. Amend Section 2.5 Parking and Loading to address the different levels of electric vehicle charging stations. Amend Section 2.6 Signs to prohibit face illuminated channel letter signs, require master sign plans for all commercial shopping centers and extend time period for banner signs for new businesses after DRB submittal. Amend Section 3.2 Tree Conservation, Landscape and Buffer Requirements to remove pines as a specimen or tree of quality and to allow homeowner's associations to review certain requests for tree removal within the front yard. Amend Section 3.5 Installation of Street to add regulations pertaining to the installation of multi-use trails. Amend Appendix A: Alpharetta Downtown Code, Section 2.8 Building Design to address applicability of architectural style requirements.

- Director of Community and Economic Development, Kathi Cook, came forward to present this item.
- City Attorney, Molly Esswein, read the Ordinance title aloud.
- This item was considered by the Planning Commission at the September 7, 2023 meeting. There were no public comments. After discussion, Planning Commission recommended approval (vote 6-0).
- The proposed ordinance is attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve PH-23-11 Unified Development Code (UDC) Text Amendments – Signs, Parking, Multi-Use Trails, Downtown Architecture and Tree Preservation, with one note of removing 5(b) in regards to specimen trees.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution: 2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan

Consideration of adoption of the resolution which adopts the 2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan as the official guiding document for economic development initiatives activities within the City of Alpharetta, superseding the existing 2011 strategic plan.

- City Attorney, Molly Esswein, read the Resolution title aloud.
- Economic Development Manager, Lance Morsell, came forward to introduce this item.
- Kyle Talente (with RKG & Associates) came forward to present the proposed plan.

- The 2023 City of Alpharetta Economic Development Strategic Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit "B."
- The City of Alpharetta last adopted an Economic Development Strategic Plan in 2011.
- In early 2020, prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, RKG & Associates were selected as the consultants to conduct a study and formulate recommendations for a new Economic Development Strategic Plan. When the pandemic began, RKG and city staff chose to pause the study to ensure recommendations would account for economic changes in the post-pandemic landscape, and in early 2022, city staff re-engaged RKG to resume the study.
- Over the last year, RKG has worked with city staff and a steering committee consisting of elected officials, real estate professionals, residents, Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) representatives, and others to conduct a study of Alpharetta's economic landscape. RKG conducted interviews with businesses across a spectrum of sizes and industries and collected a vast array of data on Alpharetta and the surrounding region. The purpose of this report is to provide the city with a road map of sustainable growth and economic development for years to come.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve the adoption of a resolution which adopts the 2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan as the official guiding document for economic development initiatives activities within the City of Alpharetta, superseding the existing 2011 strategic plan.
 - Council Member DeRito seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved (6-0).

B. SMART Traffic Grant Application

Consideration of approval for the Department of Public Works to submit a SMART Grant application, as presented, and authorize the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

- Director of Public Works, Pete Sewczwicz, came forward to present this item.
- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant program with \$100 million appropriated annually for fiscal years 2022-2026. The SMART program was established by the Federal Government to provide grants to eligible public sector agencies to conduct demonstration projects focused on advanced smart community technologies and systems to improve transportation efficiency and safety.
- The SMART Grant is broken into two stages; planning and development is stage 1 and implementation is stage 2. Based on the information from US DOT, only recipients of Stage 1 funding will receive Stage 2 funding. It is anticipated

approximately 20-30 Stage 1 Grants will be awarded, with the minimum award of approximately \$250k and the maximum award of approximately \$2M. The application is on-line through US DOT's SMART Grant's application portal.

- The Phase 1 application should include some sort of technology that involves sensors or advanced transportation technologies. This grant application, which is for Planning & Prototyping/Design, does not require funding from the City. In order to improve the operation and management of traffic lights as well as to make safety and mobility improvements, there are 18 intersections in the City that could be considered for advanced smart transportation technologies.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member DeRito offered a motion to approve the Department of Public Works to submit a SMART Grant application, as presented, and authorize the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved (5-0; as Council Member Binder was not present in the room during the motion and vote).

C. Wire & Wood RCS Productions Contract (#102168 / RFP 22-108) – Amendment #1

Consideration of approval for an amendment to the City's contract (#102168 / RFP 22-108) with RCS Productions and Entertainment d.b.a. RCS Productions to increase the cost for services for the city's annual Wire & Wood event for the inclusion of additional sponsored stages and talent.

- Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services, Morgan Rodgers, came forward to present this item.
- Staff is recommending that Mayor and Council approve the amendment to RCS Productions and Entertainment, Inc. Contract #102168, permitting the increase in cost of services for the Wire & Wood event to accommodate additional stages and associated talent buying and production.
- The Wire and Wood Music Festival's goal is to showcase local and regional music talent that writes and performs their own original work, raise awareness about the importance of music, and highlight the many facets of the music community.
- In an effort to work toward this goal, Wire and Wood has six main stages where regional and national talent, as well as some well-known local musicians, perform for the community. In addition, the local businesses open their doors for up-and-coming local artists to perform in "Music Match" performances. Through sponsorship opportunities, businesses could help enhance the event by electing to fund an additional stage and the associated talent/production.

- To date, all four of the additional stages have secured sponsorships. As the initiative proved successful, staff must turn their attention to the existing contract with the vendor providing the stages, talent, and production services and request amendments to accommodate the additional stages.
- The Alpharetta Convention & Visitors Bureau is a partner for the event and sponsors \$50,000 for the main stage headliners, reducing the City's total out of pocket expense for the event's talent buying and fees, stage, and production to \$77,225.
- The existing contract (attached hereto as "RCS Productions Contract 102168 - RFP 22-108") includes terms related to the addition of stages, staff sought a new cost proposal from RCS Productions for the six existing stages and the four new sponsored stages.
- The amendment drafted by Legal and attached for your approval, will formalize the agreement between the City and RCS Productions for the newly proposed cost for services for the Calendar Year 2023 (FY2024) Wire and Wood event. The amendment will also grant staff the ability to amend any future specifications, rates, and number of stages as well as sign amendments related to increased costs for services under the notion that such changes are properly documented and will continue to be communicated to City Council.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve the amendment to the City's contract (#102168 / RFP 22-108) with RCS Productions and Entertainment d.b.a. RCS Productions to increase the cost for services for the city's annual Wire & Wood event for the inclusion of additional sponsored stages and talent.
 - Council Member DeRito seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

D. Phoenix Rugby – Partnered Athletic Association

Consideration of approval of Phoenix Rugby (of Atlanta Youth Rugby, Inc.) as a partnered athletic association with the City of Alpharetta's Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department.

- Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services, Morgan Rodgers, came forward to present this item.
- Staff is recommending that Mayor and City Council approve Phoenix Rugby (of Atlanta Youth Rugby) as a partnered athletic association with the City of Alpharetta.
- Phoenix Rugby has been playing on our fields as renters since January 2022. The association uses North Park Turf Field #1 on Tuesdays and Thursday from 7-9 pm and have been excellent renters in the time they have been with the city.
- Recently, Phoenix Rugby merged under the umbrella of Atlanta Youth Rugby, Inc., which gives the club the opportunity to compete with other clubs locally, as well as

travel clubs regionally. Phoenix Rugby will maintain its identity as Alpharetta's rugby provider and will oversee all field usage for Phoenix Rugby matches, practices, clinics, and camps.

- Currently, the City of Alpharetta Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services Department partners with four additional Youth Athletic Associations. The youth athletic league programs operate in Wills Park, Webb Bridge Park, North Park, and the Innovation Academy Sports Complex.
- Under the agreement attached hereto, the City of Alpharetta would add Phoenix Rugby as a fifth partnered youth athletic association, thereby transitioning the youth athletic association's program from private play to a high-quality public youth athletic league (organized league play) for citizens as a City of Alpharetta youth sports program. The agreement would also require Phoenix Rugby's to abide by specific guidelines regarding usage of park fields and facilities for City partnered youth athletic associations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve Phoenix Rugby (of Atlanta Youth Rugby, Inc.) as a partnered athletic association with the City of Alpharetta's Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department and authorize the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

E. Employment Contract: Kathryn "Kathi" Cook

Consideration of approval of an Employment Contract between the City of Alpharetta and Kathryn Cook to serve as Economic and Community Development Director.

- City Administrator, Chris Lagerbloom, came forward to present this item.
- If approved, this employment contract for Kathryn "Kathi" Cook would provide benefits, conditions of employment, and working conditions for her to serve as the Economic and Community Development Director for the City of Alpharetta.
- This agreement would take effect on October 1, 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve an Employment Contract between the City of Alpharetta and Kathryn Cook to serve as Economic and Community Development Director.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **Ken Sullander** (2490 Hopewell Plantation Drive 30004) came forward to speak on Short Term Rentals.
- **David Horst** (2010 Brooke Forest Court, Alpharetta, GA 30022) came forward to speak on Short Term Rentals.
- **Bonnie Steadman** (Vaughn Drive, Alpharetta, GA) came forward to thank the Mayor and City Council for their support and encouragement to save the city's historic structures for the future.

9. REPORTS

- Council Member Hipes shared that Thursday is the Food Truck Alley, and Friday the Alpharetta Rotary Club is hosting a benefit concert for Wacky World Playground from 6-10 p.m. on the Town Green, on Saturday there is the Grilling and Gridiron event benefitting The Lionheart School with food, football, and friends, and Sunday there will be the Fit for Life Expo on the Town Green. Also, thank you to Director Pete Sewczwicz for completing the Town Green Wall project ahead of schedule and on budget.
- Mayor Pro Tem Merkel shared that this past Saturday was Brew Moon Fest was amazing and everyone enjoyed it.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED)

- There was not an executive session.

11. ADJOURNMENT

- ❖ Council Member Mitchell offered a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - Council Member DeRito seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- With no further business, Mayor Gilvin adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A

ORDINANCE NUMBER:



AN ORDINANCE BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA, GEORGIA TO AMEND ARTICLE II, ARTICLE III, AND APPENDIX A: ALPHARETTA DOWNTOWN CODE OF THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA, GEORGIA; TO AMEND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS; TO AMEND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO ALPHARETTA DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES; TO AMEND AND ADD REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO SIGNS; TO AMEND AND ADD REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO TREE CONSERVATION; TO AMEDN AND ADD REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO MULTI-USE TRAILS; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Alpharetta (the “City Council” or “Council”) are charged with the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Alpharetta;

WHEREAS, the Unified Development Code was designed to be amended from time to time when circumstances warrant that modifications be made in order to make said Codes more responsive to community needs;

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that ordinances and regulations governing the uses of land and development of land within the City, as well as the City’s operations, should be continually improved from time to time and modified as necessary to better protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare of the residents and businesses of the City of Alpharetta;

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to amend Article II, Article III, and Appendix A: Alpharetta Downtown Code of the Unified Development Code for the foregoing purposes; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the following amendments to the Unified Development Code promote the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity and general welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the City of Alpharetta.

NOW THEREFORE, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Alpharetta hereby ordains, as follows:

Section 1: Article II, Subsection 2.3.6 titled “Fence and Wall Requirements” of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “A” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2: Article II, Subsection 2.5.7 titled “Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS)” of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “B” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 3: Article II, Section 2.6 titled “Signs” of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “C” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 4: Article II, Subsection 2.10.5 titled “North Point Overlay Streets” of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “D” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 5: Article III, Section 3.2 titled “Tree Conservation, Landscape, and Buffer Requirements” of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “E” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 6: Article III, Subsection 3.5.7 titled “Multi-Use Trails” of the Unified Development Code is hereby added by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “F” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 7: Appendix A: Alpharetta Downtown Code, Subsection 2.3.5 titled “Multi-Use Trails” of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “G” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 8: Alpharetta Downtown Design Guidelines, as referenced in Appendix A: Alpharetta Downtown Code of the Unified Development Code is hereby amended by amending same as set forth in Exhibit “H” attached hereto as if fully set forth herein.

Section 9: If any section, subsection, provisions, or clause of any part of this Ordinance shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional or, if the provisions of any part of this Ordinance as applied to any particular situation or set of circumstances shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not be construed to affect the portions of this Ordinance not so held to be invalid, or the application of this Ordinance to other circumstances not so held to be invalid. It is hereby declared as the intent of the City Council that this Ordinance would have been adopted in its current form without the invalid or unconstitutional provision contained therein.

Section 10: This Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon its adoption by the City Council and the amendments made herein shall be incorporated into the Unified Development Code of the City of Alpharetta, Georgia, as applicable. This Ordinance hereby repeals any and all conflicting ordinances and amendments.

SO ORDAINED, this ____ day of January ____.

CITY OF ALPHARETTA

By: _____
Jim Gilvin, Mayor

[SIGNATURES CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE]
[SIGNATURES CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE]

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Pro Tem Dan Merkel

Council Member Donald F. Mitchell

Council Member Brian Will

Council Member Douglas J. DeRito

Council Member John Hipes

Council Member Jason Binder

(SEAL)

Attest:
sufficiency:

Approved as to form and legal

Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk

[INSERT ATTORNEY], City Attorney

Exhibit “A”

2.3.6 Fence and wall requirements.

- A. *Height.* Height of fences and walls used as fences shall not exceed six (6) feet on residential property and eight (8) feet on non residential property. These limits may be exceeded by up to 50% on sloped lots where the appearance of an even fence line is desired.
- B. *Location on Property.* In order to prevent the obstruction of visibility, no walls, fences, shrubbery or hedges over three (3) feet in height shall be located within twenty (20) feet of an intersection of two or more streets or within ten (10) feet of the edge of a driveway leading to a street. Fences and walls shall be placed at least five (5) feet from required landscape strips and buffers to accommodate construction and maintenance unless approved otherwise at a public hearing.
- C. *Materials.* Fences and walls used as fences shall be made of wood which shall be protected from decay by the use of naturally durable wood or wood that is pressure treated, metal, brick, block, vinyl or stone. The use of plywood/sheet goods as a material is prohibited. Barbed, razor wire or electrically charged fencing shall be permitted in AG and RE districts and may be permitted, subject to administrative review and approval, in other districts.
- D. *Appearance.* All fencing shall be constructed with finished side facing away from the property owners property. Fences and walls used as fences shall not be finished with bright or primary colors or be visually distracting in any other way. A privacy fence or chainlink fence along a public or private right-of-way shall only be permitted when the required landscape strip and associated landscape material is provided. Privacy and chainlink fences shall be prohibited in a front yard, except that the Director of Community Development, or designee, may approve a privacy fence in the front yard on collector or arterial streets.
- E. *Permit.* A permit for construction shall not be required to erect a fence or wall used as a fence which is built in accordance with these standards. Signage incorporated into such fences shall require a sign permit.
- F. **Multi-use Trails. A fence or wall along a public multi-use trail shall be setback at least ten-feet (10') from the trail, shall not be opaque and shall not exceed five-feet (5') in height.**

Exhibit “B”

2.5.7 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS).

All non-residential and Dwelling, 'For-Rent' developments requiring 100 or more vehicle parking spaces shall provide Electric Vehicle charging stations (EVCS). One (1) Level 2 EVCS for every 25 required vehicle parking spaces or one (1) Level 3 EVCS for every 100 required vehicle parking spaces shall be required.

Exhibit “C”

SECTION 2.6 SIGNS¹

2.6.8 Prohibited signs and devices.

Except as otherwise provided, the following types of signs or attention-getting devices are prohibited in all zoning districts of the City:

1. Balloons, pennants, streamers, feather signs, air or gas filled figures, or similar attention-getting devices or wind-activated devices, excluding flags.
2. Swinging signs.
3. Rotating signs.
4. Animated signs, flashing signs, and intensely lighted signs.
5. Beacons, search lights or laser lights or images.
6. Variable message boards used for purposes other than traffic management.
7. Signs which purport to be, or are an imitation of, or resemble an official traffic sign or signal.
8. Window signs which, in aggregate, exceed 20% of the window area or otherwise fail to meet the standards of this Ordinance.
9. A-frame signs, sandwich board, sidewalk or curb signs are prohibited except when placed within 5 ft. of the front door of a building.
10. Signs painted on or attached to utility poles, trees, rocks or other similar objects, except signs lawfully placed on utility poles by a government, public authority or public utility.
11. Signs which obstruct a fire escape, required exit, window or door opening used as a means of ingress or egress, or which interfere with any opening required for ventilation, or which violate any code of the City, including the Life Safety Code and the Fire Prevention Code.
12. Signs occupying a parking space required under the minimum parking requirements of this Ordinance, other than signs designating the space as reserved for handicapped or other use.
13. Signs which do not conform to City-adopted building and electrical codes.
14. Signs which emit audible sound, odor or visible matter.
15. Portable signs.
16. [Reserved].
17. [Reserved].
18. Signs attached to any street signs or traffic control devices, or to any pole supporting same, or any sign attached to any utility pole, other than those signs lawfully placed by a government, public agency, or public utility.
19. Signs projected on a building.
20. Signs in a public right-of-way other than publicly owned or maintained signs.

¹Ord. No. 720 , § 2(Exh. A), adopted 2-22-2016, repealed former § 2.6 (2.6.1—2.6.14), and enacted a new § 2.6 as set out herein. The former § 2.6 pertained to similar subject matter and derived from the original codification and Ord. No. 713 , §§ 1—8, adopted Sept. 28, 2015.

21. Signs which are in violation of the rules and regulations of any zoning overlay district presently existing or as may later be enacted.
22. Signs located on any substandard lot.
23. Abandoned signs.
24. Any sign that is structurally unsound, or is a hazard to traffic or pedestrians.
25. Dilapidated or neglected signs. A sign (including sign structure) will be dilapidated or neglected if it does not present a neat and orderly appearance, which may be manifested by the following: rust or holes on or in the sign or sign structure, or broken, missing, loose or bent parts, faded or flaking paint, non-operative or partially non-operative illuminating or mechanical devices or missing letters in sign copy.
26. Signs exceeding 156 sq. ft. in copy area if located on a commercial building, signs exceeding 240 sq. ft. in copy area if located on an industrial or office park building and/or signs and sign structures in excess of 10 ft. in height (measured from the ground to the highest point of the structure).
27. Signs in any area designated as an undisturbed buffer pursuant to a federal, state or local law, a condition of zoning, or approved plat.
28. Internally illuminated window signs, including neon or LED signs (except as otherwise permitted herein). Additionally, LED, string or similar lighting outlining the windows, doors or other similar building features shall be prohibited.
29. Cabinet signs in the Downtown Overlay.

30. Face illuminated channel letter signs in the Downtown Overlay.

(Ord. No. 720 , § 2(Exh. A), 2-22-2016; Ord. No. 736 , § 1, 3-20-2017; Ord. No. 805 , § 1(Exh. A), 8-10-2020; Ord. No. 841 , § 2(Exh. B), 2-21-2022)

2.6.11 General provisions.

Except as otherwise provided in this Ordinance, the following general regulations apply to all zoning districts in the City:

A. MAINTENANCE AND APPEARANCE OF SIGNS.

1. All signs shall be maintained in good condition and present a neat and orderly appearance. Any sign showing gross neglect, or which becomes dilapidated, or which is surrounded by an unmaintained ground area, or due to its condition which may pose a threat to the safety of the public may be required to be repaired or removed as set forth below.
2. The Director, upon finding any of the above conditions, will give the owner written notice which may be up to 10 days to correct the deficiencies or to remove the sign or signs. If the owner refuses to correct the deficiencies or remove the sign, the Director may issue a citation under the enforcement provisions of this Ordinance.

B. ILLUMINATION OF SIGNS.

1. The light from any illuminated sign shall not be of an intensity or brightness which will interfere with the peace, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of residents or occupants of adjacent properties.
2. No sign shall have blinking, flashing, or fluctuating lights or other illuminating devices which have a changing light intensity, brightness or color.

3. No color lights shall be used at any location or in any manner so as to be confused with or construed as traffic control devices.
4. Neither direct nor reflected light from primary light sources shall create a hazard to operators of motor vehicles.
5. Lighting for free-standing signs shall be located above the sign and aimed downward in order to minimize the brightness added to the night sky.

C. MEASUREMENT OF SIGN AREA.

1. *Generally.* Except as otherwise provided herein, the area of a sign shall be computed as the area within the smallest rectangle enclosing the limits of a sign face, together with any sign face cabinet, frame, material, texture, or color forming an integral part of the sign face used to differentiate the sign face from the structure upon which it is placed. The computation of the area of a sign face shall not include the structure, supports, or uprights on which the sign face is placed or any portions of a sign structure that are not intended to contain any copy or serve background, but rather are purely structural or architectural in nature, except as provided above.
2. *Double-Faced Signs.* For double-faced signs, when the sign face surfaces are parallel and are back to back, or where the interior angle formed by the faces is sixty (60) degrees or less, the area of the sign shall be taken as the areas on the largest side. For all other multi-faced signs, the area of the sign shall be the total area on all sides that can be viewed from any angle.
3. *Monument Signs.*
 - a. *Area of Sign.* For monument signs, the "sign area" or "area of the sign" shall mean the total area of the visible surface of the sign, including the base, sign structure, and sign face of the sign. The computation of the sign area of a monument sign shall include the entire surface of the base, sign structure and sign face, as measured from top to bottom and side to side. For monument signs that are double-faced, when the sign face surfaces are parallel and are back to back, or where the interior angle formed by the faces is sixty (60) degrees or less, the area of the sign shall be taken as the areas on the largest side.
 - b. *Sign Face.* For monument signs, the area of the sign face shall be measured in the same manner as provided for the measurement of the area of sign for all other signs.
 - c. *Copy Area.* For monument signs, the copy area shall be measured in the manner provided in the definition of "copy area."
 - d. *Tenant Panels and Changeable Copy Board.* If a portion of a monument sign includes a sign face with tenant panels or changeable copy board, which is separated from another copy area on the sign by portions of a sign structure that are not intended to contain any copy, but rather are purely structural or architectural in nature, the portion of the sign containing tenant panels or changeable copy board shall be measured separately from the other copy area of the sign (i.e., the copy area of the monument sign is the total of (i) the area within the smallest rectangle enclosing the limits of the sign face comprised of tenant panels or changeable copy and (ii) the other (separated) copy area.

D. STANDARDS FOR MONUMENT SIGNS.

1. The base of a monument sign shall be at least as wide as the sign face. Unless otherwise specified in a Master Sign Plan or a condition of zoning approval, the base and structure of a monument sign shall be constructed of brick, stone, or other architectural materials matching the principal building's materials and color. Any poles or columns utilized for

structural purposes shall be fabricated or covered so that they may not be detected visually. Foundations shall be designed to carry weight and wind load of the sign, in soil which it is placed.

2. Any tenant panels or changeable copy on a monument sign shall have a uniform background color and material.
3. All monument signs shall display the property address in numbers at least six (6) inches in height. The numerical address shall not be considered part of the sign face and shall not count against the allowable sign square footage provided such numbers are not more than twelve (12) inches in height.
4. Except for subdivision signs, monument signs may not be constructed before the principal building is on a lot.

E. BANNERS. Banners require a permit and are permitted in all zoning districts pursuant to the following standards:

1. Banners shall be permitted for either one (1) fourteen (14) day period per calendar year per lot or two (2) seven (7) day periods per calendar year per lot. An individual banner permit may be divided into two (2) non-consecutive seven (7) day periods provided the dates are stated on the permit. However, in the case of lots which contain a shopping center (or strip shopping center) with multiple tenant spaces, each tenant space shall be allowed to erect or place a banner for either one (1) fourteen (14) day period per calendar year or two (2) seven (7) day periods per calendar year. Applicants that require review and approval of signage from the Design Review Board (DRB), other than for a Master Sign Plan, shall be permitted one (1) banner sign for up to a 60 day period after submission of a DRB application.
- a. The Director may grant an extension of the time period set forth above for a commercial business when the business fronts a roadway that is under construction. In order to qualify for such an extension:
 1. The subject roadway construction must be related to a project performed by the City, County or the Georgia Department of Transportation; and
 2. The subject roadway construction is planned to continue for three (3) months or more following the date of the request for an extension; and
 3. The subject roadway construction either:
 - a. Causes the removal of a monument sign; or
 - b. As determined in the discretion of the Director, disrupts the store frontage to the extent the site and/or business appears dosed without the use of a banner.

Any extension granted under this subsection shall be limited to the duration of the subject roadway construction. Extensions granted by the Director may be revoked or limited at any time due to changes in the roadway construction or disruption of the store frontage as determined in the discretion of the Director. The Director may require removal or replacement of any banner placed pursuant to an extension at any time if the banner is not maintained in good condition as determined in the discretion of the Director.

2. In addition to the foregoing, banners shall be allowed on private property during an approved temporary use, as defined in Section 2.3.2 of the U.D.C., for the approved period of such temporary use, but not to exceed forty-five (45) days; provided, however, the placement of banners on lots during approved temporary uses shall not be permitted more than two (2) times per calendar year per lot. Any such banners shall be removed upon termination of the temporary use or within forty-five (45) days from the

date it is first placed on the lot, whichever is first to occur. Upon removal, no banner shall be placed on the same lot for a period of sixty (60) days.

3. Banners shall not exceed 24 sq. ft. total area in size.
 4. Banners must either be free-standing or mounted to the wall of a tenant space or the lot's existing monument sign. If free-standing, the height of the banner shall not exceed five (5) [feet] above grade. If mounted to the wall of a tenant space, the width of the banner shall not exceed tenant frontage and shall not extend above the horizontal plane of the roof where the building wall and roof meet. If mounted to the lot's existing monument sign, the banner shall not extend beyond the sign face of the monument sign.
 5. Banners shall be erected with supports or other means so that they do not sag or become dilapidated.
- F. PLACEMENT OF SIGNS. Except within the Central Business District, all free-standing signs must be set back at least ten (10) ft. from the public right-of-way. Within the Central Business District, all free standing signs must be set back at least five (5) feet from the public right-of-way.
- G. CHANGEABLE COPY. Any monument sign permitted under this Ordinance may contain up to sixty-five percent (65%) changeable copy if the sign is located on a lot zoned and used (as its principal existing use) for an institutional, public or semi-public use and which includes an indoor public assembly place accommodating one hundred (100) or more persons.

H. **SIGNS PERMITTED IN STRIP SHOPPING CENTERS, SHOPPING CENTERS, AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS.** To ensure aesthetic compatibility of signage throughout a development, strip shopping centers, shopping centers, and mixed-use developments shall submit a Master Sign Plan to the City's Design Review Board for consideration. At a minimum, Master Sign Plans shall address signage type, sign face color, and illumination color. Plans shall limit sign illumination color to one (1) color and sign face colors to no more than three (3) colors, except that licensed trademark/logo colors shall be permitted. Master Sign Plans shall apply to any signage that requires a permit.

(Ord. No. 720 , § 2(Exh. A), 2-22-2016; Ord. No. 847 , § 1(Exh. A), 4-18-2022)

Exhibit “D”

SECTION 2.10 NORTH POINT OVERLAY

2.10.5. Streets.

A. Applicability.

1. The Section applies to:
 - a. New development;
 - b. Existing developed sites when more than 25% of the site area is disturbed, except as provided for in "2" immediately below;
 - c. Existing principal buildings that are expanded, except as provided for in "2" below immediately; and
 - d. Existing principal buildings that are renovated or repaired and the value of said work exceeds 50% of the building's replacement cost, except as provided for in "2" immediately below.
2. The Director of Community Development may grant variances to any requirement of this Section for existing developed sites and existing buildings (except as specifically delegated to the City Transportation Engineer) when one or more of the following exists:
 - a. The streetscape or multi-use trail would render a site non-conforming with regard to vehicular parking; or
 - b. Existing topography, trees, buildings, bridges, utilities, retaining walls, or other existing features render this Section unreasonable.
3. This Section does not apply on a parcel for which a Land Disturbance Permit or Building Permit is issued but where the Director of Community Development determines that the permit is for an accessory use or structure to the principal use or structure or for minor repairs or additions to the principal building or structure in existence.

B. Streetscapes.

1. *Streetscapes Required.*
 - a. New public and private streets must include sidewalks and planters as identified in the Streetscape Standards of the Site Regulation Table prior to the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy, except as indicated in "d" immediately below.
 - b. Existing streets that do not meet the Streetscape Standards of the Site Regulation Table must be brought into compliance with said standards along the site's frontage prior to the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy, except as indicated in "d" immediately below.
 - c. On existing streets where there is insufficient right-of-way for the required streetscape improvements, the right-of-way needed for such improvements may be expanded by mutual agreement between the property owner and the entity holding the right-of-way, or a public access easement may be provided to the City to meet the required improvements.
 - d. On streetscapes that are or will be within the public right-of-way, root barriers are required between the sidewalk and any adjacent landscape strips or planters, subject to approval of the City Arborist.
 - e. The City encourages the use of multi-functional runoff reduction measures in the streetscape, including bioretention areas, stormwater tree box, and planter box. The

dimensional standards for planting area, tree spacing, and planting type be varied to accommodate runoff reduction measures.

- f. Alternative streetscape may be approved by City Transportation Engineer for multi-use trails in accordance with Sec. 2.10.5.C.

C. *Multi-Use Trails.*

1. Multi-use trails shall have an average width of 12 feet, but their width may be periodically reduced to 8 feet where topography, wetlands, stream buffers, existing buildings, existing trees, or other existing conditions render this requirement infeasible. The maximum aggregate length of this reduced width is 400 feet.



2. A multi-use trail ~~may~~ shall be required instead of a sidewalk along any new or existing street when the location is identified for a multi-use trail in the North Point Livable Centers Initiative Study or another plan that has been adopted by the City of Alpharetta. A multi-use trail may be required in other locations identified for a multi-use trail in the North Point Livable Centers Initiative Study, the Alpha Loop Plan, or another plan that has been adopted by the City of Alpharetta.
3. ~~Where a City of Alpharetta park or access easement held by the City of Alpharetta abuts a street subject to "1" above, the multi-use trail may also be located in such park or easement.~~
4. In approving a multi-use trail in lieu of a sidewalk, the City Transportation Engineer, upon application, shall ~~may~~ reduce the required planter width to a minimum width of 5 feet if the proposed reduction is supported by the public health, safety and general welfare.
5. Buildings shall maintain a minimum setback of twenty-feet (20') from a multi-use trail.

Exhibit “E”

SECTION 3.2 TREE CONSERVATION, LANDSCAPE, AND BUFFER REQUIREMENTS²

3.2.1 General.

In order to maintain and promote the public health, safety and welfare, the City has established regulations governing the conservation, planting, and replacement of trees. The importance of trees is recognized for their contribution toward quality of life, visual quality of the city, and improved property values. It is the City's intent to prevent the indiscriminate removal of trees without denying the reasonable use and enjoyment of real property. It is also the intent of these regulations that all applicable sites within the City maintain or obtain minimum tree density, as defined herein. Consistent with the expressed purpose of these regulations, all persons shall make reasonable efforts to protect and retain certain existing, self-supporting trees as defined herein. Each person shall be responsible for the normal care of trees located on its premises.

- A. Willful injury or disfigurement of any tree growing within the City shall be a violation of this Ordinance.
- B. No person shall:
 - 1. Attach any sign, notice or other object to any tree or fasten wires, cables, nails or screws to any tree in a manner that could prove harmful to the tree.
 - 2. Pour any material on any tree or on nearby ground which could be harmful to the tree.
 - 3. Cause or encourage any unnecessary fire or burning near or around any tree.
 - 4. Construct a concrete, asphalt, brick or gravel sidewalk, significantly compact the soil, place fill material, or create other impervious or semi-impervious surfaces around any tree so as to cut off air, light or water from the roots of the tree so as to adversely impact the tree's root system.
 - 5. Pile building material or equipment around any tree so as to cause injury thereto.
 - 6. Deny routine maintenance, watering and reasonable arboricultural care to existing and newly established trees as may be required as a result of activities taking place under this Section.
 - 7. Remove any tree without Permit.
 - 8. Remove or prune a tree on commercial property during non-development activity unless they follow ISA industry standard protocols for pruning or have written approval from the Director.
 - 9. Park any vehicle on the unpaved area underneath existing tree canopies.

(Ord. No. 739 , 5-1-2017)

3.2.2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this Section, unless the context indicates otherwise, the following terms shall have the meaning set forth below:

Boundary Tree. Any tree located on adjacent property with a critical root zone that will be impacted by proposed land disturbance activity.

²Ord. No. 739 , adopted May 1, 2017, amended Section 3.2 in its entirety to read as herein set out. Former Section 3.2, Subsections 3.2.1—3.2.19, pertained to tree protection, and derived from the original codification.

Buffer. An area required to remain undisturbed or replanted where existing vegetation is sparse, as determined by the director.

Caliper. A standard of trunk measurement for replacement trees. Caliper inches are measured at the height of 6 inches above the ground for trees up to and including 4 inch caliper and 12 inches above the ground for trees larger than 4 inch caliper.

Conifer Tree. Any tree with needle leaves and a woody cone fruit including, but not limited to, pine, juniper and cedar species.

Conserve. Protect from harm or destruction; preserve; save.

Critical Root Zone (CRZ). The minimum area beneath a tree which must be left undisturbed in order to preserve a sufficient root mass to give a tree a reasonable chance of survival. The Critical Root Zone will typically be represented by a concentric circle centering on the tree's trunk with a radius equal in feet to one and three-tenths times the number of inches of the trunk diameter. EXAMPLE: The CRZ radius of a twenty (20) inch diameter tree is twenty-six (26) feet.

Dead Tree. Any standing tree which is no longer alive or has the ability to sustain itself through natural processes as determined by a qualified professional.

Development Activity. Any alteration of the natural environment, which requires the approval of a development or site plan and issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit. Development Activity shall also include the "thinning" or removal of trees from land in conjunction with a forest management program, the removal or destruction of trees incidental to the development of land or to the marketing of land for development, the removal or destruction of trees in conjunction with any grading activity, including the removal or filling (stockpiling) of soil, and logging or the removal of trees not in conjunction with an ongoing forest management program. Nothing in this definition shall be deemed to require or authorize the issuance of a permit for any activity described herein.

Diameter Breast-Height (DBH). The standard measure of tree size (for trees existing on a site). The tree trunk is measured at a height of 4½ feet above the ground. If a tree splits into multiple trunks below 4½ feet, the trunk is measured at its most narrow point beneath the split.

Director. The Director of Community Development or designee shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Ordinance; provided, however, that a designee shall have no authority to revoke permits.

Georgia 400 Tree Protection Zone. All property within a horizontal distance of 120 feet of the right-of-way of Georgia 400. At major intersections on Georgia 400 having exit and/or entrance ramps the protection zone shall be reduced to 60 feet. The reduction shall apply for the length of each such ramp. The Georgia 400 Tree Protection Zone is a Buffer.

Grading Activity. Altering ground surfaces to specified elevations, dimensions and/or slopes; this includes stripping, cutting, filling, stockpiling and shaping or any combination thereof and shall include the land in its cut or filled condition.

Guidance Document. A document maintained by the City of Alpharetta Arborist that includes clarifications to requirements with examples and additional technical standards about tree protection, tree planting, species selection, and other information relevant to the protection and replanting of trees in the City of Alpharetta. The document may be revised by the City Arborist as conditions and technical standards evolve.

Hardwood Tree. Any tree that is not coniferous (cone bearing). This definition is based on the colloquialism, and does not necessarily reflect any true qualities of the tree.

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). A professional organization that promotes the professional practice of arboriculture, sets standards for obtaining professional credentials for arborist, and establishes best practices for tree care, pruning, and protection.

Land Disturbance Permit. A permit issued by the City that authorizes Development Activity and includes, but is not limited to, Soil Erosion Protection, clearing and grubbing, land disturbance and building construction.

Landscape Strip. A portion of a lot required to be reserved for, installed with, and maintained with vegetation. Such a strip may or may not be required to be of a linear form. No utilities or parking shall be allowed within a required landscape strip.

Landscape Tree. A tree or trees that were planted or retained on a developed or previously developed site.

Lot Building Area. The area of a lot encompassed by front sides and rear yard setbacks or building line as required by City Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Mass Grading. The grading within existing or across proposed property lines including the removal of trees and disturbance of soils in order to prepare a site for construction where buildings are not approved.

Mulch. An organic material spread around the base of a plant or on a plant bed to enrich and insulate the soil. Types of mulch include Pine Straw, Shredded Hardwood, Wood Chips, and Bark Chips. Mulch should be free of disease and pests. Synthetic or artificial mulches are not acceptable for use in the City of Alpharetta.

Non-Development Activity. Any alteration of the natural environment which does not require development or site plan approval, but which would include the proposed removal or destruction of any tree(s). Any removal of trees that constitutes Development Activity as that term is herein defined shall not constitute non-development activity.

Ornamental Tree. A tree that provides a visual impact in the landscape. The impact may be provided through form, bark, branching structure, leaf color, and/or flower color. Typically a small or medium size tree.

Overstory Tree. Those trees that compose the top layer or canopy of vegetation and will generally reach a mature height greater than 40 feet and typically have a spreading canopy.

Permit (Tree Removal Permit). An official Permit for tree removal issued by the City of Alpharetta.

Pervious Surface. All that area of land that can be landscaped or planted, allows natural passage through by water, and is not covered by man-made materials or structures such as buildings or paving.

Pine Tree. An evergreen coniferous tree that has clusters of needle-shaped leaves.

Plantable Area. The pervious surface area available for the preservation or planting of trees. Plantable Area shall not include that portion of the lot that is covered by buildings and structures permitted pursuant to the maximum lot coverage standards of this Ordinance.

Planted Area. An area of living plant material created for the purpose of establishing open space and consisting of a minimum of 50% of the area devoted to trees and shrubs.

Pruning (Tree Pruning). To cut away dead, overgrown, or undesirable branches or stems. Pruning of trees to be done in compliance with standard arboricultural practices as outlined in ANSI A300 and shall maintain the trees natural form and structure.

Qualified Issuing HOA (QIH) An established HOA, POA, or COA with recorded covenants that maintains a contract with a landscape architect or Qualified Professional that has attended and passed the required tree removal permit regulation class provided by the city. The QIH shall be permitted to issue tree removal permits to their HOA, POA, or COA members where trees are located within the front setback and shall require recompense and/or replacement where required by Section 3.2. QIH certification can be revoked at any time by City if QIH is found to be in non-compliance.

Qualified Professional. An International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, an American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) Registered Consulting Arborist, or a Registered Forester.

Recompense. Replacement of trees or payment into the City held tree fund for the removal of Specimen Trees.

Replacement Planting. The planting of trees on a site that before development had more trees, and after development shall have less trees per acre.

Responsible Party. Any individual, firm, principal, or other entity who is a signatory to a Tree Removal Permit Application or Land Disturbance Permit for Development Activity or any person or company caught in the act of tree removal without a City-issued permit, or who violates any other provision of this Ordinance.

Shade Tree. Any tree that has a spreading canopy that provides partial to full shade to the ground with a minimum height of 20 feet.

Semi-Pervious. Hardscape, aggregate or porous paver that allows at least fifty percent (50%) of surface water to pass through the manmade material and into the underlying soil.

Softwood Tree. Any coniferous (cone bearing) tree. This definition is based on the colloquialism, and does not necessarily reflect any true qualities of the tree.

Specimen Tree. Any tree, **not including pine trees**, which qualifies for special consideration for preservation due to its size, type, condition, location or historical significance and which also meets the minimum size criteria set forth below.

Size Criteria:

<i>Pine Trees:</i>	30-inch diameter or larger for trees in the Pinus (Pine) genus.
<i>Coniferous Trees:</i>	20" diameter or larger for trees in the cedrus (deodar cedar), Thuja (Arborvitae), or other ecologically similar trees.
<i>Overstory Trees:</i>	30-inch diameter or larger for trees in the Liquidambar (Sweetgum) or Liriodendron (Tulip poplar) genus.
	20-inch diameter or larger for trees in the Fagus (Beech), Nyssa (Tupelo), Diospyros (Persimmon), Sassafras (Sassafras), or other ecologically similar trees.
	20-inch diameter or larger for Magnolia grandiflora (Southern magnolia) and those cultivars that generally reach a mature height over 40'.
	24-inch (24") diameter or larger for trees in all other genera.
<i>Understory Trees:</i>	8-inch (8") diameter or larger.
	10-inch (10") diameter or larger for Oxydendron arboretum (Sourwood).

See additional requirements for Specimen Trees in "The Guidance Document."

Street/Streetscape Tree. Any tree located or proposed to be located along a public or private street. The actual location will be determined by the specific zoning district or overlay. In situations where there is limited planting space in the right-of-way and or safety concerns, street trees may be located at the back of the sidewalk or within the landscape strip on private property and the discretion of the Director.

Structural Root Plate. The zone of rapid root taper that provides the tree stability against wind throw. The radius of the structural root plate is equal to 0.5 feet per inch of DBH.

Timber Harvest. Harvesting of timber from sites as a timber management activity as part of a demonstrated ongoing agricultural land use.

Tree. Any living, self-supporting woody or fibrous plant which normally obtains a diameter breast height of at least three (3) inches, and typically has one (1) main stem or trunk and many branches.

Tree Care Plan. A plan developed to provide an impacted tree the best possible chance of survival. A tree care plan should be prepared by a qualified professional and conform to the requirements of ANSI A300 and the Guidance Document

Tree Density. A measurement of trees on a property, expressed as inches per acre. For existing trees density is calculated based on DBH. For proposed trees tree density is calculated based on the caliper.

Tree Grouping. A community of trees as determined by the Director to merit special consideration as an ecological feature based upon species composition, form, structure, age, and condition. Tree groupings shall be in good condition and free from defects and or insect and disease infestations. Specimen trees and trees of quality may be included in tree groupings and every alternative should be evaluated to save these trees. Except as otherwise provided in Section 3.2., Tree Groupings will be treated as specimen trees for preservation credits and every alternative should be evaluated to save these trees.

Tree of Quality. A tree that merits special consideration due to historical significance, ideal shape and structure, or uniqueness of the species as determined by the Director. A tree of quality shall be in good condition, free from defects and or insect and disease infestations, and of a typical form for that species. Except as otherwise provided in Section 3.2., Trees of Quality will be treated as specimen trees for preservation credits and every alternative should be evaluated to save these trees. Pine, Yellow poplar, Sweetgum, Bradford pear, Leyland cypress, invasive species, or other species as determined by the Director shall not be considered a tree of quality.

Tree Removal or Removal of Trees. Removal of trees through an act of cutting down a tree or any act which causes a tree to die within 2 years after commission of the act or impedes the ability of the tree to sustain itself, including but not limited to damage inflicted upon the root system, trunk, or canopy as a result of:

1. The improper use of machinery on the trees;
2. The storage of materials in or around the trees;
3. Soil compaction;
4. Altering the natural grade to expose the roots or to cover the tree's root system with more than 4 inches of soil;
5. Causing the infection or infestation of the tree by pests, fungus or harmful bacteria;
6. Pruning judged to be excessive by the Director or not in accordance with the standard set forth by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA);
7. Paving with concrete, asphalt or other impervious surface within such proximity as to be harmful to the tree or its root system; and
8. Application of herbicides or defoliants to any tree without first obtaining a permit.

Tree Planting List. List of preferred tree species for use in the City of Alpharetta. Species not included on this list may be approved at the discretion of the Director. The Tree Planting List is included in the Arborist Guidance Document.

Tree Protection Area. An area encompassing the critical root zone of a tree that shall remain in an a pervious state.

Tree Save Area. An area designated for the purpose of meeting tree density requirements, saving natural trees, and/or preserving natural buffers that shall remain in a pervious state.

Understory Trees. Those trees that grow beneath the overstory, and will generally reach a mature height less than 40 feet. Understory trees may include coniferous trees that meet these same height characteristics.

Zoning Districts. Those areas as defined in the Zoning Ordinance and shown on the Zoning Map.

(Ord. No. 739 , 5-1-2017; Ord. No. 749 , § 4, 9-18-2017; Ord. No. 769 , § 1, 11-12-2018; Ord. No. 850 , § 1(Exh. A), 1-3-2023)

3.2.3 Exemptions.

- A. The following shall be exempt from the provisions of this section:
1. The removal of trees with a Permit.
 2. The removal of trees from horticultural properties such as farms, nurseries or orchards. This exception shall not be interpreted to include timber harvesting incidental to development of the land;
 3. The necessary removal of trees by a utility company within dedicated utility easements;
 4. The removal of trees on public rights-of-way conducted by, on behalf of, or any activity pursuant to work to be dedicated to, a federal, state, county, municipal or other governmental agency in pursuance of its lawful activities or functions in the construction or improvement of public rights-of-way;
 5. The removal of trees from lakes and detention ponds, and drainage easements, unless specifically planted to be part of the stormwater system; or
 6. The removal of any tree which is dead or has become or threatens to become a danger to human life or property;
 7. The removal of any tree which is located in the front setback of a 'For-Sale' dwelling that receives permit approval from their Qualified Issuing HOA (QIH).
- B. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all reasonable efforts shall be made to save specimen trees and trees of quality, and tree groupings.
- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to authorize, directly or indirectly, the removal of a tree from the Georgia 400 Tree Protection Zone or any buffer.

(Ord. No. 739 , 5-1-2017)

Exhibit “F”

3.5.7 Multi-Use Trails.

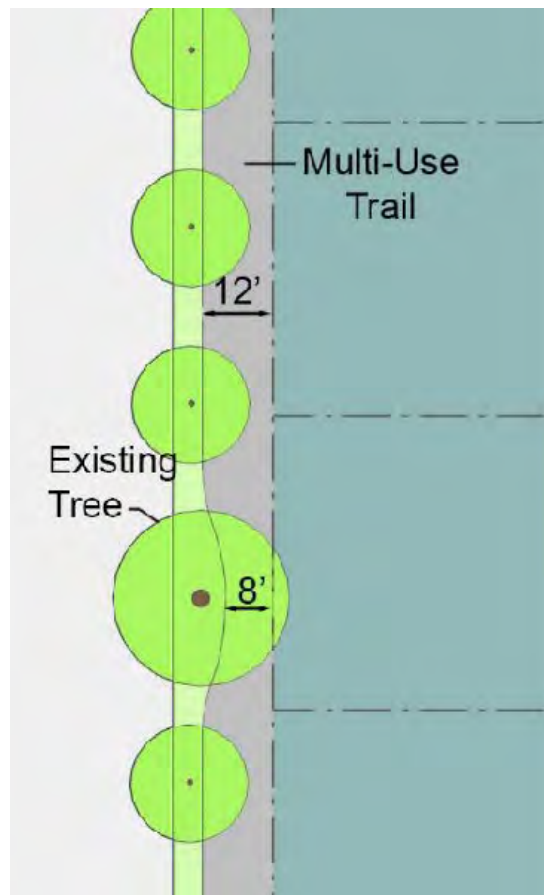
- A. Multi-use trails shall have an average width of 12 feet, but their width may be periodically reduced to 8 feet where topography, wetlands, stream buffers, existing buildings, existing trees, or other existing conditions render this requirement infeasible. The maximum length of this reduced width is 400 feet.
- B. A multi-use trail shall be required instead of a sidewalk along any new or existing street when the location is identified for a multi-use trail in planning documents that has been adopted by the City of Alpharetta.
- C. In approving a multi-use trail in lieu of a sidewalk, the City Transportation Engineer, upon application, shall reduce the required planter width to a minimum width of 5 feet if the proposed reduction is supported by the public health, safety and general welfare.
- D. Buildings shall maintain a minimum setback of twenty-feet (20') from a multi-use trail.

Exhibit “G”

Sec. 2.3. Streets.

2.3.5. Multi-Use Trails.

- A. Multi-use trails shall have an average width of 12 feet, but their width may be periodically reduced to 8 feet where topography, wetlands, stream buffers, existing buildings, existing trees, or other existing conditions render this requirement infeasible. The maximum length of this reduced width is 400 feet.
- B. A multi-use trail ~~may~~ shall be required instead of a sidewalk along any new or existing street when the location is identified for a multi-use trail in the Downtown Master Plan or other plan that has been adopted by the City of Alpharetta.



- C. ~~Where a City of Alpharetta park or access easement held by the City of Alpharetta abuts a street subject to Section 2.3.5.A above, the multi-use trail may also be located in such park or easement.~~
- D. In approving a multi-use trail in lieu of a sidewalk, the City Transportation Engineer, upon application, shall ~~may~~ reduce the required planter width to a minimum width of 5 feet if the proposed reduction is supported by the public health, safety and general welfare.
- E. Buildings shall maintain a minimum setback of twenty-feet (20') from a multi-use trail.

Exhibit “H”

The Alpharetta Downtown Design Guidelines (The Design Guidelines) are an amendment to the Alpharetta Design Review Ordinance and Design Guidelines. These guidelines expand the area subject to the Alpharetta Design Review Ordinance and Design Guidelines to include the **Downtown Overlay "Downtown Core"** identified on page 70 of the adopted **Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan (The Master Plan)**. These guidelines also provide additional standards that apply to all non-single family detached buildings, structures, sites and areas and the property on which they are located. Other applicable guidelines, regulations, and ordinances regulating development also apply. Where guidelines stated in this document are in conflict with other governing regulations, unless otherwise noted, the more restrictive shall control. Additionally, sculptures, art, and murals shall require review by the Cultural Arts Commission.

The Design Guidelines are intended to promote new development within Downtown Alpharetta that meets the goals of The Master Plan. These Guidelines include both standards (requirements that must be complied with) and recommendations (suggestions that are strongly encouraged to be complied with). Standards typically use the word "shall", an active verb (i.e. "provide" or "install") and/or a clear directive ("are not permitted", or "are required"). Images and illustrations are provided of many of the issues discussed and are intended to aid developers and City Staff in the design and approval processes.

Finally, some guidelines only apply to specific building types. Definitions of these building types are established in the **City of Alpharetta Downtown Code Overlay**, which applies to the entire Downtown **Code Overlay** regulated by these Design Guidelines.

Master Plan Goals

Downtown Alpharetta is envisioned as a vibrant live-work-play district featuring shops and restaurants, walkable streets, a range of open spaces, civic uses, new mixed-use development, contextual housing, preserved historic resources, and much more. With its rich sense-of-place and small town scale, Downtown is intended to represent an authentic town center with programming and designs that differentiate it from other business centers in the Alpharetta area and make it a focal point for citizens of Alpharetta and nearby communities.

While the Design Guidelines are not intended to establish a single architectural design direction for Downtown Alpharetta, they do provide guidance and standards for site design, the design of buildings and streetscapes, material selections, exterior lighting, and signage design that are consistent with the design of the traditional Main Street as seen in small to medium sized towns throughout the United States, most of which were built during the 19th century up through the early part of the 20th century. The Design Guidelines are intended to be flexible and fluid in order to take advantage of future development trends, while maintaining a sense of visual cohesiveness within the downtown area.



These guidelines apply to all non-single family detached buildings, structures, sites and areas and the property on which they are located within the Downtown **Code Overlay** of the Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan Study Area.

EXHIBIT B

September 2023

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Alpharetta, Georgia

PREPARED FOR:

City of Alpharetta Economic Development

2 Park Plaza

Alpharetta, GA 30009

Phone: 678.297.6196

Web: www.connectedalpharetta.com

PREPARED BY:



RKG Associates, Inc

2121 Eisenhower, Suite #402

Alexandria, VA 22314

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1 INTRODUCTION

Although built around the concept of a bedroom community, the City of Alpharetta has emerged into a major employment center in Fulton County and the primary economic hub of the North Fulton County area. The city's economic transformation originated from an in-demand office product that captured rapid business investment. Alpharetta developed robust industry agglomerations, particularly in Technology. As the suburban office park continues to age out of favor and post-COVID-19 remote and hybrid working models normalize, Alpharetta's long-term economic sustainability becomes increasingly threatened.

While the economic development landscape continues to shift, the City of Alpharetta is challenged to reposition its priorities and objectives. The Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP) is intended to guide the City of Alpharetta on strategies and initiatives that can be used to address evolving market preferences and macroeconomic pressures. And consequently, sustain its long-recognized success as a premier economic activity center and retail the City's ability to attract business investment, stimulate job growth, and support fiscal health.

The City's elected leadership, administration, business community, and key stakeholders were engaged over a year-long process to identify locally relevant economic development goals, review the market findings and opportunities, and prioritize recommended strategies. This SEDP would not have been possible without the participation and commitment of the city's professional staff and a highly engaged group of community stakeholders assembled to represent the diverse business and community interests within Alpharetta. This group met several times with RKG Associates during the SEDP development process. Their collective input and guidance ensured that the SEDP goals and objectives were relevant and timely while recommendations were achievable. The Steering Committee consists of the following members:

Name	Affiliation
Lance Morsell	City of Alpharetta
Kathi Cook	City of Alpharetta
Charlotte Christian	City of Alpharetta
Dan Merkel	Alpharetta City Council
Brian Will	Alpharetta City Council
Karen Cashion	Tech Alpharetta
Janet Rodgers	Awesome Alpharetta
Otto Burianek	Georgia State University
Ronnie Cannon	CLRE Advisors
Nick Garzia	CIM Group
Jack Nugent	Alpharetta Development Authority
Morgan Reynolds	Alpharetta Development Authority
Felipe Smolka	Tech Alpharetta

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Socioeconomic Findings

North Fulton County's population rates are lower than rates across the region. Communities across North Fulton County, including the City of Alpharetta, impose greater housing limitations than communities across the Four-County Region, thus preventing more people from moving into North Fulton County. Developers can access greater and more flexible residential development options outside North Fulton County. The fewer housing options, the fewer numbers of new working-age residents. Fewer working-age residents can limit the long-term growth of Alpharetta's labor market, reducing the City's competitiveness to recruit and retain businesses.

The middle-to-senior age population (45+) increased and the prime-working age population (25-34) decreased. In the long-term, Alpharetta's labor market is vulnerable to shortages as much of the City's population moves towards the age of retirement and fewer prime-working residents are available to replace retirees. The source of the declining base of prime-working residents is a consequence of the City's restrictive costs of living, which are unaffordable to most entry-to-mid-level workers.

Alpharetta's disproportionate share of highly educated residents highlights potential labor market challenges. The City's population is highly educated, most have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher. This is beneficial for recruiting and retaining white-collar businesses while stimulating job creation in technology-based industries. The lack of educational attainment diversity suggests that key segments of the workforce are excluded from living in Alpharetta. In particular, many service-based workers typically have lower levels of education. As fewer service-based workers are able to live in Alpharetta, service-based businesses such as restaurants are prone to face recruitment challenges.

Alpharetta's foreign-born population, non-white population, represent all the City's population growth. In the latter half of the last decade, Alpharetta's white and native population declined, whereas the City's foreign-born non-white population offset those losses. Most incoming residents come from Asian countries, particularly India and China. The increasing racial and cultural diversity in Alpharetta can create a variety of economic development opportunities.

Housing diversity integrated with community-based amenities will bolster the City's long-term economic sustainability. As the demand for suburban office parks continues to decline and the City becomes more cost-prohibitive, Alpharetta's labor market and overall economy are vulnerable to contractions. Additional workforce housing options and greater public

transportation connectivity can facilitate the City's business recruitment and retention efforts, attract young professionals, and support job creation.

2. Real Estate Findings

Outdated development concepts can threaten business recruitment and retention efforts. Suburban office parks were regarded as the primary source of the city's transformation into a major employment hub. As workplace preferences shift towards hybrid-work models and employment in vibrant urban areas, the city's office stock increasingly falls out of favor. Consequently, imposing major challenges to recruiting and retaining businesses.

Mismatch between jobs and housing can affect long-term labor market outcomes. The city's aging population and declining prime-working age population makes Alpharetta vulnerable to labor market shortages. Many young professionals, essential for sustaining Alpharetta's long-term labor market performance, are excluded from living in the city due to prohibitive costs-of-living. Minimal housing opportunities are affordable to young professionals, reducing their attractiveness to working in Alpharetta. Additional price-diverse housing options can help attract young professionals while facilitating job creation efforts.

Scarce development opportunities are readily available. Since Alpharetta is largely built out and remaining vacant parcels are limited by zoning regulations, construction activity has been limited. As land prices escalate, developers are forced to construct at higher densities to make projects financially feasible. In particular, mixed-use developments projects credited for enhancing the city's economic development efforts. Given the limited development conditions, infill and redevelopment strategies have become the best alternative.

New work-live-play destinations prove concepts work but benefits can be maximized if made more affordable. City Center and Avalon represent ground-breaking concepts for Alpharetta, centralizing live-work-play opportunities. Both prove to be producing successful outcomes, activating street life and pedestrian foot traffic. However, both are strictly designed for high-income households at the detriment of critical segments of Alpharetta's workforce. This includes young professionals, who thrive in these lifestyle destinations. Expanding work-live-play destinations but integrating more price-diverse housing options can attract young professionals while facilitating the city's job creation efforts.

3. Target Industry Findings

The objective of the Target Industry Analysis is to identify industry clusters that have the greatest potential to produce job growth in Alpharetta based on socioeconomic trends, real estate market conditions, and macroeconomic pressures. The analysis aims to guide Alpharetta towards a defined list of target industry clusters the City seeks to proactively recruit. Following this

assessment, RKG identified the following target industries for the City of Alpharetta to pursue in the near-term:

- *Software Development and IT Services*
- *Research & Development: Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences*
- *Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism*
- *Entrepreneurship and Innovation*

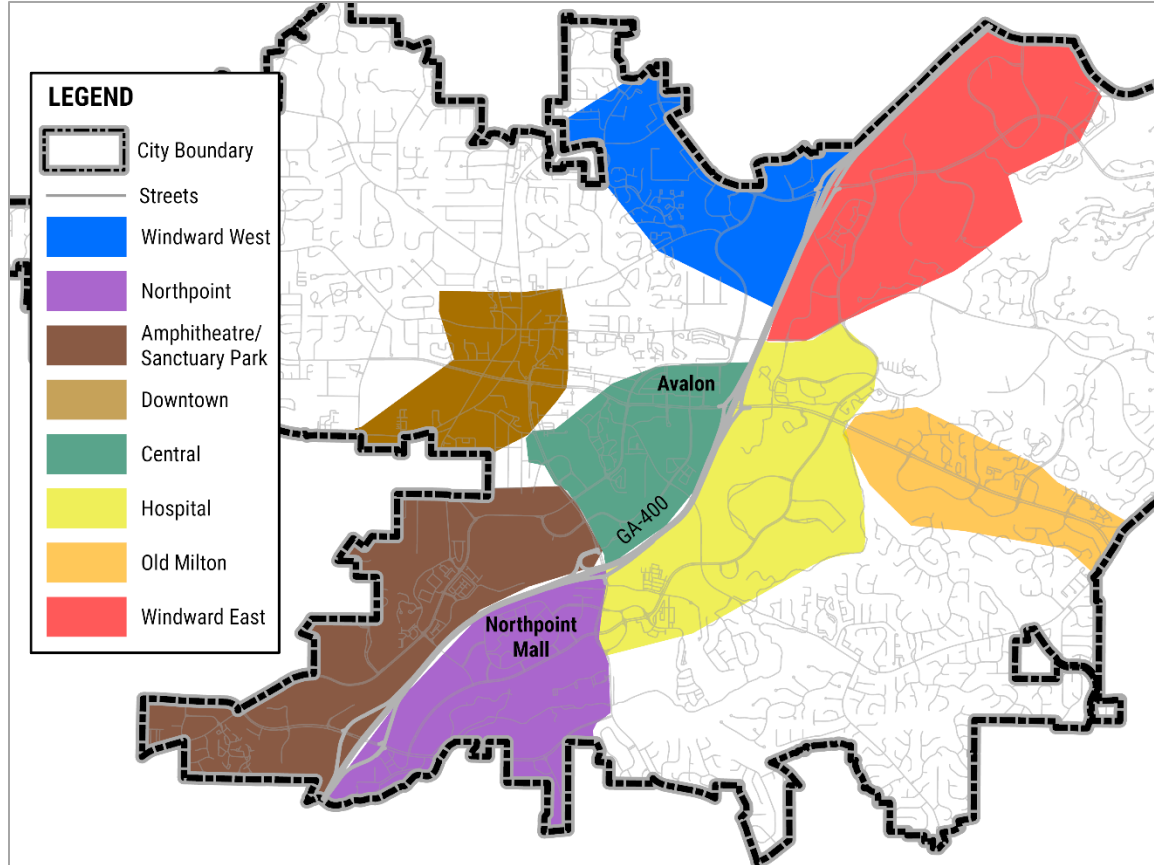
B. OPPORTUNITY SITES ANALYSIS

Most industries are in flux, constantly readjusting to shifts in macroeconomic pressures, market trends, and technological innovation. While these shifts unfold, businesses within industries are prone to change their real estate requirements. For instance, as virtual-work models continue to normalize, many businesses are seeking to downsize their office space needs. This is particularly impactful in Alpharetta, as Financial Technology (FinTech) and Medical Technology (MedTech) have sustained some of the most aggressive remote working policies since the COVID-19 pandemic. Strategic real estate investments can be an essential source for sustaining industry expansions within Alpharetta, reconfiguring properties in the City to meet industry-specific real estate requirements and strengthening the City's competitiveness in attracting new firms to backfill vacated office space. RKG Associates coordinated with the Advisory Group to identify and assess economic activity areas within Alpharetta that offer properties with catalytic real estate investment opportunities. Based on a variety of locational and market factors, 9 economic activity areas within the City were evaluated:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| ▪ Downtown | ▪ Amphitheatre Area |
| ▪ Central | ▪ Windward East |
| ▪ Hospital | ▪ Sanctuary Park Area |
| ▪ Northpoint | ▪ Windward West |
| ▪ Old Milton | |

The Opportunity Sites chapter details specific recommendations in each area. The following is a summary of the economic development potential for these activity centers.

Map of Alpharetta Activity Centers



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

1. Downtown

Downtown Alpharetta's emergence into a mixed-use walkable destination can benefit the City's economic development efforts. City Center has increased levels of walkability and street life, exposing neighborhood retailers to an expanded consumer base. The addition of multifamily housing units can expand consumer activities beyond traditional workday hours (9 A.M.-5 P.M.). Enhanced access to community-based amenities raises the City's quality-of-life standards, an attractive asset for corporations interested in relocating their operations to Alpharetta. The Downtown Area is equipped to absorb greater levels of investment activities to expand upon the neighborhood's work-live-play concept. Infill development strategies can be utilized, tightening the connectivity between lifestyle amenities while further enhancing walkability. Additional vertical mixed-use development projects with ground-floor retail and housing units on the upper floors can expand the critical mass for consumer activities and can enhance the City's business recruitment efforts.

2. Central

Additional development opportunities can build upon the commercial success and momentum of Avalon, expanding the mixed-use development concept to other parts of the Central activity area. The concept has proven to be a strategic medium for filling office spaces, expanding consumer retail activities, and establishing a sense of destination to enhance community-development objectives. To increase the likelihood that additional development opportunities can advance this concept in the long-term, enhancing physical connectivity and social accessibility must be an overriding objective of each strategy. This includes providing the infrastructure to support pedestrian-scale walkability across Old Milton Parkway. Moreover, expanding the price-diversity of housing options can create the critical mass needed to ensure the area's long-term economic sustainability.

3. Hospital

Several suburban-scale office properties are underutilized, which offers opportunities for in-fill development or adaptive reuse projects to revitalize declining commercial activities. These opportunities can capitalize on the proximity to Northside/Alpharetta Medical Campus while generating positive recruitment externalities that can enhance the hospital's long-term operations. This can include locating work-live-play opportunities with pedestrian connectivity to the hospital, offering a source of attraction to healthcare services professionals. Adaptive reuse projects can incorporate Public-Private Partnerships with the Northside/Alpharetta Medical Campus to help facilitate conversions to lab spaces for life-sciences research. And consequently, catalyze a built environment for innovation in ancillary industries to develop (Biotech, MedTech).

4. Northpoint

Redevelopment of the Northpoint Mall into a live-work-play activity center offers a major catalytic investment opportunity to become a centralized economic hub for North Fulton County. Through this opportunity, incorporating dense vertical mixed-use development patterns can be a strong source of attraction for businesses and white-collar professionals. The site is situated in a favorable location to support a redevelopment into a live-work-play activity center, providing access to multimodal transit options while buffered away from residential subdivisions.

5. Old Milton

Future real estate can be a strategic initiative, in coordination with property owners, existing businesses, and GSU-Alpharetta. The presence of GSU-Alpharetta in proximity to major technology-based businesses can shape the conditions for a 'workforce development hub,' capitalizing on the educational resources of GSU-Alpharetta and industry-knowledge resources of nearby technology-based businesses. This synergistic relationship can encourage the development of educational programs at GSU-Alpharetta that upskill existing workers. While hybrid-work models are ongoing and many young professionals live outside the City limits,

localizing young professionals increases in importance. RKG Associates recommends that many properties within the activity area incorporate live-work-play activity centers, offering a source of attraction for young professionals.

6. Amphitheatre Area

Like many suburban office parks, the intended vision is to preserve and revitalize underutilized. While the area's commercial and industrial operations remain stable, the objective of Amphitheatre Area is to preserve related economic activities. This includes expanding upon the momentum of the area's small-scale production-based operations and automotive uses. Strong market indicators point to pent-up demand for small-scale production-based facilities, especially as the region's supply chain networks expand and cottage manufacturing is revived into a normalized business-model among aspiring entrepreneurs. Properties within Amphitheatre Area exist that can catalyze these bullish opportunities.

7. Windward East

Windward East represents yet another situation where large-scale suburban office developments face pressures to sustain economic activities due to shifting market preferences. Other areas of the region, including Alpharetta, offer competitive workspaces that are driven by prevailing market preferences to locate in areas that provide convenient accessibility to services and amenities. The intended vision of Windward East is to develop in way that match prevailing market preferences, creating a town-center style environment; a diversity of housing-price typologies, concentrations of lifestyle-retail amenities, and infrastructure that supports walkability.

8. Sanctuary Park Area

Similar to many activity areas with suburban-scale office developments, the intended vision is to preserve and revitalize underutilized economic activities. While Sanctuary Park's clubhouse addition can be appealing, it isn't likely to be a catalyst for backfilling vacated spaces. As post-pandemic work models become more popular, businesses will continue locating areas that are positioned to attract young professionals; areas that offer connectivity and walkability to services. Investments in work-live-play activity centers with price-diverse rental options can help attract young professionals. RKG Associates recommends that the parcels near Sanctuary Park embrace infill development projects, supporting a critical mass that can help revitalize lost economic activities.

9. Windward West

While the development phases of Continuum unfold, monitoring the project's office performance will be critical as market indicators suggest leasing spaces could be challenging. Despite this possibility, Continuum expands the town-center style concept in the City while bearing some

resemblance to projects like City Center and Avalon. This concept has proven to be successful in Alpharetta, enhancing the City's efforts to attract business investment. As investments in Continuum take shape, opportunities exist for infill development and redevelopment projects that can strengthen the area's overall market performance.

C. IMPLEMENTATION

The implantation strategy is a culmination of economic development strategies for the City of Alpharetta to adopt as recommended by RKG Associates and the Advisory Group. These strategies were crafted on account of feedback from local and regional implementation partners, empirical research, and input from the City of Alpharetta elected officials and staff. The initial section of this chapter details the defined principles and goals identified by the Advisory Group and City of Alpharetta. The next sections detail discrete recommendations and implementation steps to assist the City in pursuing their economic development goals.

1. Economic Development Goals

The assembled Advisory Group (listed in the introduction section) represents the various public and private perspectives that influence—and are influenced by—the City's economic development efforts. This Advisory Group provided guidance and feedback throughout the development of this plan. As part of that effort, a comprehensive outreach strategy was held to identify, refine, and prioritize the City's economic development goals that were initiated through previous efforts. These goals were presented and reviewed with the Advisory Group, who provided feedback on refining and prioritizing these goals. The following list represents the culmination of this input and selection process and is presented in order of the Advisory Group's recommended priority.

- **Expand the City's business retention efforts to reach all existing businesses.**
- **Continue to attract professional and technical services firms to Alpharetta.**
- **Expand the City's entrepreneurial ecosystem through strengthening tech-based efforts and expanding initiatives that target other sectors.**
- **Diversify the City's employment base beyond existing software companies.**
- **Create dynamic employment centers through place-based strategies that meet evolving demand from employers and workers.**
- **Encourage development that complements the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.**
- **Enhance the City's housing supply to attract workers and businesses.**
- **Maximize the potential of the City's expanding green infrastructure.**
- **Strengthen relationships between businesses and training providers to reach residents, existing businesses, and prospective businesses.**

2. Implementation Matrix

The following Implementation Matrix presents the full range of objectives and corresponding action items for the City's consideration. As noted, this matrix should serve as a reference document as the economic development staff craft their annual business plan. The timelines, estimated costs, and implementation partners for each action item identified in the matrix reflect RKG Associates' professional recommendation guided by input from City staff and the project's Advisory Group. The final timing, focus, and potential costs for each action item should be refined by staff and/or the responsible implementation partner when implementation occurs.



LEGEND

Implementation Leaders

Public

AL	City of Alpharetta
FC	Fulton County
MU	Other Municipalities
GA	State of Georgia

Partners

AB	Business Advisory Board
BA	Alpharetta Business Association (ABA)
CC	Alpharetta Chamber of Commerce (ACC)
ID	Fulton County Industrial Development Authority (FCIDA)
MC	Metro Atlanta Chamber (MAC)
NF	Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce (GNFCC)
TA	Tech Alpharetta
VB	Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)

Private

C	Consultant
F	Financial Institutions
I	Industry Leaders
N	Neighborhood Residents
O	Property Owners
R	Realtors/Brokers

Cost Estimate Legend:

ST	Staff Time
A	Under \$1,000
B	\$1,000 to \$10,000
C	\$10,000 to \$50,000
D	\$50,000 to \$100,000
E	\$100,000 to \$250,000
F	\$250,000 to \$500,000
G	Over \$500,000

	Action
--	--------



City of Alpharetta, Georgia Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)										Estimated	Cost
		Public/NP	Private	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Cost	Type
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION															
Objective 1.1	Continue to develop a comprehensive list of all businesses within the City														
Action 1.1.1	Create a single database of all Alpharetta businesses based on lists already available (e.g., pervious COVID efforts, secondary data vendors, partner organization membership lists...)	AL, AB, BA, CC, TA, VB												A	One Time
Action 1.1.2	Utilize the city's business license process to collect more detailed data about businesses, particularly contact information	AL												ST	Annual
Action 1.1.3	Provide opportunity for businesses to register/review their information in the business list through the town's economic development website	AL	O, I, R											Included 5.5.1	Annual
Action 1.1.4	Work with property owners and landlords to collect business contact information	AL, AB, CC	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 1.1.5	Implement volunteer walks, having 10-15 volunteers canvas the town's various activity centers to gather contact information	AL, CC	O, I											A	Biannual
Action 1.1.6	Ask industry roundtable members to advertise volunteer walks and engage their relationships to build the database	AL, AB	O, I											ST	Biannual
Objective 1.2	Implement an annual business survey to identify emerging trends/needs														
Action 1.2.1	Establish a fixed date (e.g., week) that the survey will be released. This should be consistent year over year. Recommend the Fall	AL, AB, CC	O, I											A	Annual
Action 1.2.2	Ensure the survey covers the following topics: Market climate/changes, Regulatory environment, Growth/contraction needs and concerns, Workforce needs, and Physical space needs	AL, AB	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 1.2.3	Work with the Tech Alpharetta, the Chamber, other business organizations, and industry roundtables to refine questions and expand awareness of the survey each year	AL, AB, BA, CC, TA, VB	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 1.2.4	Invest in multimedia marketing and outreach at least 2 months prior to the release of the survey each year (e.g., print, social media, direct outreach)	AL												Included 5.5.2	Annual
Action 1.2.5	Share general results of the survey with roundtables, partner organizations, and the community through the monthly newsletter	AL	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 1.2.6	Use results of survey to prioritize retention/expansion visits for the year	AL												ST	Annual
Action 1.2.7	Work with respective roundtables about industry-specific findings from survey to determine annual action items	AL, AB	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 1.2.8	Retain all survey results to create a longitudinal assessment tool (e.g., Excel database) that can help economic development efforts become more predictive to changing market climates	AL												ST	Annual
Action 1.2.9	Consider rekindling your partnership with the other North Fulton municipalities to implement a broader survey effort (increased responses, shared costs)	AL, MU												ST	Annual
Objective 1.3	Proactively outreach to existing businesses through 1-on-1 meetings														
Action 1.3.1	Use the comprehensive business list to identify new companies to visit and track past visit efforts. Do not concentrate on the same businesses year over year	AL, AB	I											ST	Continuous
Action 1.3.2	Establish quotas for number of monthly visits, starting with ten (10) per month, expanding as more staff is hired and/or volunteers trained	AL												ST	Continuous
Action 1.3.3	Use business survey results to prioritize outreach efforts to companies that indicate growth needs or challenges to maintain operations	AL, AB												ST	Annual
Action 1.3.4	Coordinate with economic development partners for business visits (e.g., chamber or Tech Alpharetta)	AL, AB, BA, CC, TA, VB												ST	Continuous
Action 1.3.5	Maintain database of visited businesses to track frequency and results of the visit through a Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) software	AL												B	Annual
Action 1.3.6	Create a direct "help line" initiative on the city's economic development website that allows businesses to connect to an economic development staff member for assistance	AL	C											Included 5.5.1	One Time
Action 1.3.7	Activate business ambassadors to assist in outreach, providing them training on questions to ask and how to track the conversation	AL, AB	O, I											Included 5.3.1	Annual

[illegible]

City of Alpharetta, Georgia Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)										Estimated	Cost
		Public/NP	Private	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Cost	Type
BUSINESS RECRUITMENT															
Objective 2.1	Become more proactive with regional and statewide partners in business recruitment														
Action 2.1.1	Engage industry roundtables and individual businesses to generate potential recruitment leads through vertical and horizontal supply chains	AL, AL, BA, CC												ST	Quarterly
Action 2.1.2	Establish quarterly work sessions with implementation partners (e.g., ABA, ACC, GNFC, FCIDA, MAC...) to discuss opportunities and implementation strategies	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC												A	Annual
Action 2.1.3	Maintain local property and land database, coordinating with partners on maintaining an accurate and up-to-date list	AL	C											Included 3.2.1	Annual
Action 2.1.4	Collaborate on leads collected through business outreach and marketing efforts	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC												ST	Annual
Action 2.1.5	Work with local partners to build relationships with site selectors in target industry sectors, adding them the city's economic development newsletter distribution list	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 2.1.6	Create a municipal economic development coalition focused on information sharing, best practice engagement, and collaboration on cross jurisdictional needs/opportunities (e.g., workforce development)	AL, MU												ST	Annual
Objective 2.2	Expand start-up and entrepreneurial development services open to all businesses														
Action 2.2.1	Provide information seminars in partnership with other North Fulton municipalities on how to start, operate, and grow a business	AL, MU, FC												B	Annual
Action 2.2.2	Fund the training of 2-3 new mentors each year, selecting within business sectors that are underrepresented, particularly women and people of color	AL, MU	O, I											B	Annual
Action 2.2.3	Work with local banks to create a PPP revolving loan fund that offers low/no-interest loans and/or gap financing to start-ups and small businesses seeking to grow. Target an 80% private/20% public resource pool	AL, MU	F											F	One Time
Action 2.2.4	Engage local HR, engineering, accounting, and legal professionals to create a database of potential consultants for entrepreneurs to use	AL, MU	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 2.2.5	Provide financial assistance for entrepreneurs and small businesses to access critical services such as human resources assistance, financial planning assistance, and legal assistance	AL, MU												D	Annual
Action 2.2.6	Proactively market small business initiatives to existing businesses, focusing on home-based businesses using updated business tracking data	AL												ST	Annual
Action 2.2.7	Modify incentive programs to offer financial support to startups and small businesses to locate and grow in Alpharetta (e.g., one-time grants for creating jobs above area median income), requiring participation in an entrepreneurial training program	AL, AB												D	Annual
Action 2.2.8	Identify a highly visible, well appointed location for a comprehensive incubator/business support facility that incorporates Tech Alpharetta	AL, AB												D	Annual
Action 2.2.9	Consider hiring an additional full-time staff member dedicated to small business/entrepreneurial development in partnership with Tech Alpharetta	AL, TA												D	Annual
Objective 2.3	Scale proactive marketing and recruitment efforts to best leverage the City's resources and market reach														
Action 2.2.1	Partner with local and state entities to market through relevant digital and print mediums annually	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC	C											C/D	Annual
Action 2.2.2	Host a searchable online database of available commercial space and land for prospectus businesses to review	AL												A	Annual
Action 2.2.3	Create a 'tip line' for citizens to call/Email/text ideas on business recruitment and any leads they may have on businesses that may wish to relocate or expand to Alpharetta	AL	C											Included 5.5.1	One Time
Action 2.2.4	Develop/refine the City's business recruitment collateral (see OUTREACH, COMMUNICATION, AND MARKETING section)	AL												Included 5.1.1	Annual

[illegible]

[illegible]

City of Alpharetta, Georgia Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)										Estimated	Cost
		Public/NP	Private	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Cost	Type
OUTREACH, MARKETING, AND COMMUNICATION															
Objective 5.1	Create marketing collateral necessary for effective retention and recruitment efforts														
	Action 5.1.1 Create all materials listed below in print and digital format, updating regularly (minimum once a year)	AL	C											C	Annual
	Action 5.1.2 Create target industry-specific fact and information sheets	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.3 Refine the existing marketing document to reflect recommended changes where applicable (e.g., incentives)	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.6 Create a property prospectus book detailed in 3.3.3 (digital only)	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.4 Create quality of life information sheets on livability and amenities in Alpharetta	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.5 Create materials to market the new ombudsman program	AL	C											Included	Biannual
	Action 5.1.7 Create employment marketing brochure detailed in 3.1.4	AL	C											Included	Biannual
Objective 5.2	Enact a monthly newsletter detailing market and economic development activities														
	Action 5.2.1 Highlight recent economic development activity and successes, maintaining a 'running tally' dashboard of accomplishments for the year	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.2 Publish regular opinion editorials from business owners, partner organizations, or invited guests focused on topics that influence (or are influenced by) economic development in Alpharetta	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.3 Include separate topic-themed Mayor/Economic Development Director messages in each newsletter	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.4 Implement, monitor, and report the results of opinion polls and business surveys through the newsletter	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.5 Highlight a different Alpharetta business (preferably from the target industries) in each newsletter that have invested, expanded, or created new jobs	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.6 Target writing two (2) or three (3) industry/market white papers each year focused on educating local businesses and residents about current or impending market shifts and how they will impact local/regional businesses	AL, AB, ID	O, I, R											ST	Monthly
Objective 5.3	Activate existing business leaders in economic development efforts														
	Action 5.3.1 Develop at least five (5) business ambassadors, individuals who can work with economic development staff to promote Alpharetta and engage existing/prospective business owners in targeted industries. Train more as necessary	AL, AB	O, I											A	Biannual
	Action 5.3.2 Develop a network of mentors in each of the target industries, focusing on developing women, minority and young business owners to reach the city's diverse business base	AL, AB	O, I											Included 2.2.4	Annual
	Action 5.3.3 Develop at least four (4) engaged Alpharetta residents as advocates that can assist in community outreach and resident interaction	AL, AB	N											A	Biannual
	Action 5.3.4 Create a Business-2-Business database that businesses can access to find specific services/networking opportunities	AL, AB												A	Continuous
Objective 5.4	Implement a proactive community engagement and education initiative														
	Action 5.4.1 Hold an annual "town hall" meeting open to the public (and televised) to discuss accomplishments and ongoing efforts for the previous/upcoming year	AL	N											A	Annual
	Action 5.4.2 Implement a biannual resident survey to gauge the goals and concerns of Alpharetta residents about the town's economic development efforts. Use the results to inform any changes to approach	AL	N											ST	Biannual
	Action 5.4.3 Hold a community outreach meeting in each employment center annually to engage business leaders and residents on economic development issues, opportunities, and challenges those areas are facing	AL	N											A	Annual
	Action 5.4.4 Host semiannual panelist discussions on topics of economic development each year. These discussions should address specific market/location opportunities and challenges facing local businesses	AL	C											B	Semiannual
	Action 5.4.5 Provide an online portal for citizens and groups to submit questions, provide feedback on content, or request meetings on the economic development website	AL												Included 5.4.1	One Time

2 SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the 20th century, Alpharetta, GA emerged into an economic center absorbed by waves of investment activity that rippled throughout North Fulton County. Alpharetta's household base exploded to unprecedented levels while many businesses set up shop in the City's expansive stock of suburban office parks; At the time, an innovative and attractive workplace model allowing businesses executives to work near their homes without the inconvenience of commuting into urban centers. This came at the expense of most employees, forced to travel far distances into the office while commuting through the region's congested roadways.

While this model developed as a source of Alpharetta's economic growth, shifting employment priorities and workplace preferences threaten its long-term sustainability. And consequently, the City's long-term economic position. Accelerated by an expanding Gen-Z population, employees increasingly prefer workplaces that offer convenient commutes with walkability to nearby amenities and services. The City of Alpharetta is at a crossroads. The City can switch their approach to the workplace, cater to shifting employment priorities which may involve embracing new economic ideas and practices. Or rather, continue business-as-usual while the City faces pressures from an aging population, a declining prime-working age population, and rising affordability challenges.

The combination of these pressures can culminate into potential labor market shortages, decreased spending capacities, a contraction of local services, and business recruitment/retention challenges. The Socioeconomic Analysis examines these evolving conditions in Alpharetta, as well as demographic and economic trends unfolding throughout the region. In the face of a restructuring marketplace, the results of the analysis aim to shape policies and programs that can help the City of Alpharetta sustain its economic vitality in the long term.

B. MAJOR FINDINGS

North Fulton County's population rates are lower than rates across the region. Communities across North Fulton County, including the City of Alpharetta, impose greater housing limitations than communities across the Four-County Region, thus preventing more people from moving into North Fulton County. Developers can access greater and more flexible residential development options outside North Fulton County. The fewer housing options, the fewer numbers of new working-age residents. Fewer working-age residents can limit the long-term growth of Alpharetta's labor market, reducing the City's competitiveness to recruit and retain businesses.

The middle-to-senior age population (45+) increased and the prime-working age population (25-34) decreased. In the long-term, Alpharetta's labor market is vulnerable to shortages as much of the City's population moves towards the age of retirement and fewer prime-working residents are available to replace retirees. The source of the declining base of prime-working residents is a consequence of the City's restrictive costs of living, which are unaffordable to most entry-to-mid-level workers.

Alpharetta's disproportionate share of highly educated residents highlights potential labor market challenges. The City's population is highly educated, most have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher. This is beneficial for recruiting and retaining white-collar businesses while stimulating job creation in technology-based industries. The lack of educational attainment diversity suggests that key segments of the workforce are excluded from living in Alpharetta. In particular, many service-based workers typically have lower levels of education. As fewer service-based workers are able to live in Alpharetta, service-based businesses such as restaurants are prone to face recruitment challenges.

Alpharetta's foreign-born population, non-white population, represent all the City's population growth. In the latter half of the last decade, Alpharetta's white and native population declined, whereas the City's foreign-born non-white population offset those losses. Most incoming residents come from Asian countries, particularly India and China. The increasing racial and cultural diversity in Alpharetta can create a variety of economic development opportunities.

Housing diversity integrated with community-based amenities will bolster the City's long-term economic sustainability. As the demand for suburban office parks continues to decline and the City becomes more cost-prohibitive, Alpharetta's labor market and overall economy are vulnerable to contractions. Additional workforce housing options and greater public transportation connectivity can facilitate the City's business recruitment and retention efforts, attract young professionals, and support job creation.

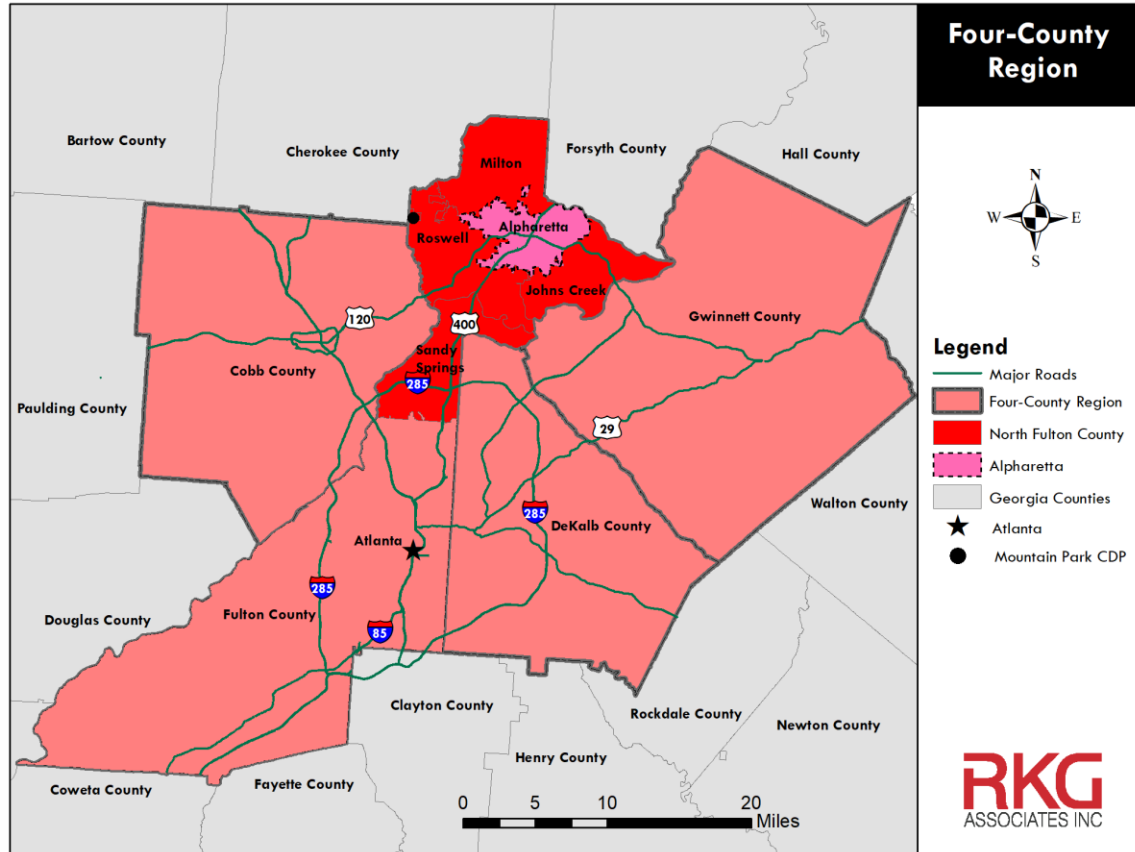
C. METHODOLOGY

1. Geographic Focus of Analysis

Alpharetta is located in North Fulton County, a major employment and population hub north of the City of Atlanta. Alongside Alpharetta, other municipalities that comprise North Fulton County include Johns Creek, Sandy Springs, Roswell, Mountain Park, and Milton. This chapter evaluates Alpharetta's demographic and economic conditions, drawing comparisons with the other North Fulton County municipalities; as well as the four largest counties absorbed within Atlanta's immediate sphere of economic gravity. These include Fulton County, Cobb County, DeKalb County, and Gwinnett County. Throughout this document, the combination of these four-counties will be identified as the 'Four-County Region' or simply The Region. Gaining a better understanding of key differences and similarities between Alpharetta, other North Fulton

County communities, and the Four-County Region can help the City shape policies for sustaining economic competitiveness while Atlanta’s marketplace rapidly expands. Map 2-1 illustrates the areas under analysis throughout this chapter.

Map 2-1



Source: City of Alpharetta RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

2. Data Sources

The Socioeconomic Analysis assesses various demographic and economic data metrics. Demographic data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as estimates and projections from ESRI. ESRI is a nationally recognized third-party data provider that uses U.S. Census data to generate its estimates and projections for geographic areas. Economic data on workforce characteristics mostly came from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Lightcast. Lightcast provides labor market conditions of geographic areas nationwide, including the zip codes that comprise the City of Alpharetta.

D. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis evaluates demographic conditions and trends in the City of Alpharetta and throughout the Four-County Region. The evaluation includes potential impacts to the local economy and community that may shape the City of Alpharetta's future economic development efforts.

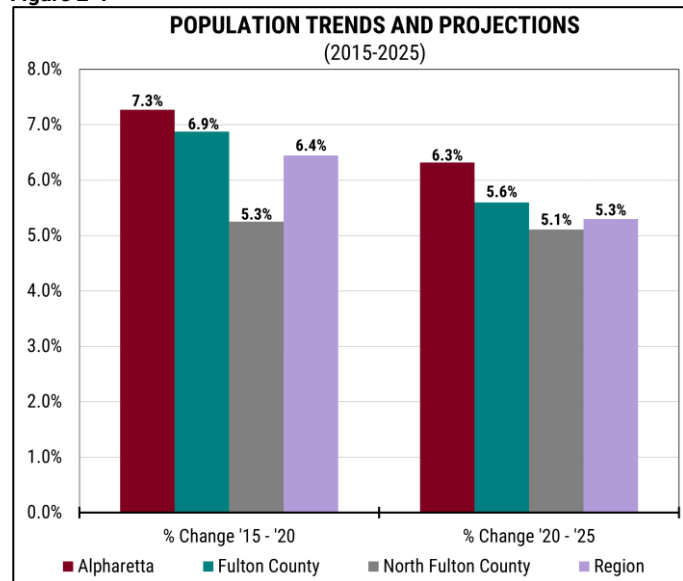
1. *Population Trends and Projections*

Atlanta's rapidly expanding marketplace has stimulated significant population growth throughout the Four-County Region. Population growth rates have been lowest in North Fulton County (Figure 2-1). The relatively lower rates are due to the pace of housing construction, slower than in areas outside North Fulton County.

Areas further from Atlanta's urban core, such as Gwinnett County, offer substantial land resources to support residential construction. Closer to Atlanta's urban core, more zoning and land use regulations exist that encourage multifamily construction, delivering more housing units on a per parcel basis. Developers have capitalized on these opportunities, delivering attractive housing options while stimulating higher rates of population growth throughout the Four-County Region.

Most communities throughout North Fulton County have demonstrated resistance to housing development in general, and multifamily development specifically. Fewer housing projects are constructed as a result, limiting the number of people that can move into North Fulton County. While the housing supply is constrained, the cost of living escalates, limiting the availability of housing opportunities for critical segments of North Fulton County's workforce--young professionals and service-based workers. The local supply of workers is therefore vulnerable to decline, discouraging business activities in communities throughout North Fulton County. This includes Alpharetta, which needs to attract more workers as large proportions of the City's population reaches the age of retirement. These pressures largely emanate from Alpharetta's lack of housing price diversity.

Figure 2-1



Source: U.S. Census, Esri, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

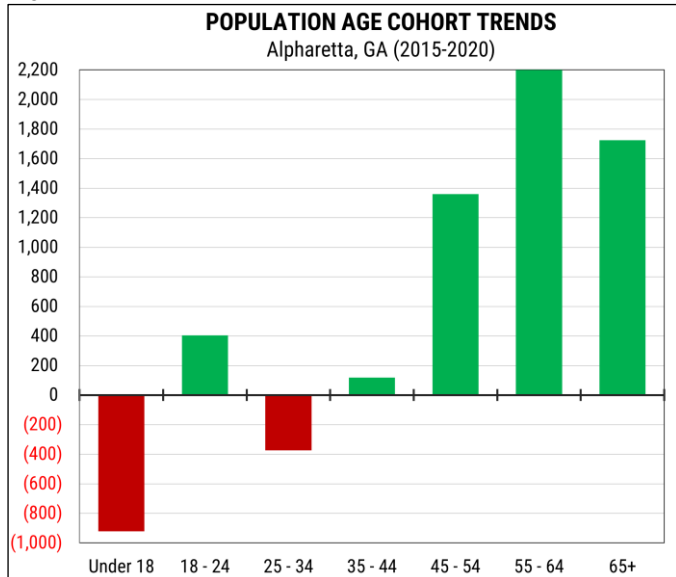
2. Population by Age

Between 2015 and 2020, Alpharetta's middle-aged to senior population (Age 45+) underwent rapid expansions while the prime working age population (Ages 25-34) declined (Figure 2-2). These trends can impose long-term economic development challenges, as the City becomes disadvantageous for a business' recruitment efforts. As seniors transition to retirement and fewer workers are available to replace retirees, the City is vulnerable to pervasive labor market shortages. Most of all, among mid-to-upper-level management roles who are credited as the primary decision-makers within a businesses' operations. The declining availability of prime-working age

residents that could assume those supervisory and leadership positions imposes recruitment limitations on local businesses. And therefore, increasing the likelihood of relocating their operations elsewhere; Particularly, to areas that offer greater accessibility to a young talented workforce that can sustain the business' long-term labor needs. In part, this explains why businesses nationwide are expanding their operational footprints in urban centers such as Midtown Atlanta and Sandy Springs. These areas offer a diversity of housing options, including affordable opportunities for young professionals to live and work in the same community.

Few affordable opportunities exist in Alpharetta, which accelerates the decline of the City's prime-working age population; The earning levels of most young professionals are not enough to afford the City's prohibitive housing costs. This forces many young professionals to commute into the City for work, adding pressure to the area's already overburdened traffic patterns. Without an efficient public transportation system and limited housing options, Alpharetta is inaccessible to young professionals. That degree of inaccessibility can reduce the City's attractiveness to workers seeking job opportunities. And therefore, reduce attractiveness to businesses seeking to expand their workforce capacities.

Figure 2-2

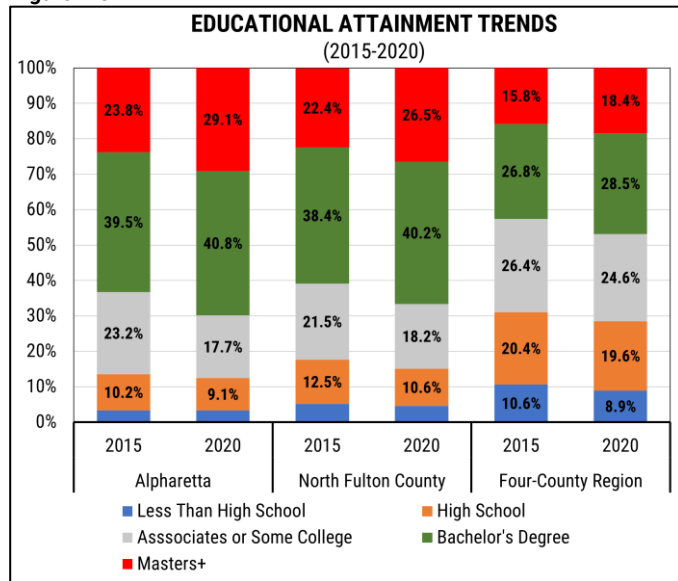


Source: U.S. Census, Esri, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

3. Educational Attainment

Alpharetta is concentrated with highly educated residents. As of 2020, nearly 70% of City residents possess a Bachelor's Degree or higher (Figure 2-3). Alpharetta's high educational attainment levels have fueled job creation among businesses that propel high-value economic expansions. Predominately, concentrated in knowledge-based industries such as Technology and Financial Services. Several technology businesses have located their operations in Alpharetta, capitalizing on the City's availability of talented workers with technical skillsets. Similar jobs have been created locally too. Tech Alpharetta has helped develop multiple entrepreneurial ventures within the City's limits. The creation of jobs in knowledge-based industries has cumulated into a variety of economic development benefits, including increased fiscal spending capacities that can support local services.

Figure 2-3



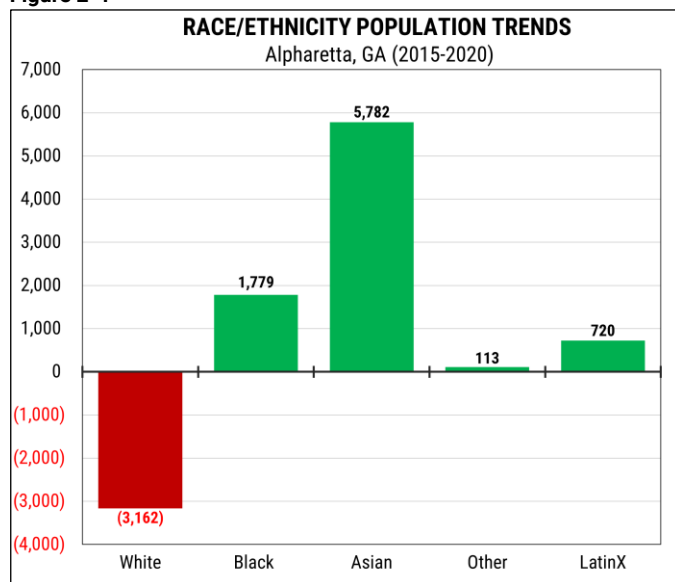
Source: U.S. Census, Esri, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

While the City's large concentration of highly educated residents helps support job creation in knowledge-based industries, businesses among service-based sectors are more likely to face recruitment and retention challenges. Fewer residents are willingly available to fill roles in community services, retail/hospitality, and restaurants. Restaurant owners have voiced the significant challenge of recruiting sufficient workers. As most service-based workers are unable to afford to live in Alpharetta, they're more likely to seek employment opportunities that offer greater accessibility to their homes. And consequently, imposing risks to sustain Alpharetta's high quality of local services, which are a vital source of attracting corporations to the City. Without enough service-based workers to sustain the quality of the City's lifestyle amenities, corporations may be less inclined to relocate to Alpharetta.

4. Racial-Ethnic Diversity

People of color spearheaded Alpharetta’s population growth in the latter half of the previous decade. Between 2015 and 2020, the City’s white population experienced a net-loss of 3,162 residents while the non-white population experienced a net gain of nearly 8,394 residents (Figure 2-4). Most of the net-growth is driven by the Black and Asian population. The City’s diversifying population can nurture a vital source of job creation. Higher levels of diversity can enhance recruitment efforts for local businesses, appealing to Gen Z’s preferences of living and working in dynamic places with greater proportions of racial and ethnic diversity. Attracting this group is critical for sustaining Alpharetta’s labor market performance, especially since the City’s labor market is weighted towards workers reaching the age of retirement. The additional diversity also lends itself to job creation at the local level—historically, minorities are more likely to jumpstart businesses than the majority population nationwide.

Figure 2-4

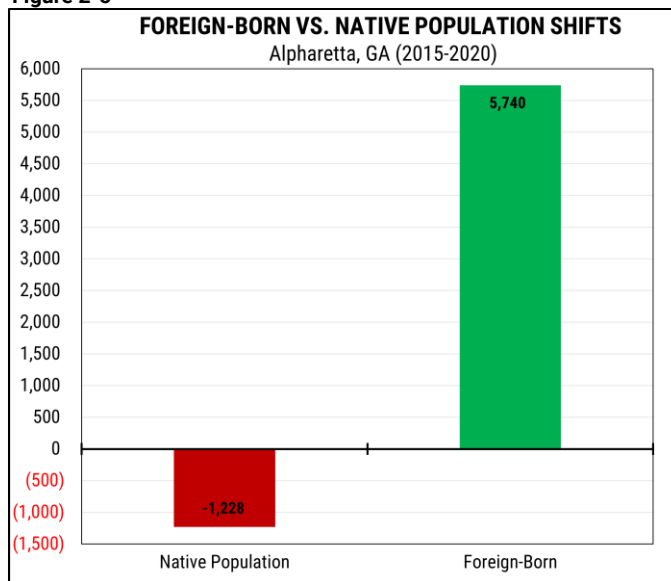


Source: U.S. Census, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

5. Foreign-Born Population

The foreign-born population has sustained the City’s recent economic performance, supporting Alpharetta’s positive net-population growth while offsetting losses among the native population (Figure 2-5). Most of the City’s population growth comes from Asian nations (e.g., India, China), possessing high levels of educational attainment. Among the roughly 4,700 Asian residents (Age 25+) that moved into Alpharetta between 2015-2020, approximately 85% possess a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher (ACS). The influx can provide a strong support system for strengthening the City’s economic

Figure 2-5



Source: U.S. Census, Esri, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

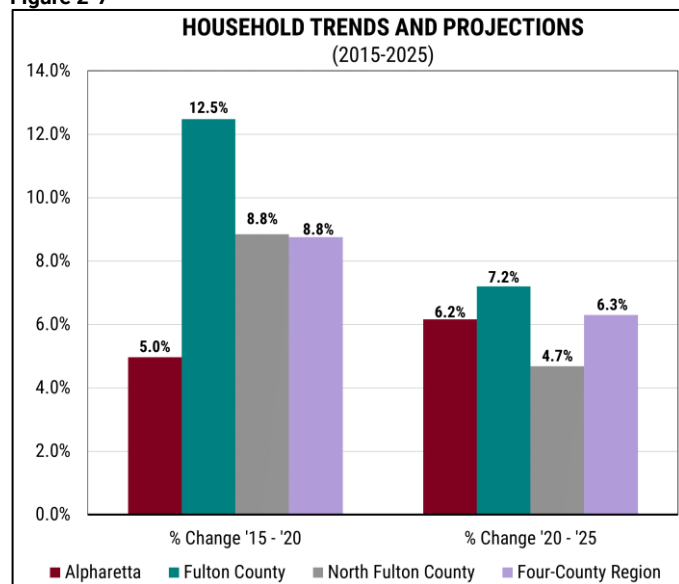
development position. This includes expanding Alpharetta's presence on a global scale, appealing to a broader international investor community, and enhancing the City's business recruitment and retention efforts.

The City's increasing diversity creates a critical economic development asset, helping to alleviate the challenges associated with the City's struggling labor market. Moreover, a diverse community can help local businesses' recruitment efforts, as Gen Z-er's prefer to live and work in places with greater proportions of racial and ethnic variation.

6. Households

In Alpharetta, population growth rates exceeded household growth rates between 2015 and 2020. This means the City's average household size increased, reflecting the types of households moving to Alpharetta; Most notably, families with children and foreign-born households. As of 2020, foreign-born households averaged 3.0 members per household, exceeding the City's 2020 total average (2.76/household). Many incoming foreign-born households have children. Overall, irrespective of national origin, families with children accounted for a significant proportion of the City's increase in average household sizes. Their influx can be attributed to Alpharetta's blend of family-oriented assets, attracted to the City's high-quality public schools, low crime rates, and evolving entertainment scene (e.g., Avalon).

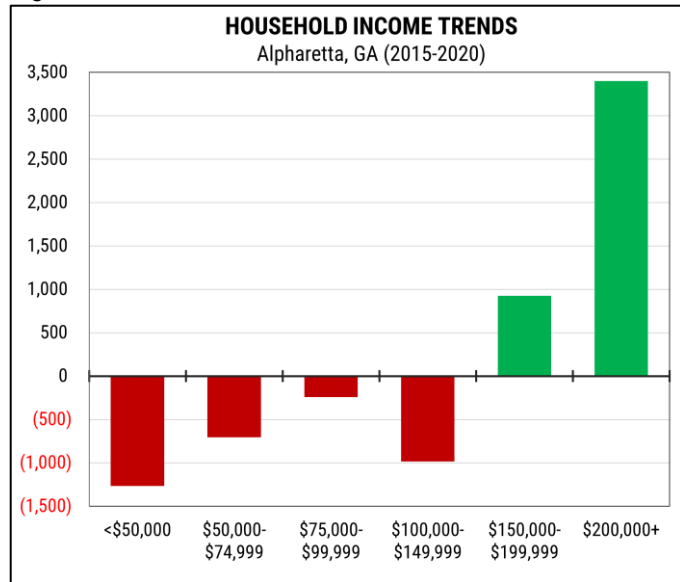
Figure 2-7



The influx of households generates obvious economic benefits to communities. More spending dollars are circulated within a City's limits and additional sources for fiscal expansions are made available. These benefits compounded in Alpharetta in the latter half of the previous decade. Between 2015 and 2020, all of Alpharetta's net growth occurred among households earning \$150,000 or more (Figure 2-8). Alpharetta's abundant stock of high-end ownership housing units absorbed many of these households, translating into notable expansions to the City's spending capacities. Amidst the influx of these high-income households, a substantial outflow occurred among households earning below \$150,000. These trends raise concerns for Alpharetta's economic development efforts while illuminating the City's key limitations towards advancing sustainable and resilient economic growth.

The influx of high-income households and substantial outflow of relatively lower-income households' points to Alpharetta's prohibitive costs-of-living. Households with incomes below \$150,000 correspond to the annual earnings of critical segments within Alpharetta's workforce. That includes entry to mid-level white-collared professionals, most of which do not earn enough to live in Alpharetta. Their inability to afford Alpharetta's living costs largely reflects the City's lack of housing opportunities that correspond to their annual earnings. Therefore, many entry to mid-level professionals are forced to live elsewhere and commute through the region's congested roadways; A stressful experience aggravated by the absence of convenient public transportation options.

Figure 2-8



Source: U.S. Census, Esri, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

If we learned anything from COVID-19, convenience and accessibility are major employment priorities of young professionals. Many choose to live in urban centers, offering advantages that support these priorities—connectivity, walkability, affordability etc. Nearby business investment follows, locating within proximity to young professionals as a strategic recruitment effort. This is unfolding in areas such as Midtown Atlanta and Sandy Springs. To attract similar business investments, Alpharetta can enhance their built environment with expanded workforce rental options and a better-connected public transportation system. This can culminate in attracting young professionals to the City, while fueling business investments and job creation, a precondition for advancing sustainable and resilient economic growth.

E. ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

The Economic Base Analysis evaluates Alpharetta's economic conditions and trends. This includes a discussion on unemployment trends, labor force characteristics, industry compositions, and the City's position relative to the Four-County Region. The results of the analysis can assist the City of Alpharetta to shape future economic development programs and policies.

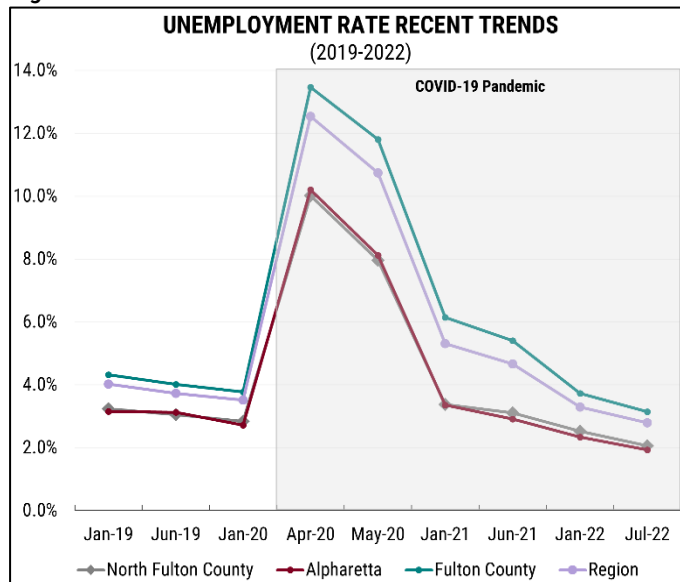
1. Unemployment Trends

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted Alpharetta's labor market, hovering below 4% prior to the pandemic then spiking to roughly 10% following pandemic-induced social distancing mandates (Figure 2-9). Service-based workers felt these impacts the most, especially those employed in Accommodation and Food Services establishments, which accounted for a net-loss of roughly 3,000 workers in 2020 (Lightcast).

In relation to Alpharetta, service-based industries comprise a larger proportion of workers in Fulton County and the Four-County Region. As a result, Fulton County and the Four-County Region experienced a sharper spike among their respective unemployment rates during the pandemic. Alpharetta's greater resiliency during the pandemic dovetails the City's workforce advantages. Compared to Fulton County and the Four-County Region, higher proportions of the City's workforce are employed in white-collar industries. Many businesses within white-collar industries transitioned to a work-from-home environment. Many white-collar workers retained their jobs during this transition, not accounted for within the City's unemployment rate.

As the pandemic subsides, unemployment rates have plummeted below pre-pandemic rates. As of July 2022, the City's unemployment rate is 1.9%, which can be considered unhealthy from a business recruitment and retention perspective. At these levels, minimal workers are available for recruitment. And of those workers available, they're driving recruitment negotiations, demanding higher wages from businesses desperately seeking to expand their labor capacities. Technology-based businesses, the lifeblood of Alpharetta's economy, have faced immense recruitment pressures as the pandemic has subsided. Many have been forced to near-shore and off-shore workers.

Figure 2-9



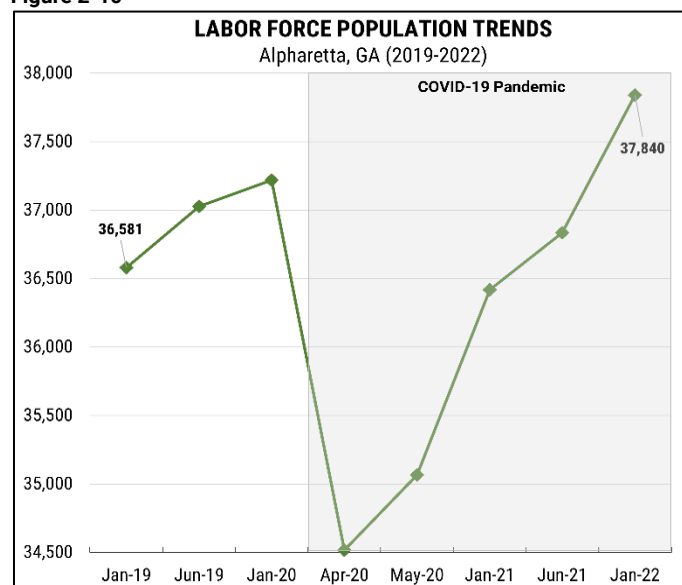
Source: BLS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

The pandemic has redefined the workplace, as many Alpharetta-based businesses are employing either full or partial virtual-working models. These models translate into fewer workers commuting into Alpharetta, which overtime can reduce their attachment to employment opportunities in the City. Given this possibility, along with increased labor recruitment pressures, workforce retention and expansions becomes increasingly important to stabilize market conditions. The City of Alpharetta must execute a comprehensive approach to do so. This includes enhancing its entrepreneurial infrastructure, facilitating partnerships in-coordination with local educational institutions, and expanding the supply of talent through workforce housing opportunities.

2. Labor Force Participation Trends

Trends among the City's labor force population followed a similar narrative to unemployment trends. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, Alpharetta's labor force participation dropped due to social-distancing mandates (Figure 2-10). As mandates were lifted, participation levels became more stable. To sustain an upward trajectory of labor force participation levels will require expanding the City's labor force. Expansions are vital for Alpharetta's long-term economic sustainability and to counteract the waves of conflicting socioeconomic trends. Alpharetta's unemployment rate is at unfavorable levels, large proportions of workers are transitioning to retirement, and critical segments of the workforce live outside the City. Looking into the future, these trends point to a shrinking labor force which can discourage businesses from investing in the City. The City of Alpharetta must consider executing a comprehensive approach to mitigate the potential risks, emphasizing strategies that focus on attracting young professionals and enhancing the accessibility for all workforce segments.

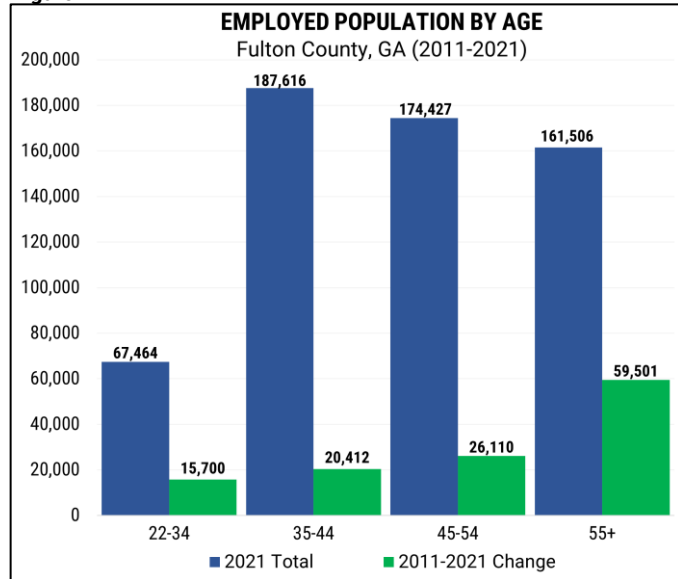
Figure 2-10



3. Employed Population by Age

The baby boomer generation's impact on Fulton County's workforce is evident, as the county's employed population is skewed towards workers aged 45 and older (Figure 2-11). This indicates that many workers are reaching the age of retirement, imposing labor market shortages in the mid-to- long-term. Future labor market shortages galvanize a need to replace those transitioning to retirement. This becomes all the more critical as many impending retirees have developed valuable skill sets and leadership qualities throughout their careers. Businesses will face the challenge of recruiting workers to backfill critical operational roles, responsible for molding strategies, making decisions, and distributing resources effectively and efficiently.

Figure 2-11



Source: QWI, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Unfortunately for businesses in Fulton County, Gen-Z workers (aged 22-34) represent the smallest share of the county's employment base (Figure 2-11). And among these workers, most live and work in Atlanta. Alpharetta-based businesses are therefore in a worse competitive position for recruitment purposes. To help enhance their competitive position, the City of Alpharetta can execute strategies credited for attracting young talent. That includes expanding the availability of rental units, providing efficient and convenient public transportation, and integrating work-live-play destinations.

4. Labor Force Population by Educational Attainment Level

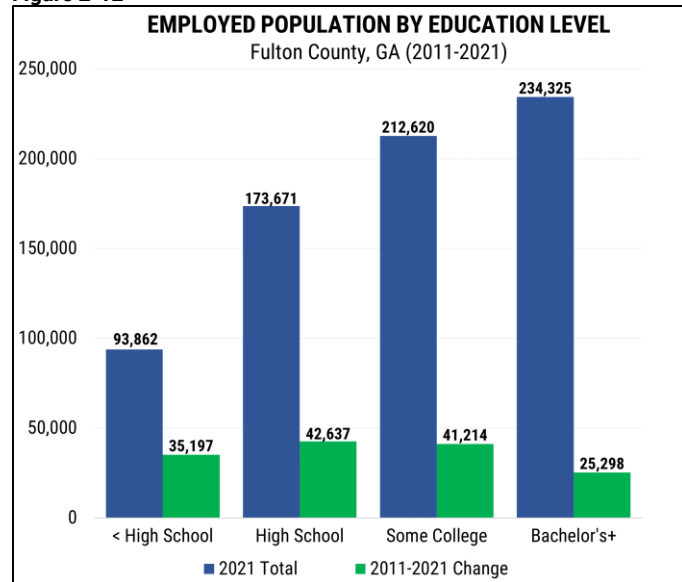
In Fulton County, most job growth occurred among positions that don't require a post-secondary education. Between 2011 and 2021, increases among jobs that don't require a Bachelor's Degree or higher outnumbered jobs that do require a Bachelor's Degree or higher by a ratio of 5:1 (Figure 2-12). The disproportionate ratio underpins the critical mass of workers needed to support the pent-up demand for essential services in Fulton County. Essential services may include restaurant and retail services as well as repair or maintenance services. The pent-up demand is largely attributed to Atlanta's rapidly expanding marketplace and increasing income levels, driving upward shifts in consumption patterns.

Expansions among service-based jobs correspond with an expanded labor pool, supporting the recruitment efforts for service-based businesses in Fulton County. Service-based businesses in urbanized areas, including Atlanta, are anticipated to benefit the most from the expanded labor pool. Such areas offer advantageous infrastructure that support service-based workers' connectivity and accessibility to job opportunities. In particular, infrastructure that tailors to their limited income levels; Cost-effective public transportation and income-compatible housing options. Without these opportunities, many service-based businesses in Alpharetta will likely continue to face recruitment challenges.

5. Industry Analysis

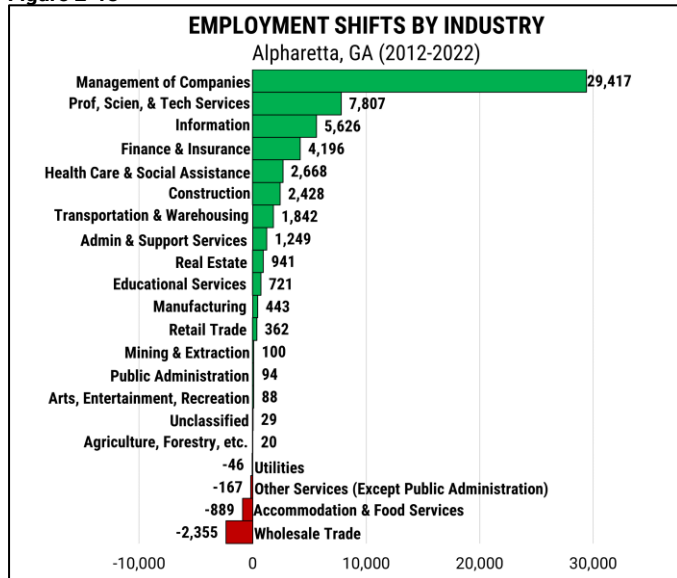
Alpharetta has evolved into a major employment center in North Fulton County. Between 2012 and 2022, nearly 30,000 jobs identified within the 'Management of Companies' industry were added to the City's employment base (Figure 2-13). Industry job growth reflects Alpharetta's mass absorption of corporate operations, expanding their footprint to take advantage of the City's high quality-of-life features and highly skilled workforce. These advantages cater to knowledge-based industries, as many corporate expansions are concentrated around financial services, healthcare, and above all, technology. With good reason, Alpharetta has branded itself as 'Technology City of the South,' hosting more than 600 technology-based businesses and distinct software development clusters in state-of-the-art fields (e.g., FinTech, MedTech).

Figure 2-12



Source: QWI, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 2-13



Source: QWI, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

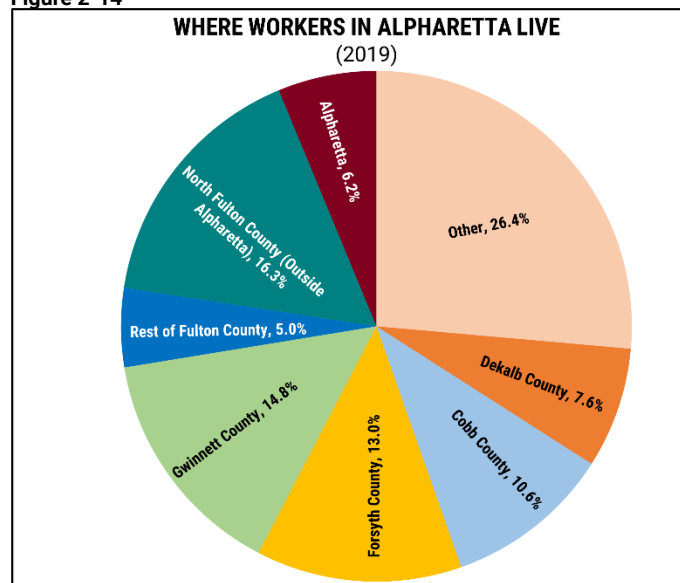
Technology businesses were the clear winners during the COVID-19 pandemic, capitalizing on the heightened demand for digital products and services. As other industries faced employment contractions, shifts to remote-working models allowed technology businesses to sustain jobs and even expand operations. While the pandemic subsides, remote-working models, or at least hybrid working models have become commonplace. And are anticipated to remain well into the future.

Alpharetta's long-term economic prospects may be threatened, especially since technology-based businesses are a core segment of the City's economy. The mass transition to hybrid-work models coincides with fewer workers commuting to the City, a contracted consumer base to support service-based businesses, and reduced demand for office spaces. These adverse impacts, among others, could be accelerated in Alpharetta, as the City falls short on many assets that appeal to the evolving technology-based workforce in the 'New-Age Economy' - income-compatible rental housing, work-live-play destinations, efficient and convenient public transportation.

6. Labor Force Mobility Patterns

Most of Alpharetta's workforce live outside the City's limits and even Fulton County. Forsyth County and Gwinnett County represent nearly 30% of in-commuters (Figure 2-14); Both areas offer the ability to secure less-expensive housing outside Alpharetta while accessing high-salary employment opportunities within the City's limits. As a hub for knowledge-based industries (e.g., Technology) and corporate operations, Alpharetta offers abundant employment opportunities that pay high salaries. Many of these salaries are insufficient to afford the City's exorbitant housing costs, however. This is reality for many entry-to-mid young professionals, forced to commute far distances to their place of employment.

Figure 2-14



Source: QWI, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

The mismatch between housing and jobs dovetails Alpharetta's large proportion of in-commuters. Critical segments of the City's workforce, including young professionals and service-based workers can't afford to live in the City. This helps contribute to widespread traffic congestion, workforce recruitment, and fewer spending sources overtime.

F. INSIGHTS & IMPLICATIONS

Alpharetta is a major employment center in North Fulton County and has transformed into a vibrant technology hub recognized across the country. Corporate expansions have contributed to Alpharetta's success, attracted to the City's high quality-of-life amenities and highly skilled workforce. Evolving socioeconomic trends, including an aging workforce, and declining base of young professionals can impose adverse impacts and threaten the City's long-term economic sustainability. Feasible impacts include labor market shortages, reduced spending capacities, business recruitment challenges. In an effort to counteract these impacts and strengthen its economic resiliency, the City of Alpharetta must consider executing policies and programs that adapt to prevailing market preferences, in particular initiatives that attract young professionals and service-based workers. This will require strengthening the connectivity for the City's workforce, offering accessibility to price-compatible housing opportunities and efficient public transportation options.

3 REAL ESTATE MARKET ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

Alpharetta's real estate market is predominantly the traditional suburban bedroom community. The City's economic activity centers also reflect more traditional suburban form (e.g., horizontal mixed uses, large surface parking fields...). However, Alpharetta is also equipped with a substantial corporate-scale office inventory that fueled the city's transformation into a major employment hub. While Alpharetta's residential market is expected to remain vigorous, shifting workforce preferences and macroeconomic trends are adversely impacting the vitality of the city's campus-style office market. Above all, the preference to work in walkable destinations abundant with community amenities and services is affecting location decisions of larger corporations. The shifting preference towards working among these destinations has imposed pressures on increasingly outdated forms of commercial developments.

Suburban office parks represent most of Alpharetta's office market and are reporting high vacancy rates. Rates are projected to rise while yielding to workplaces more in character with urban marketplaces, credited for offering better proximity between housing opportunities, at-work amenities, and the office. While the connection between real estate and economic development becomes increasingly stronger, the City of Alpharetta enhancement of the built environment to reflect shifting workplace preferences will benefit long-term office market viability. Consequently, improving their prospects for job creation, business recruitment/retention, and entrepreneurship.

The Real Estate Market Analysis assesses Alpharetta's residential and non-residential marketplace, to understand recent trends, current conditions, and emerging opportunities to assist the City of Alpharetta create policies and programs that bolster their built environment to promote sustainable economic development outcomes.

B. MAJOR FINDINGS

Outdated development concepts can threaten business recruitment and retention efforts. Suburban office parks were regarded as the primary source of the city's transformation into a major employment hub. As workplace preferences shift towards hybrid-work models and employment in vibrant urban areas, the city's office stock increasingly falls out of favor. Consequently, imposing major challenges to recruiting and retaining businesses.

Mismatch between jobs and housing can affect long-term labor market outcomes. The city's aging population and declining prime-working age population makes Alpharetta vulnerable to labor market shortages. Many young professionals, essential for sustaining Alpharetta's

long-term labor market performance, are excluded from living in the city due to prohibitive costs-of-living. Minimal housing opportunities are affordable to young professionals, reducing their attractiveness to working in Alpharetta. Additional price-diverse housing options can help attract young professionals while facilitating job creation efforts.

Scarce development opportunities are readily available. Since Alpharetta is largely built out and remaining vacant parcels are limited by zoning regulations, construction activity has been limited. As land prices escalate, developers are forced to construct at higher densities to make projects financially feasible. In particular, mixed-use developments projects credited for enhancing the city's economic development efforts. Given the limited development conditions, infill and redevelopment strategies have become the best alternative.

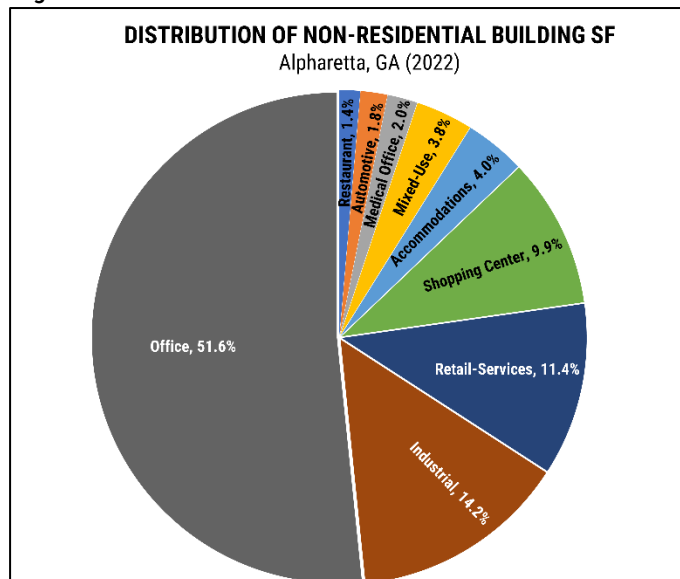
New work-live-play destinations prove concepts work but benefits can be maximized if made more affordable. City Center and Avalon represent ground-breaking concepts for Alpharetta, centralizing live-work-play opportunities. Both prove to be producing successful outcomes, activating street life and pedestrian foot traffic. However, both are strictly designed for high-income households at the detriment of critical segments of Alpharetta's workforce. This includes young professionals, who thrive in these lifestyle destinations. Expanding work-live-play destinations but integrating more price-diverse housing options can attract young professionals while facilitating the city's job creation efforts.

C. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

1. Non-Residential Building Stock

Office uses dominate Alpharetta's non-residential built spaces, constituting over 50% of the city's non-residential building square footage (Figure 3-1). Most of the city's office uses are located in traditional suburban office parks, facilitating Alpharetta's transformation into a major employment center in the late 1990s. In recent years, suburban office parks have increasingly fallen out of favor as businesses gravitate towards urban centers to gain better access to a young-talented workforce. This is largely due to young professionals' lifestyle preferences, many of whom prefer to live and work in areas that offer convenient access to amenities and services. These preferences conflict with

Figure 3-1



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

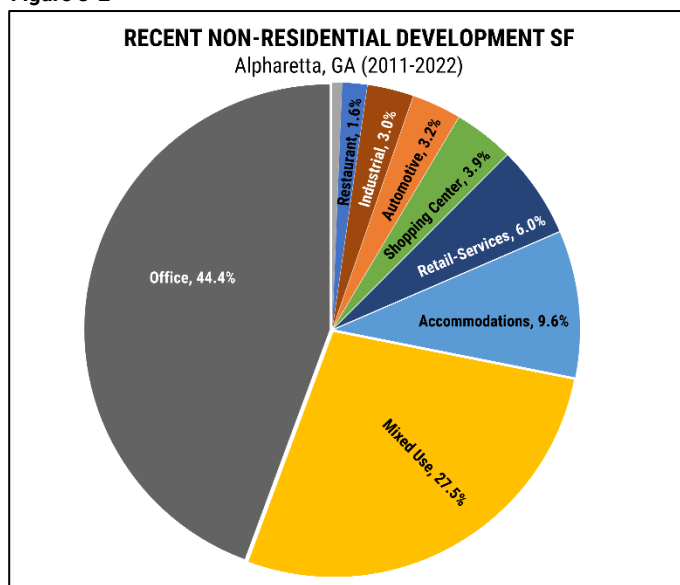
the prototypical suburban office park model, which typically requires workers to drive to their place of employment. Trends suggest many young professionals prefer to ride public transportation, walk, or even bike to their place of employment.

While the suburban office park concept is losing favor as a preferred employment destination, much of the city's existing inventory offers opportunities to be reimagined in support of prevailing market trends. In particular, redeveloping or converting campus-style office parks with high vacancies into work-live-play activity centers; ideally, a combination of apartments, retail establishments, and office spaces formulated in an accessible and walkable environment. These types of activity centers can help Alpharetta attract young professionals, whose residential population in the city continues to decline. In addition to suburban office parks, underutilized shopping centers are ripe for conversions into work-live-play activity centers. This includes the North Point Mall, which continues to decrease in economic and social value.

2. Recent Non-Residential Building Activities

The total non-residential building square footage developed since 2011 represents approximately 14% of all non-residential development within the city's limits. Among non-residential buildings developed since 2011, nearly 70% were built between 2016 and 2022. Mixed-use projects constituted a substantial share of non-residential development since 2011 (Figure 3-2), with most occurring in the middle of the previous decade. Consumer preferences for walkable activity centers fueled the construction of notable projects like City Center and Avalon. Both have catalyzed numerous economic benefits for Alpharetta, strengthening the city's commercial marketplace, facilitating business recruitment efforts, and creating a vibrant communal destination for residents. Permitting expansions of mixed-use destinations can benefit's Alpharetta economic development efforts overtime, enhancing job creation and business recruitment.

Figure 3-2



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

3. Land Use Efficiencies

Successful work-live-play activity centers are designed to be human-centric, offering convenient accessibility to employment opportunities and community-based amenities. Convenient

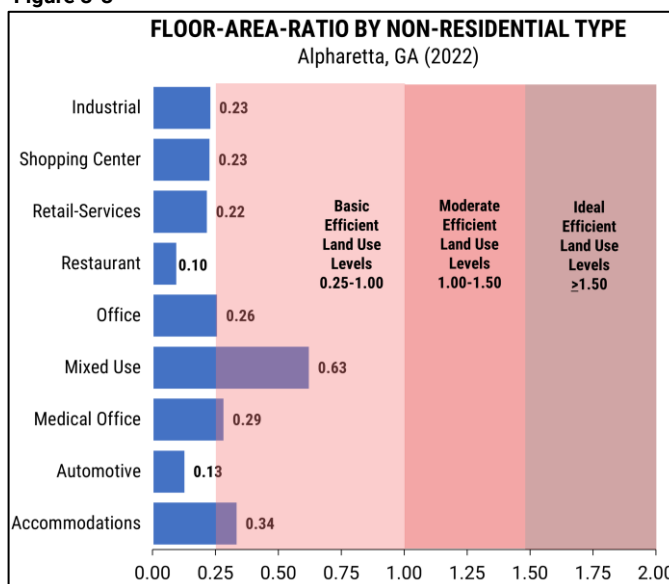
accessibility is synonymous with high-walkability levels, instrumental to the success of areas like City Center and the Avalon. Both areas are pedestrian-scale, offering walkability to retailers, restaurants, and office spaces. Consequently, catering to prevailing market preferences while attracting households and businesses. Other areas of Alpharetta are capable of absorbing further expansions of human-centric development patterns but embracing higher developmental densities will be required.

In contrast to most major employment centers, Alpharetta's sparse development patterns reflect a typical suburban community. A distinguishing feature is the city's low Floor-Area-Ratios (FAR) for most commercial building types. The FAR measures the density of developed parcels in square feet, or the floor size of the building in relation to the size of the parcel upon which it was built. Most commercial building types in Alpharetta reported FARs well below 1.00 (Figure 3-3), configuring a built environment that promotes driving while discouraging walkability and connectivity. Mixed use buildings are the only commercial building type that reported FARs above

1.00, manifested in activity-dense structures such as those exhibited along Commerce Street in Downtown Alpharetta; A tremendous display of planning that appeals to the tastes and preferences of young professionals and service-based businesses.

A major barrier to increasing density levels in Alpharetta is the city's restrictive zoning and land use regulations which limit infill development opportunities. These restrictions are largely intended to safeguard the character and identity of residential subdivisions; A priority shared among many active community members that can undermine the city's economic development efforts. Easing restrictions can facilitate investment activities that strengthen the city's job creation efforts. This can be targeted in commercial-intensive areas separated from residential subdivisions (e.g., Northpoint area), balancing the city's objectives of sustaining long-term economic growth without impacting community character.

Figure 3-3



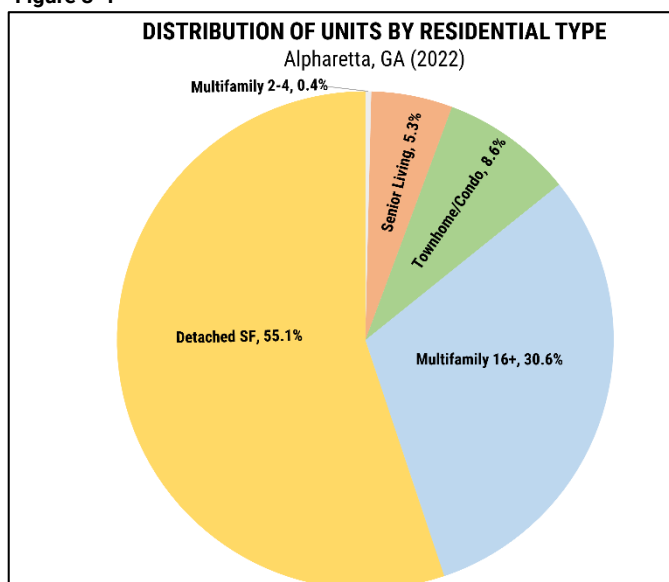
Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

4. Residential Building Stock

Most housing units in Alpharetta are single-family detached homes, consuming over half of the city's residential building stock (Figure 3-4). The imbalance of single-family detached homes corresponds to the city's preferential treatment towards homeownership, satisfying a long-standing community convention to preserve Alpharetta's suburban design and character. In fact, a salient policy included in the city's most recent comprehensive plan is ensuring Alpharetta's housing stock maintains a ratio of 68% owner-occupied units to 32% rental units (Horizon 2040). While fewer multifamily rental units are constructed and market demand increases, rental prices escalate which strains the affordability levels of existing rental households. This is an existing challenge in Alpharetta, as severe supply shortages impact the city's rental households at the lowest- and highest-income levels (Figure 3-5). Many are therefore excluded from living in Alpharetta, forced to seek housing opportunities elsewhere.

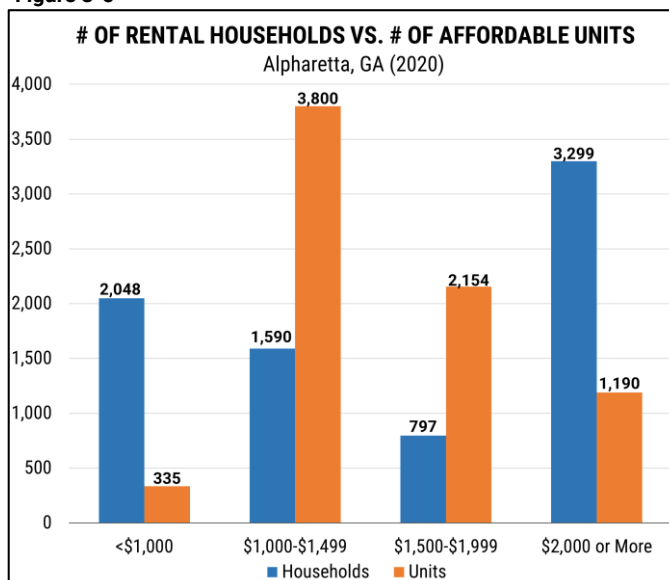
Among rental households that can't afford to live in Alpharetta, many represent critical segments of the city's workforce. In particular, service-based workers and even entry-to-mid-level white-collar workers. While most workers can't live locally, many are subjected to commuting into the city, increasing traffic congestion on Alpharetta's already overburdened roadways. Longer commute times and psychological stress follow, pressing many workers to seek job opportunities that offer greater accessibility and proximity to their places of employment. Such opportunities play to the prevailing market preferences of young-educated professionals while reducing the attractiveness of working in Alpharetta. Without the

Figure 3-4



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 3-5



Source: U.S. Census, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

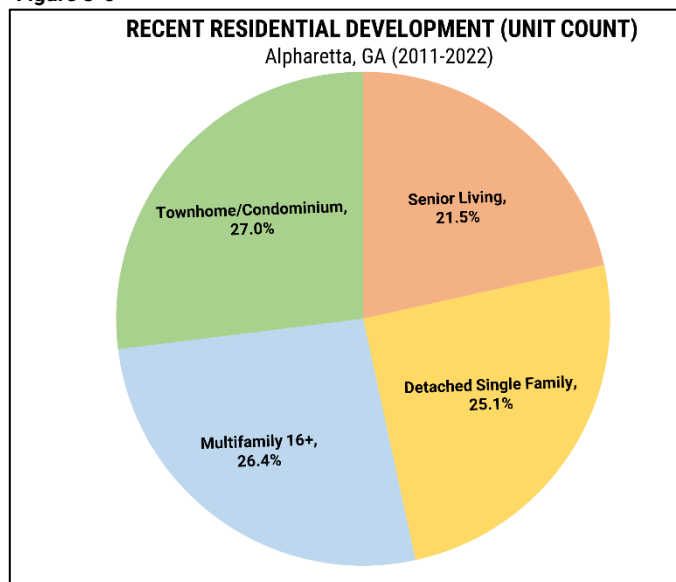
infrastructure that attracts young-educated professionals—price diverse rental options and public transportation—Alpharetta’s aging labor market becomes all the more vulnerable to shortages in the long-term. And as a result, exposing the city’s economic development efforts to adverse conditions. A smaller labor pool increases the challenge of recruiting and retaining businesses, reduces entrepreneurial ventures, and decreases overall spending capacities.

5. Recent Residential Building Activities

Housing has served as a major protagonist within Alpharetta’s economic development narrative. The city’s abundance of high-end homes appeals to c-suite executives, attracting many to locate their business operations in Alpharetta. The city’s abundance of homeownership opportunities appeals to families, attracting many to nurture children in a safe community with accessibility to high-quality schools. The benefits to Alpharetta’s economic base are irrefutable, as the city’s absorption of businesses and households have culminated in rapid job and fiscal expansions.

Recent residential construction activities have continued the city’s economic development narrative, although, through a different approach. Contrary to historical development trends, residential construction was more balanced across development typologies. Rather than limited to detached single family homes, multifamily units constituted a greater share of residential construction activities in the previous decade (Figure 3-6). Most multifamily construction was integrated with groundbreaking mixed-use projects such as Avalon and City Center. Both projects reflect the ideals of a modern-living environment, offering living opportunities within walking distance to jobs, services, and community-based amenities. These types of dynamic and compact environments are credited for attracting young-education professionals. And rental units in general, are credited for attracting service-based workers. Avalon and City Center are not designed to do so, however.

Figure 3-6



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

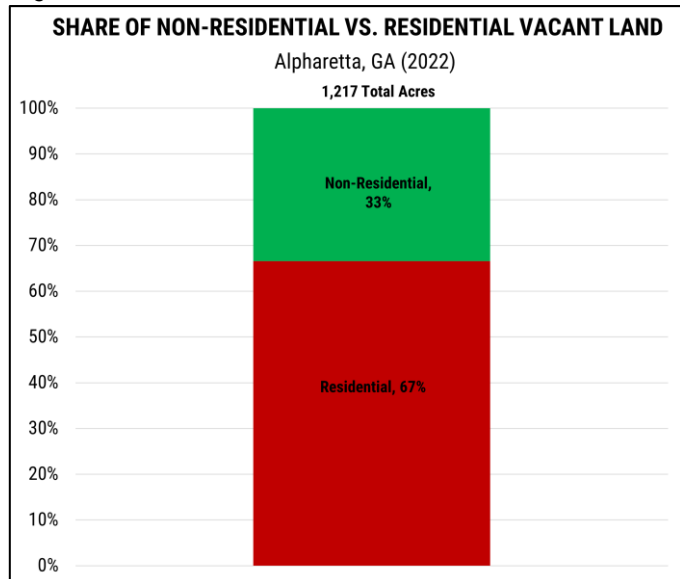
Recently constructed owner-occupied homes in proximity to these projects are averaging \$700,00 or more while rental-occupied units are priced at \$2,000 or more. The expansion of high-end housing options, although multifamily units were incorporated into the residential landscape, is expected to continue the city’s economic development narrative; Particularly, attracting high-income households. This isn’t considered a bad thing. However, excluding housing to the

highest-income households can make the city vulnerable to economic development challenges overtime; Ultimately, challenges related to workforce and business recruitment.

6. Developable Land Opportunities

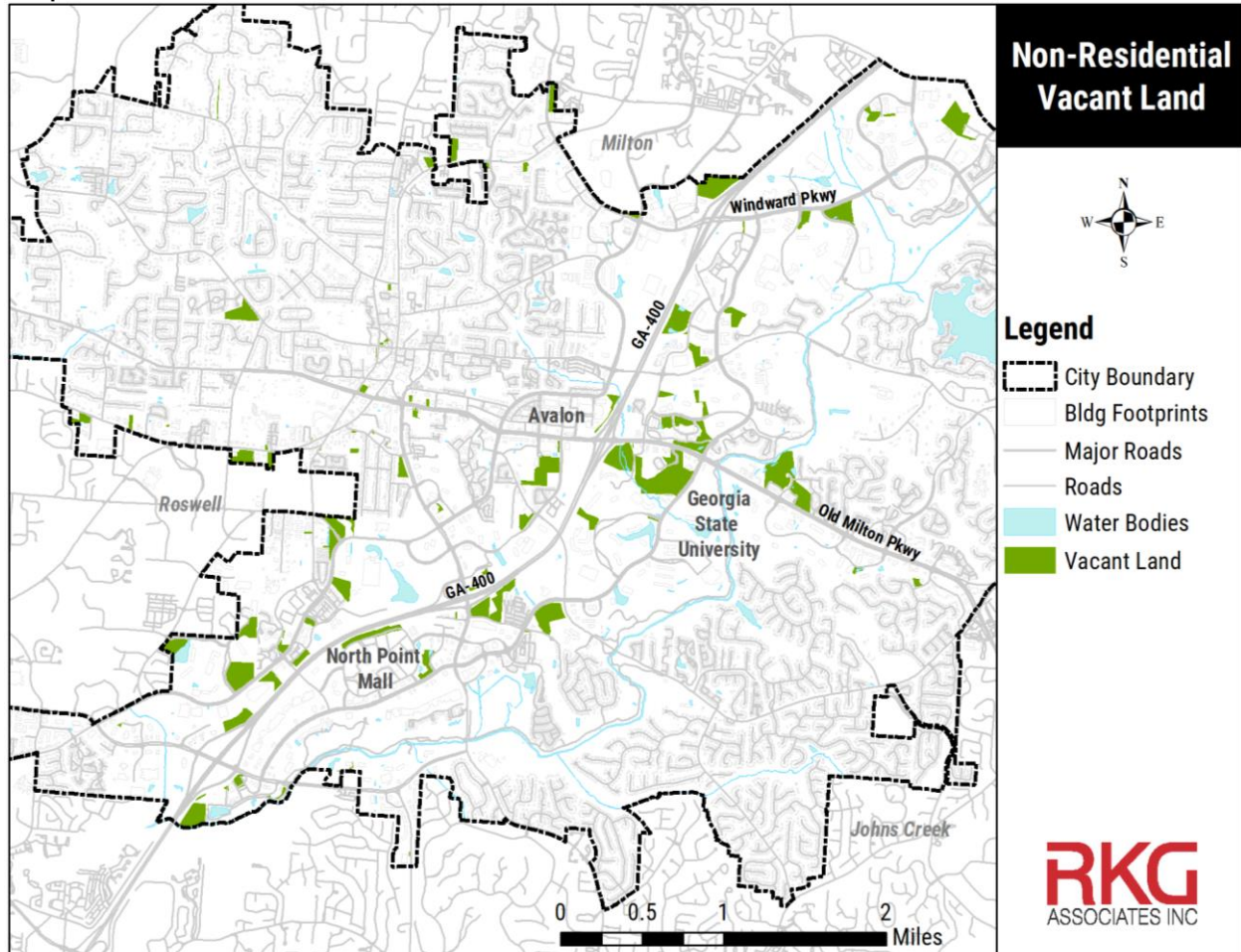
Map 3-1 illustrates the city's minimal availability of non-residential vacant land that could be used for development opportunities. Alpharetta is largely built out, and most remaining vacant land is restricted to residential development (Figure 3-7). The lack of vacant land available to non-residential development opportunities contribute to the city's escalating land prices, which demand developers to construct higher density projects to justify the increased costs of construction. Rising construction costs and limited vacant land availability suggests a critical need to permit higher densities in the city's primary commercial activity areas. In particular, targeting infill and redevelopment opportunities on underutilized suburban office parks and shopping malls. The approach to future development opportunities should consider prevailing labor market preferences; Particularly, mixed-use developments that encourage walkability, accessibility, and connectivity.

Figure 3-7



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Map 3-1



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

D. COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET ANALYSIS

REIS, a commercial real estate analytics firm, produces key commercial market indicators of geographic areas nationwide; including distinct submarkets throughout metro Atlanta. Alpharetta's commercial markets (office, retail, industrial) are represented in submarkets delineated by REIS. The following sections evaluate these submarkets while providing insights into market performance in the City of Alpharetta. Maps 3-3 through 3-5 at the end of this chapter illustrate the submarkets under analysis.

1. Office Market

The Roswell/Alpharetta submarket represents the northernmost stretches of metro Atlanta's broader office marketplace, incorporating portions of Johns Creek, Forsythe County, and Roswell. In wake of Atlanta's rapidly expanding marketplace, Alpharetta/Roswell absorbed a tsunami of corporations and professional-services businesses, attracted to the submarket's extensive stock of suburban office parks; a long-standing development trend that catered to the workplace preferences of the time. The suburban office park can offer abundant parking spaces, efficient commutes, and proximity to the home addresses of c-suite executives. Times have changed, however, as the suburban office park concept increasingly falls out of favor. The value of location and a sense of destination has upended this concept, contributing to Alpharetta/Roswell's high vacancy rates; nearly 1/4th of its office stock is unoccupied as of 2022 (Figure 3-8). That's 3.8 million square feet, a vast display of unused workspaces and underutilized economic activity. Employees, especially among the millennial population and rapidly expanding Gen-Z generation, increasingly prefer workspaces near public transportation integrated within vibrant work-live-play-destinations.

These shifting preferences offer justification for Alpharetta/Roswell's high vacancy rates. Most of the submarket's office spaces are located in isolated areas without convenient accessibility to public transportation options and social amenities. Workers are forced to commute through metro Atlanta's unforgiving traffic conditions while increasing their likelihood of developing an unhealthy work-life balance. A standard 40-hour work week in addition to a long and unpredictable commute leaves substantially less time and energy for activities outside the workplace; an employment situation that many young professionals are prone to avoid in

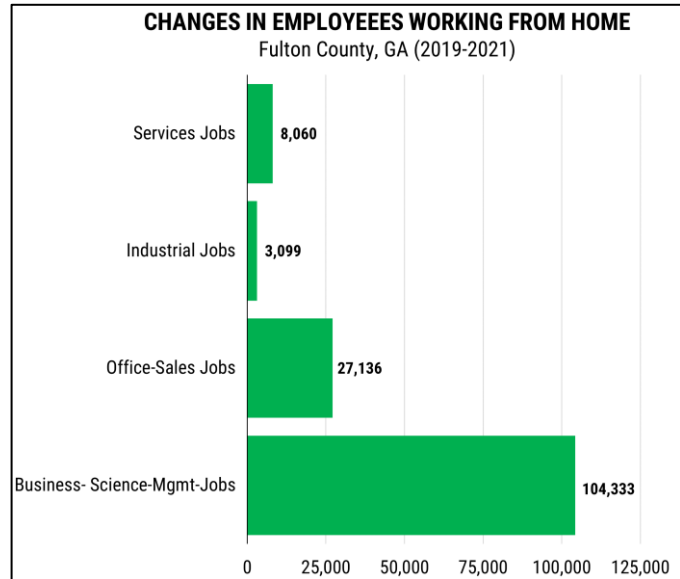
Figure 3-8

Roswell/Alpharetta Office Submarket		
2022 Q2 Metrics:		Outlook
Total Square Footage:	16.1 Million SF	
Total Vacancy Rate:	23.4%	
'Class A' Vacancy Rate:	21.6%	
Total Net Absorption:	-290,000 SF	

Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

favor of working in urban areas designed to offer a better work-life balance. Many reside in urban areas, taking advantage of the enhanced proximity to jobs, services, and social opportunities while improving their quality-of-life standards. As the competition for young talent tightens, businesses increasingly locate nearby to strengthen their workforce recruitment and retention outcomes. And so, expanding their office footprints in places like Midtown Atlanta. The evolving preference among workers, to capture greater accessibility to their place of employment, was especially accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. To comply with social-distancing restrictions, most white-collar businesses transitioned to a work-from-home model. Between 2019 and 2021, substantial expansions occurred among Fulton County's workforce that worked from home (Figure 3-9). While social-distancing restrictions have been lifted, working from home has remained a popular workplace model in Fulton County. Or rather, hybrid-work models at the very least.

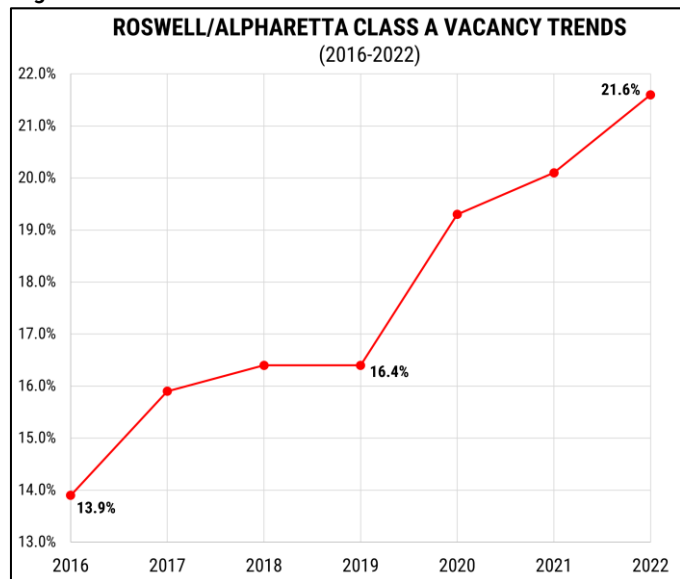
Figure 3-9



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

These models are expected to remain, prompting many white-collar white businesses to reevaluate their unused workspaces or downsize their spaces. Technology-based businesses, Alpharetta's primary economic base, are credited for spearheading this transition. As leases expire, many are vulnerable to discontinuing their leases at existing spaces; Particularly, those operating out of 'oversized' spaces represented in Alpharetta's excessive supply of suburban office parks. While businesses are prone to downsize their physical footprint due to hybrid-work models and attraction towards urban environments, vacancies are projected to increase among the city's office market. That even includes buildings recognized for their high-quality design standards. Class A office spaces report vacancies above 20% (Figure 3-10),

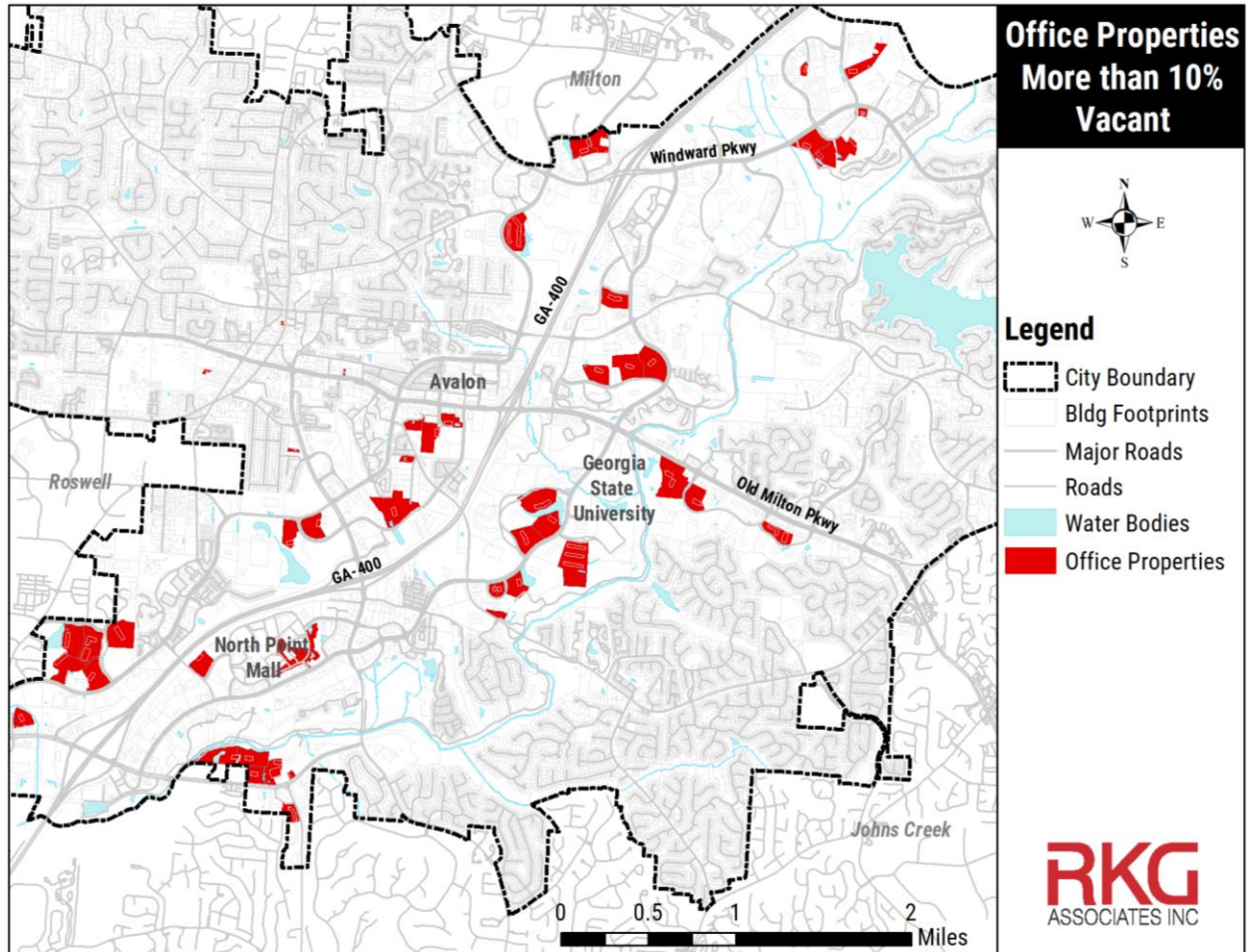
Figure 3-10



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

reinforcing how the value of location exceeds and level of accessibility to services exceeds the value of construction quality in today's marketplace. As suburban office markets like Alpharetta struggle to retain tenants, many property owners are urged to reconsider their long-term investment prospects. Some have answered through expanding lifestyle amenities on their properties, as office parks like The Edison and The Sanctuary seek to attract workers back to the office. These interventions may be insufficient, however--large quantities of The Sanctuary remain vacant as the office park is situated far away from housing opportunities designed for entry-to-mid-level professionals.

Map 3-2



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

In an effort to reverse the trend of rising vacancies across Alpharetta's office market, the city must execute a comprehensive approach designed to match prevailing workplace preferences. Above all, localizing town-center style developments with price-diverse housing opportunities, access to public transportation, and co-working spaces. Underutilized suburban office parks with high vacancies (Map 3-2) are viable to support these developments through a collection of infill and/or redevelopment strategies. The results of these efforts can help strengthen Alpharetta's economic development position by attracting young professionals to replace an aging workforce, expand the labor pool for existing businesses, and sustain the city's fiscal base for supporting local services.

2. Retail Market

As a major employment hub for commuters, Alpharetta has developed into a regional shopping destination for north metro Atlanta. Daily workforce commuters more than double Alpharetta's daytime population, escalating the city's daily consumer base while driving revenue streams across major retail types. Food services and drinking places report large surpluses (Figure 3-11), as drive-in retailers attract commuters along the city's major north-south and east-west thoroughfares. While commuting patterns are vulnerable to decline due to hybrid-work models, Alpharetta's retail market is susceptible to decreased consumer activity. Suburban retail outlets already face market threats, as the demand for online shopping (ecommerce) continues to increase; A regional trend that satisfies consumer preferences for convenient and accessible purchases. The popularity of ecommerce has undermined the performance of suburban-dominated retail markets, including the Sandy Springs/North Fulton submarket where inventories have declined and vacancy rates remain high (Figure 3-12). The City of Alpharetta, a retail hotspot within the Sandy Springs/North Fulton submarket, has launched synergistic approaches that can enhance the performance of traditional brick and mortar establishments.

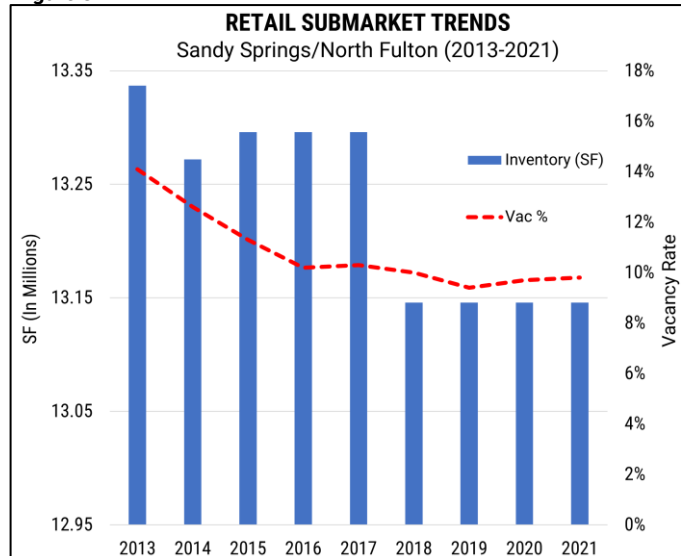
City Center and Avalon represent ground-breaking projects that split from the city's long-standing approach to retail; automobile-oriented developments such as shopping malls

Figure 3-11



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 3-12



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

and single-anchor neighborhood centers. Retailers throughout both projects capitalize off the synergies of nearby housing and offices, attracting consumers due to their presence in walkable-accessible locations. Branded as live-work-play destinations, City Center and Avalon are credited for activating street life and pedestrian traffic beyond standard business hours. Therefore, enabling stores and restaurants to capture revenue streams beyond the city's daytime population. These types of developments have gained favor in retail marketplaces, tempering the adverse impacts of ecommerce and declining commuting patterns. Meanwhile, threatening the economic vitality of former bustling retail outlets such as shopping malls.

Figure 3-13

Sandy Springs/North Fulton Submarket		
2022 Q2 Metrics:		Outlook
Total Square Footage:	13.2 Million SF	
Net Absorption:	3,000 SF	
Vacancy Rate:	9.8%	
Asking Rent-\$/SF:	\$21.7	

Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

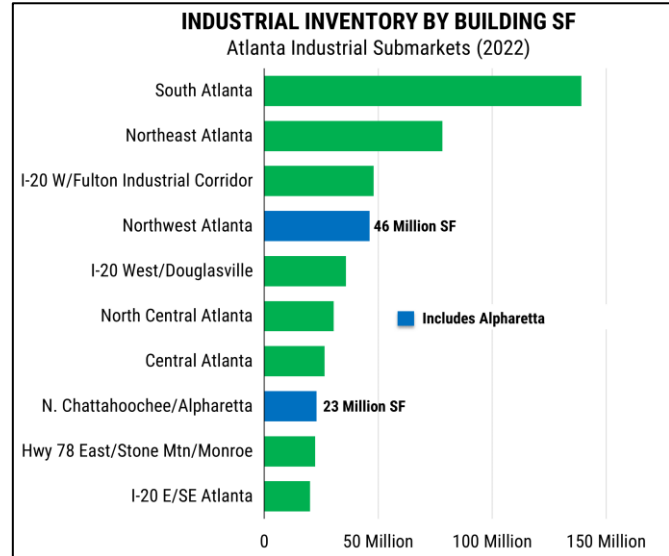
That includes the North Point Mall, a former bustling retail outlet for shoppers in metro Atlanta. In wake of shifting consumer preferences, the mall has been in decline while exhausting a potential source for economic development. Revitalization efforts have generated interest from the development community, submitting proposals that model the ideals of a work-live-play destination. And therefore, enhance the performance of nearby retailers. Policymakers have struggled to embrace such proposals, fearing that additional multifamily units may disrupt competing community objectives. As the connection between retail performance and housing strengthens, embracing work-live-play destinations becomes more critical. Not only for retailers but for the city's long-term sustainability, as these destinations have become essential for job creation in the New-Age Economy.

3. Industrial Market

Prototypical industrial development—noxious processing plants and spacious warehouse facilities—are unlikely to materialize in Alpharetta or be a feasible source for job creation in the city. Limited vacant parcels are available to support construction activities and operations can undermine the city's quality-of-life. Moreover, while the region is a global supply-chain leader, other areas of metro Atlanta offer cost-effective alternatives. For instance, the South Atlanta submarket's substantial inventory is credited to its intersection with three interstates and proximity to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. These locational conditions appeal to production-based operations, attracted to the advantageous cost-efficiencies. Ultimately, these advantages enabled the South Atlanta submarket to capture the most industrial development inventory in the broader metro Atlanta industrial market (Figure 3-14).

Alpharetta is divided into two of metro Atlanta’s submarkets, North Chattahoochee/Alpharetta, and Northwest (Figure 3-15). The city’s representation is minimal in both submarkets, mostly comprised of Flex/R&D spaces and storage facilities. The former benefit city-area businesses with generally lower lease rates than traditional office buildings; Whereas the latter benefit city-area households, allowing high-income households units to store excess property. In contrast to Flex/R&D spaces, storage facilities consume substantially more land resources while generating fewer jobs. As job creation remains an incentive for the City of Alpharetta and development opportunities are scarce, storage facility expansions can create obstacles.

Figure 3-14



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Accounting for the city’s scarce development resources, skilled-technical workforce, and thirst for job creation, targeting investments towards scaled-down R&D facilities appears to be strategic. However, like recent innovative retail investments, it must be synergistic; Providing the ingredients enables micro-R&D facilities to thrive, integrated with housing and lifestyle amenities. Otherwise coined as live-work-create destinations. Urban areas are recognized for these investments, as makerspaces and micro-labs are popping up around mixed-use development centers. Underutilized commerce parks and commercial areas in Alpharetta are prime candidates to support these investments through infill and redevelopment opportunities.

Figure 3-15

N. Chattahoochee/Alpharetta Industrial Submarket		Northwest Industrial Submarket	
2022 Q2 Metrics:	Outlook	2022 Q2 Metrics:	Outlook
Total Square Footage: 21.8 Million SF	↑	Total Square Footage: 46.2 Million SF	↑
Net Absorption**: 380,000 SF	↑	Net Absorption**: 3.6 Million SF	↑
Warehouse Vacancy Rate: 4.3%	↓	Warehouse Vacancy Rate: 9.6%	↓
Construction Activity**: 425,000 SF	↑	Construction Activity**: 2.7 Million SF	↑

Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

And consequently, localize spaces within live-work-create destinations that support cottage manufacturers, promote entrepreneurship, and foster innovation.

E. INSIGHTS & IMPLICATIONS

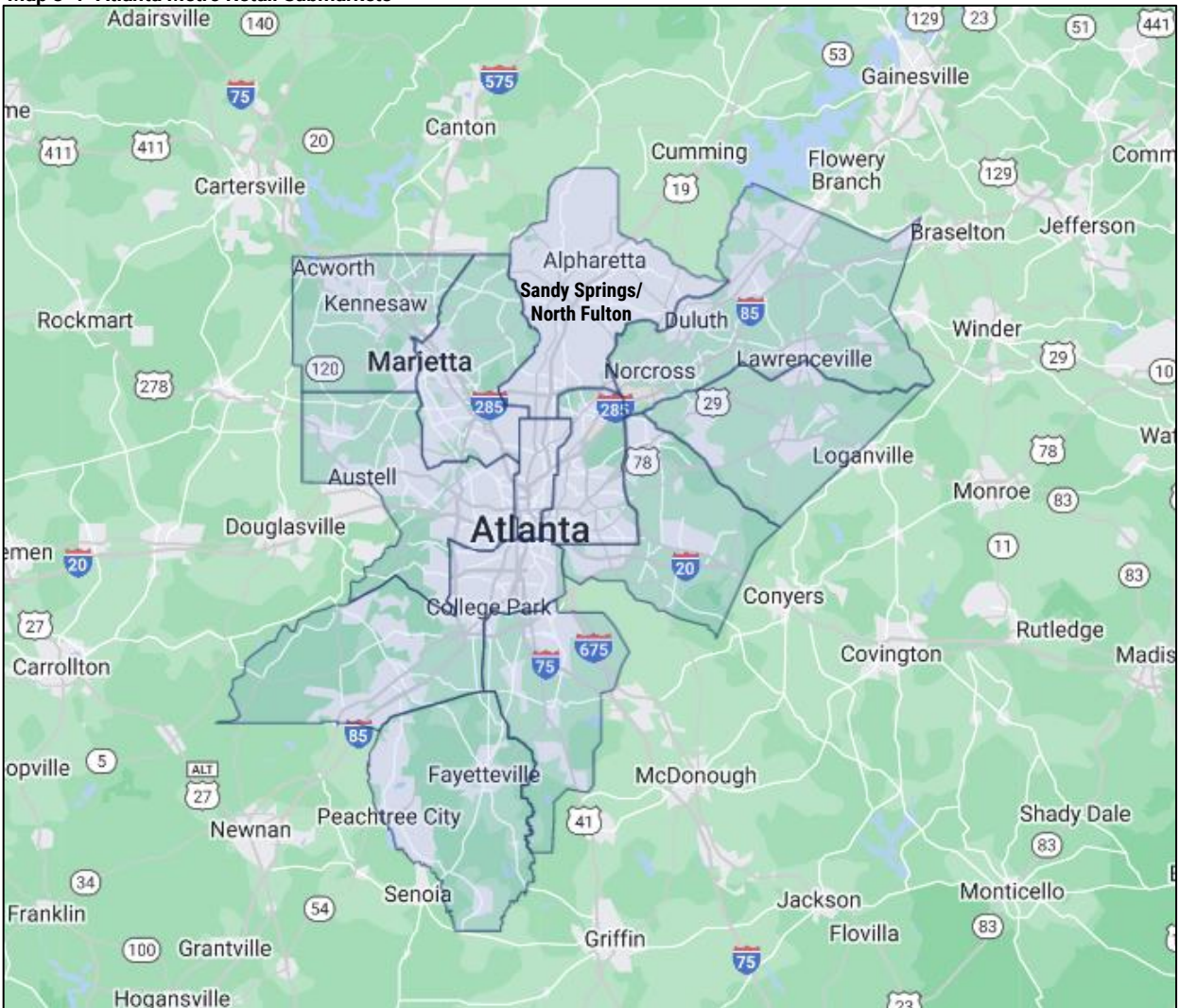
Shifts in workplace preferences, changes in consumer tastes, and outdated development patterns threaten Alpharetta's long-term economic sustainability. Neglecting to embrace these evolving market conditions can obstruct the city's job creation efforts, which becomes all the more important in face of disruptive socioeconomic forces; an aging population and declining Gen-Z population. Additional improvements to Alpharetta's built environment, that enhance walkability and accessibility can strengthen local labor market outcomes. The city can still retain its community character and identity without undermining economic development interests. It will involve greater flexibility towards density, concentrating work-live-play/create development opportunities in areas that 'make sense.' In particular, buffered away from residential subdivisions (e.g., North Point Mall). Above all, such opportunities must integrate key synergies to maximize economic development benefits: accessibility to public transportation, increased densities for enhanced walkability, and price-diverse housing options near key services/lifestyle amenities.

Map 3-3- Atlanta Metro Office Submarkets



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Map 3-4- Atlanta Metro Retail Submarkets



Source: REIS, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

A map of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, highlighting three specific submarkets. The Northwest Submarket is shaded in light green and includes areas around Canton, Marietta, and Acworth. The Marietta submarket is shaded in light blue and includes areas around Marietta, Duluth, and Norcross. The N. Chattahoochee/Alpharetta submarket is shaded in light purple and includes areas around Alpharetta, Cumming, and Flowery Branch. The map also shows the city of Atlanta in the center, surrounded by various other cities and towns like Rome, Dalton, and Gainesville. Major highways such as I-75, I-85, and I-20 are clearly marked.

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4 TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

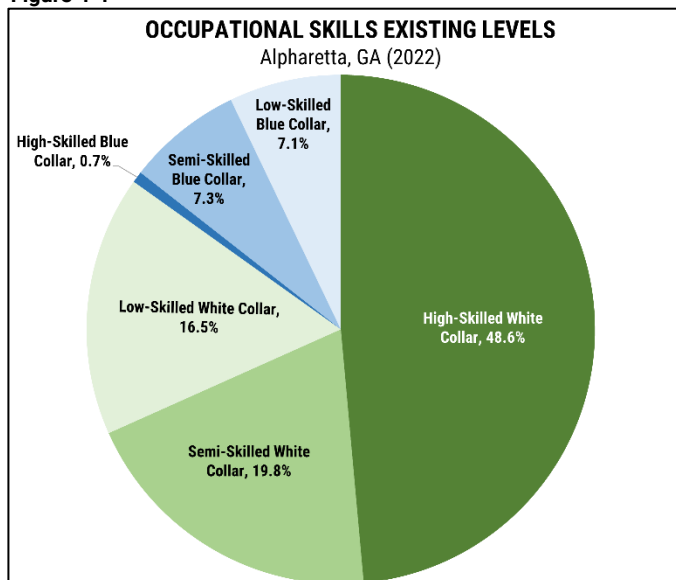
The objective of the Target Industry Analysis is to identify industry clusters that have the greatest potential to produce job growth in Alpharetta based on socioeconomic trends, real estate market conditions, and macroeconomic pressures. The analysis aims to guide Alpharetta towards a defined list of target industry clusters the City seeks to proactively recruit. This chapter includes: (1) an evaluation of characteristics related city's workforce, (2) site location strengths and weaknesses, (3), an assessment of local and regional business climate features for supporting the city's business recruitment and retention; (4) a description of the identified industry clusters and preliminary tools and initiatives to promote employment expansions within each industry.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

1. Occupational Skills Trends

Most occupations in Alpharetta are geared towards white-collar industries, designated for highly educated or experienced professionals. As of 2022, nearly half of jobs in the city are classed as 'High-Skilled White-Collar' occupations (Figure 4-1). This includes critical positions that serve Alpharetta's primary target industries, providing an essential source for attracting businesses in Software Development & IT Services. Major businesses such as ADP, LexisNexis, and Fiserv have expanded their footprints in Alpharetta, in an effort to enhance their recruitment efforts towards workers with software capabilities and technical skillsets.

Figure 4-1



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

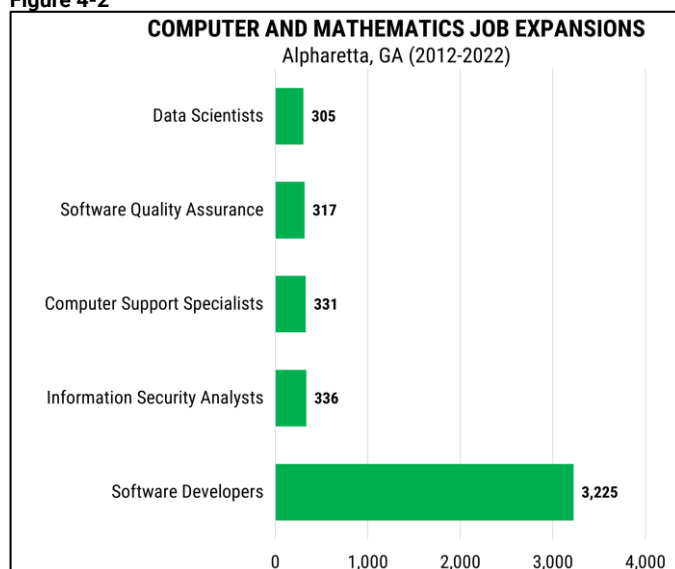
As several Software Development & IT Services businesses relocated to Alpharetta, successive job expansions unfolded among computer-based occupations (Figure 4-2). The expanded presence among these workers and Software Development & IT Services businesses is mutually reinforcing—an increase of qualified workers with software capabilities and technical skillsets is

expected to generate further increases among businesses seeking to recruit those workers. This favorable situation has been the reality for Alpharetta, as the city has transformed into a well-recognized tech hub. Alpharetta's transformation into a tech hub has generated several economic development benefits. This includes expanded local spending capacities and improved community marketability.

2. Occupational Skills Employment Projections

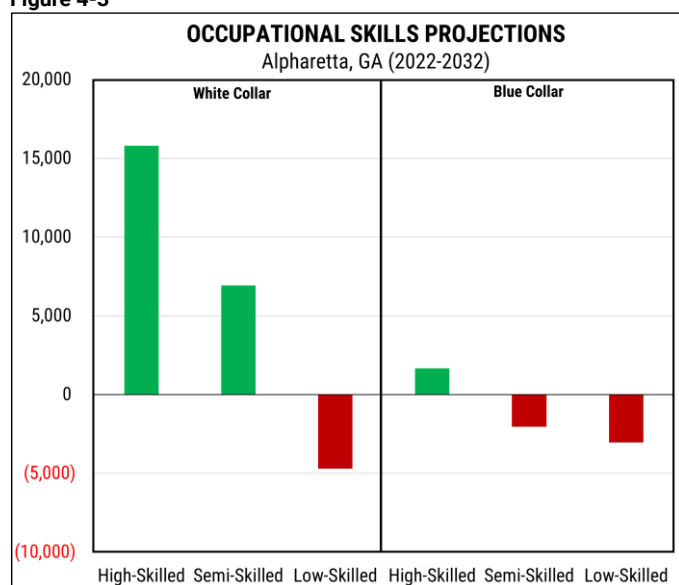
While Alpharetta has benefited through its continue development into a tech hub, the economic boom has imposed unintended consequences on critical segments of the city's workforce. This includes accelerating the displacement of service-based workers unable to afford the city's high—and rising—costs of living. Service-based businesses such as retailers and restaurants have felt these effects, with many business owners interviewed for this analysis reporting the challenge of finding workers willing to commute to Alpharetta. Projections point to recruitment conditions worsening for these types of businesses, as substantial losses are projected among low-skilled white-collar professionals through 2032 (Figure 4-3). The projected decline among service-based workers can result in a decline of key community services, including retail and healthcare. And consequently, impact Alpharetta's quality-of-life which plays a major role in the city's business recruitment and retention efforts. The City of Alpharetta must consider interventions that can limit the magnitude of future losses among low-skilled white-collar workers. That can include facilitating investments in workforce housing opportunities and efficient public transportation options.

Figure 4-2



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 4-3



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

3. Workforce Availability

While the abundance of highly skilled workers served as a major catalysis for business investment, particularly in Software Development & IT Services, recent labor market trends point to a decline in recruitment access for employees. Computer and Mathematics occupations, which include all the occupations listed in Figure 4-2, report an unemployment rate of 1.8% (Figure 4-4).

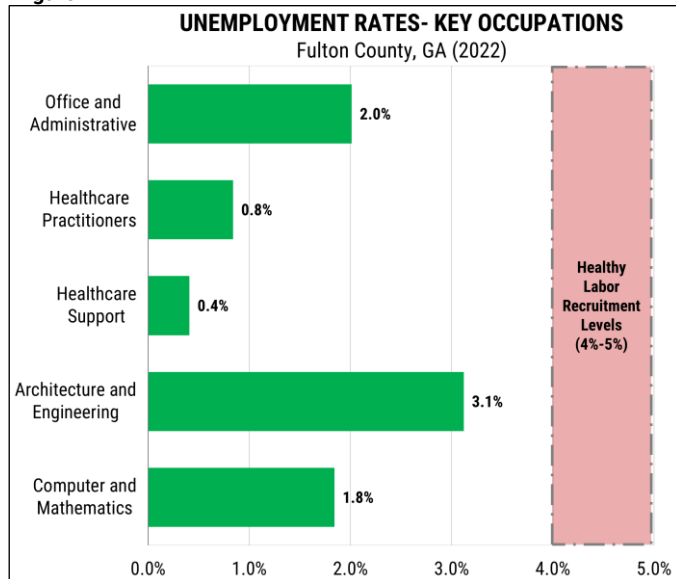
The unemployment levels point to a tight hiring market for Software Development & IT Services businesses. Most workers are already employed, leaving existing businesses with very few prospects available for recruitment. Without an adequate local supply of skilled talent, many businesses in Software Development & IT Services have turned to near-shoring and even offshoring to meet their workforce needs. This hiring practice accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as virtual-working models normalize for Computer and Mathematical Occupations. This is especially pronounced within FinTech and Cybersecurity operations, which maintain a significant representation

within Alpharetta's city limits. While virtual recruitment models are projected to continue and recruitment within the city remains challenging, Software Development & IT Services businesses are more likely to relocate their operations elsewhere. And if so, the city is subjected to job losses, reduced spending capacities, and the challenge of backfilling vacated office spaces. Even if a business retains physical office space, fewer workers are commuting daily into Alpharetta due to virtual-working models. While fewer workers commute into Alpharetta, fewer spending resources are available to support the city's fiscal health and community services.

4. Workforce Development

Fulton County needs substantial workforce expansions among key occupations within target industry segments, sufficient to meet projected 2032 levels. Computer and Mathematics occupations, which are mostly employed within Software Development and IT Services businesses, need nearly 30,000 workers over the next 10 years to stabilize labor market conditions (Figure 4-5). For Alpharetta, expanding the number of workers in target industry segments will involve facilitating partnerships between private and public stakeholders, enhancing workers'

Figure 4-4



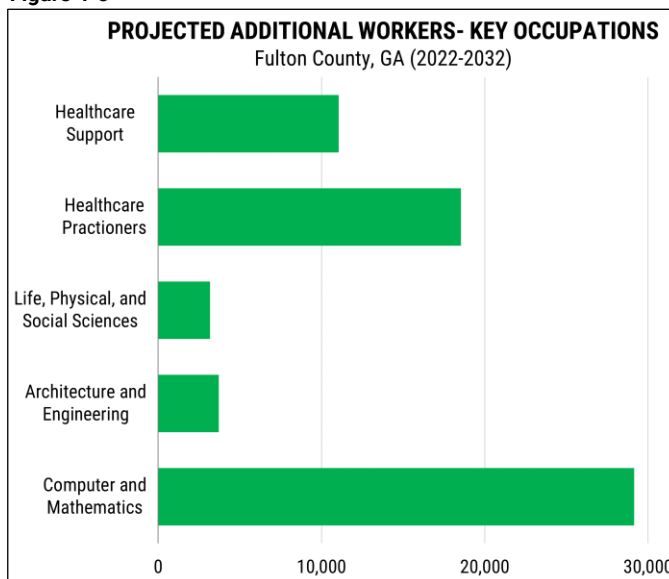
Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

living conditions, and capitalizing on local educational resources. While the competition for young talent among target industry segments tightens in Fulton County, executing a comprehensive approach to job creation will be critical for Alpharetta.

The tightening competition for young talent is largely attributed to high-capital investment activities targeting the City of Atlanta. Major players in Big Tech, including Amazon and Google, expanded in Midtown Atlanta to strengthen their recruitment efforts towards impending graduates from world class research institutions in advanced technical and scientific fields. Particularly, from Georgia Tech (Figure 4-6).

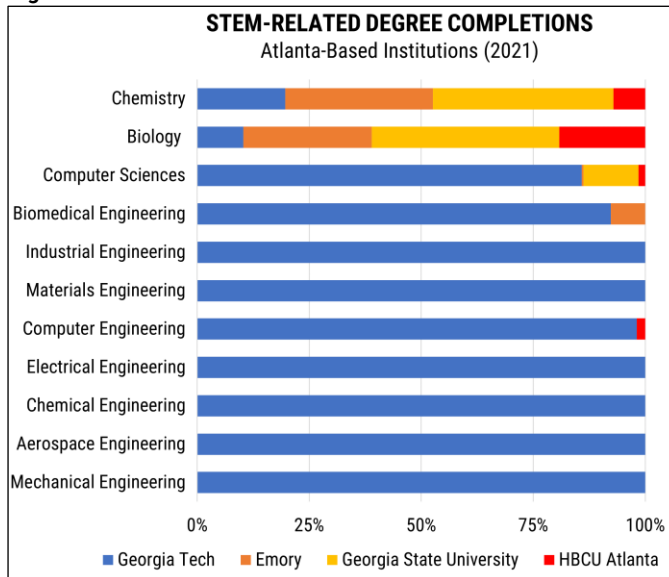
While Alpharetta-based businesses in technology-based sectors are prone to recruit from these institutions too, most graduates will likely be drawn to nearby companies in Atlanta. In effort to capture greater proportions of graduates in Alpharetta, the city will have to consider implementing a comprehensive approach; providing price-diverse housing options affordable to entry-to-mid-level professionals, working with regional transportation entities (MARTA) to expand rail access, and upskilling existing workers in cooperation with local educational institutions (Gwinnett Tech).

Figure 4-5



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 4-6



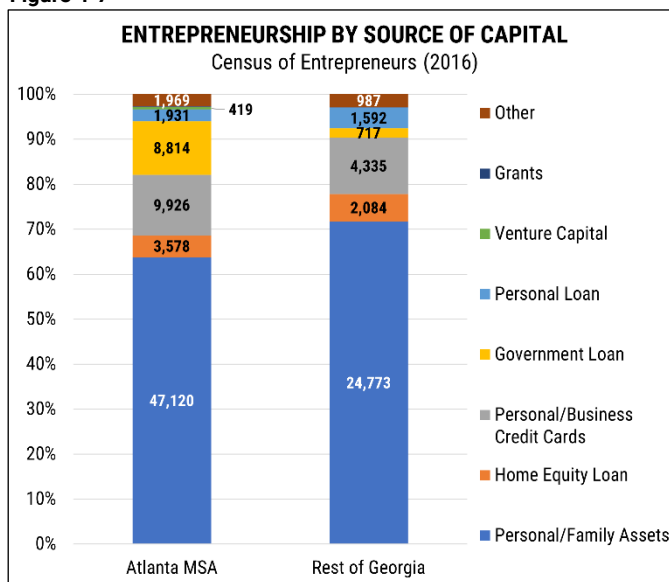
Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

C. ENTREPRENEURIAL ANALYSIS

1. Sources of Capital

In the Atlanta MSA, entrepreneurs are most likely to use personal capital to finance startups (Figure 4-7). This is a common source of financing for entrepreneurs residing in high-income communities, including places like Alpharetta. Without enough personal capital, alternative sources to financing startup ventures may involve a greater risk factor such as a personal loan. Or maybe challenging to access, such as venture capital (VC) financing. In the Atlanta MSA, venture capital is the least common financial source for entrepreneurs (Figure 4-7). The low figure reflects the limited range of startup opportunities venture capitalists target investment towards. In The New Age Economy, most venture capitalists limit investments towards high-tech startups in advanced sectors such as software development and biotechnology.

Figure 4-7



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

According to Tech Alpharetta, venture capital financing is limited in the city and a firm investor infrastructure is nonexistent. Most investors are in Atlanta, reducing Alpharetta-based tech ventures to networking opportunities which is a vital factor to attract early-stage seed-financing. Atlanta-based startups are better positioned to capitalize on these opportunities, in closer proximity to exhibit their ideas more easily.

2. Patent Activities

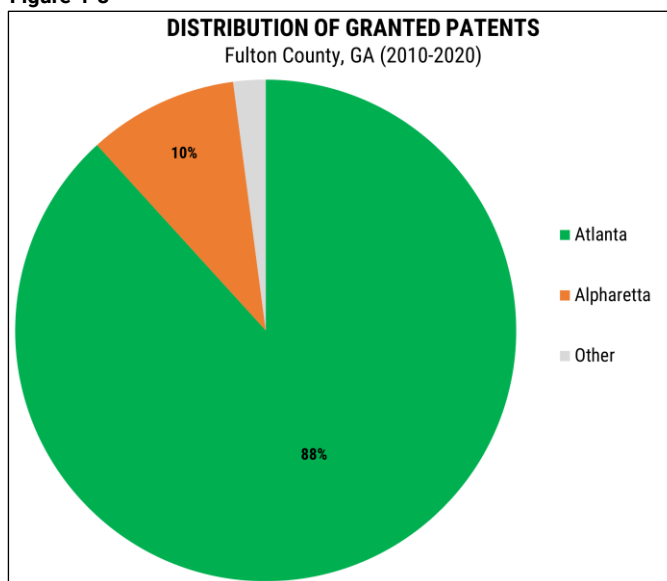
Several tech incubators and state-of-the-art Research & Development facilities are in Atlanta. Many are affiliated with Georgia Tech or Emory University, providing cost-effective access to advanced machinery and equipment. Access to these types of assets increases a community's competitive advantage for innovation, which contributed to Atlanta capturing the most patents in Fulton County between 2010 and 2020 (Figure 4-8).

While accounting for a much smaller proportion of acquired patents in Fulton County over the previous decade, Alpharetta remains a major patent hub outside of Atlanta. Patents related to Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing make up most patents received in Alpharetta, as most commercialized products developed in the city are software technologies (Figure 4-9).

Given the city's concentrated workforce in STEM-oriented fields and substantial corporate presence with R&D arms (e.g., Phillips Healthcare), Alpharetta is equipped with the human capital and financial resources to develop into an innovation hub.

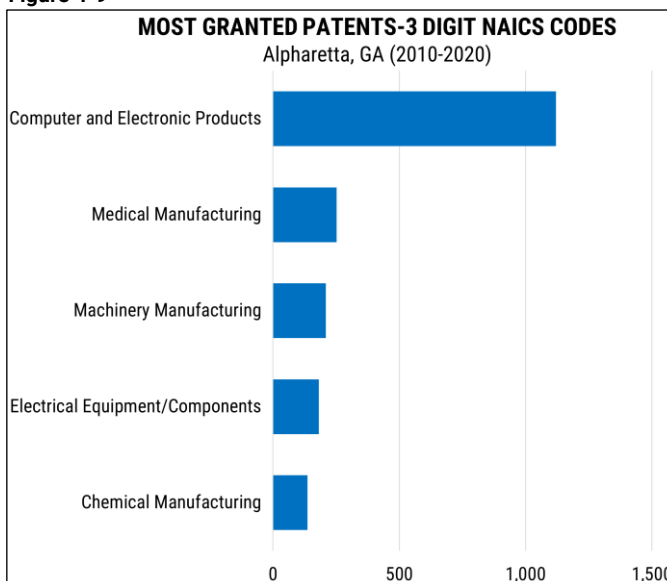
To capitalize on these resources, the city must take a more proactive approach; Particularly, facilitating strategic partnerships between corporate sponsors and Tech Alpharetta to institutionalize an investment vehicle to finance capital projects--R&D facilities, laboratories, and advanced machinery and equipment (e.g., 3-D printers). These interventions can be critical for investing in ventures beyond software development, such as Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences which require substantially more financial resources than software applications. A comprehensive approach can enhance innovation and entrepreneurial outcomes, shaping a built environment that supports the demands of a tech-savvy, young talented workforce. That includes expanding the price-diversity of housing options integrated within vibrant work-live-create destinations. Such destinations promote socialization and 'knowledge-sharing,' essential conditions for an environment that fuels innovation.

Figure 4-8



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 4-9



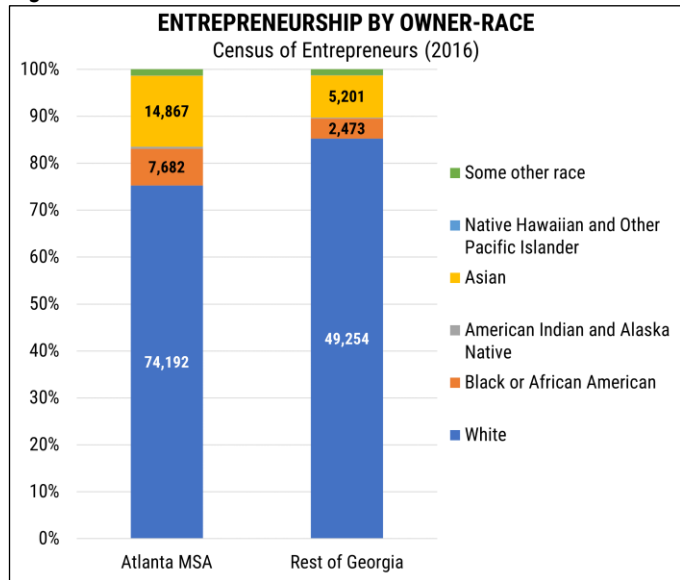
Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

3. Minority Entrepreneurship

Metro Atlanta has a more diverse entrepreneurial base than the rest of Georgia (Figure 4-10). The relatively greater proportion of minority entrepreneurs is representative of most urban centers nationwide, where minorities historically have greater access to financial and social resources than in rural areas.

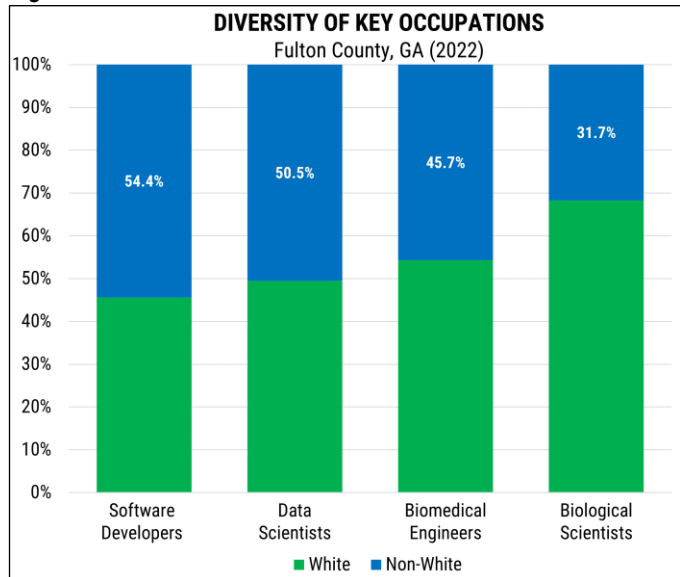
Given Alpharetta's influx of non-white residents and foreigners, the city must develop programs that empower their entrepreneurial ventures. Programmatic development could include coordination and cooperation with Tech Alpharetta, as substantial proportions of minorities are employed in technology-based fields across Fulton County (Figure 4-11). Many of which either work or live in Alpharetta. Models to support entrepreneurial ventures are underway throughout the metropolitan region. For instance, Apple and Southern Company each invested \$25 million to develop the Propel Center, a startup incubator for Atlanta-area HBCU students. Without a program focused on minority entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in technology-based fields, can reduce Alpharetta's competitiveness with places that do.

Figure 4-10



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 4-11



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

4. Self-Employed and Non-QCEW Workers

Over the course of the previous decade, Alpharetta’s self-employed and non-QCEW workforce expanded (Table 4-1). Major expansions occurred among industries known for employing high concentrations of independent contractors; Particularly, Insurance Carriers and Related Activities which absorbed the largest net-gain of jobs between 2012 and 2022. Considering expansions, the City of Alpharetta should strive to bolster their social capital environment, spurring investments in things like co-working spaces and innovation districts.

Table 4-1

SELF-EMPLOYED AND NON-QCEW WORKERS Alpharetta, GA (2012-2022)				
NAICS	Description	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	Net Change
524	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	1,059	2,077	1,018
541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,182	1,566	385
551	Management of Companies and Enterprises	22	245	223
531	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	261	399	137
236	Construction of Buildings	359	471	112
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	215	304	90
812	Personal and Laundry Services	281	363	83
523	Securities/Commodities/Finances	57	100	43
713	Amusement/Gambling/Recreation	109	150	41
485	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	0	29	29
454	Nonstore Retailers	60	87	27
512	Motion Picture/Sound Recording Industries	30	56	26
517	Telecommunications	8	30	22
334	Computer and Electronics Manufacturing	7	27	20
518	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	4	23	19
443	Electronics and Appliance Stores	67	85	18
339	Miscellaneous Manufacturing	19	37	18

D. BUSINESS CLIMATE FACTORS

Business climate factors measure a community’s economic and social viability for executing business functions and scaling operations. The strength of these factors is essential for supporting Alpharetta’s key industry segments. For instance, technology-based businesses have stringent place-based requirements to support financing capital and operational costs efficiently and effectively. Cost-efficiencies for technology-based companies have become increasingly critical, as more financial resources are distributed towards research and innovation to remain competitive. The main business climate factors include- Businesses & Jobs, Financial Assets & Income, Housing & Homeownership, Healthcare, and Education. Each factor accounts for a collection of quantified metrics, gauging the ‘business-friendliness’ of the area under analysis. For instance, a metric accounted for within the Businesses & Jobs factor is a state’s proportion of microenterprise enterprises (businesses with 5 employees or fewer). The State of Georgia ranks 9 among U.S. states with microenterprise enterprises, suggesting Georgia ecosystem for entrepreneurial development is stronger than most U.S. states.

The following analysis in this section incorporates data points from a variety of sources, including Prosperity Now; a non-profit focused on assisting state and local governments expand economic opportunities throughout their respective jurisdictions. An understanding of Georgia's 'business-friendliness' relative to the rest of the U.S. can help Alpharetta gauge its 'business-friendliness' relative to the State of Georgia. And accordingly, shape policies and programs that strengthen the city's competitiveness in creating jobs through business attraction and entrepreneurship. The analysis primary uses Alpharetta's key industry segments as a case study, as competition tightens in Georgia for technology-based industries.

1. Financial Assets & Income

Metrics among the Financials Assets & Income factor measure the distribution of wealth and access to financial resources in communities. As the level of wealth accumulation increases, communities become better equipped to finance economic development initiatives that fuel job creation. This is particularly critical for job creation evolving New Age Economy, as technology-based corporations increasingly form strategic community-based partnerships to finance high-tech accelerators/incubators and R&D functions.

Relative to other U.S. states, Georgia ranks low among multiple metrics that demonstrate a community's capacity to manage and expand financial resources (Table 4-5). For instance, Georgia ranks 49th among U.S. states for the proportion of 'underbanked households,' an indication that many households lack the essential accounts (e.g., savings investment vehicles) needed to accumulate wealth. The low rankings misrepresent Alpharetta's financial circumstances, as the city is predominantly high-income households and a hotspot for corporations. Alpharetta's median income is \$117,894 significantly higher than Georgia's 2020 median income (\$65,030). Alpharetta hosts major corporate offices, including businesses in advanced technology fields—ADP, Clearside Biomedical, Change Healthcare etc. The city's potential depth of financial resources can be a catalytic source for startups in advanced technology fields. Despite this advantageous opportunity, however, it appears the use of these financial resources is underutilized.

Tech Alpharetta is the city's primary technology incubator, crediting for jumpstarting multiple businesses and creating thousands of jobs in technology-based fields. According to Tech Alpharetta, the city lacks a streamlined venture capital infrastructure to scale entrepreneurial startups. Most investors are in Atlanta, yielding a competitive edge for tech entrepreneurs in places like Midtown and Buckhead. Given Alpharetta's depth, high-income households and high-capital corporations with R&D functions, potential financial resources exist to develop a structured capital financing program. Such programs are critical to scale startups focused on innovating and commercializing products in advanced software and hardware fields. Sufficient capital-financing is needed to facilitate accessibility to high-tech equipment such as 3-D printers and to cloud computing infrastructure. As industry vertical partnerships with Georgia Tech and Emory University are formed in other areas of the Atlanta MSA to finance the capital and operating needs of innovative startups, aspiring entrepreneurs will be more prone to locate there.

Consequently, reducing Alpharetta's competitive edge for creating jobs through technology-based startups.

Other than accessing equipment and infrastructure, innovative technology companies need substantial financial resources to fund workers' salaries. Due to tighter labor markets for skilled talent, particularly in Alpharetta, salaries have grown exponentially in key occupations (e.g., software developers, DevOps engineers) making it increasingly cost-prohibitive for many startups. This reinforces the need for an institutionalized financing infrastructure in the city to spur innovation and enhance Alpharetta's competitive edge for startups in advanced technology fields.

2. Businesses & Jobs

Metrics among the Businesses & Jobs factor measure the distribution of job types and access to entrepreneurship. Favorable metrics can demonstrate a community's potential for business recruitment and retention. The proportion of Low-Wage jobs in a community can be a barometer that gauges the stability of a community's services, as workers within these jobs are critical service-based workers. Relative to the U.S., Georgia ranks low at 41 among states proportions of low-wage jobs (Table 4-2). Fewer low-wage jobs can correspond to a lower quantity and quality of community services. Most of Alpharetta's businesses have relocated to the city, attracted to the city's premier lifestyle amenities. These lifestyle amenities are supported by the proportion of service-based workers that fill positions in low-wage jobs. As the costs-of-living escalate and service-based workers are pushed out of Alpharetta, the city's lifestyle amenities are vulnerable to decline in quality. Consequently, threatening the City of Alpharetta's ability to continue recruiting corporate operations which are a vital source of the local economy. Expanding the price-diversity of housing options can support living opportunities for service-based workers while sustaining the quality of lifestyle amenities within the city.

3. Homeownership & Housing

As the competition for talent workers tightens amid the evolving New Age Economy, technology-based businesses increasingly locate in urban centers with proximity to major research institutions. Sufficient housing options are an essential element of these locations, providing rent-affordable living opportunities for entry-to-mid-level professionals equipped with strong technical skillsets. These conditions have supported the development of innovation hubs, facilitating the recruitment efforts of emerging startups and big tech. Google and Adobe are expanding their footprints in Midtown Atlanta, capitalizing on the accessibility to a young and educated talent base amid a robust innovation ecosystem. These skilled workers that technology-based firms recruit choose to live there in the first place, largely to take advantage of the relatively affordable housing costs compared to North Fulton County, including the City of Alpharetta.

Most of Alpharetta's housing stock is owner-occupied units and as of November 2022, the median home value in the city was \$665,928 (Zillow.com). Accounting for all related owner-occupied

housing expenses (e.g., mortgage payments at FHA rate, insurance taxes etc.) a household must earn a minimal annual gross income of \$173,576 to be considered in today's marketplace. To put this into perspective, the median annual earnings of software developers with 0–3 years of experience in Fulton County is roughly \$106,322 (Lightcast). The substantial difference between these earnings and home values suggests most entry-to-mid-level professionals are unable to afford to purchase a home within Alpharetta's city limits.

Even if purchasing a home was a viable option, many entry-level professionals may be disinterested in doing so. Many are young professionals in the early stage of their careers, averse to the potential long-term time and social costs attached to owning a home. Given the city's limited availability of affordable rental options for young professionals, most seek rental options in other parts of Fulton County. This is the case for young professionals employed in critical occupations that serve Alpharetta's key target industry segments. Accounting for each occupation's median annual earnings, substantially more affordable units are available to entry-level professionals in other parts of Fulton County than Alpharetta. This includes the City of Atlanta, where many technology-based businesses have expanded their operations in recent years to gain proximity to young skilled talent.

Amid the evolving New-Age Economy and post-pandemic hybrid work models, the link between housing and business attraction has strengthened. Businesses, especially in technology-based industries, increasingly locate near young skilled talent to improve their recruitment prospects. Expanding the price-diversity of housing rental options can attract young talent, enhancing the City of Alpharetta's efforts to recruit and retain businesses in technology-based fields.

4. Healthcare

Metrics among the Healthcare factor measure the level of accessibility to healthcare coverage, influencing the health and wellbeing of residents. The city's premier healthcare coverage conflicts with the poor-quality healthcare metrics represented statewide (Table 4-2). According to Prosperity Now, Georgia ranks low among healthcare metrics, nearing the bottom of state-rankings for many of the reported metrics (e.g., Uninsured Rate). Alpharetta is equipped with nationally recognized healthcare systems, including Emory Healthcare and Northside Hospital. The Northside/Medical Campus sits on a 140-acre campus staffed with nearly 3,500 physicians, supporting a comprehensive pool of medical specialties. The city's accessibility and concentration of quality healthcare services strengthens Alpharetta's competitiveness as a place to do business. Investment activities into medical services are projected to rise due to an aging population. That said, expanding and sustaining the healthcare industry must be prioritized by the City of Alpharetta.

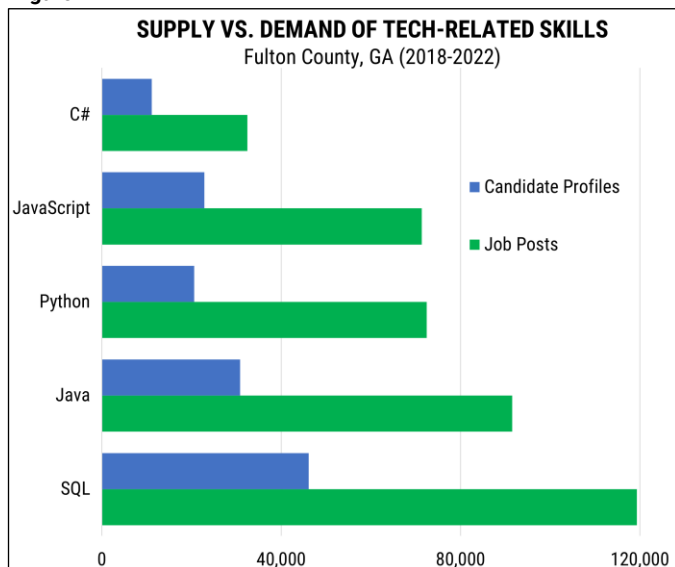
5. Education

Metrics among the Education factor measure an area's educational attainment levels and prevalence of educational institutions. The proportion of college graduates in Georgia is

moderate relative to U.S. standards, ranking 21st among U.S. states. This differs from Alpharetta, where the city’s abundance of college graduates has helped fuel the city’s business recruitment and retention efforts. Despite city’s the abundance of college graduates, Alpharetta’s labor market has become increasingly overheated in recent years. Most college graduates are already employed, reducing the number of workers available for recruitment. These circumstances have disproportionally affected technology-based businesses in Alpharetta, as existing candidates are demanding exponentially higher salaries and the base of skilled talent demanded by employers is declining.

The declining base of skilled candidates can be encouraging for local institutions that offer coursework and certificate programs to develop in-demand workforce skills. Gwinnett Tech offers programs for learning SQL and Java, two in-demand programming languages. In 2023, Tech Alpharetta will offer online training programs that teach in-demand skills—front-end web development, back-web development, and cloud computing. Tech Alpharetta, Gwinnett Tech, and local technology-based business should continue collaborating to help upskill the local marketplace. And consequently, expand the number of skilled workers available to technology-based businesses for workforce recruitment. This is critical, especially since there appears to be a mismatch between the number of workers with marketable skillsets and the number of job opportunities that demand specific skillsets in Fulton County over the previous few years (Figure 4-12). A greater supply of skilled workers can strengthen local labor conditions, while facilitating the city’s efforts to attract and retain businesses.

Figure 4-12



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Table 4-2
Economic Assets and Opportunities Scorecard
Georgia Relative to United States

Category	Score		Rank
	Georgia	US	Georgia
FINANCIAL ASSETS AND INCOME			
Access to Revolving Credit	69.1%	74.0%	39
Asset Poverty Rate	27.3%	24.1%	34
Bankruptcy Rate	4.10	2.30	48
Borrowers Over 75% Credit Card Limit	30.9%	25.4%	48
Consumers with Collections	28.9%	21.2%	45
Consumers with Prime Credit	42.4%	53.0%	49
Low Financial Well-Being	20.0%	18.0%	9
Households with Savings Accounts	64.2%	71.4%	45
Households with Zero Net Worth	17.2%	15.7%	10
Saved for Emergencies	52.2%	57.8%	43
Severely Delinquent Borrowers	20.0%	14.8%	44
Unbanked Households	10.6%	6.5%	48
Underbanked Households	24.1%	18.7%	49
BUSINESSES AND JOBS			
Business Ownership by Race	19.3%	17.6%	8
Business Value by Gender	4.03	3.03	49
Business Value by Race	\$374,615	\$440,190	41
Employers Offering Health Insurance	42.4%	46.8%	40
Low-Wage Jobs	25.4%	18.7%	41
Microenterprise Ownership Rate	20.4%	18.2%	7
HOUSING AND HOMEOWNERSHIP			
Delinquent Mortgage Loans	1.3%	1.1%	39
High-Cost Mortgage Loans	8.6%	7.6%	42
Homeownership Rate	63.8%	63.9%	40
Housing Cost Burden - Homeowners	25.1%	27.7%	22
Housing Cost Burden - Renters	49.8%	49.7%	38
HEALTH CARE			
Employee Share of Premium	31.5%	27.8%	43
Employer Provided Insurance Coverage	57.5%	59.5%	35
Forgoing Doctor Visit Due to Cost	18.2%	13.0%	51
Poor or Fair Health Status	19.1%	18.4%	34
Uninsured Low-Income Children	11.4%	7.1%	48
Uninsured Rate	15.7%	10.4%	48
EDUCATION			
Borrowers with Student Loan Debt	25.0%	21.9%	45
Four-Year College Degree	31.9%	32.6%	21
High School Graduation Rate	79.4%	84.1%	44
Math Proficiency - 8th Grade	31.1%	33.8%	31
Median Student Loan Debt	\$20,727	\$18,366	49
Reading Proficiency - 8th Grade	32.1%	33.6%	31

Source: Prosperity Now, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

E. TOP SITE SELECTION FACTORS

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a declining interest for suburban office parks and automobile-dependent commuting, features in character with Alpharetta’s existing workplace environment. Amidst the pandemic, many technology-based businesses maintained sufficient productivity levels through remote working. Meanwhile, employees gained a better work-life balance and avoided a draining commute to the office. While the pandemic subsides and many businesses transition from remote-working models to hybrid-working models, workplace preferences largely remain the same for their employees. Most are demanding workplaces that offer flexibility and convenient accessibility to office spaces (in the case for those employed under hybrid-working models). These shifts in demand have decreased the office space requirements for many tech businesses, particularly those tied to leases in mega suburban office parks.

No longer seeing the practical value of maintaining these spaces, businesses in Alpharetta have turned to subleasing. In August 2022, Global Payments, the city’s largest FinTech employer, subleased nearly 40% of its 220,000 square foot facility (Atlanta Business Chronicle). This is enough space to accommodate approximately 450 employees. In the previous year, significant office subleases entered Alpharetta’s marketplace. This includes FinTech businesses other than Global Payments, seeking to sublease their underutilized office spaces in wake of normalizing virtual-working models. While virtual-working models remain, businesses are projected to increasingly downsize their workspaces. Consequently, reducing the demand for ‘mega-spaces’ in traditional suburban office settings which represent most of Alpharetta’s underperforming office marketplace.

High vacancy rates in Alpharetta’s office market reflect shifts in a businesses’ site selection preferences. To sustain the city’s attraction to businesses, Alpharetta is challenged to respond to shifts in preferences. According to Area Development Magazine, a publication that surveys corporate executives, a community’s high quality-of-life is considered a key asset for recruiting and retaining businesses as of the year 2020.

Table 4-3- Corporate Executives Survey of Top Site Selection Factors

Executives' Top Site Selection Criteria		
2020	2010	2000
Availability of Skilled Labor	Highway Accessibility	Highway Accessibility
Highway Accessibility	Labor Costs	Labor Costs
Energy Availability & Costs	Tax Exemptions	Availability of Skilled Labor
Quality of Life	Occupancy or Construction Costs	Corporate Tax Rate
Labor Costs	State & Local Incentives	State & Local Incentives
Occupancy or Construction costs	Corporate Tax Rate	Tax Exemptions

Source: Area Development Magazine, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

However, Alpharetta’s quality-of-life ‘assets’ is largely restricted to c-suite executives and their families, attracted to the city’s stock of luxury homes and highly rated public schools. Both assets

are less prioritized for the expanding Gen-Z workforce population, who evaluate a community's quality-of-life through a completely different lens; Specifically, large segments of Gen-Z workers will evaluate the magnitude of rental options available to entry-to-mid-level professionals, accessibility to efficient public transportation options, and the presence of vibrant nightlife options. While the city's availability of skilled labor remains a top priority for executives, expanding the availability of quality-of-life assets for Gen-Z workers creates an additional advantage for Alpharetta as a place to do business. And so, enhancing the city's long-term business recruitment efforts.

The availability of highly skilled labor represents a strength for Alpharetta to recruit and retain businesses. The following sections detail other strengths, as well as weaknesses, that can affect the city's capacity as a place to do businesses. Given the identified strengths and weaknesses, the following sections also discuss potential threats and opportunities for the Alpharetta to consider as the city seeks to advance its ultimate economic development objective; ensuring Alpharetta is equipped to sustain long-term job growth in face of evolving market pressures. This includes tightening labor market competition for young talent, an aging population, and shifting workplace models.

Table 4-4

Site Selection Criteria Competitiveness		
Rank	Factor	Rating
1	Availability of Skilled Labor	
2	Highway Accessibility	
3	Energy Availability and Costs	
4	Quality-of-Life	
5	Labor Costs	
6	Occupancy or construction costs	
7	Corporate tax rate	
8	Tax exemptions	
9	State and local incentives	
10	Inbound/outbound shipping costs	

Source: Area Development Magazine, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

1. Alpharetta Strengths

Highly Skilled Workforce. Alpharetta’s workforce is highly educated with most workers equipped with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher. The presence of a highly skilled workforce can be instrumental for attracting businesses to a community. Alpharetta is credited as a premier technology hub, and its abundance of workers with in-demand skillsets has fueled business investments in Software Development and IT Services. Investments from these industries have catalyzed job expansions among software developers and data analysts, whose high salaries have benefitted the city’s fiscal health and spending capacities.

Public School Performance. Many public schools throughout greater Alpharetta are highly rated, attracting families with children to move to the city (Table 4-5). The high performance corresponds to greater proportions of high-income households, generating strong fiscal benefits for the local community.

Crime & Safety. The city’s low crime rates, relative to state rates, can be a source of attraction for businesses and households. Ultimately, leading to investment activities that can support the city’s job creation efforts and increase local spending resources.

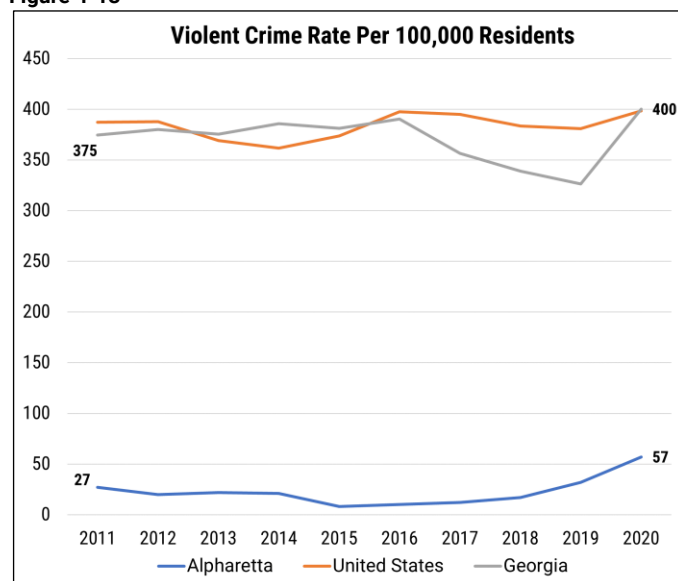
Regional Competitiveness. As the region’s marketplace continues to expand, Alpharetta possesses competitive advantages that can attract incoming investment activities. Advantages include highly rated quality of life amenities and concentrations of highly skilled workers.

Table 4-5- Grades Among Alpharetta-Based Schools

School	Grade
Creek View Elementary School	A
Alpharetta Elementary School	B
Lake Windward Elementary School	A
New Prospect Elementary School	B
Manning Oaks Elementary School	C
Alpharetta Elementary School	B
Hopewell Middle School	B
Haynes Bridge Middle School	B
Webb Bridge Middle School	A
Milton High School	A
Cambridge High School	A
Centennial High School	B
Alpharetta High School	A
Chattahoochee High School	A

Source: State of Georgia, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Figure 4-13



Source: FBI, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Economic Development Partnerships. The City of Alpharetta maintains proactive partnerships with various public and private stakeholders to fuel investment activities among the city's primary industries. For instance, the City of Alpharetta and Tech Alpharetta coordinate to expand entrepreneurial activities in high-demand technology sectors—FinTech, MedTech, Cybersecurity etc. Continued coordination and cooperation with local stakeholders can help the city shape policies and programs that may sustain industry expansions and resist economic shocks.

Tech Alpharetta. Alpharetta's primary business incubator has facilitated entrepreneurial ventures in tech-related sectors. Tech Alpharetta is credited with creating thousands of jobs throughout greater Alpharetta and graduating multiple businesses. The presence of an incubator can support networking opportunities to attract venture capital investment and facilitate corporate partnerships aimed to strengthen R&D outcomes; capital/startup financing opportunities, mentorship, and equipment/machinery contributions.

Diversifying Population. The city's population increasingly diversifies, which can promote a dynamic and inclusive environment. Such environments can attract an emerging Gen-Z population, recognized as a cohort that values social equity and inclusion. While major corporations seek to advance their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) objectives, locating near a diverse population is a valuable investment. All that said, Alpharetta's diversifying population is a strong asset for workforce and business recruitment efforts among the city's established and emerging industries; Software Development and IT Services, Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences. Among these industries, large concentrations of minorities are employed within high demand occupations.

2. Alpharetta Weaknesses

Public Transportation System. The city lacks an efficient public transportation system that can support convenient accessibility between housing and employment centers. While white-collar workers prefer access to an efficient public transportation system, this is a necessity for many service-based workers. Due to earning limitations and the escalating costs-of-living throughout the Atlanta MSA, commuting via automobile is unaffordable for many service-based workers. Those that can access MARTA's rail system lend support to their financial needs while facilitating the recruitment efforts for regional restaurants and restaurants. Due to the absence of a public transportation system that offers efficient connectivity to Alpharetta, restaurants and retailers are more to struggle with identifying hireable workers.

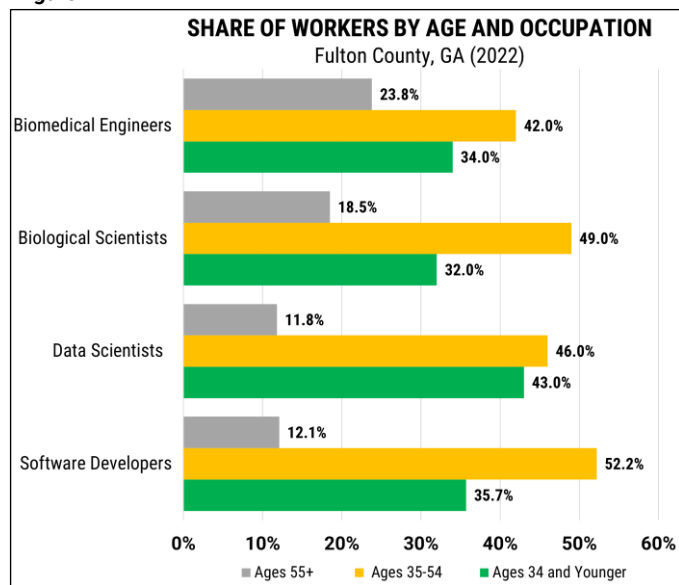
Housing Diversity. Most of Alpharetta's housing stock are owner-occupied units designed for high-income households. The limited supply of rental units distributed across earnings levels prohibits critical segments of the workforce from living in Alpharetta. This includes large proportions of software developers, police officers, childcare workers, nurses, and teachers. While the cost of living continues to escalate in Alpharetta, many workers are

increasingly likely to live and work elsewhere. Consequently, making the city vulnerable to reduced spending capacities, decreased level of services, and increased tax burdens.

Retail Diversity. Alpharetta’s retail market mostly caters to families and high-income households. In the evolving New Age Economy, young professionals prefer locating in vibrant areas with an active nightlife scene; supplied with late-night bars and restaurants. A scarce supply of these retail establishments operates in Alpharetta, reducing the city’s attractiveness to young professionals. While the city’s population continues to age, attracting young professionals becomes increasingly time sensitive. Without their presence, Alpharetta is vulnerable to significant labor market shortages in the long-term.

Throughout Fulton County, substantial proportions of young professionals are employed within occupations integral to the city’s target industries (Figure 4-14); Software Development and IT services, Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences. As catalytic investments aim to expand these industries around Georgia Tech and Emory University, Alpharetta’s competitiveness to recruit young professionals is vulnerable to decline. The City of Alpharetta can continue their competitive position through investments in work-live-play destinations that accommodate the social and retail preferences of young professionals.

Figure 4-14



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Labor Availability. Fulton County’s unemployment rates have reached unfavorable levels, fluctuating between 2% and 3%. These levels suggest an overheated labor market, diminishing the supply of available workers to fulfill key roles. The county’s extraordinarily low unemployment rates have impacted technology-based businesses’ recruitment efforts in Alpharetta, forcing many to near-shore or even off-shore workers. The diminished labor pool can reduce Alpharetta’s attraction as a place to do business; Particularly, for technology-based businesses which prioritize locating in areas that provide access to highly skilled technical workers.

Underdeveloped Venture Capital Platform. An institutionalized venture capital platform is non-existent in the city, limiting many entrepreneurs from commercializing their ideas. Without an institutionalized platform, Alpharetta’s competitiveness as place for

entrepreneurship and innovation is vulnerable to decline. This can disproportionately impact the potential for tech startups to scale their operations.

3. Alpharetta Opportunities

Updating Workplace Conditions. Many of Alpharetta’s suburban office parks are vulnerable to declining market values. An uptick in vacancies and subleases in suburban office parks reflect shifting workplace priorities. Businesses are expanding their footprints near live-work-play destinations, locating jobs and financial assets in places like Midtown Atlanta and Central Perimeter. To accommodate shifting workplace priorities with the objective of sustaining business investments, the City of Alpharetta can convert declining office parks into work-live-play destinations.

Improve Coordination & Communication. While high-capital investments in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and software development unfold in the City of Atlanta, Alpharetta’s competitiveness to attract investment is likely to tighten. Proactive coordination and communication among local and regional stakeholders can be an effective approach to maintaining levels of competitiveness. Effects of these efforts could include upskilling of the city’s existing workforce, pooling resources for R&D activities, and capitalizing on synergies of regional specializations. For instance, while early-stage pharmaceutical research accelerates in the City of Atlanta, Alpharetta’s concentration of software developers and MedTech businesses can coordinate in support of AI innovation that expedite and improve early-stage research methods.

Bolster Innovation Environment. Alpharetta is concentrated with corporations in STEM-related fields and has a highly skilled technical workforce. The assets are ripe for advanced technological and scientific innovation. Since the formation of Tech Alpharetta, most entrepreneurial ventures have focused on app-development. In general, app-development requires minimal capital investment in comparison to R&D activities among advanced manufacturing fields. Local corporations and Tech Alpharetta should increase their cooperation and pool financial resources for expansive innovation investment fund. Sufficient to finance innovative ventures among fields that generally require high-capital investments (e.g., advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, biotech etc.)

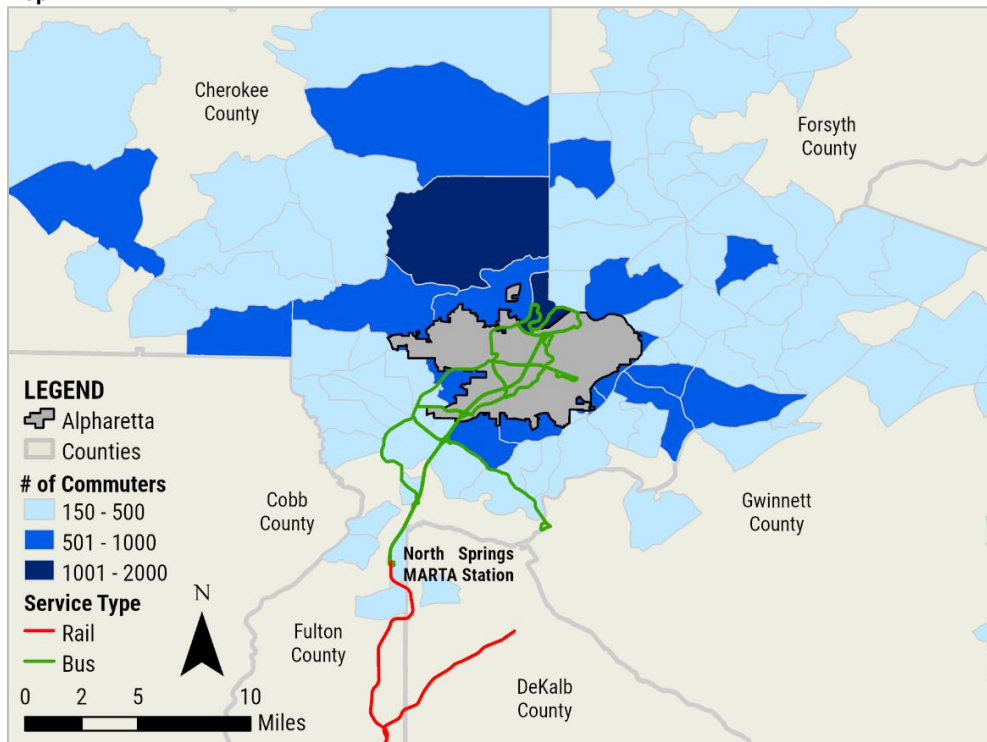
Leveraging Diversity. Historically, foreign-born residents are more likely to start small businesses than the native population. This is a viable opportunity in Alpharetta, given that many foreign-born residents have achieved high levels of educational attainment. Empowering the foreign-born population and local minorities to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities can be instrumental to expanding entrepreneurship in target industry segments.

4. Alpharetta Threats

Urban Sprawl. In the 1990s and through the early 2000s, Alpharetta’s economy skyrocketed to unprecedented levels. Alpharetta absorbed rapid business expansions as executives were attracted to the city’s cost-effective quality of life amenities and proximity to the City of Atlanta. As the city’s developable land resources become limited and the city’s costs of living escalate, investment activities are beginning to expand in other parts of the Atlanta MSA- Forsyth County, Cobb County, Gwinnett County etc. Consequently, affecting Alpharetta’s competitive position to capture jobs and financial investment in key industry segments (e.g., healthcare occupations). Areas north and west of Alpharetta, where urban sprawl is unfolding due to affordability advantages (Cherokee County, Forsyth County), traffic congestion into Alpharetta is projected to increase. As job creation investments target Cherokee County and Forsyth County and traffic congestion exacerbates, fewer workers living outside Alpharetta may be less inclined to commute into the city. And if that happens, Alpharetta is vulnerable to reduced spending resources and labor market shortages.

Transit Accessibility. Limited transportation options exist to access Alpharetta workspaces. MARTA offers four north-south bus routes that connect between North Springs Station and major employment destinations in the city. Otherwise, inbound commuters are forced to travel by car. Most are likely to do so, as counties with substantial proportions of Alpharetta-based workers do not have access to public transportation (Map 4-1). The lack of access to public transportation can be an impediment to attracting technology-based businesses in the post-pandemic environment, as young talent prefers to live and work in urban environments that offer convenient accessibility.

Map 4-1



Source: On the Map, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Post-Pandemic Work-Models. While the pandemic subsides, hybrid-working models are increasingly utilized in technology-based businesses, Alpharetta's primary economic base. Hybrid work models translate to fewer in-bound commuters daily, and therefore, less spending resources to sustain the quality and quantity of community services. Sustaining quality of services is essential to the city's business recruitment and retention efforts since the city's premier quality-of-life amenities are a primary source of attraction to businesses. Furthermore, technology-based businesses are less inclined to retain their physical office space in Alpharetta as fewer workers commute into the city for work. As vacancies increase among office spaces, commercial tax revenues are projected to decrease. And therefore, imposing pressures to the city's fiscal sustainability.

Resistance to Change. The city's suburban development patterns are incompatible with evolving workplace preferences and priorities. High office vacancies reflect the reduced demand for the city's suburban office parks. The lack of affordable multifamily rental units restricts entry-to-mid level professionals from living in Alpharetta. As the evolving Gen-Z workforce population seeks flexible workplaces integrated with work-live-play destinations, Alpharetta-based businesses are likely to face recruitment challenges. And therefore, increasing the likelihood of relocating their operations elsewhere, taking away vital jobs and spending resources. As other places in Fulton County, including Atlanta, offer stronger assets to support the livability of Gen-Z workers, business investment will likely follow. Attracting Gen-Z workers is essential to Alpharetta's economic development efforts, as the city faces impending labor shortages as a result of an aging population.

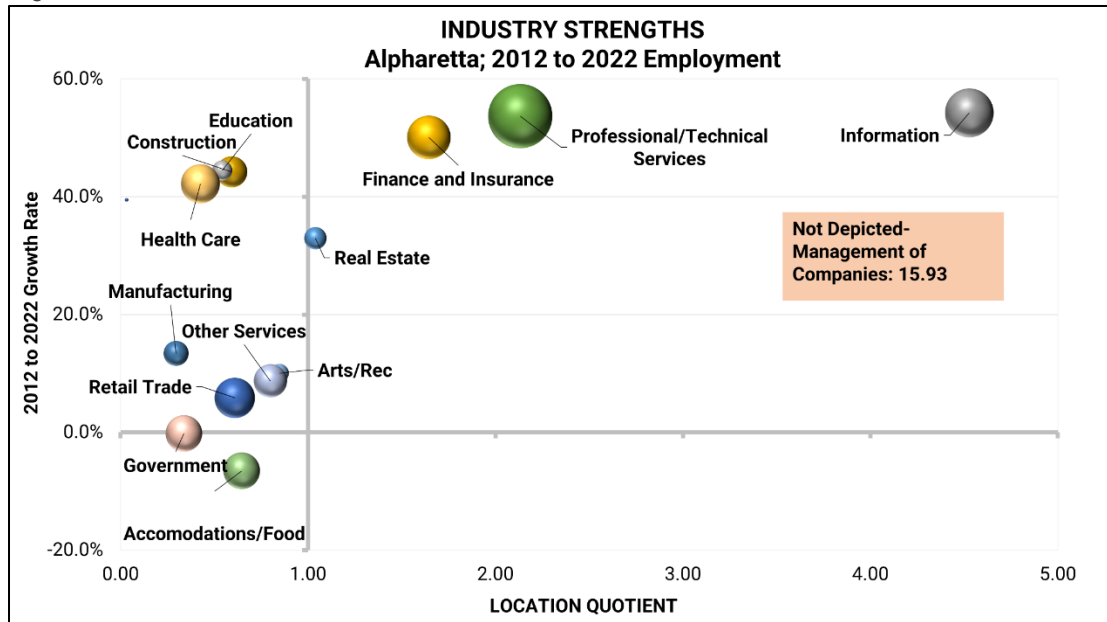
F. TARGET INDUSTRIES

The identification of the above target industries involved a complex vetting process, accounting for multiple factors. The process began with a cluster analysis, assessing industry at the basic NAICS 2-digit level to gain a baseline understanding of Alpharetta's industry strengths. Figure 4-9 on page 2-17 illustrates the three main drivers of an industry's cluster score: its size in terms of number of jobs in the City of Alpharetta (bubble size), its location quotient (LQ) or job concentration relative to the Atlanta MSA (x-axis), and employment growth rate in the City of Alpharetta (y-axis). The chart indicates that Alpharetta's largest job concentrations relative to the Atlanta MSA are Management of Companies (LQ: 15.93) and Information (LQ: 4.53).

Each 2-digit NAICS industry was then assessed to gauge their capacity to expand based on local socioeconomic trends, real estate conditions, and conversations with local stakeholders. Following this assessment, RKG identified the following target industries for the City of Alpharetta to pursue in the near-term:

- *Software Development and IT Services*
- *Research & Development: Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences*
- *Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism*
- *Entrepreneurship and Innovation*

Figure 4-15



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Table 4-6 on page 2-18 includes a collection of subindustries allocated under each of the above identified target industries. Market indicators provide justification that these subindustries can support further employment expansions within the City of Alpharetta. If applicable, a subindustry will correspond with a specific 6-digit NAICS code.

The following sections include a snapshot of the identified target industries, broadly describing relevant labor market trends and socioeconomic conditions and justifying the industry's potential for future expansions. Specific subindustries are discussed, but most recommended strategies and policies will apply to all the subindustries among each target industry. For instance, policies focused on expanding the Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services industry (NAICS: 518210) will be largely like policies focused on expanding the Software Publishers industry (NAICS: 511210).

Table 4-6- Target Industries and Corresponding Subindustries

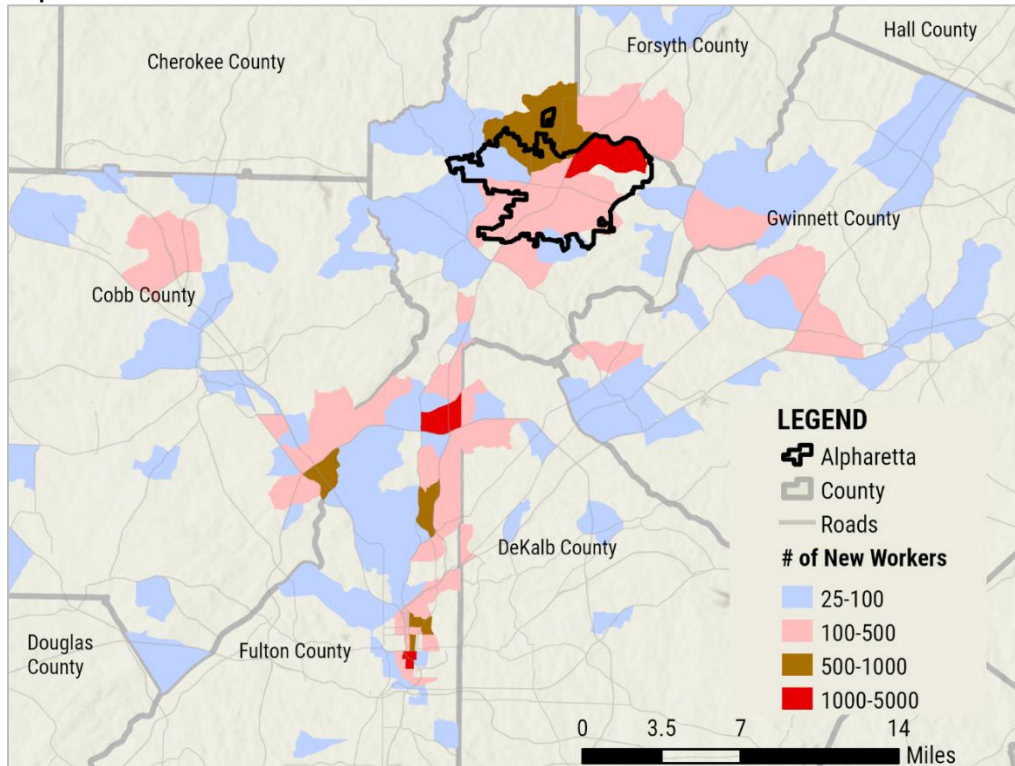
Software Development and IT Services	
Subindustries	NAICS Code (If Applicable)
Software Publishers	511210
Data Processing and Hosting	518210
Custom Computer Programming	541511
Computer Systems Design Services	541512
FinTech	N/A
MedTech	N/A
Cybersecurity	N/A
Cloud Computing	N/A
eGaming	N/A
R&D: Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences	
Subindustries	NAICS Code (If Applicable)
R&D-Biotechnology	541714
R&D- Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences	541715
Irradiation Apparatus Manufacturing	334517
Switchgear and Switchboard Manufacturing	335313
Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing	334413
Pharmaceutical Prep Manufacturing	325412
Electromedical Manufacturing	334510
Medical Instrument Manufacturing	339112
AI Systems	N/A
Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism	
Subindustries	NAICS Code (If Applicable)
Continuing Care Retirement Communities	623311
Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	623312
Medical Laboratories	621511
Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	713940
Offices of Podiatrists	621391
Offices of Physical Therapists	621340
Offices of Physicians	621111
Sports Training and Rehabilitation Services	N/A
Psychiatric Care	N/A
Entrepreneurship and Innovation	
Subindustries	NAICS Code (If Applicable)
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	541990
Software Publishers	511210
Medical Laboratories	453998
R&D-Biotechnology	541714
R&D- Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences	541715
Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing	334111
Computer Systems Design Services	541512
Artificial Intelligence Systems	N/A
Independent Retailers	N/A

Source: Lightcast, Stakeholder Interviews, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

1. Software Development and IT Services

Alpharetta has evolved into a major technology-based hub, centralizing hundreds of Software Development and IT services businesses while developing specialized market segments such as FinTech and Cybersecurity. Recent labor market trends in Alpharetta provide a source of attraction for Software Development and IT Services businesses considering relocation options throughout the Atlanta MSA. A top site-selection priority for these types of businesses is locating near areas that provide accessibility to a highly skilled, technical workforce. Among the Atlanta MSA, Alpharetta's employment base underwent substantial expansions of computer and mathematics occupations in the previous twelve years (Map 4-2).

Map 4-2



Source: Lightcast, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

In this time frame, Alpharetta captured a net-gain of 4,000 software developers; an integral subset of computer and mathematics occupations equipped with in-demand skillsets essential for supporting software product development and business operations. That includes skills in key computer programming languages (e.g., Java) and data algorithms. The concentration of workers with these skillsets can facilitate the city's business recruitment and retention efforts among the Software Development and IT Services industry. The prevalence of a highly skilled, technical workforce is one Alpharetta's competitive advantages as this industry undergoes macroeconomic expansions (Table 4-7).

While the City of Alpharetta possesses various competitive advantages for fueling industry expansions, evolving macroeconomic trends can threaten the city's efforts to recruit and retain

businesses. In Fulton County, the unemployment rate for computer and mathematics occupations is below 2%; an extremely tight labor market for recruiting qualified workers. The reduced availability of qualified workers can discourage Software Development and IT Services businesses from moving their operations to Alpharetta. Likewise, existing local-based businesses may be prone to leave Alpharetta, in favor of areas that offer better prospects for recruitment. This is especially in the face of compounding recruitment pressures that stem from tighter labor conditions. Prospective employees are demanding much higher salary expectations than ever before; many Alpharetta-based businesses are not able to pay these higher salaries and are therefore forced to nearshore or even offshore recruits. Compounded with rising local costs-of-living, Alpharetta becomes less viable for Software Development and IT Services businesses to manage increasing overhead costs. Under these circumstances, the city is increasingly prone to reduced business investment and potential job losses.

Alpharetta's marketing brand is coined as 'The Technology City of the South.' The city has earned that brand; home to more than 600 technology-based businesses and the highest concentration of software developers in the Atlanta MSA. A progressively challenging market climate, however, coupled with shifting workplace preferences accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic (remote work) can threaten Alpharetta's long-term sustainability to retain industry investment. The City of Alpharetta must consider a comprehensive approach, implementing numerous key tools and initiatives to sustain job growth among Software Development and IT Services Businesses.

Table 4-7

Software Development and IT Services
Alpharetta Advantages and Market Rationales
• Most software occupations relative to Atlanta MSA • Recruitment opportunities from regional universities • Cross-industry workforce adaptability • Facilitate local creation of spin-off industries; AI, Robotics • Presence of local tech incubator; Tech Alpharetta • Presence of corporations can finance innovation • Specialized segments for tech agglomerations; FinTech, MedTech

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Table 4-8

Software Development and IT Services
Alpharetta Disadvantages and Market Pressures
• Near-shoring/off-shoring workers • Minimal living options affordable to entry-level workers • Live-work-play amenities compatible for young professionals • Competition with expanding tech hubs; Atlanta, Gwinnett County • Labor cost hikes can restrict entrepreneurship • Limited venture capital resource structure/platform • Shifting workplace pressures; urban accessibility, remote work

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Key Tools and Initiatives:

Expanding opportunities for young professionals. Access to a young skilled talent among Software Development & IT Services is a top priority in today's increasingly competitive marketplace. This priority provides justification for the substantial investment activities occurring in the City of Atlanta. Technology-based businesses seek to capitalize on their recruitment efforts through greater proximity to a young skilled talent base nearing graduation and transitioning into the workforce. The City of Alpharetta can expand their base of young skilled talent through providing opportunities that cater to the living preferences of an evolving Gen-Z population. That includes providing sufficient housing units affordable to entry-level professionals and expanding the city's presence of work-live-play destinations.

Upskilling existing workforce through consistent stakeholder cooperation. The rapid pace of technological and software innovation yields constant demands on Software Development and IT Services businesses to adapt and remain competitive. This can require their workers to keep up to date with evolving new skillsets. The City of Alpharetta can facilitate cooperation with Tech Alpharetta, existing businesses, and local educational institutions to ensure local workforce development programs meet the skillset demands of Alpharetta-based businesses. Consequently, expanding the quantity of workers qualified and prepared for shifting job opportunities. This effort can be critical for stabilizing the labor market recruitment conditions for existing Alpharetta-based businesses.

2. R&D: Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences:

Advanced Manufacturing

The use of innovative, state-of-the-art methodologies and technologies that enhance the efficiency of traditional manufacturing production processes. Through advanced manufacturing, processes incorporate Information Communication Technology (ICT)—robotics, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems. While the field of Advanced Manufacturing continues to evolve, production-based sectors—e.g., logistics, automotive—invest in ICT systems such as 3D printers to improve their bottom line, supporting cost efficiencies and expediting life cycles.

Due to real estate limitations and local barriers, scalable manufacturing facilities are not economically or socially viable. Minimal industrial spaces exist, scarce development opportunities are available, and residents may demonstrate opposition to potential negative externalities from scaled production—air pollution. However, the city is equipped with critical resources and conditions for facilitating R&D activities, the initial exploratory stages of innovating advanced manufacturing technologies (Table 4-9).

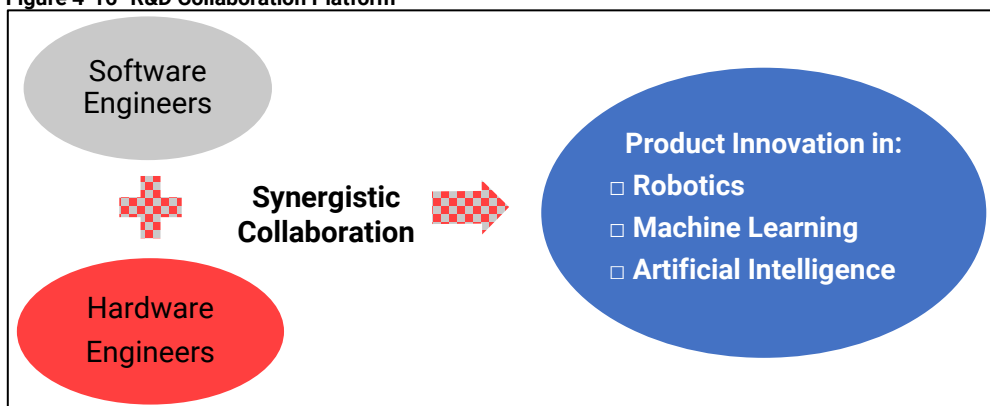
High concentrations of software and hardware engineering workers are employed in Alpharetta and across the Atlanta MSA. Many of these workers are likely equipped with computer programming and computation skillsets, which can be channeled towards the development of software applications into intelligent hardware systems. This includes the creation of artificial intelligence systems embedded within robotics. The cross-collaboration between the region's concentrations of software and hardware engineers can be an effective tool towards researching & developing innovative products. Alpharetta can capitalize on this cross-collaboration, supporting business expansions within established and emerging market segments. This includes—but not limited to—FinTech, MedTech, Cybersecurity, Biotechnologies, Pharmaceutical Manufacturing.

R&D for advanced manufacturing systems has maintained a presence in the City of Alpharetta. Since 2010, a substantial number of patents were granted to Alpharetta-based corporations that relate to Information Communication Technologies (ICT), instrumental applications for enabling autonomous systems. This includes Siemens, Verint Americas, and Landis + Gyr. Major corporations like these execute high-volume R&D investments. Many investments, however, may be outsourced to technical teams and R&D facilities on other domestic or international locations. Outsourcing can be a consequence of a local inaccessibility to critical resources needed for many R&D activities related to testing and experimentation, advanced machinery, laboratory spaces, available workers with key skillsets.

Life Sciences

These capital needs are transferable to other target industry segments, including R&D activities in Life-Sciences. Life-Sciences is the study of living organisms and biological processes to make useful products across a variety of industries--pharmaceuticals, food processing, biofuels etc. An aging population and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic are accelerating R&D investments, as pre-clinical development trials have rapidly unfolded. R&D-related activities in the life-sciences industry involves substantial capital costs, significant regulatory hurdles (FDA approvals), and long-term product development life cycles.

Figure 4-16- R&D Collaboration Platform



Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

To enhance cost-efficiencies and mitigate risks, life sciences companies are prone to form institutional partnerships with advanced research universities and/or federally funded health agencies (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Through these partnerships, institutions provide life sciences companies with the core infrastructure to execute R&D processes; Especially, access to lab-trained research experts in advanced scientific fields and state-of-the-art lab spaces.

Alpharetta's minimal infrastructure—lack of R1: Doctoral Universities, lab spaces---for executing R&D activities in life-sciences fields can reduce the city's attractiveness to industry businesses. Life-sciences companies exist in Alpharetta; however, many may just maintain their corporate operations within the city limits; outsourcing early-stage research and clinical trials to research institutions outside the city. For instance, Ennaid Therapeutics, an Alpharetta-based biopharmaceutical company, outsourced pre-clinical research to the Universidad Catolica de Murcia (UCAM) in Spain. Clearside Biomedical, an Alpharetta-based biotechnology firm, developed its initial proprietary technology through doctorates at Georgia Tech.

Due to the proximity to world class research universities and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most investments in life sciences target the City of Atlanta. Major upcoming projects include the Technology Enterprise Park and the Center for Global Health Innovation, adding hundreds of thousands of square feet of lab space to attract existing life sciences companies and facilitate emerging startups. While lab spaces become operational over the next few years, venture capital financing activity for startups is projected to concentrate around Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, and Emory University. While most life sciences and biotechnology investments will continue to unfold in the City of Atlanta, feasible opportunities exist for the City of Alpharetta to capitalize. This will involve the complex interaction of regional industry-vertical partnerships, leveraging local labor talent (software engineers), and creating incentives as a stimulus for innovation.

Table 4-9

R&D: Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences
Alpharetta Advantages and Market Rationales
• High concentrations of software and hardware engineers • Emerging regional sector presence; Biotech in Atlanta • High skills transferability; Programming->AI • Facilitate local creation of spin-off industries; Digitalization in Biotech • Evidential Innovation Activities • Potential for cross-industry R&D partnerships between corporations • Community buy-in; City enacted legislation for R&D spaces

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Table 4-10

R&D: Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences

Alpharetta Disadvantages and Market Pressures

- Minimal existing and usable R&D and testing facilities
- Most investments targeting City of Atlanta; greater cost efficiencies
- Lack of educational/training programs for lab technicians
- Lack of affordable housing options for young engineers/scientists
- Limited funding platform for access to high-tech equipment
- Minimal innovation infrastructure; dense collaboration clusters
- Developable land to scale production; Forsyth capturing investment

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Key Tools and Initiatives:

Restructuring Real Estate Assets. In April 2022, the City of Alpharetta passed zoning legislation allowing office property owners to reconvert 50% of their spaces to lab or research & development spaces without council approval. This legislation creates an opportunity to backfill operations at declining suburban office parks and attract investment in life sciences activities. While state building codes stipulate restrictive barriers for ‘wet-labs’ in high rises, Alpharetta’s 3-4 story office buildings can offer a competitive price-point advantage relative to the City of Atlanta.

Capitalizing on Biotechnology’s Digitalization. Digitalization of biotechnology research and development processes is an emerging field within life sciences. That includes integrating software applications for data storage and process automation. Alpharetta-based MedTech businesses (e.g., Change Healthcare) can form industry-vertical partnerships with emerging biotech firms across the Atlanta MSA. And through this partnership, work to innovate software applications that can be integrated into biotech research & development processes. Cross-collaboration can be an effective tool for stimulating organic job growth in Alpharetta, localizing innovative activities, and sustaining daytime population patterns. MedTech businesses are prone to implement remote-working schedules, particularly for software engineers. The creation of R&D activities through industry-vertical partnerships can be a mechanism for attracting software engineers to work daily.

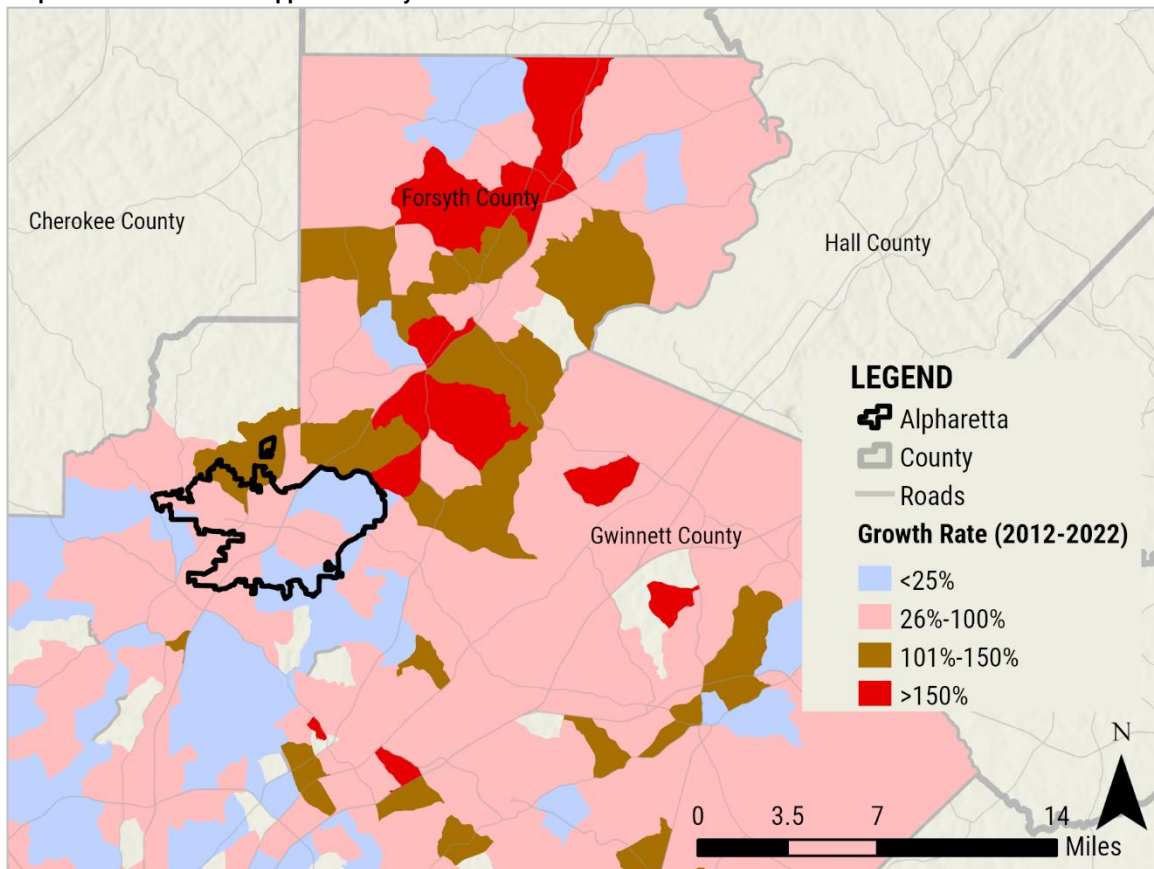
Expanding Price-Diversity of Rental Housing Options. While working remotely is feasible for Software Development & IT Services, biotech firms must conduct their operations in the lab. Alpharetta’s lack of affordable rental options can discourage biotech firms from moving to the city, as skilled researchers will likely favor living in places that provide better accessibility to lab spaces. Without sufficient rental housing options, the life sciences industry is unlikely to make a big impact in Alpharetta.

3. Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism

Healthcare services are projected to rise in demand over the next several years, as the city's population ages. Alpharetta may also absorb an influx of seniors from across the region, as seniors may be attracted to the city's quality-of-life amenities. The city has a strong healthcare presence to accommodate the growth of seniors, home to nationally recognized hospital systems and assisted living facilities. However, the availability of healthcare services faces threats due to rising affordability challenges and urban sprawl.

Alpharetta lacks sufficient workforce housing opportunities that are affordable for critical healthcare support roles (nursing assistants, home health aides, etc.) The lack of housing opportunities can encourage these medical professionals to live and work elsewhere, imposing potential labor shortages among critical healthcare support roles in Alpharetta. As investment activities continue to extend beyond Alpharetta and North Fulton County, other areas of the region are positioned to attract healthcare support workers. That includes Forsyth County and Gwinnett County, which experienced higher growth rates among these workers in the previous decade (Map 4-3).

Map 4-3- Growth Rate of Support Roles by Census Tract



Source: Lightcast, U.S. Census, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Attracting these roles is critical, as Alpharetta resident population continues to age and will consequently increase the local demand for medical services. Moreover, as discussed in previous sections of this report, access to quality healthcare is a critical factor for recruiting corporate offices to a community. As healthcare investments push towards other areas of the region, those areas may have a competitive edge for recruiting and retaining businesses in other sectors.

Medical Tourism-

Medical tourism is centralizing specialized healthcare activities to attract patients from outside the region. Centralization can be a strong marketing and branding tool to fuel investment activities into specialized medical research and job creation. The creation of a sports medicine destination demonstrates economic development potential in Alpharetta. Such a destination could be a pull factor for the region's substantive base of professional and youth athletes, attracted to athletic training and/or rehabilitation services.

Table 4-11

Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism
Alpharetta Advantages and Market Rationales
• Expanding household base and senior population • Large concentrations of high-income households • High-quality healthcare presence; Northside, Emory • Evolving sports medicine concept; • Regional participation of youth sports • Atlanta MSA professional athlete base • Presence of educational programs; Nursing at Gwinnett Tech

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Table 4-12

Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism
Alpharetta Disadvantages and Market Pressures
• Competition for healthcare resources throughout MSA • Transit accessibility to medical facilities • Key healthcare support roles more competitive outside city • Lack of affordable housing options for key healthcare support roles • Potential strains on healthcare resources given aging population

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Key Tools and Initiatives:

Expanding Price-Diversity of Housing Options. Without sufficient affordable housing options, critical healthcare workers are expected to live and work outside Alpharetta. Additional housing opportunities that accommodate the wages of nurses and physicians can sustain the quality and quantity of healthcare services in Alpharetta. The accessibility

to healthcare services is not only critical for seniors, but a critical factor for recruiting and retaining businesses in other industries.

Develop work-live-play destinations around Northside Alpharetta/Medical Campus. Typically, as people age their mobility declines. Locating senior housing within walking distance of the Northside Alpharetta/Medical Campus can increase their accessibility to healthcare. Moreover, additional work-live-play amenities around the medical campus can enhance the hospital's workforce recruitment efforts for young workers and physicians.

4. Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Entrepreneurship is an emerging component of Alpharetta's job creation efforts. Tech Alpharetta, Alpharetta's primary business incubator, was established in the previous decade amid the city's transition into a premier technology hub. Since its inception, the incubator has graduated several software-based businesses. Beyond tech-related entrepreneurial ventures, several service-based businesses originate within the city limits; 2B Whole Bakery and Smokejack BBQ are examples of Alpharetta-grown businesses, operating as popular food establishments in Downtown Alpharetta. While the city offers entrepreneurial support services for technology-based ventures, minimal resources are available for other industry segments. The City of Alpharetta must consider localizing more resources, in cooperation with Georgia State University and the UGA Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Table 4-13

Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Alpharetta Advantages and Market Rationales
• Highly skilled and educated population • Concentrations of workers in STEM-related roles • Strong quality of life amenities • Availability of existing office spaces • Affluence and presence of corporations • Tech Alpharetta and involvement of corporate sponsors • Diverifying population

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Table 4-14

Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Alpharetta Disadvantages and Market Pressures
• Extremely aggressive investment efforts in Atlanta; Big-Tech • Underdeveloped venture capital financing platform/structure • Limited base of young professionals • High costs of living can discourage start-up scalability • Lack of usable R&D facilities with lab spaces and equipment • Centralized location for sectors beyond tech

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

Key Tools and Initiatives:

Identify industry-vertical partnerships. Substantial investments are targeting Gwinnett County, generating thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in advanced scientific research and technological innovation projects. That includes Peachtree Corners' Curiosity Labs, a high-tech laboratory implemented through emerging R&D business models that facilitates startups, innovation, and workforce recruitment. The project was implemented through strong public-private partnerships, as corporate sponsors provided financial support for infrastructure and state-of-the-art equipment. The project gained success through public-private partnerships with industry crossovers; T-Mobile provided 5-G infrastructure to fuel innovation in robotics and autonomous vehicles. This project represents the importance of partnerships for catalyzing technological innovation and how Alpharetta can undertake a similar approach to enhance their startup ecosystem.

5 OPPORTUNITY SITE ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

Most industries are in flux, constantly readjusting to shifts in macroeconomic pressures, market trends, and technological innovation. While these shifts unfold, businesses within industries are prone to change their real estate requirements. For instance, as virtual-work models continue to normalize, many businesses are seeking to downsize their office space needs. This is particularly impactful in Alpharetta, as Financial Technology (FinTech) and Medical Technology (MedTech) have sustained some of the most aggressive remote working policies since the COVID-19 pandemic. Strategic real estate investments can be an essential source for sustaining industry expansions within Alpharetta, reconfiguring properties in the City to meet industry-specific real estate requirements, and strengthening the City's competitiveness in attracting new firms to backfill vacated office space. RKG Associates coordinated with the Advisory Group to identify and assess economic activity areas within Alpharetta that offer properties with catalytic real estate investment opportunities. Based on a variety of locational and market factors, 9 economic activity areas within the City were evaluated (Map 5-1):

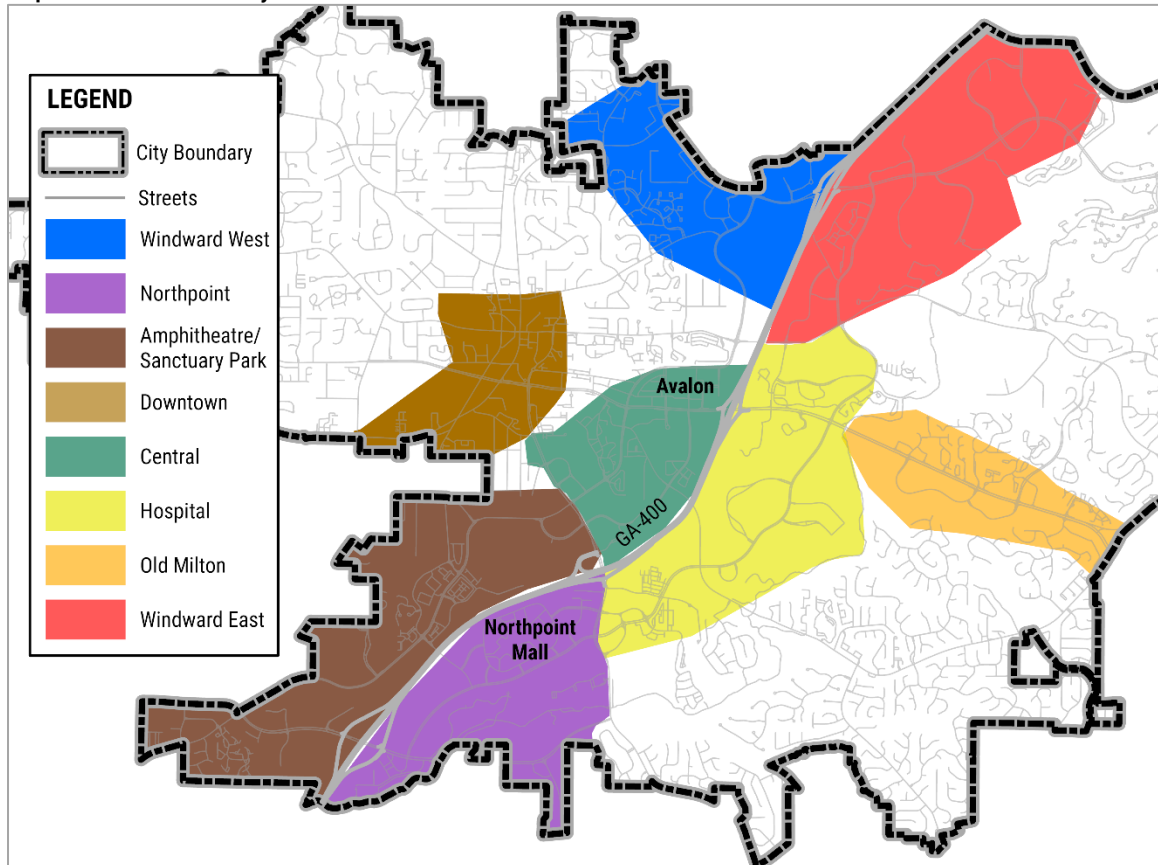
- Downtown
- Central
- Hospital
- Northpoint
- Old Milton
- Amphitheatre Area
- Sanctuary Park Area
- Windward East
- Windward West

The evaluated economic activity areas contain high concentrations of commercial activities, a strong foundation to build upon. Multiple properties were identified in each area to accommodate infill development, adaptive reuse, or redevelopment. The properties within each economic activity area demonstrate a potential to attract and sustain business investment. Several physical, spatial, and political factors were considered to determine the properties with the greatest investment potential:

- *Parcel Size* – The size of the parcel determines the scale of the development opportunity. Larger parcels can more easily accommodate infill or redevelopment.
- *Vacancies* – Undeveloped parcels and buildings with high vacancies offer an easier transition to infill, adaptive reuse, or redevelopment opportunities.

- **Land Uses** – Incompatible land uses given the context of the overall commercial corridor were considered for adaptive reuse or redevelopment opportunities (underutilized parking lots in suburban office parks).

Map 5-1- Economic Activity Areas



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates, Inc., 2022

- **City Priority Areas** – Specific economic activity areas contain properties that have generated interest and proposals from the development community (North Point Mall, Continuum)
- **Underutilized Properties** – Properties with Floor Area Ratios (FAR) below .25 are considered underutilized. Increasing the densities of properties in walkable, mixed-use economic activity centers (Avalon) can build upon its success.
- **Employment Patterns and Daytime Population** – Properties near concentrated employment clusters, especially in proximity to facilities that relate to the City's identified target industries (Healthcare).

- ***Ownership patterns*** – Assessing properties of their existing ownership structures. Adjacent properties may have different owners, which can increase the complexity of investment strategies (Assemblage)
- ***Proposed & Planned Developments*** – To ensure recommended investment opportunities are compatible with the vision of proposed or planned developments in the City’s pipeline.

The following sections discuss the existing development conditions and a proposed vision for each of the economic activity areas. The intent is to strengthen or redefine the areas to maximize their economic expansions while advancing towards the City’s long-term economic development goals. Pages 13-39 in this chapter includes 3 maps for each distinct subarea: [1] Current Land Uses, [2] Development Conditions, [3] Opportunity Sites.

B. OPPORTUNITY AREAS

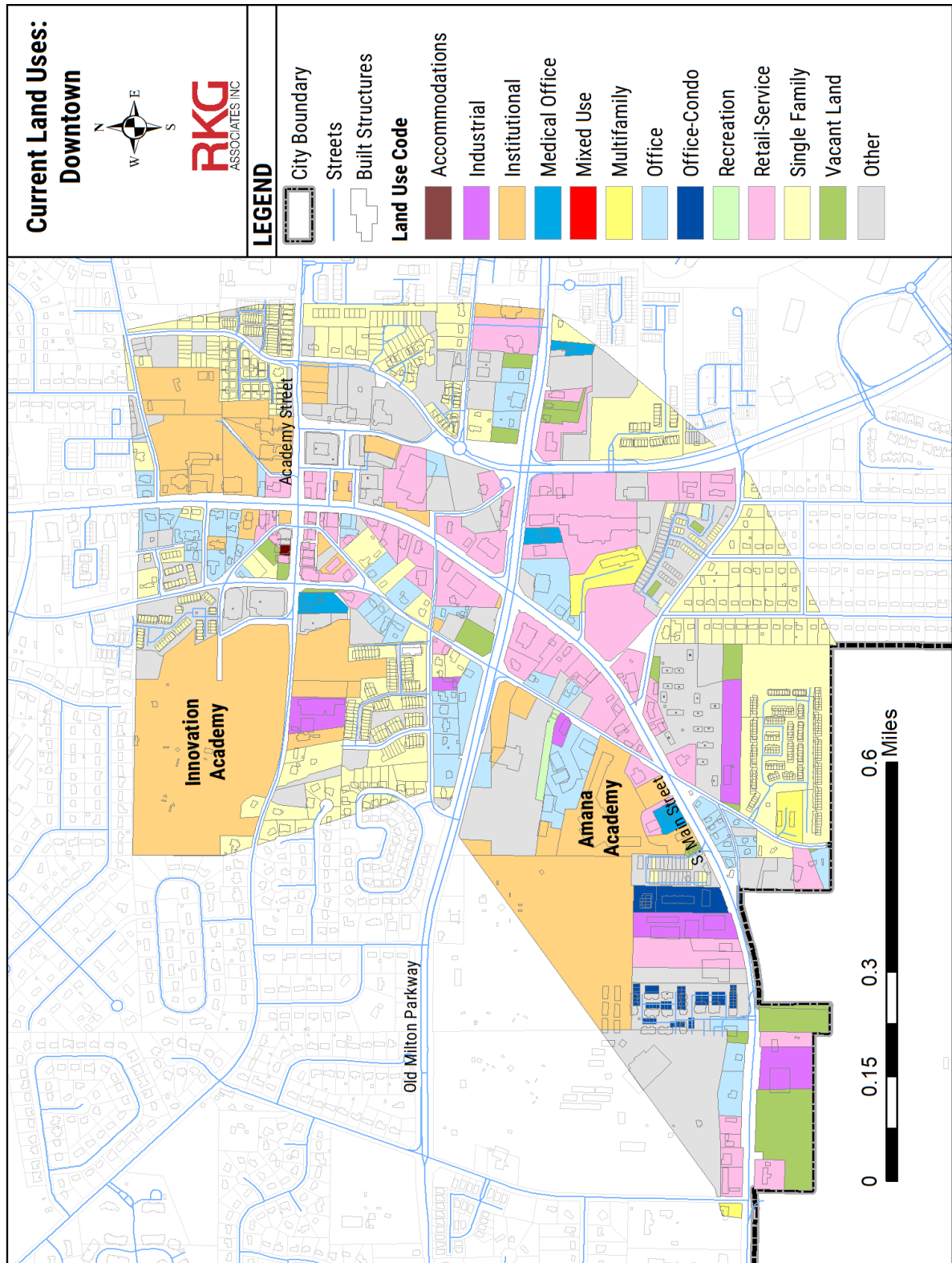
1. Downtown

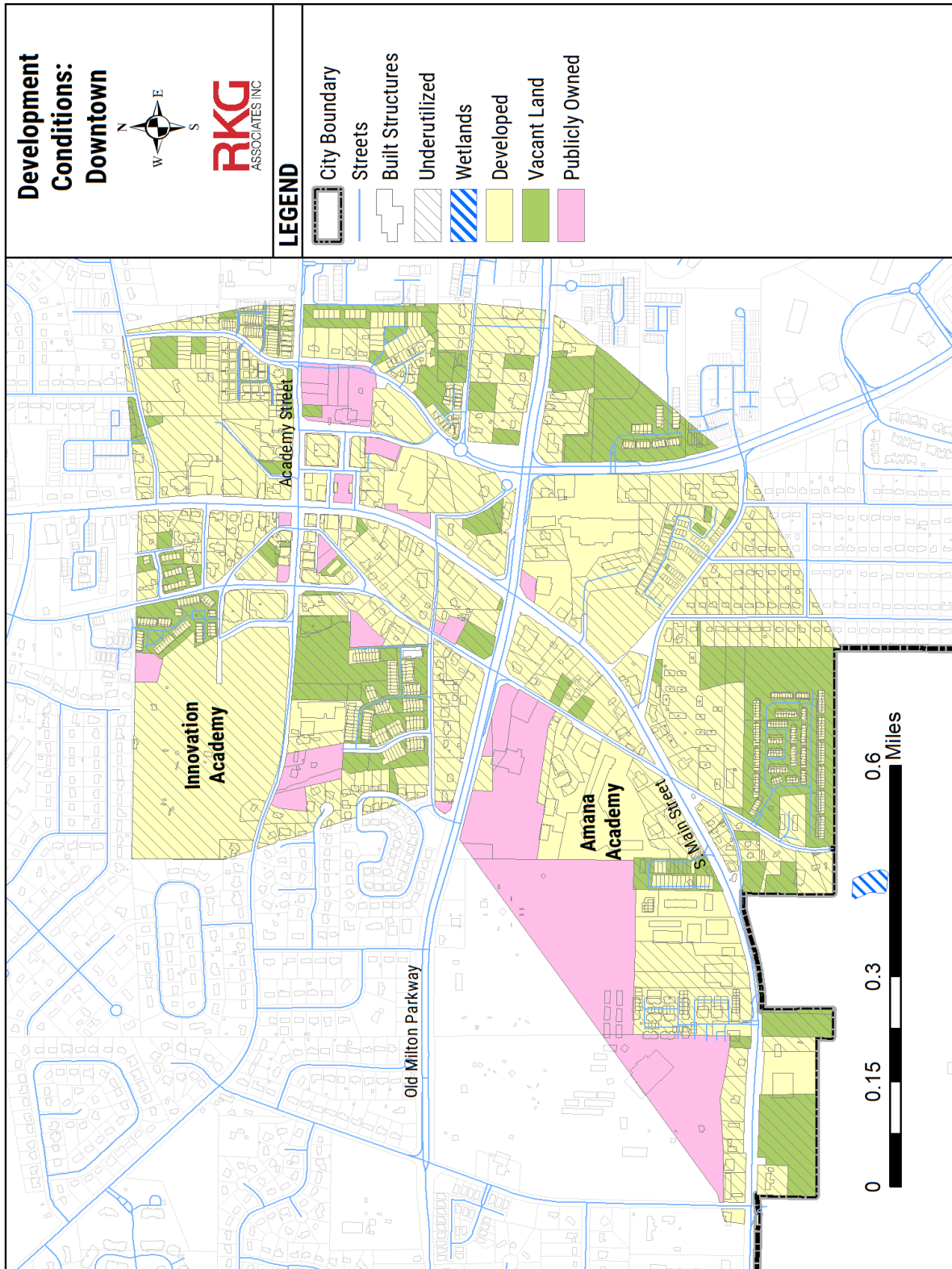
Overview

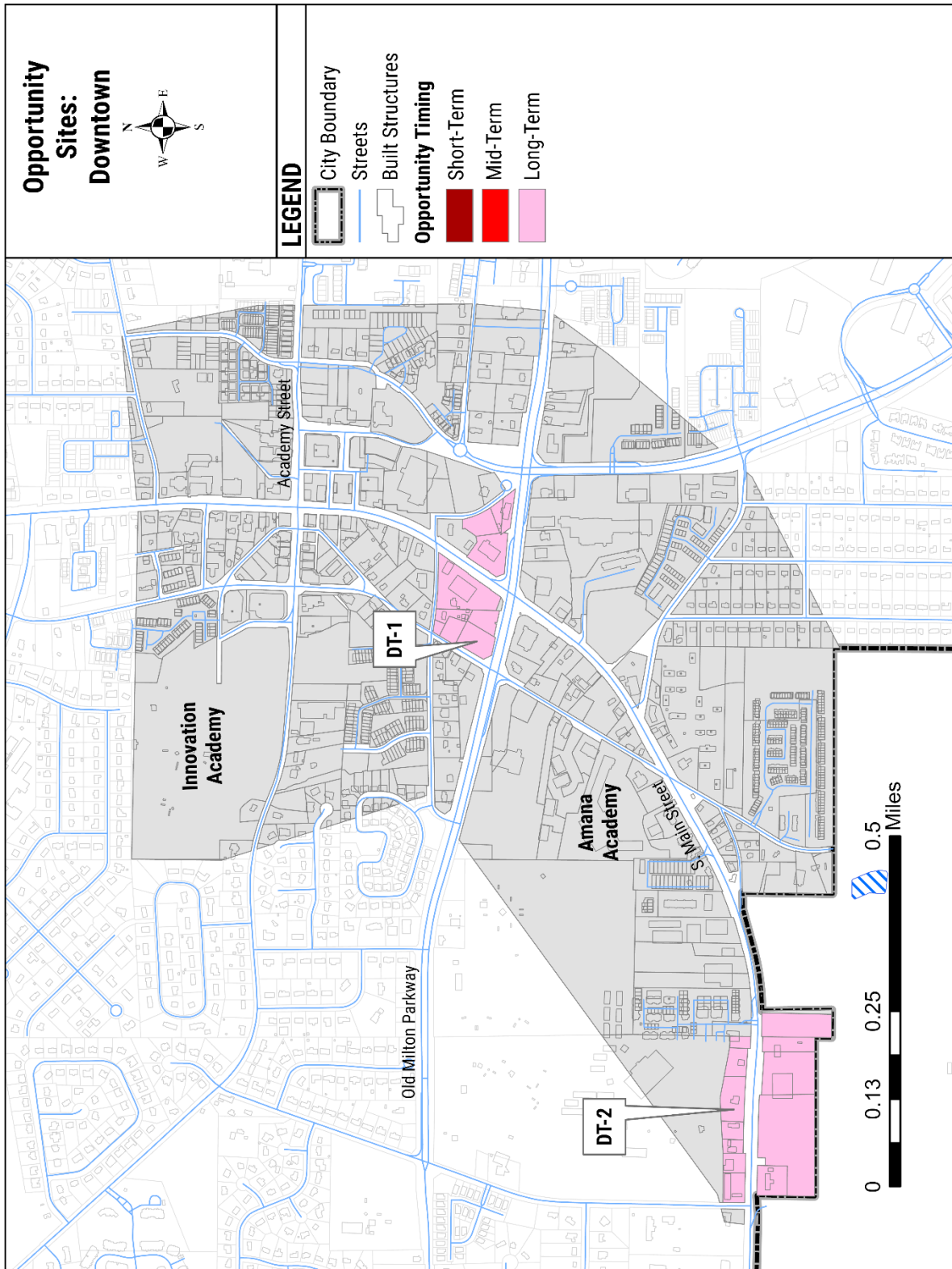
Downtown Alpharetta spans along the City’s southern boundary to Cumming Street to the North. Main Street serves as the neighborhood’s commercial core, equipped with a variety of retail and hospitality amenities. Downtown Alpharetta is considered a community-centric destination, designed to be pedestrian-friendly to support socialization and connection among the City’s residents. Major recent projects have strengthened the economic and social vitality of Downtown Alpharetta. City Center, a mixed-use development integrated with vertical multifamily units, has helped enhance the neighborhood’s walkability and street-life activities.

Vision

Downtown Alpharetta’s emergence into a mixed-use walkable destination can benefit the City’s economic development efforts. City Center has increased levels of walkability and street life, exposing neighborhood retailers to an expanded consumer base. The addition of multifamily housing units can expand consumer activities beyond traditional workday hours (9 A.M.-5 P.M.). Enhanced access to community-based amenities raises the City’s quality-of-life standards, an attractive asset for corporations interested in relocating their operations to Alpharetta. The Downtown Area is equipped to absorb greater levels of investment activities to expand upon the neighborhood’s work-live-play concept. Infill development strategies can be utilized, tightening the connectivity between lifestyle amenities while further enhancing walkability. Additional vertical mixed-use development projects with ground-floor retail and housing units on the upper floors can expand the critical mass for consumer activities and can enhance the City’s business recruitment efforts.







2. Central

Overview

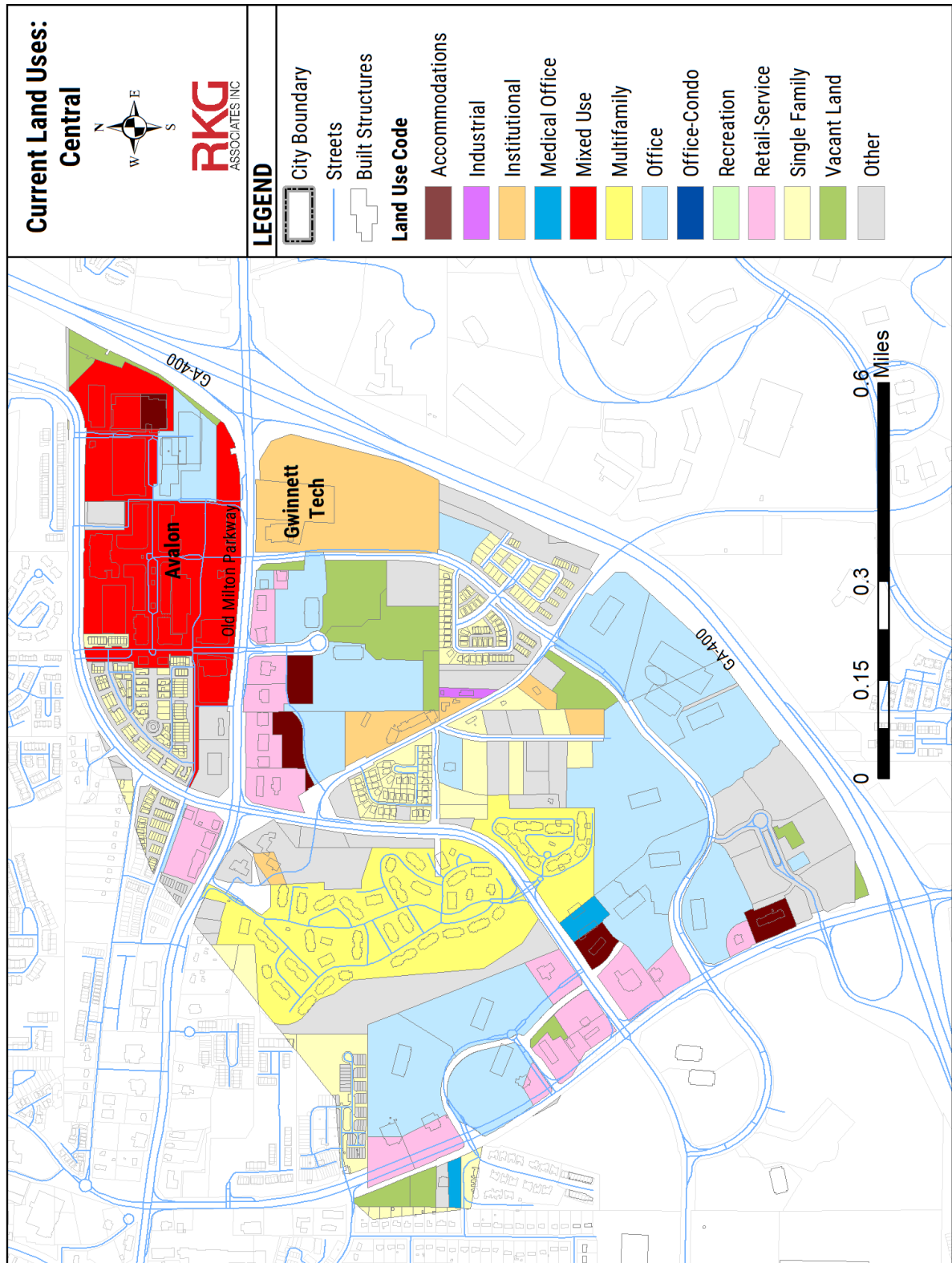
The Central activity center extends from Avalon to the interchange of GA-400 and Haynes Bridge Road. The neighborhood focal point is Avalon, the City's premier mixed-use lifestyle destination that has catalyzed expansions to the City's business and household bases. Avalon's developmental scale and commercial intensity is a state-of-the-art concept for Alpharetta, raising the City's quality-of-life standards which has become an essential source for attracting business investment.

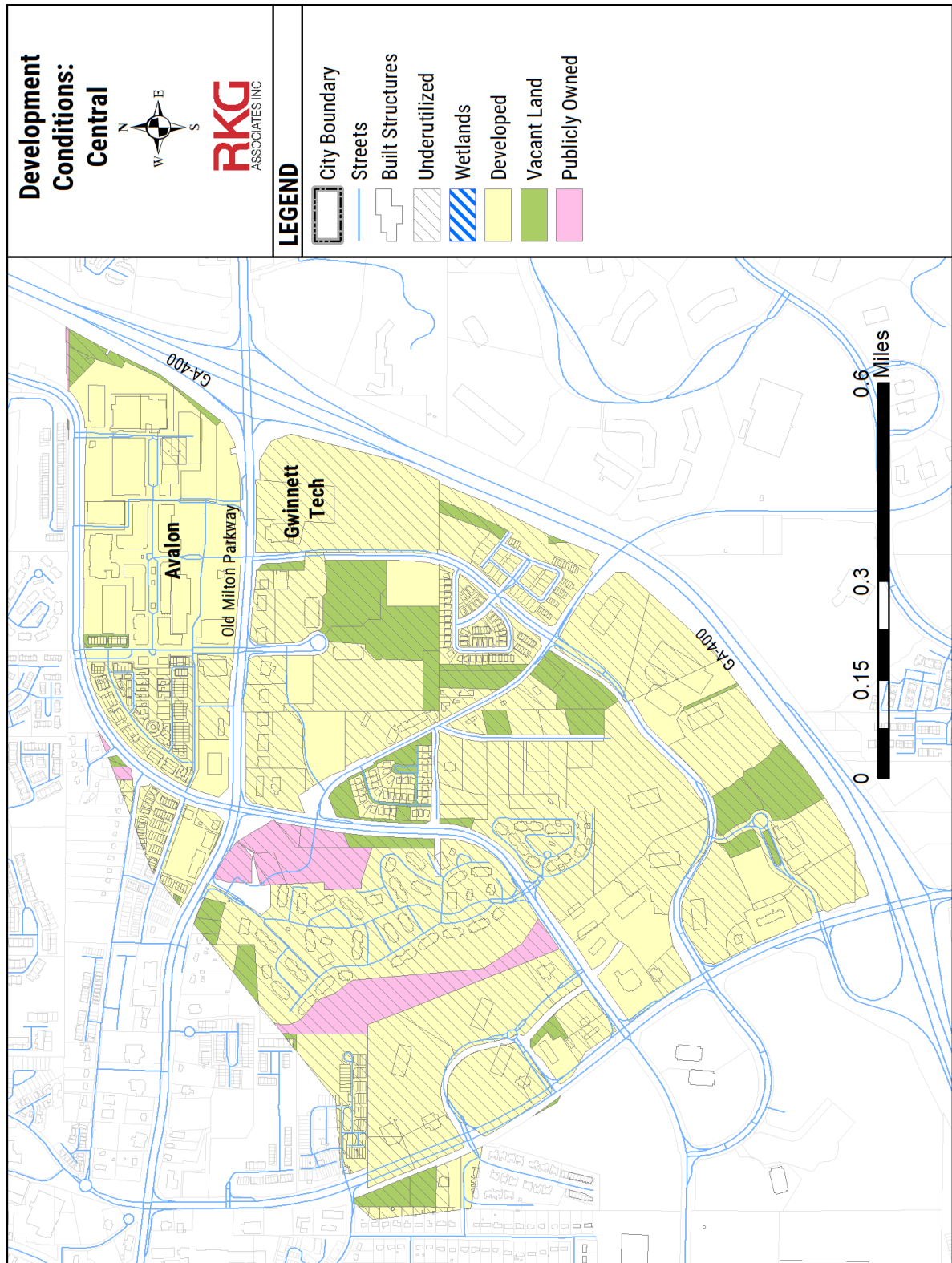
Vision

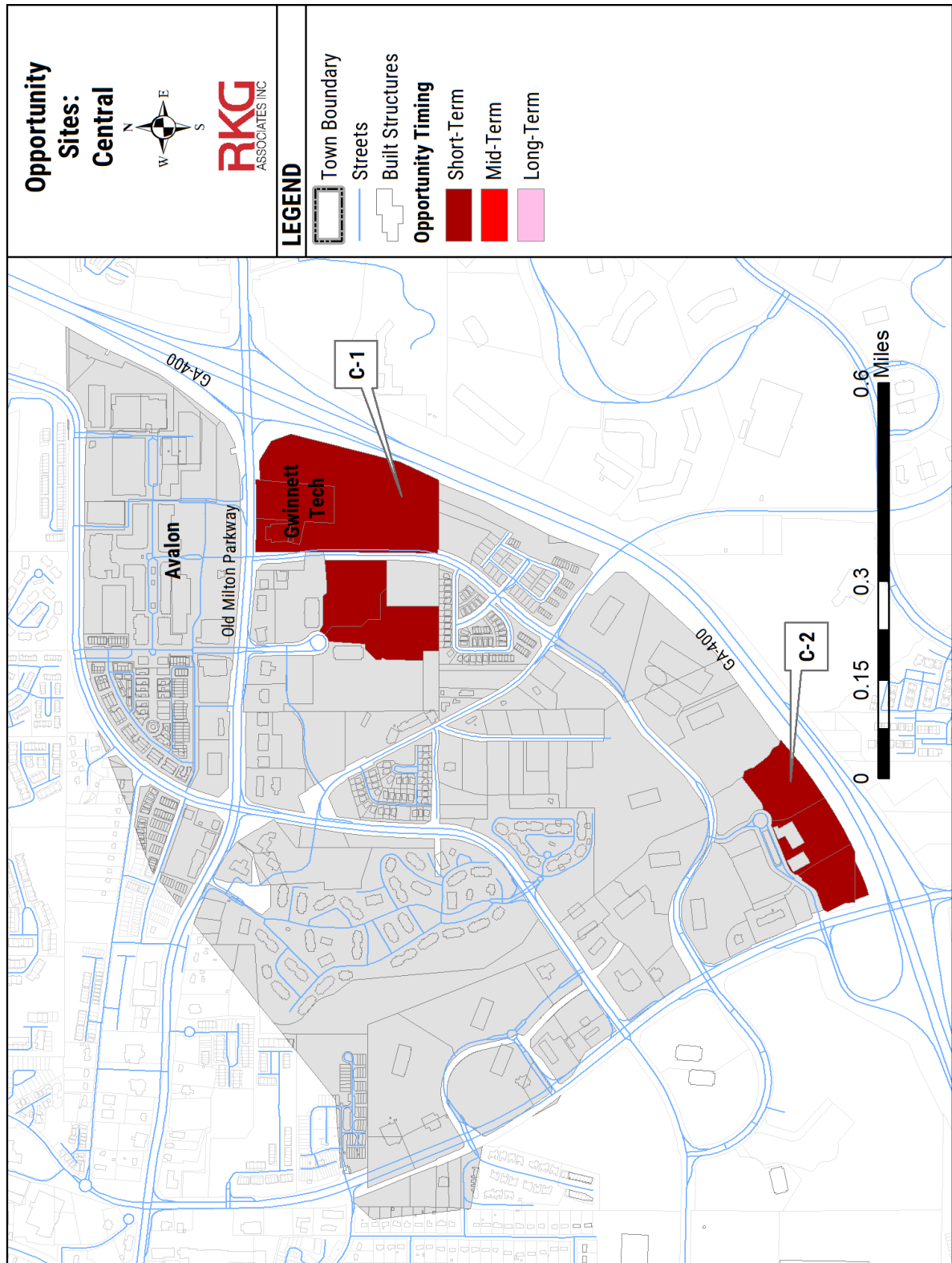
Additional development opportunities can build upon the commercial success and momentum of Avalon, expanding the mixed-use development concept to other parts of the Central activity area. The concept has proven to be a strategic medium for filling office spaces, expanding consumer retail activities, and establishing a sense of destination to enhance community-development objectives. To increase the likelihood that additional development opportunities can advance this concept in the long-term, enhancing physical connectivity and social accessibility must be an overriding objective of each strategy. This includes providing the infrastructure to support pedestrian-scale walkability across Old Milton Parkway. Moreover, expanding the price-diversity of housing options can create the critical mass needed to ensure the area's long-term economic sustainability.

Short-Term Strategies

- C-1, Infill Development w/Structured Parking: Substantial infill development opportunities exist across Old Milton Parkway on Gwinnet Tech's campus. The parcels land resources are largely underutilized, with ample greenspaces and parking lots ripe for catalytic infill development. RKG recommends that these parcels incorporate infill development at the same scale as Avalon, to expand commercial activities and the built character through pedestrian connections over Old Milton Parkway. Structured parking can help maximize land efficiencies while generating high value returns.
- C-2, Infill Development w/Structured Parking: Coordinate a public-private partnership between existing property owners for infill development projects with structured parking that strengthen the marketability of nearby commercial properties.







3. Hospital

Overview

The Hospital activity area consists of parcels adjacent and east of GA-400, extending between Webb Bridge Road and Haynes Bridge Road. Near Haynes Bridge Road are a collection of strip-development retail centers, which manage to remain operational due to access to GA-400. The center of the activity area is a cluster of suburban-scale office properties, including the Royal Centre office park which report high vacancy rates. High vacancies reflect shifts in workplace preferences, as businesses increasingly prefer locating in highly-amenitized areas. The northern edge of the activity area is the Northside/Alpharetta Medical Campus, which contains the City's largest concentration of medical professionals. Targeting investments near the medical campus can strengthen the hospital's long-term operations and the City's efforts to sustain job growth in healthcare sector segments.

Vision

Several suburban-scale office properties are underutilized, which offers opportunities for infill development or adaptive reuse projects to revitalize declining commercial activities. These opportunities can capitalize on the proximity to Northside/Alpharetta Medical Campus while generating positive recruitment externalities that can enhance the hospital's long-term operations. This can include locating work-live-play opportunities with pedestrian connectivity to the hospital, offering a source of attraction to healthcare services professionals. Adaptive reuse projects can incorporate Public-Private Partnerships with the Northside/Alpharetta Medical Campus to help facilitate conversions to lab spaces for life-sciences research. And consequently, catalyze a built environment for innovation in ancillary industries to develop (Biotech, MedTech).

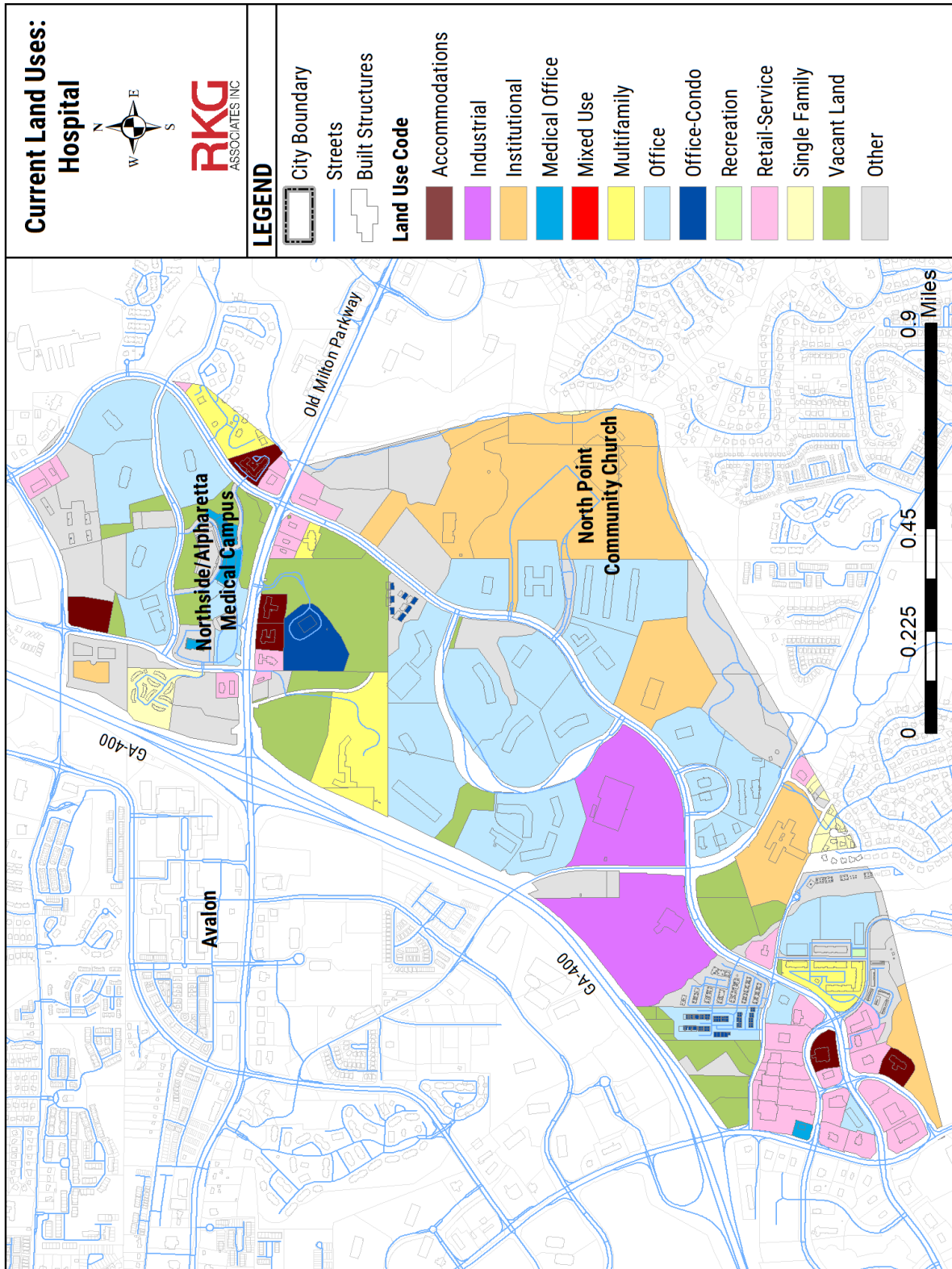
Short-Term Strategies

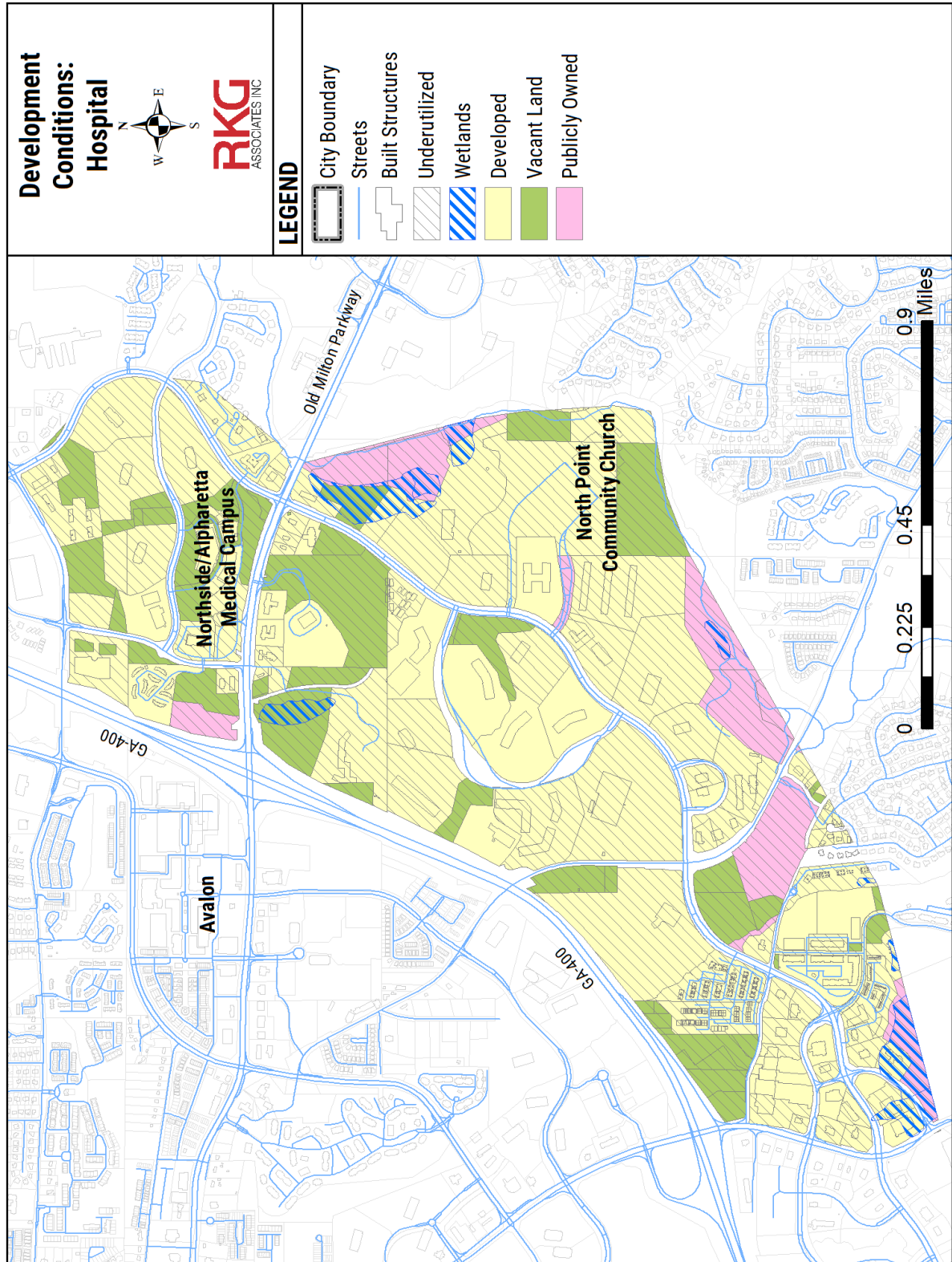
- H-1, Infill Development/Adaptive Reuse: These suburban-scale properties are located within the Royal Centre office park and report high vacancy rates due to decreased demand for these office space types. These properties offer potential opportunities for infill development with living and entertainment amenities to revive declining commercial activities. Or rather, engage with landlords and the medical campus to explore the financial feasibility for adaptive reuse projects that integrate lab-spaces for research or light manufacturing.

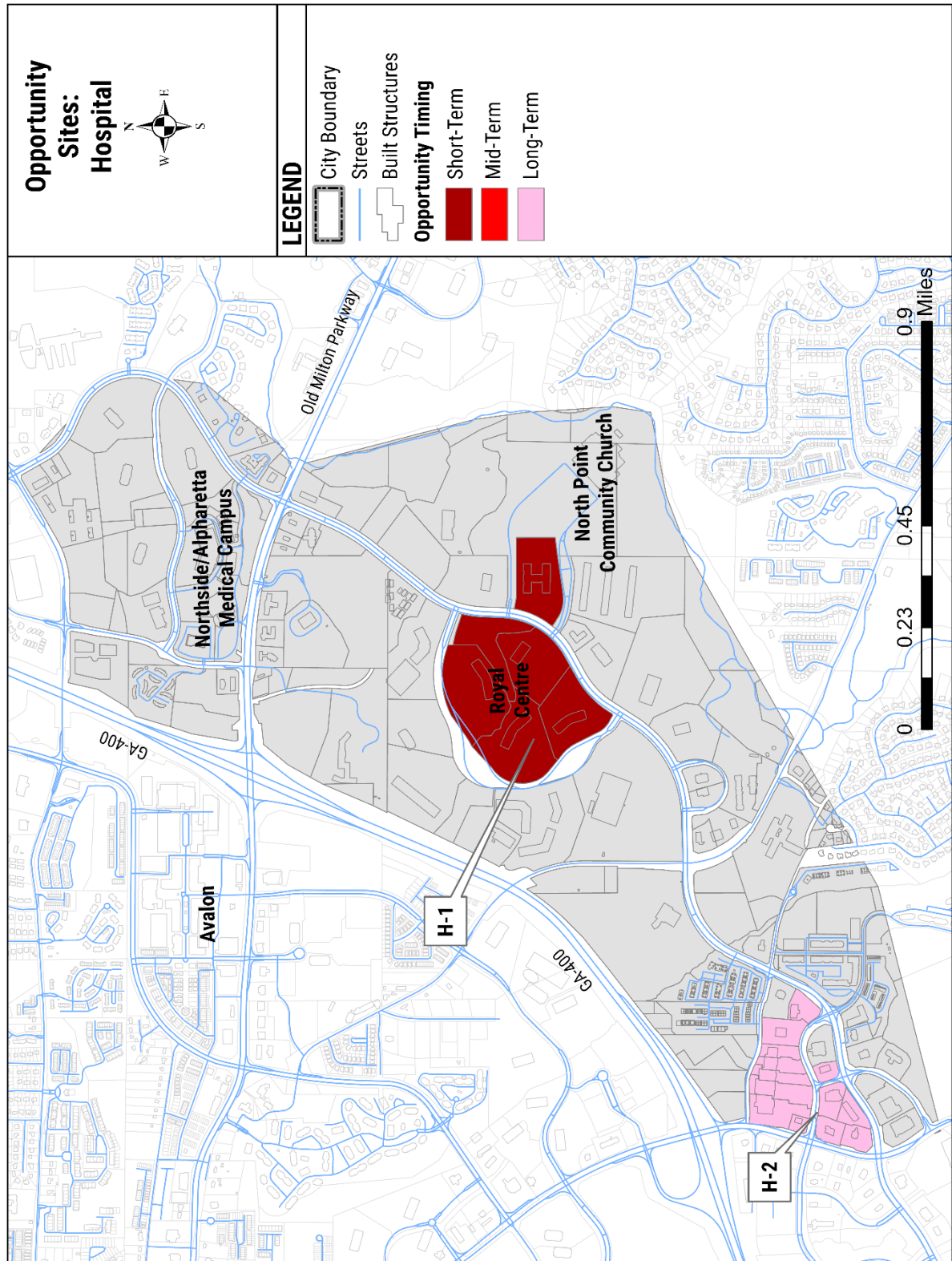
Long-Term Strategies

- H-2, Assemblage: A collection of retail-service properties are located between North Point Parkway and Rock Mill Road. Assemblage of these properties can be used for redevelopment/infill development opportunities that can increase land-use efficiencies and add more commercial activities. Reinvestments into these properties can generate exponential returns, particularly if the North Point Mall Project is revived to the

southwest. This is a long-term strategy due to the diversity of property owners which will require complex coordination and cooperation efforts.







4. Northpoint

Overview

The Northpoint activity area extends from the southern entrance of Alpharetta along GA-400 to Haynes Bridge Road. The area is predominately retail-service uses, with the Northpoint Mall as the focal point. Northpoint Mall has been the premier regional shopping destination for North Fulton County. Due to increased demand for shopping online and at competing retail destinations, like most traditional shopping malls, Northpoint Mall has faced pressures to sustain economic value. Developers have submitted proposals to redevelop the mall into a work-live-play activity center, seeking to capitalize on rising market preferences for pedestrian-friendly lifestyle destinations.

Vision

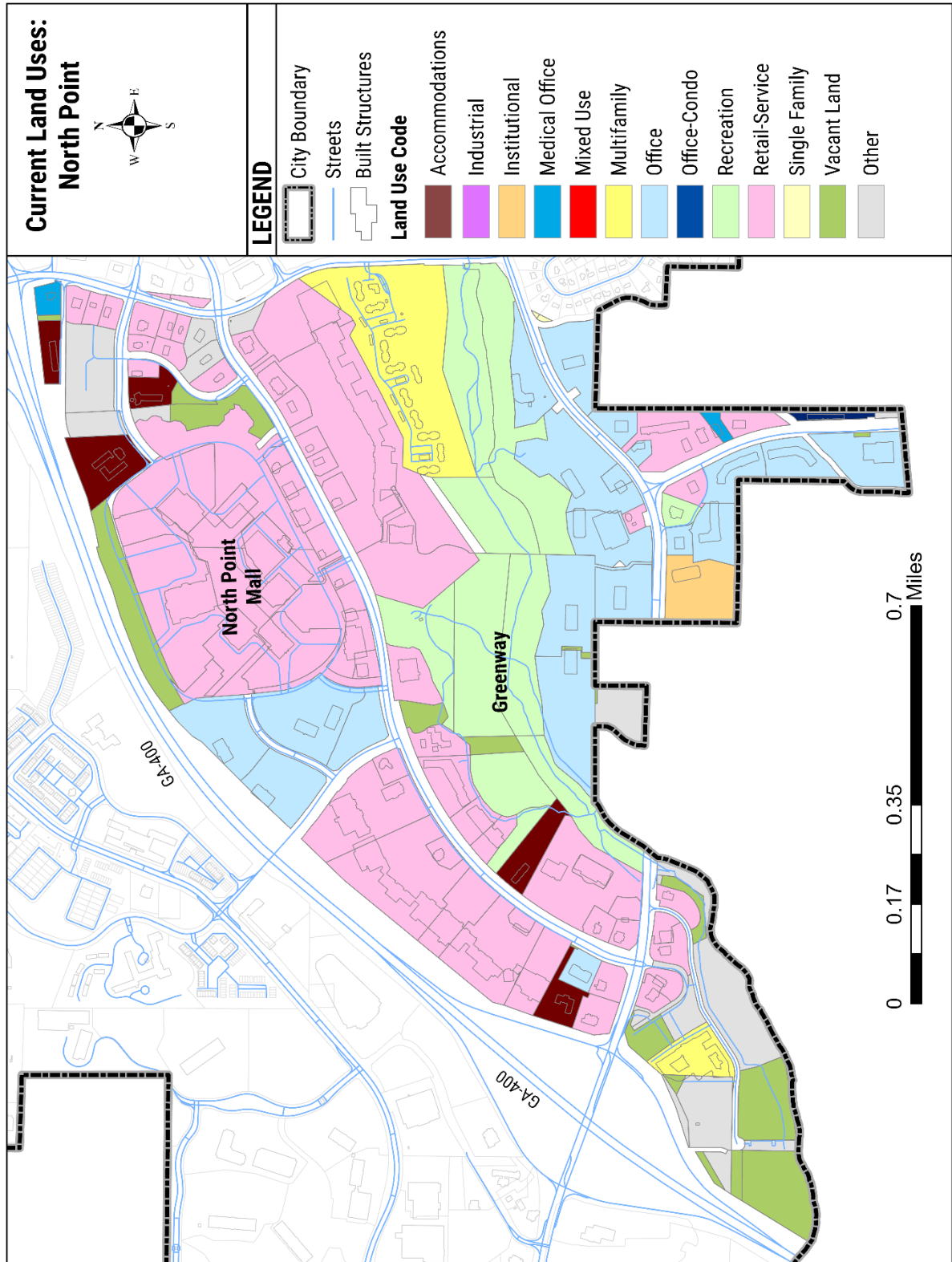
Redevelopment of the Northpoint Mall into a live-work-play activity center offers a major catalytic investment opportunity to become a centralized economic hub for North Fulton County. Through this opportunity, incorporating dense vertical mixed-use development patterns can be a strong source of attraction for businesses and white-collar professionals. The site is situated in a favorable location to support a redevelopment into a live-work-play activity center, providing access to multimodal transit options while buffered away from residential subdivisions.

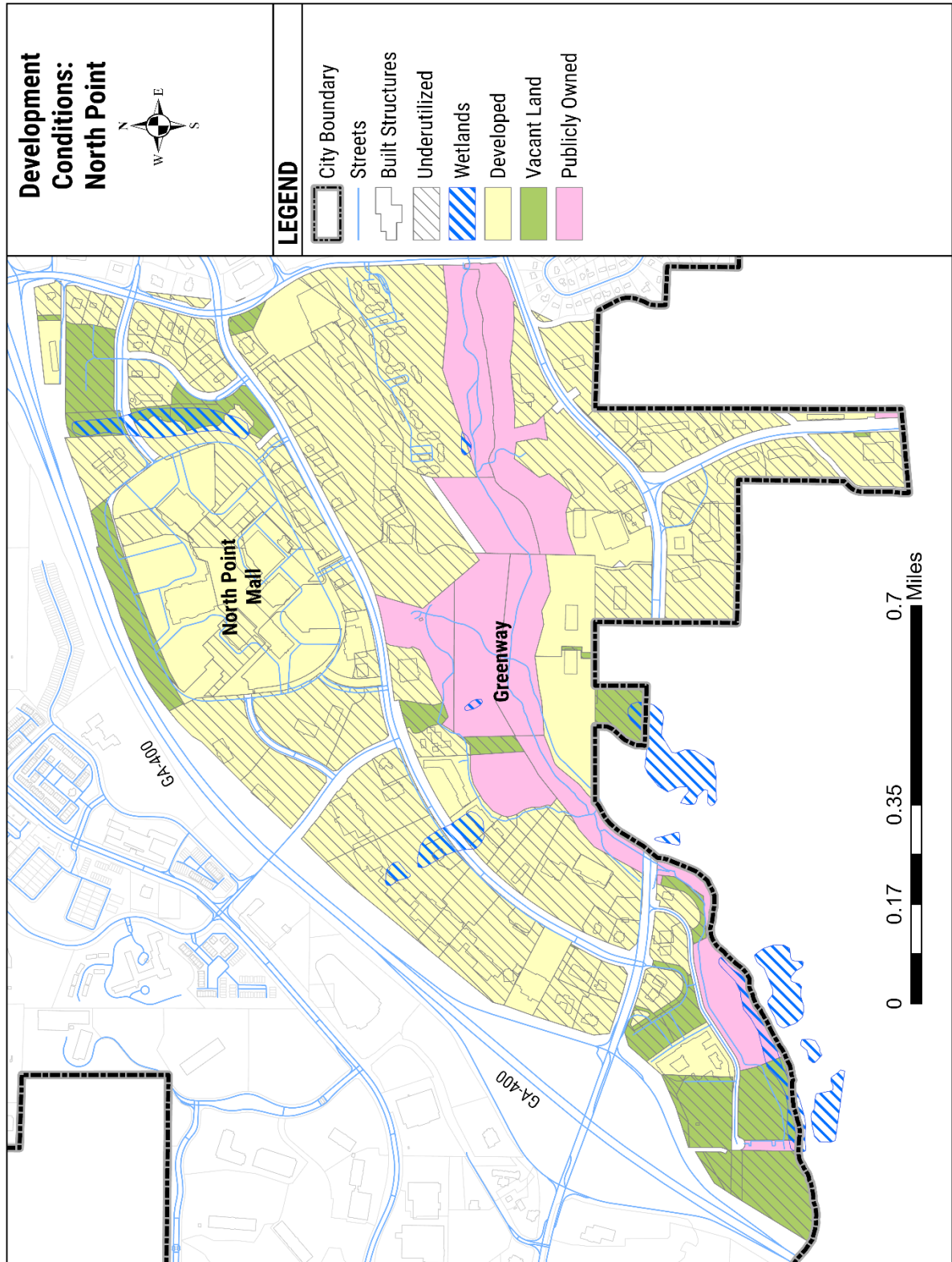
Short-Term Strategies

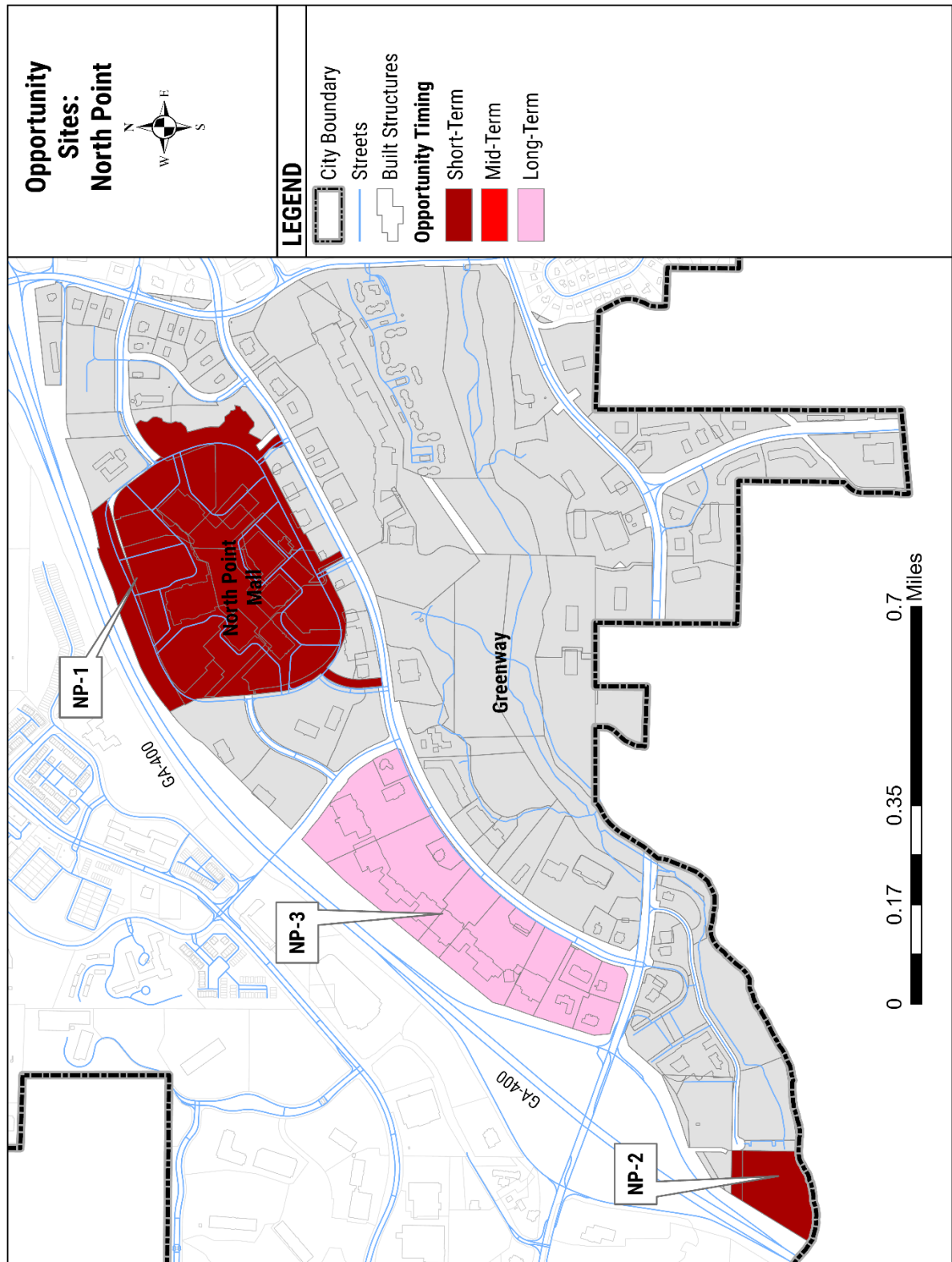
- NP-1, Redevelopment: Redevelop the Northpoint Mall into a live-work-play activity center that supports greater development densities than the Avalon and City Center. Sufficient multifamily units will need to be incorporated into the redevelopment strategy, as escalating construction costs would otherwise make the redevelopment financially infeasible. The redevelopment effort is envisioned to be a destination for young professionals to sustain long-term labor market outcomes. Connectivity to multi-modal transportation options (walking, biking, public transit) can maximize the site's potential.
- NP-2, Recreation Destination Use: With proximity to Big Creek Greenway, this site can be redesigned into a recreational activity center with a regional marketing pull that capitalizes on access to GA-400. Potential opportunities include a BMX course, ropes course, or paintball park.

Long-Term Strategies

- NP-3, Assemblage: If the redevelopment of Northpoint Mall demonstrates market success (e.g., favorable lease rates, rapid absorption rates), these properties can be assembled and redeveloped to expand upon that success. Redevelopment efforts would be an extension of the Northpoint Mall redevelopment, at high density levels with a diversity of commercial and residential uses.







5. Old Milton

Overview

The Old Milton activity area extends from the intersection of GA-400 and Old Milton Parkway to the intersection of Old Milton Parkway and Kimball Bridge Road. The activity area consists of auto-centric retailers and suburban-scale office developments. Georgia State University Alpharetta's (GSU-Alpharetta) Campus is located on the west side of Old Milton. A few large suburban-scale office developments report very high vacancies; three office buildings in front of GSU are over 50% vacant and two office buildings along Alexander Drive are over 30% vacant. The activity area is home to a few major technology-based businesses, including:

- Hi-Rez Studios
- Aptean
- Profisee
- Agilent
- Dexis Dental Imaging

Technology-based businesses are recognized for implementing hybrid-working models. As these models continue to normalize, technology-based businesses are prone to downsize their workspaces with the possibility of seeking workspaces outside of the City limits. Consequently, reducing the number of Alpharetta-based jobs and technology-based businesses. In light of these potential impacts, the City of Alpharetta should engage with the above businesses and identify their existing and future real estate needs.

Vision

Future real estate can be a strategic initiative, in coordination with property owners, existing businesses, and GSU-Alpharetta. The presence of GSU-Alpharetta in proximity to major technology-based businesses can shape the conditions for a 'workforce development hub,' capitalizing on the educational resources of GSU-Alpharetta and industry-knowledge resources of nearby technology-based businesses. This synergistic relationship can encourage the development of educational programs at GSU-Alpharetta that upskill existing workers. While hybrid-work models are ongoing and many young professionals live outside the City limits, localizing young professionals increases in importance. RKG Associates recommends that many properties within the activity area incorporate live-work-play activity centers, offering a source of attraction for young professionals.

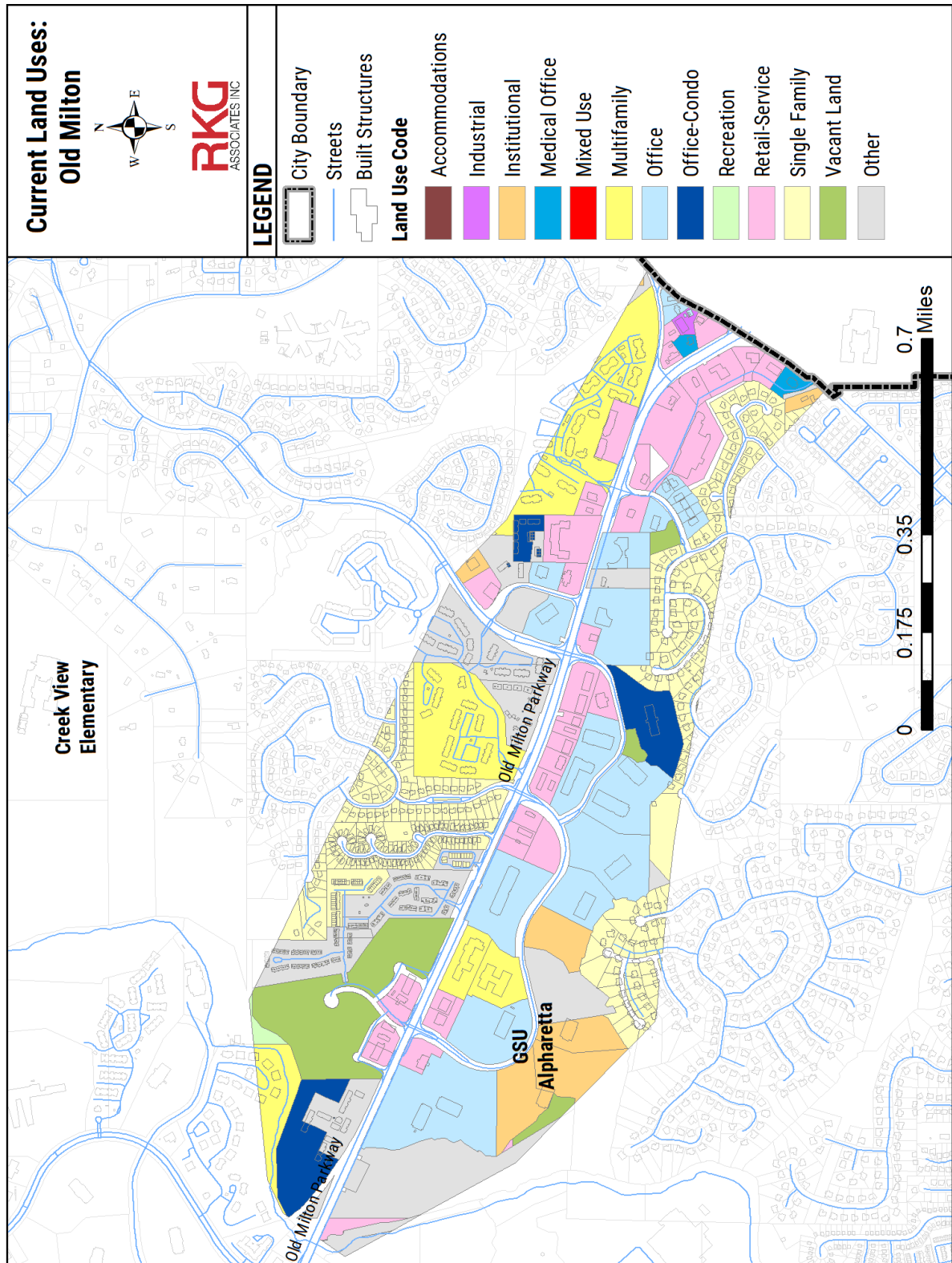
Short-Term Strategies

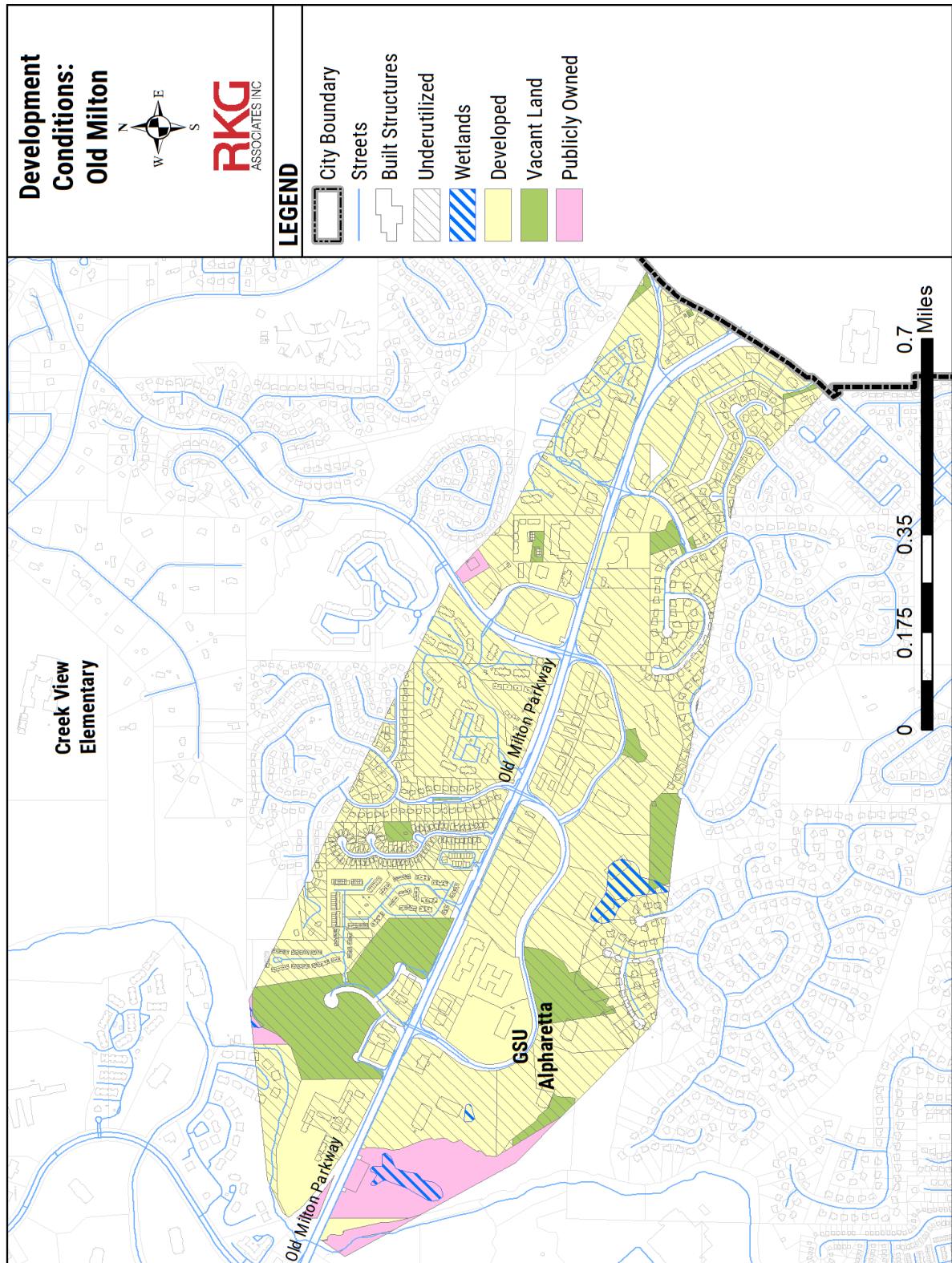
- OM-1, Redevelopment/Adaptive Reuse: A coordinated PPP strategy between existing property owners and GSU-Alpharetta can create a catalytic investment opportunity. The existing office properties report very high vacancy rates and are unlikely to backfill vacated spaces due to shifts in workplace preferences among white-collar businesses; Particularly, the preference to be located in highly amenitized and walkable areas.

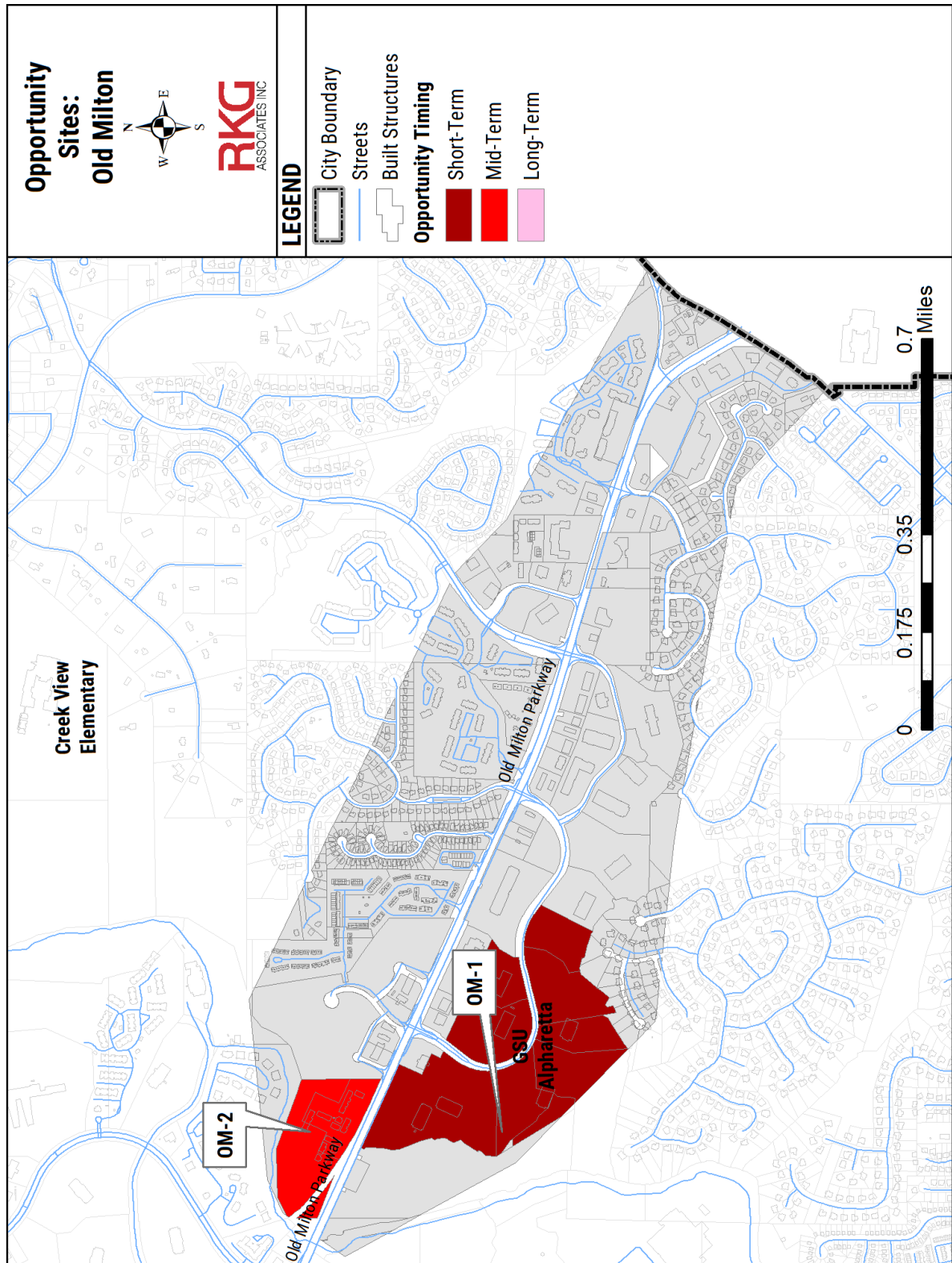
Redevelopment of the site into a work-live-create destination can help attract young professionals, a declining but needed population segment to help stabilize the City's long-term labor market conditions. Another opportunity can be converting the properties to accommodate R&D/flex spaces. These types of spaces face supply constraints throughout Fulton County and GSU is currently investing in biomedical sciences research. A PPP between GSU-Alpharetta and the office property owners can create an opportunity to expand GSU research activities to Alpharetta.

Long-Term Strategies

- **OM-2, Monitor Properties' Market Conditions:** These office-condo properties retain healthy occupancy rates. Most existing spaces are below 1,500 SF, which can be attractive to businesses seeking to downsize. If the market value of these properties declines and vacancies increase, consider adding amenities around the site in an effort to backfill vacated spaces and strengthen marketability.







6. Amphitheatre Area

Overview

The Amphitheatre Area Activity Area is predominantly industrial and commercial uses, consisting of various small-scale production-based facilities and automotive dealerships. Notable area assets include Fetch Park and the Ameris Bank Amphitheater, enhancing the City's tourism and hospitality sectors.

Vision

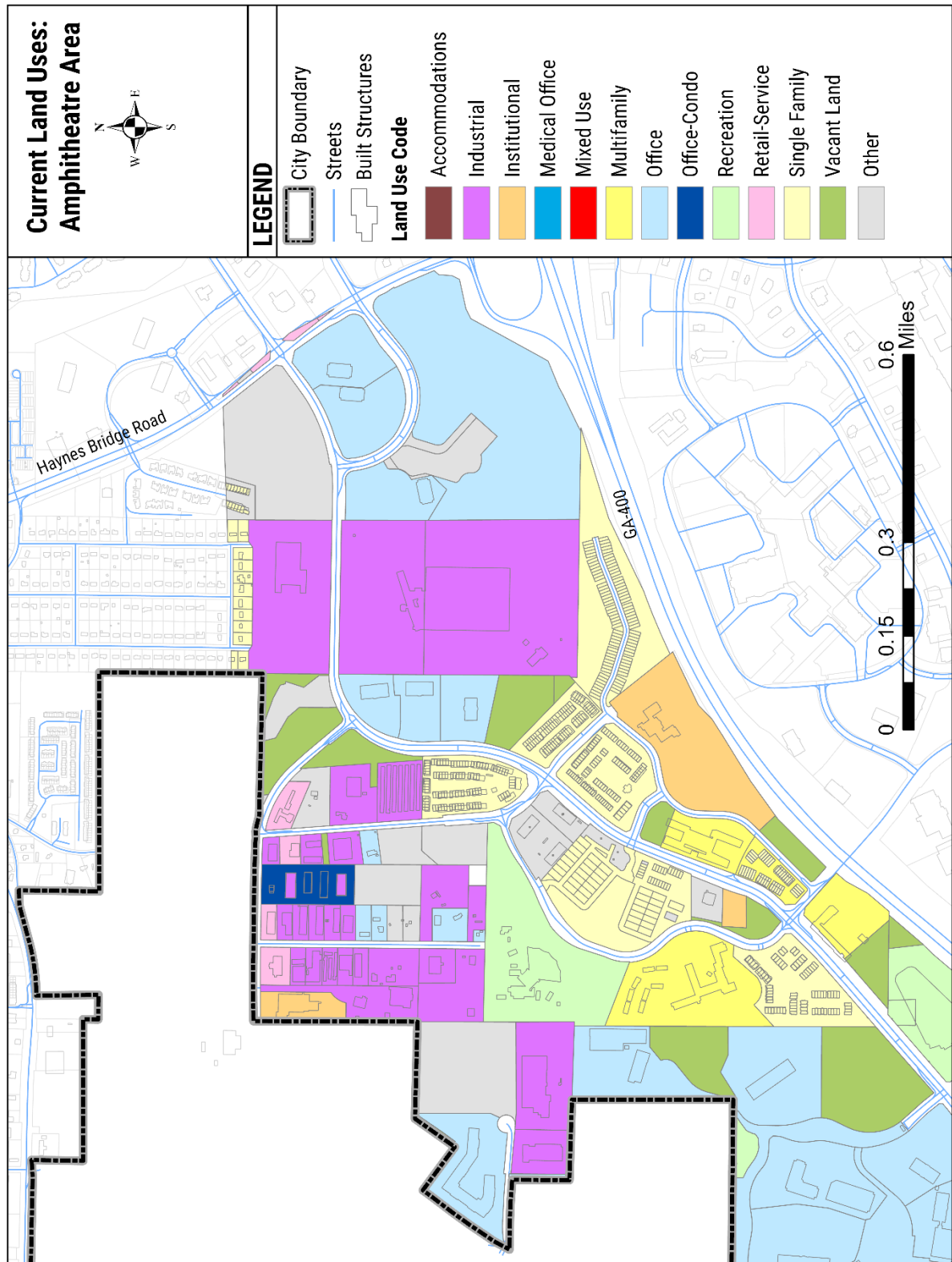
While the area's commercial and industrial operations remain stable, the objective of Amphitheatre Area is to preserve related economic activities. This includes expanding upon the momentum of the area's small-scale production-based operations and automotive uses. Strong market indicators point to pent-up demand for small-scale production-based facilities, especially as the region's supply chain networks expand and cottage manufacturing is revived into a normalized business-model among aspiring entrepreneurs. Properties within Amphitheatre Area exist that can catalyze these bullish opportunities.

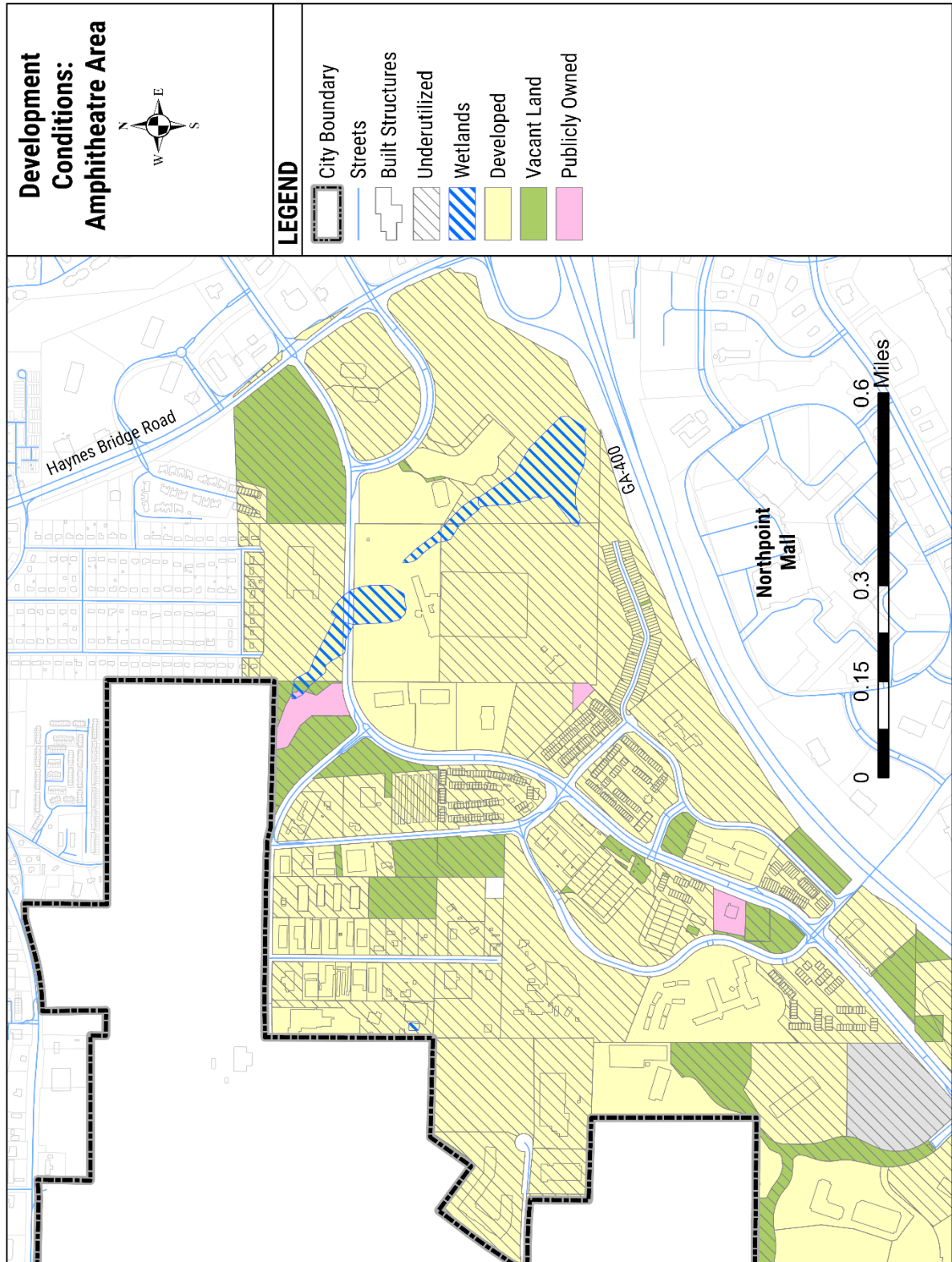
Short-Term Strategies

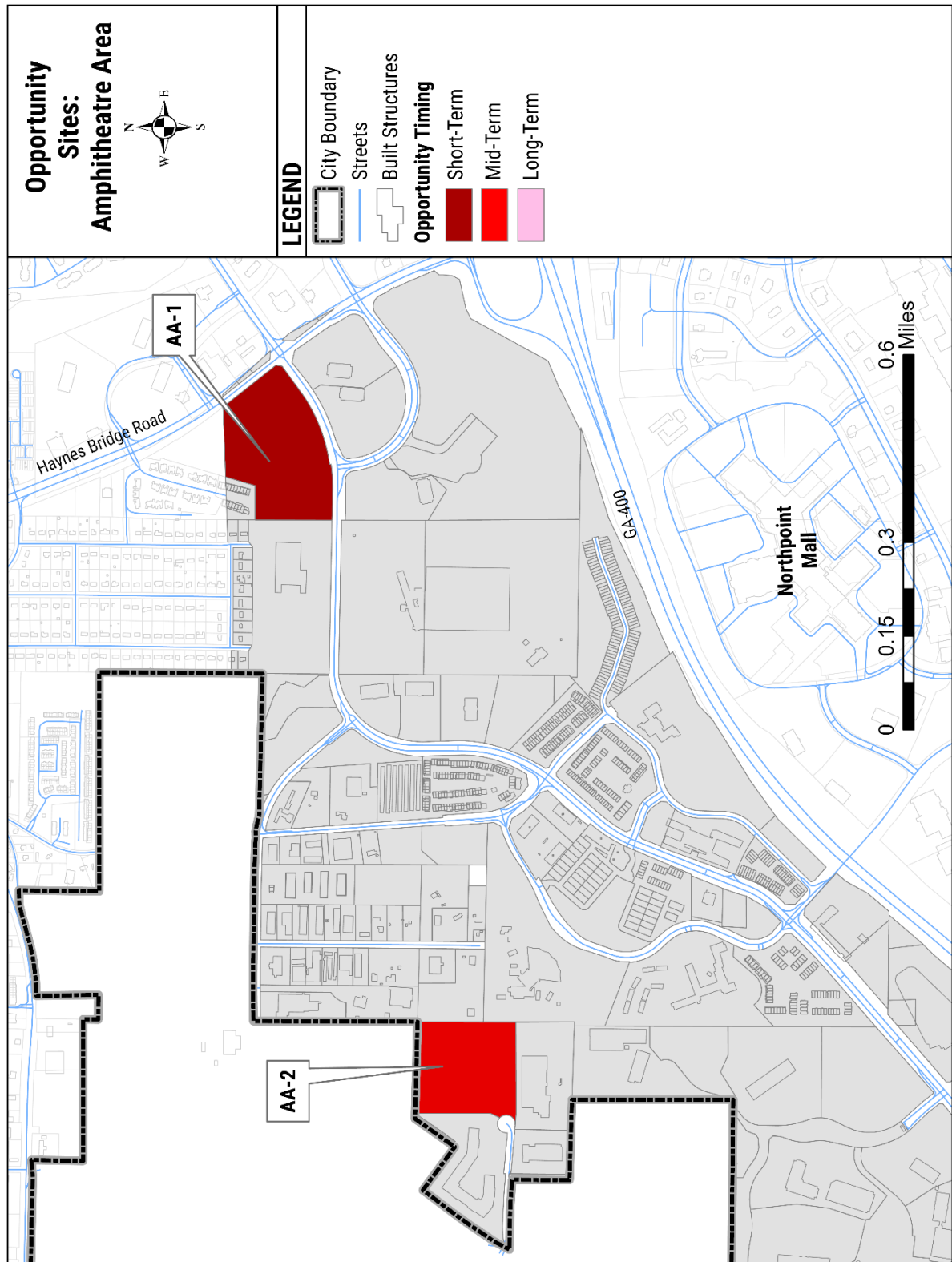
- ORN-1, Infill Development: A roughly 25 acre vacant parcel without improvements is located near the intersection of Morrison Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road. The site is absent of physical development limitations (wetlands, steep-gradients) and can be developed to capitalize on the proximity to GA-400.

Mid-Term Strategies

- ORN-2, Infill Development/Structured Parking: This vacant parcel is connected to the Ameris Bank Amphitheater, serving as a major parking lot for the venue. The parcel supports a strong catalytic potential for infill development, expanding on the momentum of small-scale production-based operations. Construction of a structured parking deck can be used to fulfill needed parking requirements for the amphitheater and increase the magnitude of commercial-generating activities. Through these efforts, the site will be better incubated to support strong fiscal benefits.







7. Windward East

Overview

The Windward East activity area borders the City's northern boundary, located directly east of the Windward Parkway and GA-400 intersection. Large-scale suburban office developments are located on either side of Windward Parkway. Many of which are underperforming due to market shifts in workplace preferences and virtual-working models. Virtual-working models have compelled many businesses to sublease unneeded workspaces. That includes Global Payments, which subleased nearly 40% of their office space in 2022. The area's underutilized workspaces translates to fewer weekly in-bound commuters, and therefore, less available spending resources on local services which can impact fiscal budgets overtime.

Vision

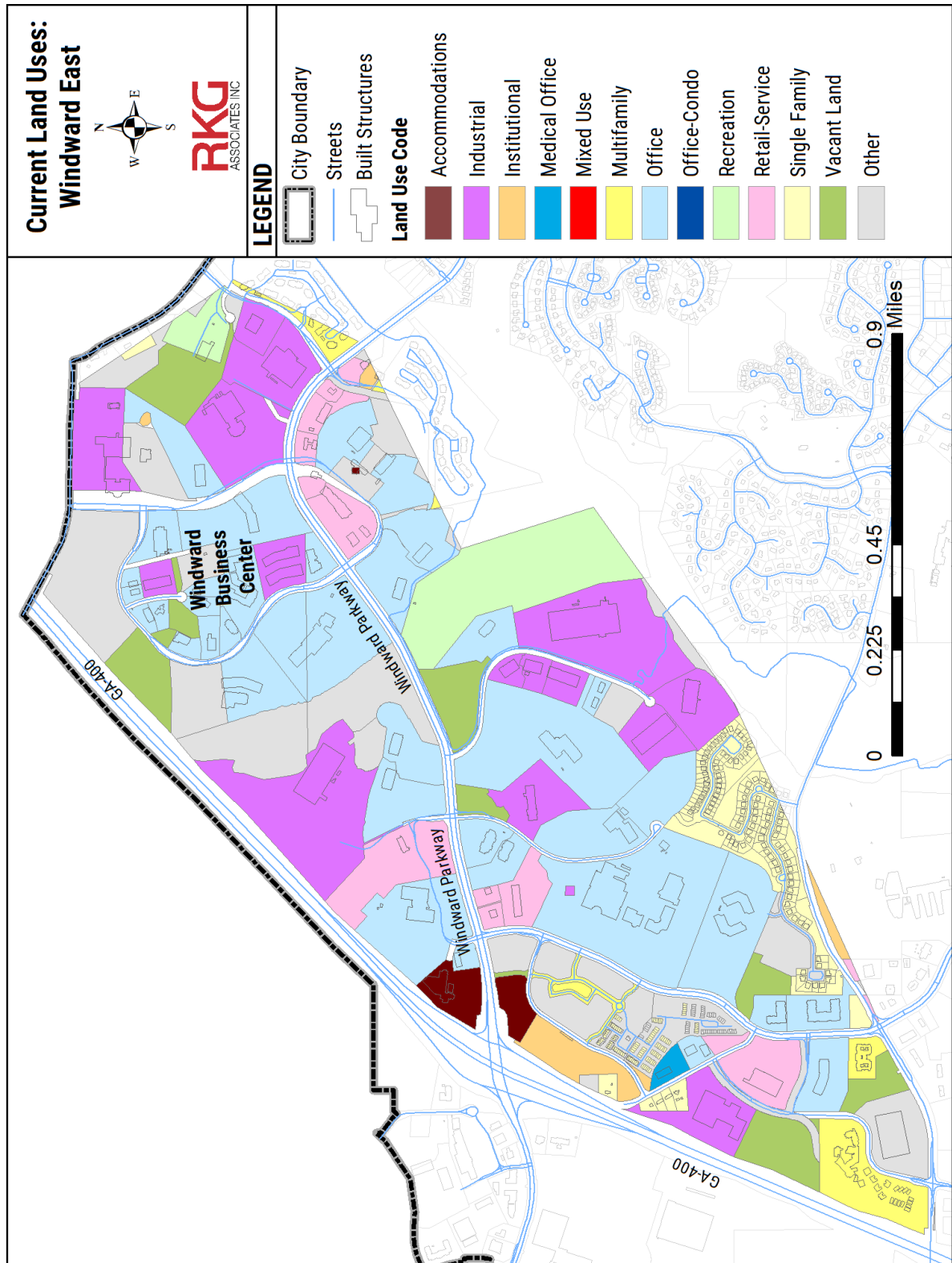
Windward East represents yet another situation where large-scale suburban office developments face pressures to sustain economic activities due to shifting market preferences. Other areas of the region, including Alpharetta, offer competitive workspaces that are driven by prevailing market preferences to locate in areas that provide convenient accessibility to services and amenities. The intended vision of Windward East is to develop in way that match prevailing market preferences, creating a town-center style environment; a diversity of housing-price typologies, concentrations of lifestyle-retail amenities, and infrastructure that supports walkability.

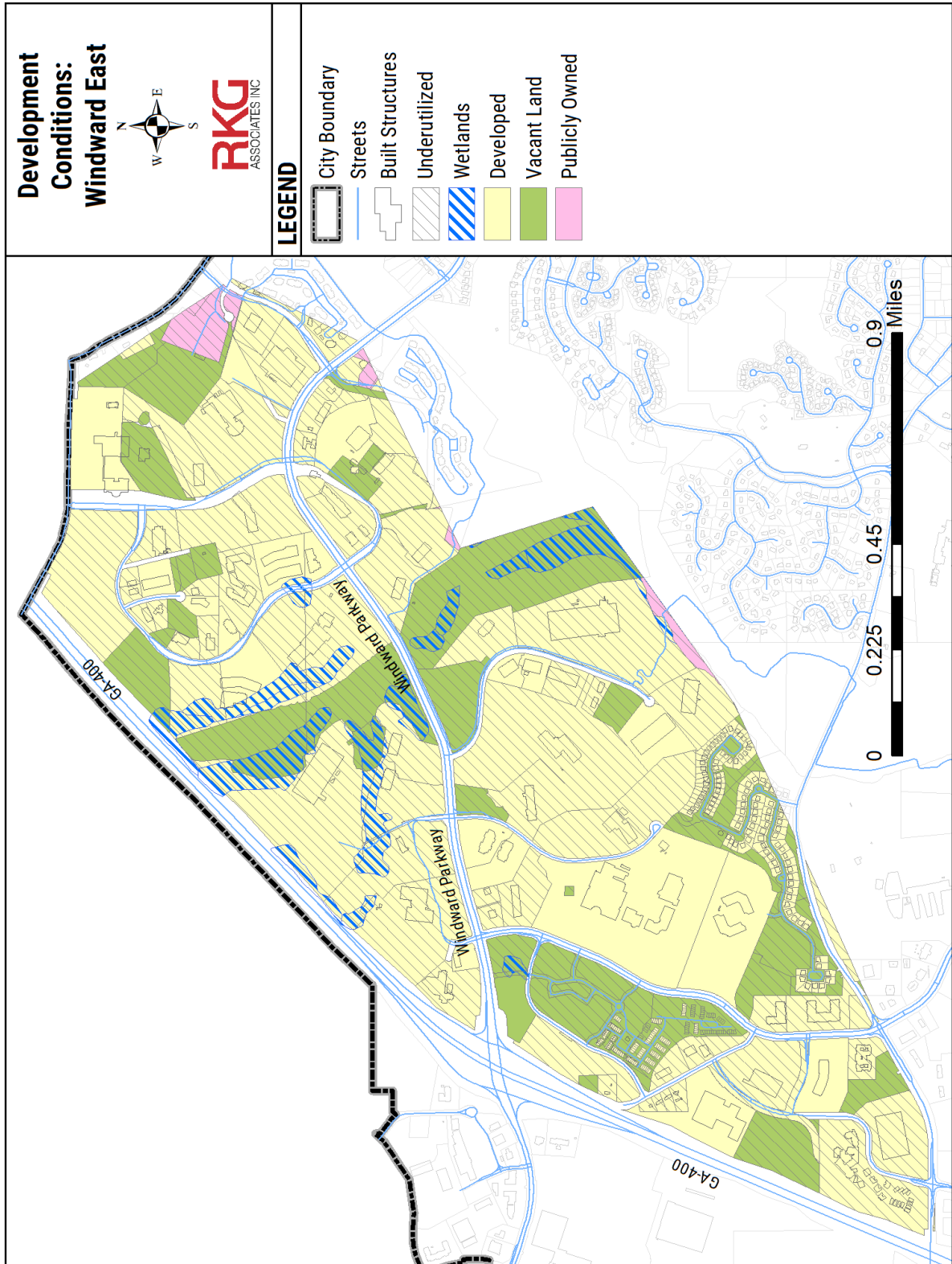
Short-Term Strategies

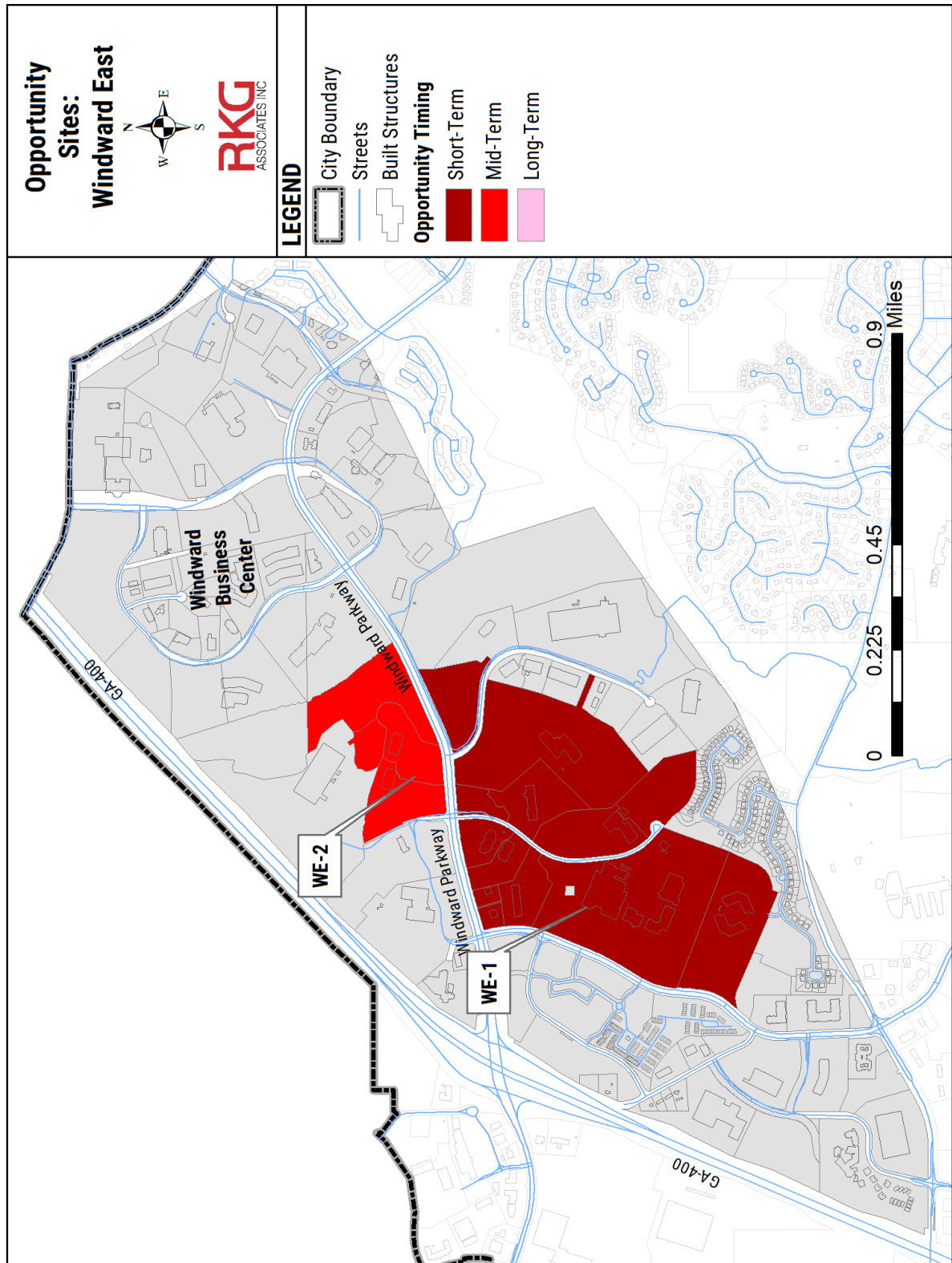
- WE-1, Infill Development w/Structured Parking: Form a public-private partnership with existing property owners to coordinate the development of a town-center style concept. Structured parking on the sites can maintain adequate parking ratios while freeing up land to develop a dense cluster of commercial-generating activities.

Mid-Term Strategies

- WE-2, Infill Development: Develop infill projects on these parcels that expand the town-center style concept on WE-1 to strengthen its marketability.







8. Sanctuary Park Area

Overview

The Sanctuary Park Area activity area extends to the City's border, interwoven with a variety of residential and commercial uses. A highlight of the area is Sanctuary Park, an instrumental business park for attracting companies and recognized for including a state-of-the-art clubhouse with lifestyle amenities. The intent of adding amenities is the same for most office park property owners, to revitalize leasing activities and attract workers back to office spaces. The rise of virtual-working models, however, imposes pressures on property owners as companies are projected to downsize their spaces. Large quantities of Sanctuary Park's office spaces remain vacant. That doesn't even account for the nearly 130,000 SF of office space which tenants are seeking to sublease, reinforcing the reduced spatial needs of businesses as virtual-working models continues to normalize.

Vision

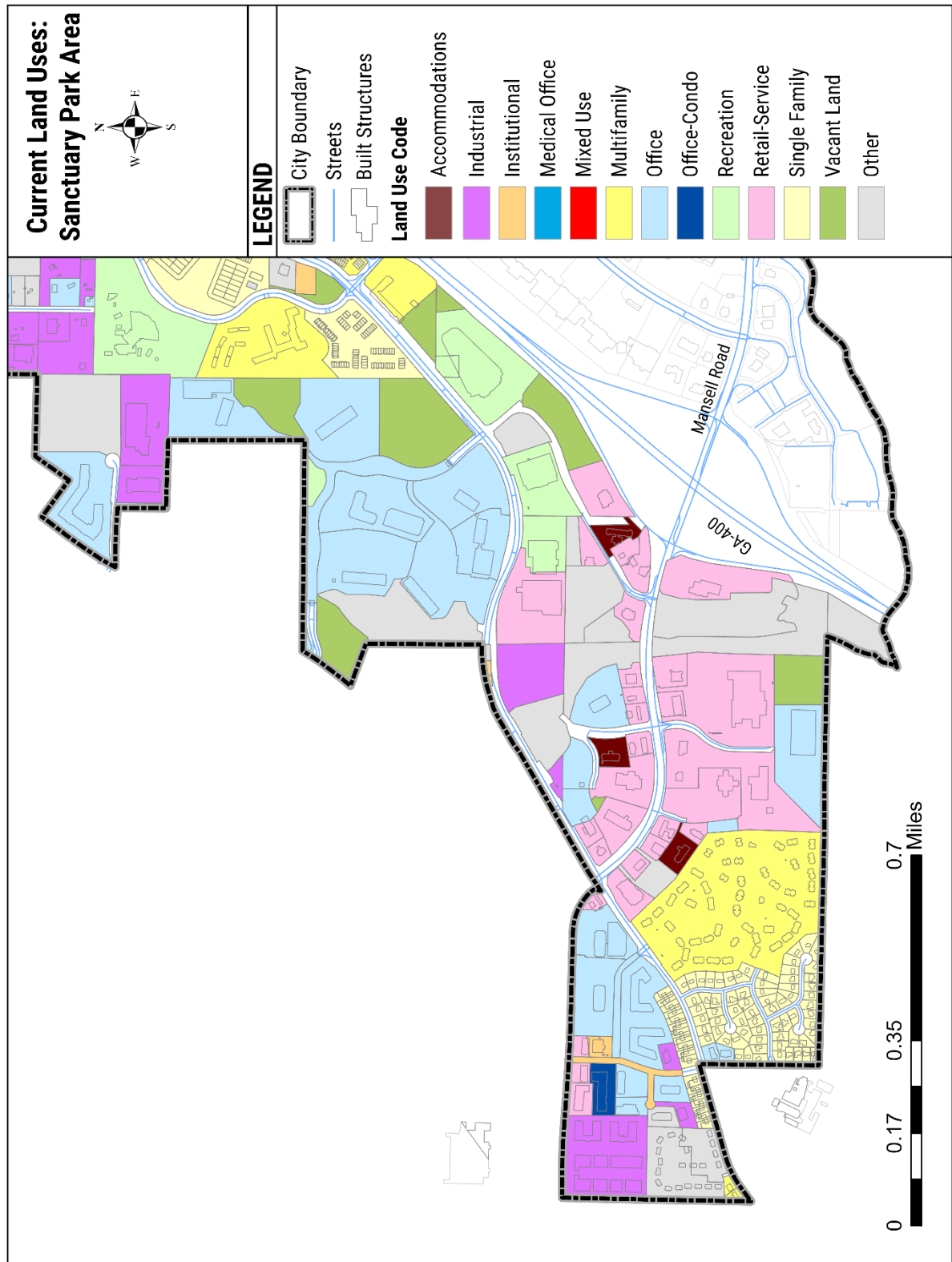
Similar to many activity areas with suburban-scale office developments, the intended vision is to preserve and revitalize underutilized economic activities. While Sanctuary Park's clubhouse addition can be appealing, it isn't likely to be a catalyst for backfilling vacated spaces. As post-pandemic work models become more popular, businesses will continue locating areas that are positioned to attract young professionals; areas that offer connectivity and walkability to services. Investments in work-live-play activity centers with price-diverse rental options can help attract young professionals. RKG Associates recommends that the parcels near Sanctuary Park embrace infill development projects, supporting a critical mass that can help revitalize lost economic activities.

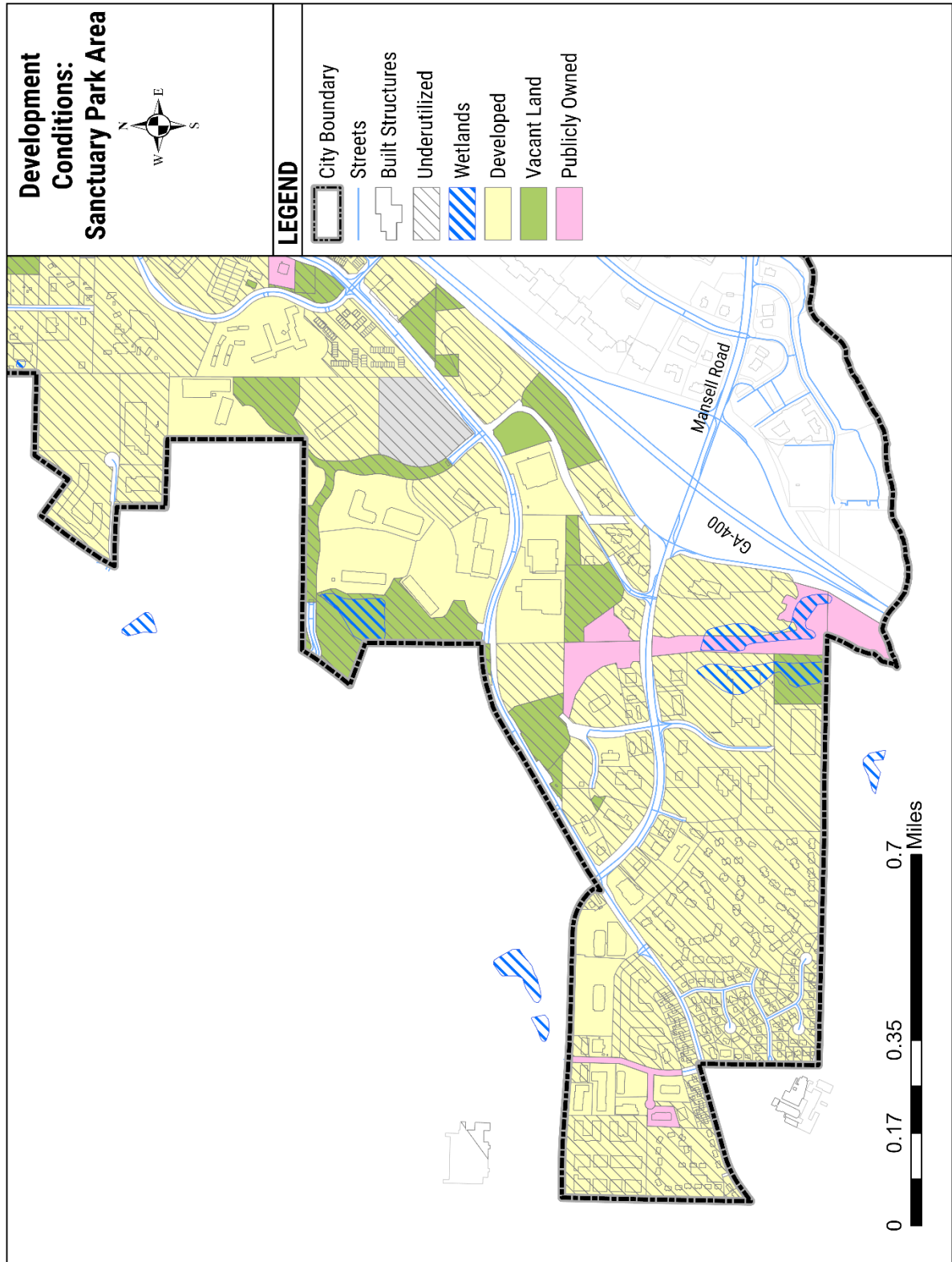
Short-Term Strategies

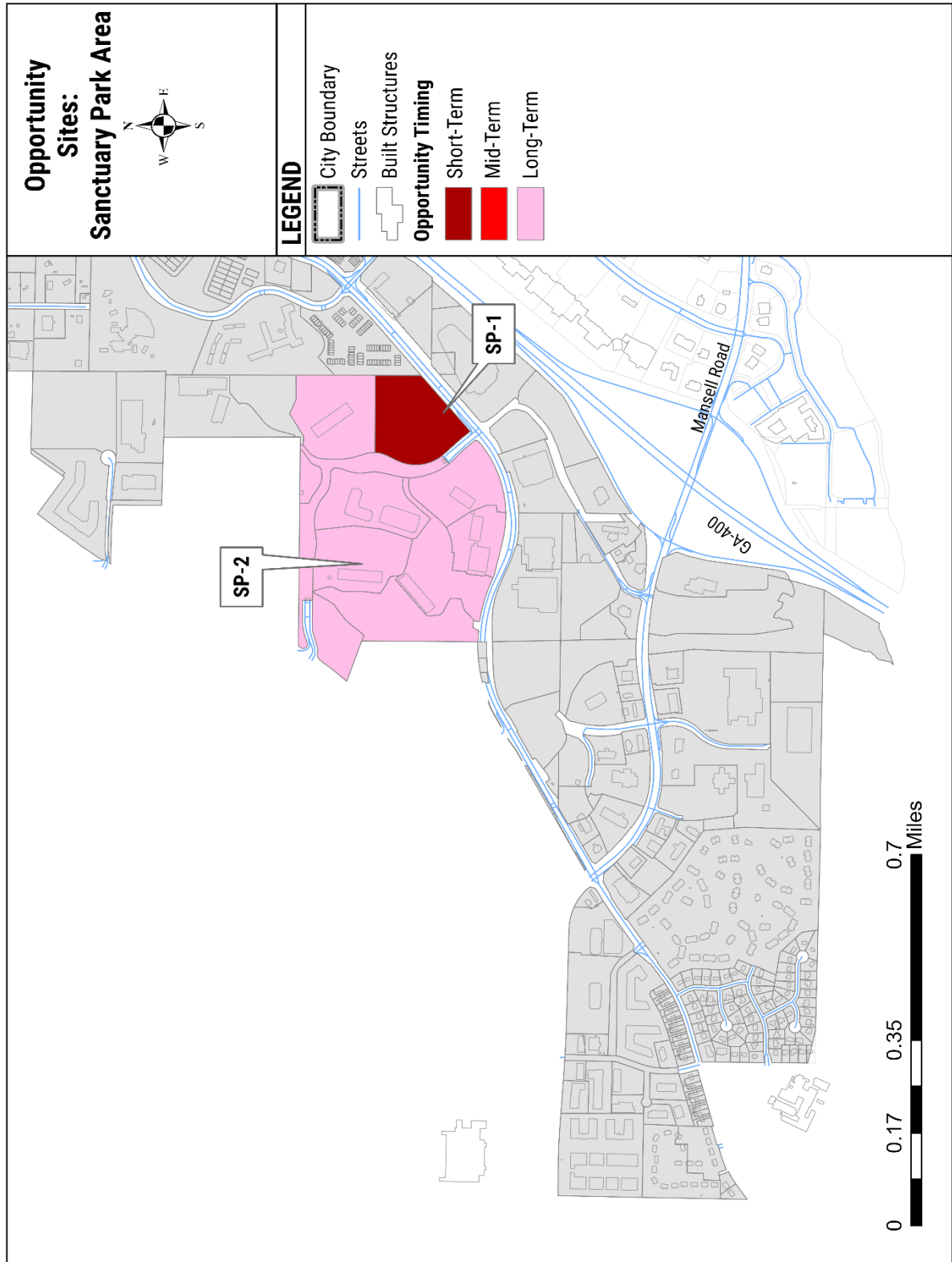
- ORS-1, Infill Development: A 14-acre vacant parcel without improvements is fronting Westside Parkway that is positioned for a catalytic opportunity. The site can be set aside for vertical mixed-use vertical development that accommodates the service and/or housing needs of existing workers within Sanctuary Park.

Long-Term Strategies

- ORS-2, Monitor Performance: Like most suburban-scale office developments, monitoring their performance will be critical to sustain economic activities in the long-term. If vacancies persist and hybrid-working models continue, expanding the town-center style concept to Sanctuary Park can strengthen its long-term market performance.







9. Windward West

Overview

The Windward West activity is west of Windward East and GA-400, hovering the City's northern boundary. The area is primarily suburban-scale retail development suburban-scale office projects. Windward West provides strong access to GA-400, which catalyzed the development of retail projects and is fueling recent investment proposals. Continuum, a City-council approved project, is expected to bring in substantial additional office space integrated with moderate levels of housing units. The project challenges the City's struggling office market performance, proposing to develop roughly 1.0 million square feet of office space.

Vision

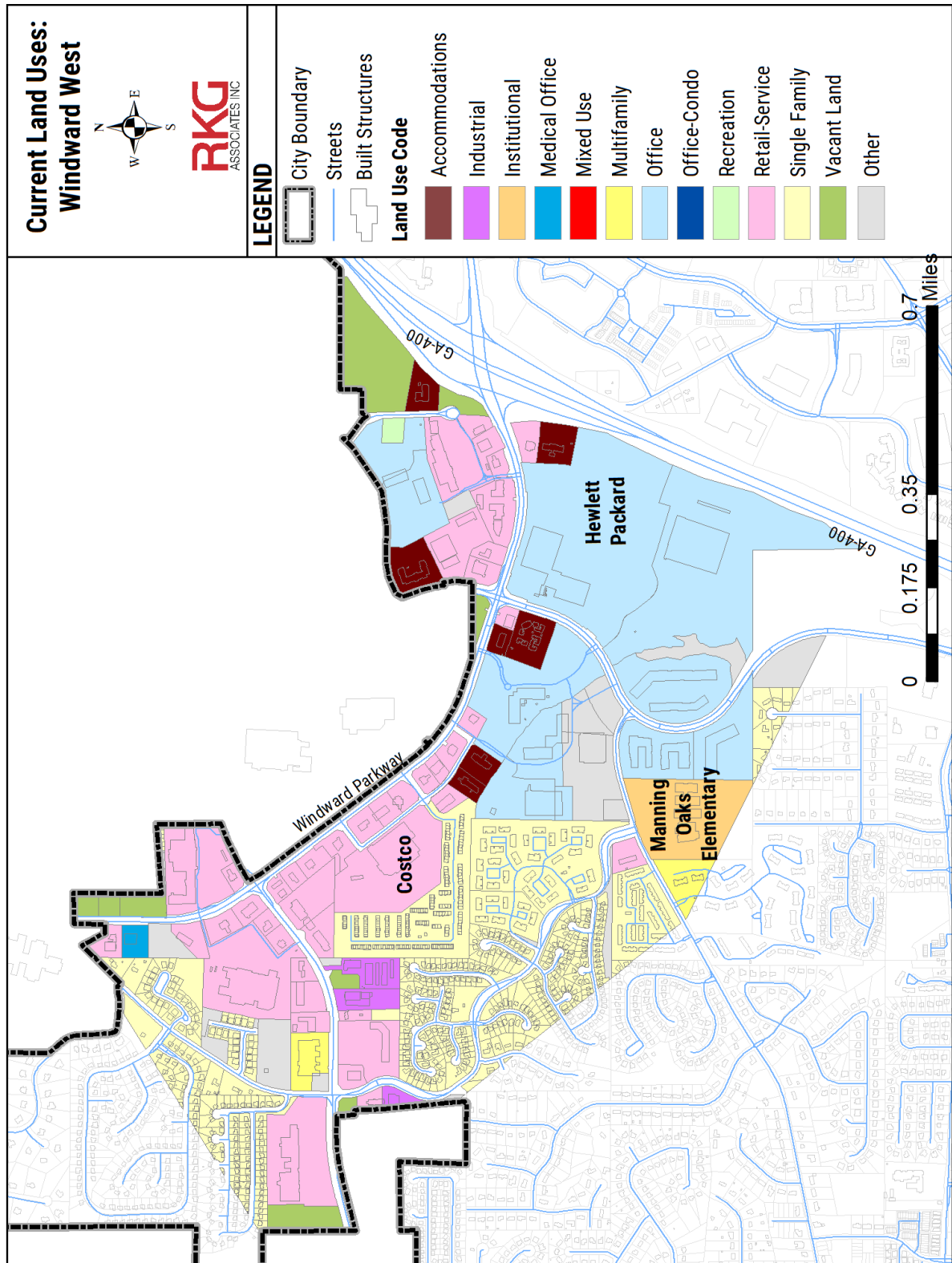
While the development phases of Continuum unfold, monitoring the project's office performance will be critical as market indicators suggest leasing spaces could be challenging. Despite this possibility, Continuum expands the town-center style concept in the City while bearing some resemblance to projects like City Center and Avalon. This concept has proven to be successful in Alpharetta, enhancing the City's efforts to attract business investment. As investments in Continuum take shape, opportunities exist for infill development and redevelopment projects that can strengthen the area's overall market performance.

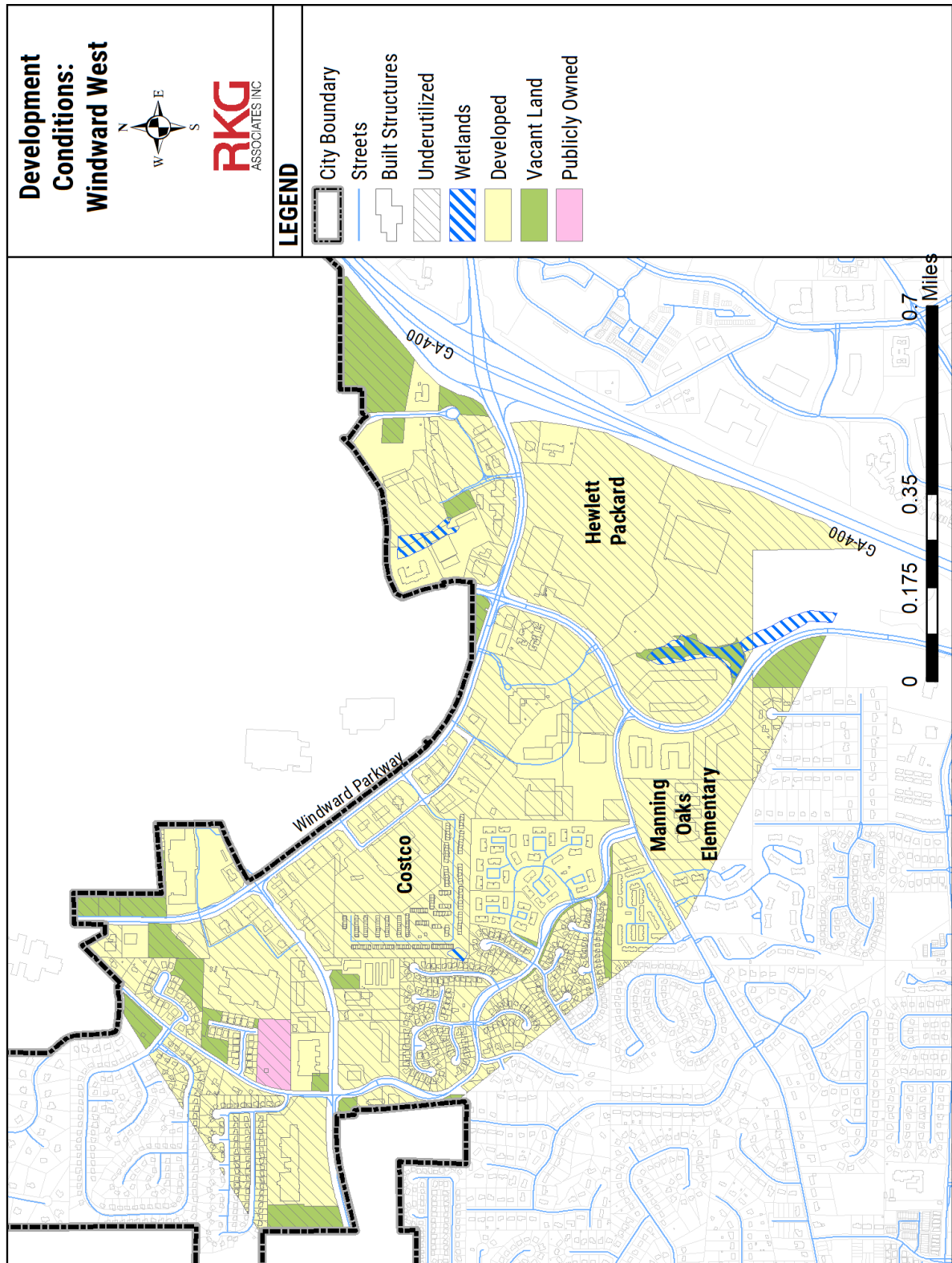
Short-Term Strategies

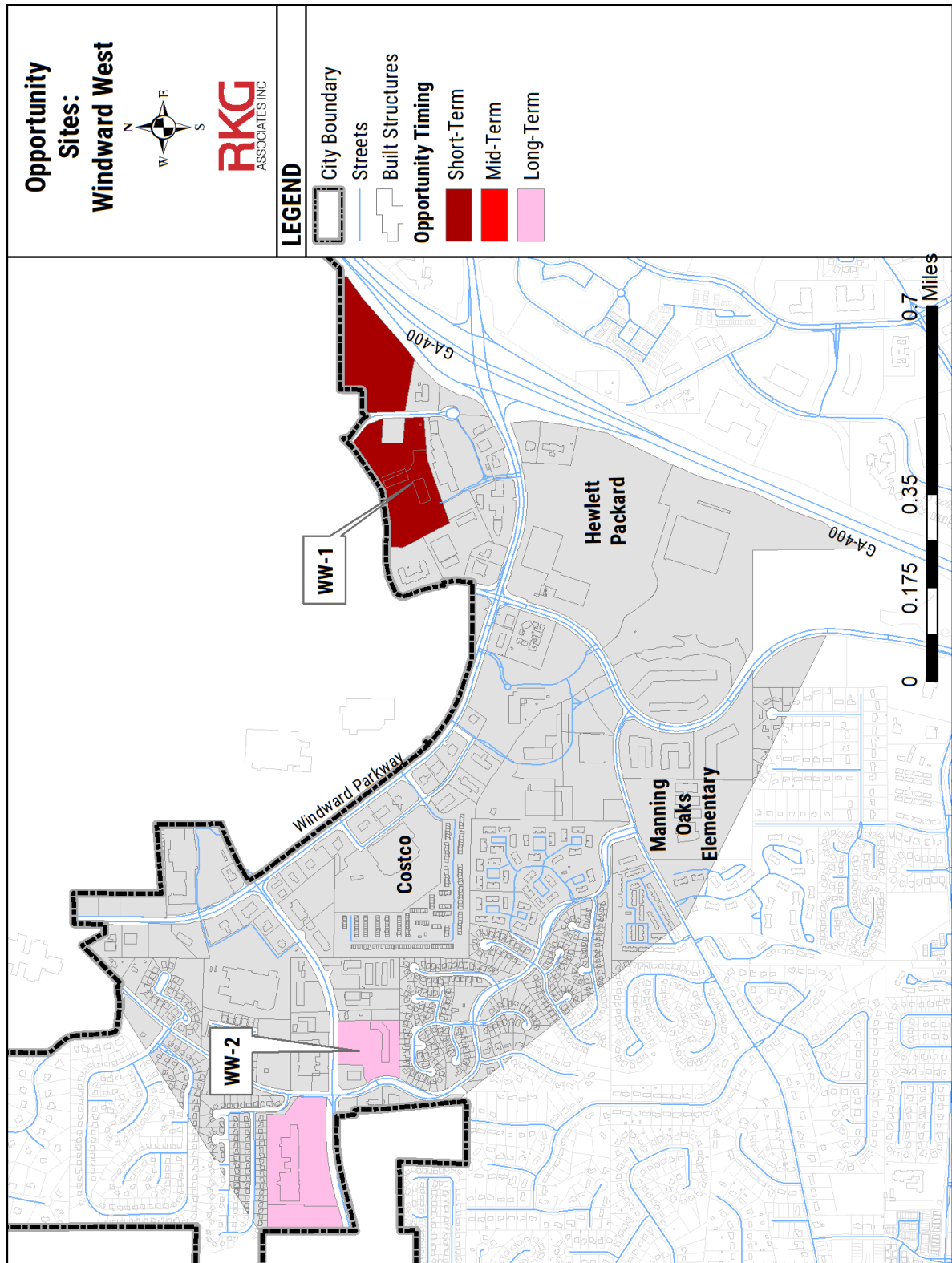
- WW-1, Infill Development w/Structured Parking: The access to GA-400 provides a catalytic opportunity for infill development. A public-private partnership with the owners in Deerfield Point can enhance cost efficiencies for the development of a town-center style concept. Structured parking can free up land to support greater densities of new commercial activities. This can help reverse declining economic activities at Deerfield Point, which report very high vacancies.

Long-Term Strategies

- WW-2, Redevelopment: Monitor the performance of these retail neighborhood centers, both of which report high vacancies. If the rates of performance continue to decline, consider redevelopment opportunities to include vertical mixed-use development; ground floor retail with rental housing units on upper floors.







6 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses economic development strategies for the City of Alpharetta to adopt as recommended by RKG Associates and the Advisory Group. These strategies were crafted on account of feedback from local and regional implementation partners, empirical research, and input from the City of Alpharetta elected officials and staff. The initial section of this chapter details the defined principles and goals identified by the Advisory Group and City of Alpharetta. The next sections detail discrete recommendations and implementation steps to assist the City in pursuing their economic development goals.

B. STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The implementation strategy is organized into six general topic areas: [1] Business Retention and Expansion; [2] Business Recruitment; [3] Existing Asset Development; [4] Toolbox Development; [5] Outreach, Communication, and Marketing; and [6] Organization and Coordination. These topic areas reflect the basic tenets of effective business retention, expansion, and recruitment activities.

The success of each topic area depends on the effectiveness of all other topic areas. For example, the City's business retention and expansion strategies will depend on committing to a comprehensive and proactive marketing, outreach, and communication strategy with existing businesses within Alpharetta. Without consistent communication, the City will be limited in its effectiveness when trying to engage individual businesses regarding growth needs and challenges.



C. PROPOSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The assembled Advisory Group (listed in the introduction section) represents the various public and private perspectives that influence—and are influenced by—the City's economic development efforts. This Advisory Group provided guidance and feedback throughout the development of this plan. As part of that effort, a comprehensive outreach strategy was held to identify, refine, and prioritize the City's economic development goals that were initiated through

previous efforts. These goals were presented and reviewed with the Advisory Group, who provided feedback on refining and prioritizing these goals. The following list represents the culmination of this input and selection process and is presented in order of the Advisory Group's recommended priority.

- **Expand the City's business retention efforts to reach all existing businesses.** Alpharetta is equipped with several assets that have attracted businesses. Workplace preferences are in constant flux, however, and the key assets that fueled Alpharetta's prior success—including the City's office park inventory and price-competitive homeownership opportunities—increasingly become less desired and/or scarcer. While this document provides recommendations on how to strengthen the City's position to continue to attract new businesses, working to retain and grow existing businesses should become a priority in Alpharetta. The City should increase their coordination and cooperation efforts with all businesses within the City, understanding their unique challenges and opportunities; and in response, address their needs to sustain and expand their operations. Such business retention efforts can be instrumental for enhancing the City's long term economic sustainability, while unlocking greater sources of job creation and spending capacities.
- **Continue to attract professional and technical services firms to Alpharetta.** Alpharetta has grown into an employment center for professional and technical services firms, rooted in the City's highly educated population, abundant technology infrastructure, and office space inventory. The City's increasing cost-of-living, which restricts housing opportunities for entry-to-mid-level workers, and limited live-play-work activity destinations, which are preferred over office parks, can reduce Alpharetta's recruitment potential. Redesigning areas of the City to align with the workplace preferences in the prevailing knowledge economy can help sustain Alpharetta's recruitment competitiveness. This includes enabling greater levels of investments into live-work-play activity centers, equipped with price-competitive rental housing opportunities and efficient public transportation options.
- **Expand the City's entrepreneurial ecosystem through strengthening tech-based efforts and expanding initiatives that target other sectors.** City-sponsored entrepreneurship efforts have primarily focused on supporting the growth of technology-based startups. And to the City's credit, Tech-Alpharetta has proven to be a measurable success producing several technology-based startups and jobs in the greater Alpharetta region. While Tech-Alpharetta's efforts have had a positive impact on job creation, there is room for improving the City's entrepreneurial ecosystem to achieve even greater results. Such improvements include relocating Tech-Alpharetta within a collaborative work-live-play destination to nurture innovation. Additionally, co-locating workforce housing options that are affordable to recent college graduates. Furthermore, pooling sufficient financial resources to fund high-tech machinery and equipment that supports capital-intensive ventures (e.g., robotics, biotechnology, etc.).

The City of Alpharetta also should expand its entrepreneurial ecosystem by offering startup services to other market segments (e.g., retail). This includes technical guidance on the various aspects of starting and managing a business. Consolidating entrepreneurial services in one physical location—technology-based with other market segments—can optimize service delivery and lead to lower costs. Moreover, consolidation can promote innovation, as entrepreneurs can explore how technologies can be applied to various business models.

- **Diversify the City’s employment base beyond existing software companies.** Alpharetta is a major hub for software companies, especially in high demand fields such as FinTech and MedTech. While the software sector has been an integral part of Alpharetta’s economic development efforts, overdependence on any single sector can threaten the City’s economic stability. If investment from software companies were to pull out of Alpharetta, fewer spending resources are available to finance other commercial activities and local services. Alpharetta is vulnerable to losing investment overtime as external factors may influence software companies to relocate elsewhere. Such factors include an increasing demand among software companies to locate near young talent and downsize office spaces due to growing remote working possibilities. All that said, it’s critical for Alpharetta to diversify their employment base beyond software companies to ensure long-term economic sustainability.
- **Create dynamic employment centers through place-based strategies that meet evolving demand from employers and workers.** Avalon represents a fundamental shift in the City’s approach towards how workspaces are designed and modeled. In contrast with the single-use office park, Avalon’s multi-use approach enabled workspaces to be mixed into a vibrant environment of social and lifestyle amenities. A dense cluster of retail and communal spaces that foster socialization and walkability, reflecting urbanesque development patterns, catalyzed the commercial success of Avalon and exerted a major influence on the City’s overall economic development efforts. More place-based investments that reflect the development patterns of Avalon, and even at greater density levels in some cases (e.g., North Point Mall), can be a strong source of business and workforce attraction.
- **Encourage development that complements the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.** Retaining community character is a policy priority for the City of Alpharetta. However, given the rising market demand for vibrant, walkable destinations, investing in additional work-live-play activity centers should be considered to accommodate shifts in demand. This will involve redesigning areas of the City that can support higher levels of developmental densities, buffered away from non-compatible land uses and spatial patterns (e.g., single-family subdivisions).
- **Enhance the City’s housing supply to attract workers and businesses.** The connection between housing and pursuing sustainable economic development outcomes cannot be

overstated. Workforce housing options are critical for attracting service-based workers, boosting the supply of labor for local restaurants and retailers. Additionally, workforce housing options have become increasingly important to attract entry-to-mid-level professionals, boosting the supply of labor for professional services firms and software companies.

- **Maximize the potential of the City's expanding green infrastructure.** Green infrastructure in Alpharetta has several various economic and community benefits. The City's network of parks and trailways has enhanced the City's aesthetic appeal, facilitated social opportunities, and promoted recreational activities. Once complete, the Alpha Loop will be an active mobility path, offering walking and biking opportunities to travel between major activity centers. To improve the economic potential of the Alpha Loop, the City should consider adding intermediate commercial amenities (e.g., bike-up microbreweries) between the major activity centers.
- **Strengthen relationships between businesses and training providers to reach residents, existing businesses, and prospective businesses.** Equipping workers with in-demand market skills is critical to sustain local businesses' operations. This is particularly important for software companies as technological advancements continue to shape what skills employers require. While workforce training programs are offered at local educational institutions, such as Gwinnett Tech, their curriculums may not be up to date to address evolving workforce demands. All that said, facilitating consistent coordination between local workforce training programs and businesses can be effective in ensuring businesses' needs are met.

D. BUILDING FOR SUCCESS

Through existing economic development staff members, the City of Alpharetta has made proactive efforts to improve the City's competitive position. This plan is not designed to supplant those efforts but rather build upon them to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of economic development investments.

- **Be flexible when implementing.** The recommended strategies detailed in this report are guidelines and not prescriptive edicts. They are considered effective practices that have been executed in other municipalities but are transcribed to reflect the ideals and vision of the Advisory Group and address challenges unique to Alpharetta. Given the long-term timeframe of several of the recommendations, strategies will likely need to be readjusted overtime to meet the City's economic development objectives.
- **Embrace change to support growth.** Development typologies and patterns that paved the way for Alpharetta's past economic development success may not align with shifting market realities. Investments in workforce housing opportunities and additional live-work-play activity centers can help Alpharetta adapt to shifting realities and ensure long-

term economic sustainability. Misleading narratives that these types of investments can generate negative consequences (e.g., reduced property values) can derail necessary investments to strengthen the City's competitive position and deter the City's economic growth potential.

- **Community data is the best data.** Identifying the key challenges and opportunities facing businesses today will involve consistent communication with them. Their responses provide the City with the most relevant information to craft applicable strategies and policies that facilitate business retention and expansion efforts.

E. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The economic development implementation strategy is based on maximizing the potential of the City's primary economic activity centers while avoiding adverse impact on the larger residential communities. To this point, implementation of the action items detailed later in this chapter should be done within context of this implementation framework.

Connectivity

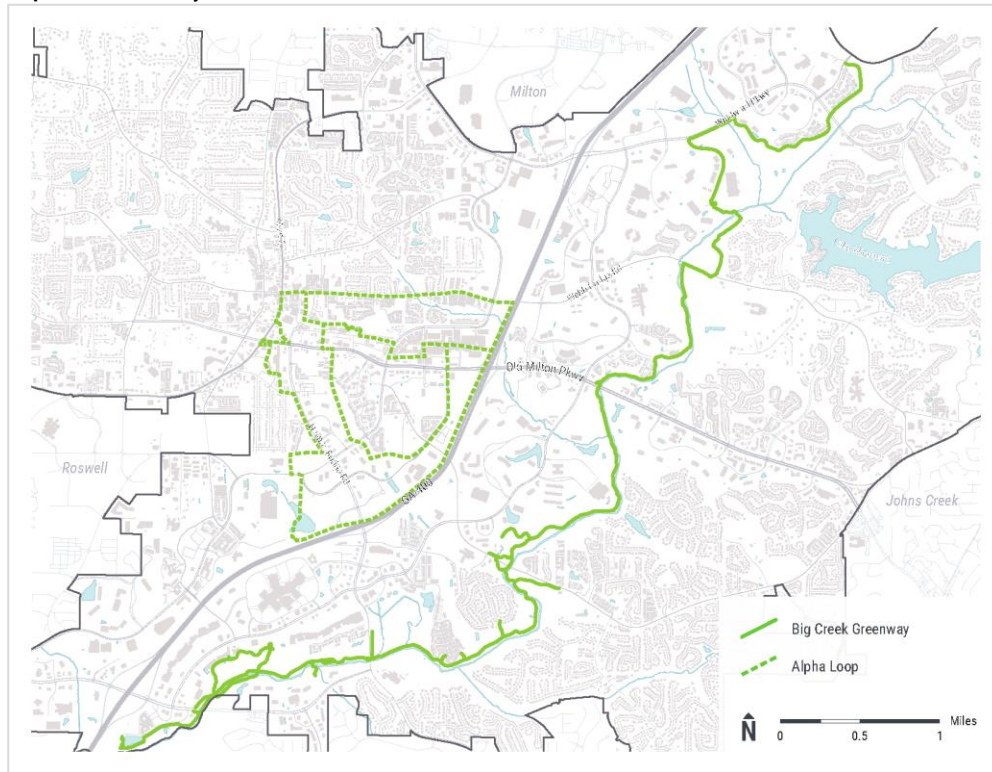
The City has invested in local green infrastructure to enhance physical connections between key economic activity centers, including the Alpha Loop and Big Creek Greenway (Map 6-1). Both trailways offer non-motorized connections (e.g., biking, walking etc.), expanding the City's multimodal transportation network beyond traditional motorized uses. Utilizing these assets as a starting point acknowledges the importance of multimodal connectivity between housing, amenities, and employment centers for attracting the current—and emerging—generations of workers. While Big Creek Greenway is completed, extensions to the Alpha Loop are still underway.

Activity Centers

The final and complete construction of the Alpha Loop will improve accessibility to various economic activity centers (Map 6-2). Through the years, each economic activity center has developed a unique character based on various factors—motorized traffic patterns, land uses, and density levels:

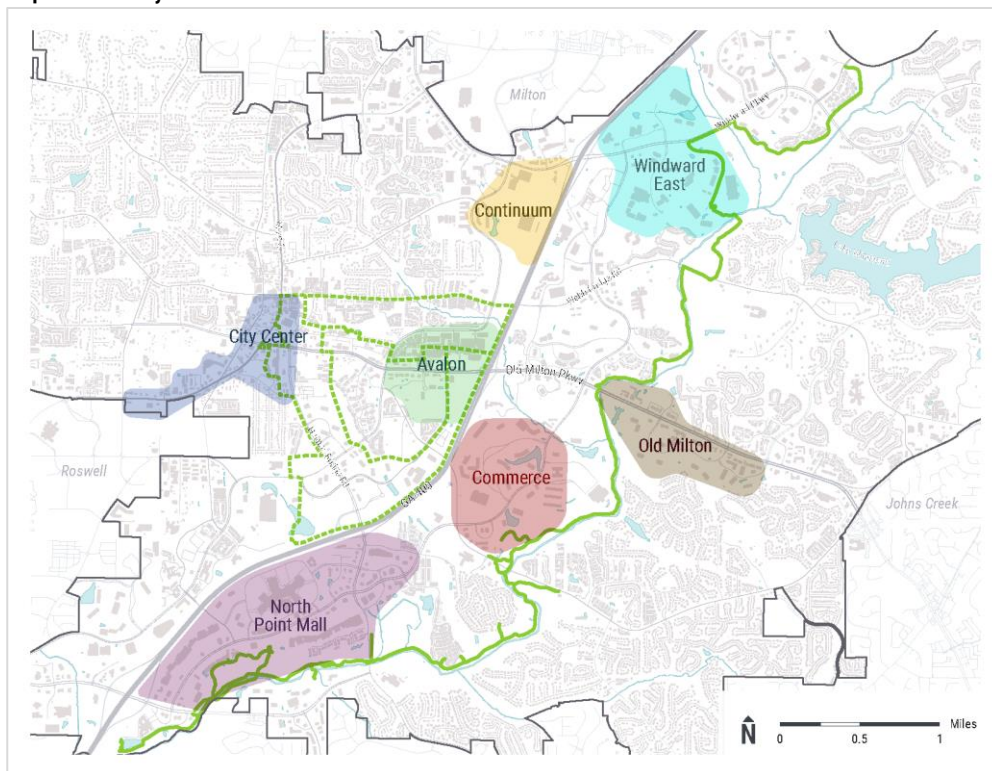
- **North Point Mall.** Regional shopping center that benefits from access to GA-400.
- **Commerce.** Suburban employment center that accompanied corporate operations
- **Old Milton.** Auto-centric retail development that benefits from access to Old Milton Parkway.
- **Windward East.** Suburban employment center that accompanied corporate operations.
- **Continuum.** Suburban employment center that accompanied corporate operations.
- **Avalon.** Vibrant mixed-use activity center that has attracted office tenants.
- **City Center.** Vibrant mixed-use activity center that serves as City's communal hub.

Map 6-1 - Connectivity



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates Inc., 2022

Map 6-2 - Activity Centers

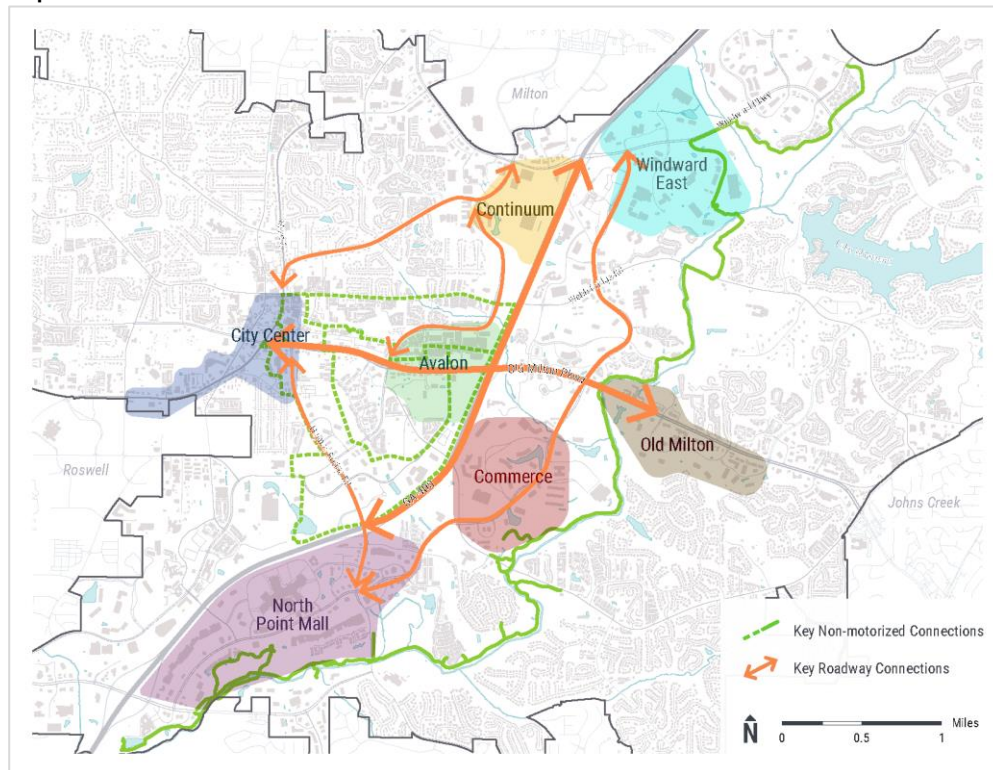


Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates Inc., 2022

Road Network

While the addition of non-motorized connections being integrate with the City's key roadways connections is important for future sustainability, focusing investment intensity in areas with the greatest transportation connectivity and access will help prioritize investment strategies and potential development levels. Using the City's main transportation assets (e.g., GA-400, Old Milton Parkway and Windward Parkway) to better define development/growth areas is paramount for this framework (Map 6-3). For instance, the planned confluence of Big Creek Greenway, the Alpha Loop, and GA-400 at North Point Mall indicates this area is better equipped for higher development typologies and intensity levels.

Map 6-3 – Road Network

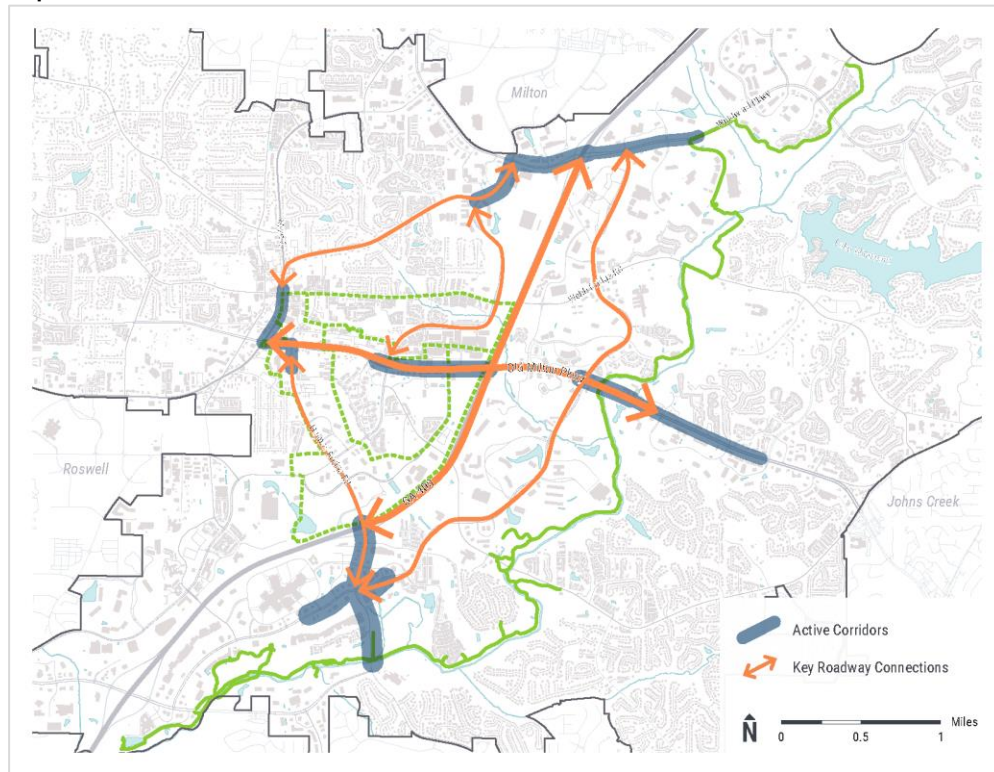


Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates Inc., 2022

Corridors and Activity Centers

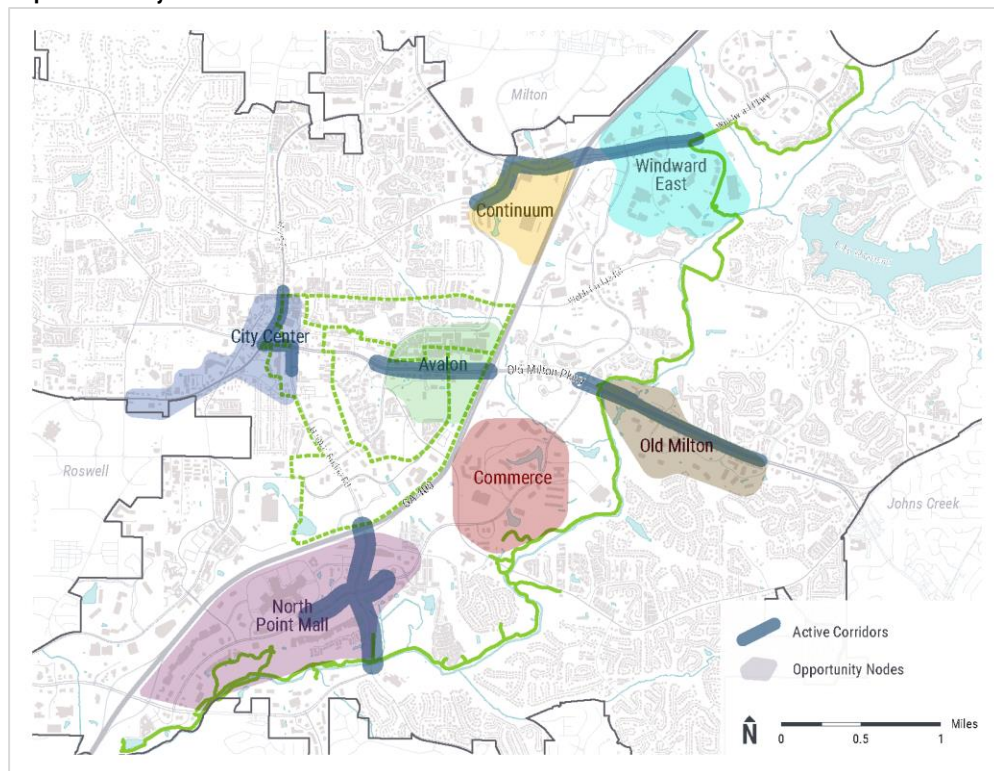
Accessibility improvements and expansions to the City's multimodal transportation network can help generate several long-term economic development benefits to each area. This includes creating new sources of consumer demand for retailers, facilitating business and workforce recruitment investments, and creating seamless connections with existing active corridors (Map 6-4, Map 6-5).

Map 6-4 – Active Corridors



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates Inc., 2022

Map 6-5 – Activity Center Corridor Nodes



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates Inc., 2022

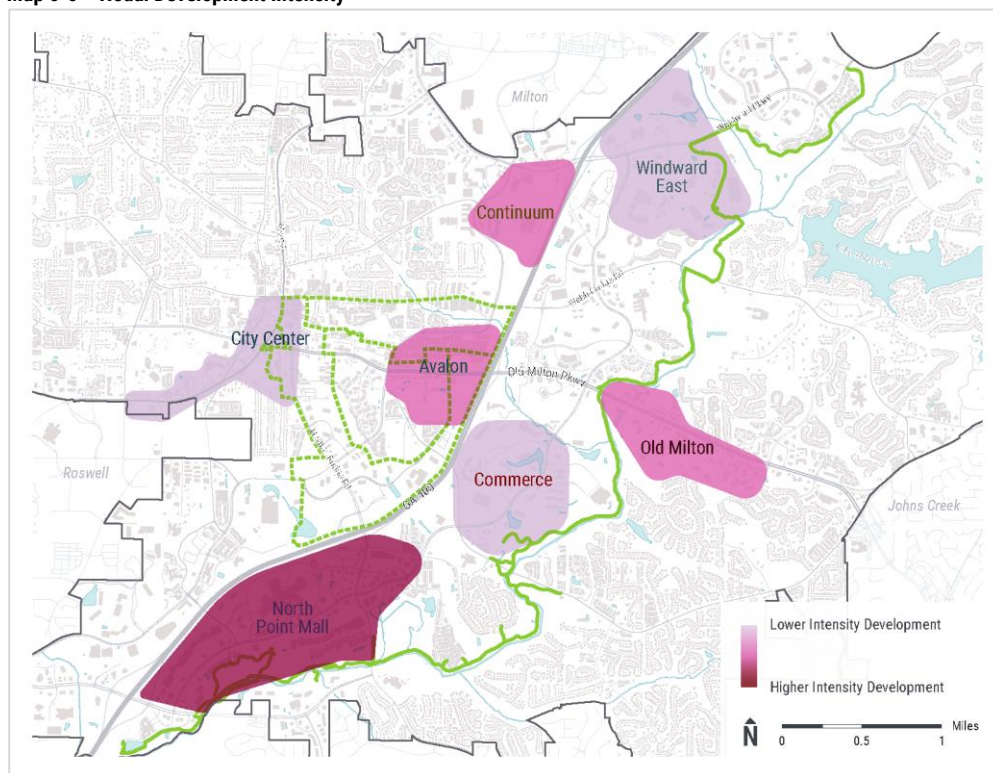
New sources of consumer demand for retailers can be developed through increased consumer traffic from walkers and bikers. For instance, while Old Milton largely relies on consumers via motorized, its intersection with the Big Creek Greenway allows walkers and bikers to access shops and restaurants more easily. This expanded accessibility for consumers can help support declining retail centers, such as the North Point Mall.

In today's knowledge economy, young professionals prioritize a multimodal transportation network, especially integrated with active mobility options. Attracting young professionals is a critical factor for attracting business investment, as businesses increasingly prioritize locating their operations near young talent. Such efforts are critical for revitalizing suburban office parks that are vulnerable to further decline (e.g., Commerce).

Nodal Development Intensity

While expansions to the City's multimodal transportation network can help with revitalization efforts in economic activity areas, enhancing land-use efficiencies and/or increasing developmental density levels should also be considered. RKG and the Advisory Group discussed how the current economic, market, transportation, and amenity climate in the City influences how the various nodes should be viewed for future infill and redevelopment efforts. Map 6-6 illustrates proposed density levels for each of the existing economic activity centers.

Map 6-6 – Nodal Development Intensity



Source: City of Alpharetta, RKG Associates Inc., 2022

North Point Mall represents the highest proposed developmental density levels whereas Commerce, Windward East, and City Center represents the lowest proposed developmental density levels. RKG Associates envisions North Point Mall transforming into a Central Business District (CBD) environment, equipped with the highest concentration of housing units, office uses, and retail spaces. The North Point Mall is a strategic location for this transformation, tucked away from incompatible land uses (e.g., single-family subdivisions) and situated at the City's gateway. RKG Associates envisions Commerce and Windward East be redeveloped to reflect similar developmental densities to City Center. Co-locating services and amenities through infill development projects can be used to sustain existing office spaces and revitalize unoccupied office spaces.

F. PRIORITY ACTIONS

The Implementation Matrix presented later in this chapter provides an easy-to-follow guide of the economic development recommendations for the City of Alpharetta. The recommendations are organized into the six general topic areas identified earlier in this chapter. The specific recommendations in this strategy were shaped through combining the vision of the Advisory Group, input from community stakeholders, business leaders, and elected officials, current and projected market conditions, and current/projected market opportunities.

The following action items are "priorities" for the Advisory Group in context of the City's short-term implementation of an economic development business plan. They are considered critical, and in some cases catalytic, in their importance to reach the stated goals. The narrative provides context for these recommendations to help frame Alpharetta's efforts in a manner that will maximize the effectiveness of City resources in expanding economic sustainability, support new and existing businesses, expand the diversity of local housing choices, and attract further investment to Alpharetta. While the other actions identified and detailed in the Implementation Matrix are necessary to meet the defined economic development goals, their implementation is more supportive and ancillary to these efforts.

1. Business Retention and Expansion

Continue to develop a comprehensive list of all businesses within the City. Over the previous few years, the City of Alpharetta has undertaken proactive efforts to inventory businesses within its municipal boundaries. Compiling a list of businesses through the availability of licensing data is efficient and effective. In an effort to ensure a comprehensive list of businesses, the City of Alpharetta can request local organizations to share their databases on existing City-based businesses. Organizations may include Tech Alpharetta, Alpharetta Business Association, and the Alpharetta Chamber of Commerce. A comprehensive list is essential for executing outreach and communication efforts to businesses in Alpharetta, such as implementing business surveys and scheduling 1-on-1 meetings.

Implement an annual business survey to identify emerging trends/needs. An annual business survey can be an effective approach towards engaging with local businesses to understand and respond to prevailing market conditions and trends, shifting regulations, workforce needs, and physical workspace requirements. Survey responses can facilitate the creation of programs and policies that address common challenges and needs among businesses. And be used to identify specific businesses vulnerable to downsizing or closing, catalyzing the City to prioritize in-person visits to those specific businesses. Assessing the results of the survey will be critical to evaluate shifting market conditions.

Proactively outreach to existing businesses through 1-on-1 meetings. A major component of business retention and expansion is working to enhance the performance of underrepresented businesses. This includes small businesses with limited capital resources and time availability. Most businesses the City of Alpharetta has recently connected with are large-scale operations (e.g., Microsoft, ADP). Large-scale operations can provide substantive insights on industry-specific market trends. However, the City must meet and engage with all businesses throughout its municipal boundaries not only to ensure their needs are met, but to update them on available economic development programs, opportunities, and incentives.

Per the existing economic development website, it seems that businesses are responsible for coordinating a discussion with staff members. It is recommended that the City reaches out to businesses to coordinate a discussion, and not the other way around. This approach can be more effective to nurture trust and transparency between the City of Alpharetta and the local business community.

Given the substantial number of businesses in Alpharetta, in-person visits will require considerable effort and time. Existing staff levels within the economic development department can limit the pace of engagement with local businesses. That said, hiring additional staff and/or reorganizing existing staff under economic development while cooperating with local implementation partners to engage with local businesses should be a priority. An efficient and effective approach is for the City to utilize a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool to track engagement efforts with local businesses.

Create additional industry roundtables to meet quarterly on market/economic issues. Industry roundtables gather professionals from a particular industry on a quarterly basis. Roundtables are an effective platform for communicating business-related challenges and opportunities in Alpharetta. The City's participation at meetings is critical, drawing insights that can be used to develop programs and policies for sustaining and growing a particular industry. While all industries are encouraged to form roundtables, RKG recommends the following industries be prioritized for forming roundtables:

- **Retailers**
- **Small Businesses**
- **Professional Services**

- **Real Estate/Commercial Property Owners**
- **Healthcare**
- **Minority-owned businesses**

Roundtables are integral for facilitating the creation of programs and policies that focus on workforce development, entrepreneurship, and asset development. This is particularly beneficial for market segments historically underrepresented in economic development discussions (e.g., small businesses, minority-owned businesses).

Actively engage Alpharetta's home-based businesses. As a means of adapting to the 'new normal' following the COVID-19 pandemic, many entrepreneurs are expected to turn to home-based businesses. As home-based businesses undergo potential expansions, the City of Alpharetta must consider similar action items recommended for other market segments. Key actions items can include the creation of business surveys and Advisory Groups targeted towards home-based businesses.

Expand existing business networking series to connect more local businesses. Networking opportunities can enable local businesses to develop professional connections, recruit workers, and identify market shifts. Such opportunities can be engineered through interactive events and seminars, especially in casual stress-free environments. These events are different than traditional social and happy-hour type gatherings. Typically, these events bring in outside experts or keynote speakers, engaging the business community to provide emerging market information or provide insights into existing challenges identified in the business survey/business outreach initiatives. The City of Alpharetta can partner with local and regional organizations (e.g., chambers of commerce, the convention and visitor's bureau...) to develop specific subject matter events, applied to various market segments--small/entrepreneurial businesses, women-owned and minority-owned businesses, and young professional/entrepreneur group events. Implementation partners that may be interested in cooperating events for various market segments include:

- **Small/Entrepreneurial Businesses:** SBDC, U.S. Small Business Administration
- **Women-Owned or Minority-Owned:** Women Influencing Business at Greater North Fulton Chamber, Women's Economic Development Agency (WEDA), Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council (GMSDC), Multicultural Business Division (MBD) at University of Georgia SBDC Center
- **Young Professional/Entrepreneurs:** Tech Alpharetta, Georgia State University

Create an annual lecture on available local, county, state, and federal assistance programs. Several local, regional, and federal programs are available to help existing businesses sustain and expand their businesses. Many of these programs spearheaded by government entities beyond the local level are actively engaged in economic development, managing larger budgets and can

offer substantial incentive programs. Local businesses should be aware of these programs, and the City should hold an annual lecture to make them aware of existing offerings at each level of government. Consequently, providing them with critical information that can increase their chances of retaining or expanding their operations.

2. Business Recruitment and Attraction

Become more proactive with partners in business recruitment. Statewide, regional, and local economic development organizations actively engage in larger-scale business recruitment, including the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Metro Atlanta Chamber, Georgia Power, and Fulton County. RKG Associates recommends the City continue to coordinate with these organizations on potential business recruitment opportunities and how Alpharetta can enhance their competitiveness to capture investment activities.

- **Engage industry roundtables to generate potential recruitment leads:** Participation in industry roundtables (discussed in *Business Recruitment and Expansion*) is valuable for networking with existing businesses that can connect the City to prospective businesses within their vertical or horizontal supply chains.

To illustrate this, consider the City's interest in expanding their life-sciences sector and the challenge of renovating office spaces to lab spaces which requires specialized expertise. Through industry roundtables with commercial property developers/owners, the City can inquire about general contractors that may have previous experience with office-to-lab space conversions. The City can coordinate with general contractors and office property owners to identify renovation opportunities and ultimately, help enhance Alpharetta's prospects for recruiting life sciences firms.

- **Leverage relationships with nearby communities to join market in common target industries:** Competition between nearby communities can reduce Alpharetta's opportunities for attracting business operations. Rather, partnerships between communities can create co-benefits and be a cost-effective mechanism for business recruitment. The North Fulton municipalities worked very well together during the COVID-19 pandemic, engaging collaboratively to identify and address business needs/opportunities. While meetings continue today, Alpharetta should encourage this group to increase its proactive retention and recruitment efforts for shared target industries and objectives. For instance, the GA-400 brand—Technology Corridor—can be used to bridge resources between southern Forsyth County and North Fulton County/Alpharetta for recruiting advanced manufacturing firms.

Expand start-up and entrepreneurial development services open to all businesses. Other than Tech Alpharetta, the City lacks a structured small business development program that helps aspiring entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses across industry segments. A Small Business Development Center (SBDC) exists to serve entrepreneurs throughout Fulton County

but is in Atlanta. Given the lack of program availability, the City of Alpharetta can create a program through a multistakeholder approach with the help of local quasigovernmental agencies, educational institutions, and business leaders.

- **Form strategic partnerships for staffing and technical assistance:** The closest Small Business Development Center (SBDC) operates out of University of Georgia. The SBDC offers entrepreneurial courses on start-up assistance, financing opportunities, digital marketing, and branding. The City of Alpharetta must consider coordinating with SBDC at University of Georgia, in effort to receive an in-house consultant that can help with small business development training and guidance. The City will need to identify a physical location in Alpharetta, for the SBDC consultant and other volunteers (retired mentors) to execute entrepreneurial development services.
- **Develop mentorship program that involves past or current business leaders:** Mentors can help enable aspiring entrepreneurs' business development goals through sharing their experiences and business connections. The City of Alpharetta should consider developing a program that connects local business leaders to entrepreneurs either seeking to start a business or grow their business. Strong consideration should be given to retirees acting as mentors, able to commit more time for mentorship than current professionals.
- **Develop small business revolving loan fund in coordination with financial partners to administer loan funds on behalf of the City:** A major challenge for entrepreneurs is to secure financing for their business operations. In response, the City should activate a small business revolving fund for business planning services and capital needs. Loans can be offered at very low interest rates with government guarantees backed by the City of Alpharetta and if possible, local, and regional stakeholders (e.g., Fulton County). The program would involve partnership with one (or multiple) banks, having these institutions match the City's investment in exchange for managing the origination and administration of the loans.
- **Partner with local firms to offer free/reduced cost business support services:** Early-stage businesses may lack the financial resources to fund specialized professional services. The City of Alpharetta should coordinate with local professional services firms to inquire about offering reduced (or free) rates for local entrepreneurs. This includes legal services, human resources, and accounting services.
- **Centralize Entrepreneurial Activities:** Tech Alpharetta just focuses on technology-based ventures. However, other market sectors are as critical to entrepreneurship (retail/hospitality). A central location for supporting entrepreneurial activities throughout all market sectors, including technology-based ventures, can enhance cost-efficiencies for City-sponsored programs. Moreover, a central location can encourage cross-pollination

between market sectors to facilitate the commercialization of innovative business solutions.

3. Asset Development

Create/update small area plans for the City's primary economic centers. The City of Alpharetta has identified several areas positioned for development and/or redevelopment opportunities. This includes the redevelopment of the North Point Mall, which has been proposed to be transformed into a vibrant live-work-play activity center. Following a complex procurement process, the most recent proposal was voted down. The eventual rejection reverberates the challenge of finding consensus among decisionmakers—in relation to things like character, scale, and developmental density levels. Without a defined and unified real estate vision, future projects will remain stalled which limits the City's overall economic development vision. RKG Associates recommends Alpharetta continue to build consensus for each of City's primary economic activity centers (through the LCI process). These ARC-sponsored small area plans serve to clearly define the scale and vision for various economic activity centers, serving to find consensus on proposed projects while balancing the interests of community members with economic development objectives.

That said, a unified vision must be in coordination with property owners, businesses owners, and residents. And through this engagement, determine the short-term, midterm, and long-term goals for each economic activity area. An integral part to promoting these visions will be modifying incompatible land-use/zoning regulations that limit progress (e.g., areas zoned for low-density residential in economic activity areas envisioned to transition to live-work-play town-center style development patterns.

Maintain a locally managed database of available land and building space. The City of Alpharetta has maintained a publicly available database that includes a useful GIS component---Select Alpharetta. The database advertises a comprehensive spectrum of spatial sizes, ranging from smaller-scale spaces (10,000 SF or below) to larger-scale spaces (25,000 SF and above). RKG Associates recommends that the City continue maintaining Select Alpharetta but cross-reference with other entities advertising properties within the City to ensure accurate reporting. For instance, many properties in Alpharetta advertised by Georgia Power Community and Economic Development report different square footages of available leasable space than reported in Select Alpharetta. The conflicting information can cause confusion for prospective tenants, and therefore, increases the likelihood of seeking other communities to locate their operations.

Identify 4-6 priority investment/reinvestment properties within the City. Based on the economic development small area plans mentioned above, the City should identify 4-6 priority investment/reinvestment properties to focus their efforts. As the properties are identified, the City should develop a prospectus book highlighting each site, current use/ownership, City vision, and the tools available to develop the site. Consistent communication with property owners will be critical to cooperate on investment strategies that are compatible with the City's vision.

4. Economic Development Toolbox

Match land use and/or zoning regulations to economic development vision. As Alpharetta seeks to sustain job growth and fiscal capacities, realigning land use/zoning regulations that support marketplace preferences will be imperative. Avalon is a strong proof-of-concept that demonstrates the marketability of mixed-use activity centers in Alpharetta. The City can realign land use/zoning regulations that support densities at the scale of Avalon or even greater. RKG Associates acknowledges and understands many community members may have concerns about Alpharetta losing its suburban character. And doesn't recommend the City match the character and scale of Midtown Atlanta. However, permitting greater flexibility and densities in areas that 'make sense' (underutilized office parks/economic activity centers—North Point Mall), can help Alpharetta develop a stable economic foundation and preserve its high quality-of-life. Developing the regulatory environment to improve consistency and predictability can increase investment activities, while helping Alpharetta enhance its built environment to support business and workforce recruitment.

Create economic development incentives that match the City's priorities and performance expectations. RKG Associates recommend the City consider incentives that vary by location (e.g., Downtown, North Point), type of business (e.g., retail, life sciences), and structural circumstances (e.g., high vacancies). Each of these incentives should include claw back requirements that would make the partner reimburse the City of Alpharetta for failure to meet incentive-term conditions. For instance, if a defined proportion of a single-use office structure (e.g., 40% or higher) remains vacant for a fixed-period time, the property owner will be required to restructure the property to support another revenue-generating activity—integrating housing units. Other performance requirements could include the net new number of jobs created and the amount of capital investment.

RKG Associates recommends prioritizing the refinement of its incentive package tools to support entrepreneurial and small business retention, expansion, and recruitment. From a financial incentive perspective, the threshold to qualify for a small business incentive should be low (e.g., create 1-2 jobs). And consider more generous thresholds for City residents seeking to start or expand a business. For instance, creating 1-2 jobs but allotted more time to achieve these thresholds than non-residents. Finally, RKG recommends specific incentives be created for aspiring minority entrepreneurs or existing business owners. Incentives for small businesses should be restricted to entrepreneurs that are involved in a business planning service (e.g., SBDC), to increase their chances of meeting defined performance metrics.

Hire a developmental ombudsman. The ombudsman position is focused on providing property owners and investors technical and process-oriented assistance when going through the development review and entitlement processes. Whether it is a rezoning or variance request, the ombudsman program is intended to assist applicants in effectively and efficiently navigating the relevant City rules and regulations. The position has two priorities. First, the ombudsman must be familiar with all procedures and expectations in the City of Alpharetta and be able to advise applicants on how to ensure a complete application package. Second, the ombudsman must be

able to collaborate with industry professionals (i.e., engineers) to provide advisory services when it comes to technical needs.

5. Outreach, Marketing, and Communication

Business Outreach

Create marketing collateral necessary for effective and retention efforts. Communication and marketing are critical for retaining and attracting investment activities. The City of Alpharetta will need to enhance their 'marketing collateral' to sustain business investment activities. Specific materials include:

- Target Industry Content – Industry-specific marketing materials for each of the target industries are important for disseminating specific data that is valuable to the City's target industries--(see Chapter 4 for recommended target industries). While the City has advertised specific industry clusters on Connected Alpharetta, it appears that datapoints may be outdated or inaccurate which may be a deterrent towards attracting businesses due to issues related to trust and transparency. The documents should highlight information including employment and establishment growth data, regional wage rates, current businesses operating in the area, competitive advantages of operating locally, unique incentives available (where applicable) and local business contacts (ambassadors). A focus on reporting employment data is critical given the importance for prospective businesses to locate near a skilled workforce.
- Incentive Sheet – The City of Alpharetta publishes state and local incentives on their economic development website--Connected Alpharetta. The City should proactively update the website to advertise new incentives when they're established. For instance, the Fulton County Recovery Loan Program, established through coordination with Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE) in August 2022.
- Business Testimonial Book – Through stakeholder interviews, RKG Associates uncovered several "success stories" of existing businesses succeeding in Alpharetta. However, these experiences are not chronicled or readily available to use in marketing. RKG recommends crafting a business testimonials book with written statements from existing industry leaders on topics ranging from quality of life, business climate, value-add created by the City, and personal preference to do business locally. Getting input from companies that have chosen Alpharetta and thrive locally is valuable to industry recruitment. Individual testimonies of leaders from a range of businesses by size should be a priority.
- Property Assemblage Book – The City should create a property assemblage book that highlights those catalytic land assets identified in each of the economic activity centers where the City and property owner are aligned on the future development program. To this point, the assemblage book should only highlight those assets where the property owners are

engaged and supportive of the City marketing their property. The book should focus on the top catalytic projects. Each listing should provide information on all the properties as well as the community's development vision for that area.

Develop business ambassadors to assist in business engagement and marketing. The ambassador program is a collection of business and industry leaders that provide support to the economic development entity's staff for industry recruitment and retention. Although these individuals will have no formal authority within the recruitment process, they provide a 'real life' vantage point for prospects doing business in Alpharetta. Their most important function is to provide a business perspective for prospects interested in locating/expanding within the City. Utilizing business leaders in the recruitment process legitimizes the recruitment effort through testimonials while leveraging the staff's time and effort. The most effective ambassadors may not be from the largest businesses. Alpharetta should identify ambassadors from each of the major industry sectors to ensure appropriate coverage regardless of the prospect.

Enact a monthly newsletter detailing market and economic development activities. The Alpharetta Business Association already publishes a monthly newsletter that advertises networking events. This newsletter should be expanded to provide opinion editorials and highlight developments occurring in certain target industries. A monthly newsletter should advertise networking events, provide opinion editorials, and highlight developments occurring in certain target industries. LinkedIn has been used as a platform for publishing significant development projects (e.g., Alpha Loop). Projects like these should be consolidated into a monthly newsletter. Moreover, this newsletter should be easily accessible on the economic development website.

Community Outreach

Community awareness and support are critical components of implementation. Simply put, the amount of financial and political support for economic development is influenced by the willingness of residents to endorse local action. Increased awareness and education about economic development can only benefit implementation in building sustainable and strategic relationships with all local stakeholders.

Host community update meetings. RKG recommends the City engage with community advocates to meet with citizen and civic groups to provide annual updates on economic development related actions. This effort can dovetail into a staff-led "town hall" presentation/discussion to be held at different locations throughout the City, enabling community members to hear about economic development efforts and ask questions/give feedback.

Implement bi-annual survey to residents. A bi-annual survey targeted to residents can gauge local understanding and support of economic development as well as identify any community-based goals and concerns. Their responses can help facilitate the creation of programs and policies

that advance community goals and provide content to develop targeted approaches to address common/detailed community concerns.

Develop citizen advocates to assist in community engagement. Given the challenge of reaching all the different community groups in Alpharetta, RKG Associates recommends a select group of interested citizens assist in engaging local civic organizations (e.g., homeowner associations, social clubs). Ideally, the community advocates would be individuals with strong ties and broad recognition within either a specific area of the City or with a civic group. Individuals selected to be advocates should be familiar with the City's economic development efforts, can discuss and explain economic development concepts, and be well spoken. Most importantly, the advocates must be available to assist in outreach to various community (i.e., congregations) and civic (i.e., neighborhood groups) entities. Outreach meetings should occur on a quarterly basis to keep community residents up to date about local economic development issues.

Create an online portal through economic development website for citizens to engage. To ensure constant and consistent communication with residents and civic organizations, an online tool should be made accessible for community members to provide feedback on economic development programs and to request meetings with staff members. Having a dedicated communication portal online can offer individual citizens the opportunity to ask questions, provide recommendations, or seek clarification on the City's economic development efforts.

General Outreach

Establish an economic development dashboard to highlight activities and impacts. Traditional economic development metrics include job creation, business attraction, and tax revenue growth. These metrics alone can overlook the performance of all economic development activities in a community. That said, additional metrics are essential to track the effectiveness and efficiency of various implementation programs. For instance, tracking the number of jobs created from the support of local incentives. This can help gauge whether new incentives need to be developed or existing incentives need to be refined to support greater job growth.

RKG Associates recommend the City establish an economic development dashboard that not only tracks traditional economic development metrics but metrics that track the performance of local programs. Recommended metrics categorized under topic areas are listed below:

- **Business Retention and Expansion**
 - Site visits performed
 - Ombudsman assists
 - Jobs retained/expanded
 - Capital Investment
 - Network event attendance
 - Survey participation
 - Programs/strategies created from roundtable discussions

- **Business Recruitment and Attraction**
 - Number of prospective businesses engaged
 - Successful recruitments
 - Total jobs created
 - Average annual wage
 - Total capital investment
 - Debrief highlights from lost opportunities

- **Entrepreneurial Development**
 - Enrollment inquiries
 - Business enrollment
 - State/regional investment
 - Graduation rates
 - Job created per graduate and associated NAICS code
 - Debrief on businesses leaving the program

- **Fiscal Sustainability Metrics**
 - Number of incentives
 - Value of incentives
 - Jobs created/preserved from incentives
 - Capital Investment
 - New tax revenues
 - Infrastructure investments

Enhance the City's virtual media presence. The City has been proactive to promote local economic development efforts online. In particular, marketing the City's successes on Instagram and LinkedIn. The City of Alpharetta should continue updating their economic development website to reflect current information (e.g., real estate data, number of businesses per industry).

6. Organization and Coordination

The importance of pursuing economic development through joint-cooperation and strategic partnerships is critical for achieving the proposed economic development goals. The City of Alpharetta needs financial and technical support from all relevant partners and stakeholders. This includes the Alpharetta Chamber of Commerce, Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce, Tech Alpharetta, and various educational institutions. To summarize, any entity involved with advancing economic and social outcomes in Alpharetta, Fulton County, and throughout the Atlanta MSA.

Fund economic development activities commensurate with economic development goals. The current volume of financial investments and staff capacity is insufficient to meet Alpharetta's proposed economic development goals. The City of Alpharetta should scale its economic

development focus to the most critical tasks until additional staff and resources are made available. In particular—small business development, marketing, and outreach to economic development stakeholders.

Leverage local and regional partnerships to support economic development activities. The City of Alpharetta has limited staff and financial resources to achieve all the proposed economic development goals. To help offset these limitations, the City needs to continue to build coordination with local mission-based entities focused on enhancing the economic and social climate in the area. Coordination among organizations is vital for bolstering the City’s efforts on business recruitment, communication and outreach, and small business development.

G. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following Implementation Matrix presents the full range of objectives and corresponding action items for the City’s consideration. As noted, this matrix should serve as a reference document as the economic development staff craft their annual business plan. The timelines, estimated costs, and implementation partners for each action item identified in the matrix reflect RKG Associates’ professional recommendation guided by input from City staff and the project’s Advisory Group. The final timing, focus, and potential costs for each action item should be refined by staff and/or the responsible implementation partner when implementation occurs.

LEGEND

Implementation Leaders

Public

AL	City of Alpharetta
FC	Fulton County
MU	Other Municipalities
GA	State of Georgia
WI	Village of Williamsville

Partners

AB	Business Advisory Board
BA	Alpharetta Business Association (ABA)
CC	Alpharetta Chamber of Commerce (ACC)
ID	Fulton County Industrial Development Authority (FCIDA)
MC	Metro Atlanta Chamber (MAC)
NF	Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce (GNFCC)
TA	Tech Alpharetta
VB	Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)

Private

C	Consultant
F	Financial Institutions
I	Industry Leaders
N	Neighborhood Residents
O	Property Owners
R	Realtors/Brokers

Cost Estimate Legend:

ST	Staff Time
A	Under \$1,000
B	\$1,000 to \$10,000
C	\$10,000 to \$50,000
D	\$50,000 to \$100,000
E	\$100,000 to \$250,000
F	\$250,000 to \$500,000
G	Over \$500,000

	Action
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City of Alpharetta, Georgia Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix			Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)										Estimated	Cost
			Public/NP	Private	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Cost	Type
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION																
Objective 1.1	Continue to develop a comprehensive list of all businesses within the City															
	Action 1.1.1	Create a single database of all Alpharetta businesses based on lists already available (e.g., pervious COVID efforts, secondary data vendors, partner organization membership lists...)	AL, AB, BA, CC, TA, VB												A	One Time
	Action 1.1.2	Utilize the city's business license process to collect more detailed data about businesses, particularly contact information	AL												ST	Annual
	Action 1.1.3	Provide opportunity for businesses to register/review their information in the business list through the town's economic development website	AL	O, I, R											Included 5.5.1	Annual
	Action 1.1.4	Work with property owners and landlords to collect business contact information	AL, AB, CC	O, I											ST	Annual
	Action 1.1.5	Implement volunteer walks, having 10-15 volunteers canvas the town's various activity centers to gather contact information	AL, CC	O, I											A	Biannual
	Action 1.1.6	Ask industry roundtable members to advertise volunteer walks and engage their relationships to build the database	AL, AB	O, I											ST	Biannual
Objective 1.2	Implement an annual business survey to identify emerging trends/needs															
	Action 1.2.1	Establish a fixed date (e.g., week) that the survey will be released. This should be consistent year over year. Recommend the Fall	AL, AB, CC	O, I											A	Annual
	Action 1.2.2	Ensure the survey covers the following topics: Market climate/changes, Regulatory environment, Growth/contraction needs and concerns, Workforce needs, and Physical space needs	AL, AB	O, I											ST	Annual
	Action 1.2.3	Work with the Tech Alpharetta, the Chamber, other business organizations, and industry roundtables to refine questions and expand awareness of the survey each year	AL, AB, BA, CC, TA, VB	O, I											ST	Annual
	Action 1.2.4	Invest in multimedia marketing and outreach at least 2 months prior to the release of the survey each year (e.g., print, social media, direct outreach)	AL												Included 5.5.2	Annual
	Action 1.2.5	Share general results of the survey with roundtables, partner organizations, and the community through the monthly newsletter	AL	O, I											ST	Annual
	Action 1.2.6	Use results of survey to prioritize retention/expansion visits for the year	AL												ST	Annual
	Action 1.2.7	Work with respective roundtables about industry-specific findings from survey to determine annual action items	AL, AB	O, I											ST	Annual
	Action 1.2.8	Retain all survey results to create a longitudinal assessment tool (e.g., Excel database) that can help economic development efforts become more predictive to changing market climates	AL												ST	Annual
	Action 1.2.9	Consider rekindling your partnership with the other North Fulton municipalities to implement a broader survey effort (increased responses, shared costs)	AL, MU												ST	Annual
Objective 1.3	Proactively outreach to existing businesses through 1-on-1 meetings															
	Action 1.3.1	Use the comprehensive business list to identify new companies to visit and track past visit efforts. Do not concentrate on the same businesses year over year	AL, AB	I											ST	Continuous
	Action 1.3.2	Establish quotas for number of monthly visits, starting with ten (10) per month, expanding as more staff is hired and/or volunteers trained	AL												ST	Continuous
	Action 1.3.3	Use business survey results to prioritize outreach efforts to companies that indicate growth needs or challenges to maintain operations	AL, AB												ST	Annual
	Action 1.3.4	Coordinate with economic development partners for business visits (e.g., chamber or Tech Alpharetta)	AL, AB, BA, CC, TA, VB												ST	Continuous
	Action 1.3.5	Maintain database of visited businesses to track frequency and results of the visit through a Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) software	AL												B	Annual
	Action 1.3.6	Create a direct "help line" initiative on the city's economic development website that allows businesses to connect to an economic development staff member for assistance	AL	C											Included 5.5.1	One Time
	Action 1.3.7	Activate business ambassadors to assist in outreach, providing them training on questions to ask and how to track the conversation	AL, AB	O, I											Included 5.3.1	Annual

[illegible]

City of Alpharetta, Georgia Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)										Estimated	Cost
		Public/NP	Private	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Cost	Type
BUSINESS RECRUITMENT															
Objective 2.1	Become more proactive with regional and statewide partners in business recruitment														
Action 2.1.1	Engage industry roundtables and individual businesses to generate potential recruitment leads through vertical and horizontal supply chains	AL, AL, BA, CC												ST	Quarterly
Action 2.1.2	Establish quarterly work sessions with implementation partners (e.g., ABA, ACC, GN FCC, FCIDA, MAC...) to discuss opportunities and implementation strategies	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC												A	Annual
Action 2.1.3	Maintain local property and land database, coordinating with partners on maintaining an accurate and up-to-date list	AL	C											Included 3.2.1	Annual
Action 2.1.4	Collaborate on leads collected through business outreach and marketing efforts	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC												ST	Annual
Action 2.1.5	Work with local partners to build relationships with site selectors in target industry sectors, adding them the city's economic development newsletter distribution list	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 2.1.6	Create a municipal economic development coalition focused on information sharing, best practice engagement, and collaboration on cross jurisdictional needs/opportunities (e.g., workforce development)	AL, MU												ST	Annual
Objective 2.2	Expand start-up and entrepreneurial development services open to all businesses														
Action 2.2.1	Provide information seminars in partnership with other North Fulton municipalities on how to start, operate, and grow a business	AL, MU, FC												B	Annual
Action 2.2.2	Fund the training of 2-3 new mentors each year, selecting within business sectors that are underrepresented, particularly women and people of color	AL, MU	O, I											B	Annual
Action 2.2.3	Work with local banks to create a PPP revolving loan fund that offers low/no-interest loans and/or gap financing to start-ups and small businesses seeking to grow. Target an 80% private/20% public resource pool	AL, MU	F											F	One Time
Action 2.2.4	Engage local HR, engineering, accounting, and legal professionals to create a database of potential consultants for entrepreneurs to use	AL, MU	O, I											ST	Annual
Action 2.2.5	Provide financial assistance for entrepreneurs and small businesses to access critical services such as human resources assistance, financial planning assistance, and legal assistance	AL, MU												D	Annual
Action 2.2.6	Proactively market small business initiatives to existing businesses, focusing on home-based businesses using updated business tracking data	AL												ST	Annual
Action 2.2.7	Modify incentive programs to offer financial support to startups and small businesses to locate and grow in Amherst (e.g., one-time grants for creating jobs above area median income), requiring participation in an entrepreneurial training program	AL, AB												D	Annual
Action 2.2.8	Identify a highly visible, well appointed location for a comprehensive incubator/business support facility that incorporates Tech Alpharetta	AL, AB												D	Annual
Action 2.2.9	Consider hiring an additional full-time staff member dedicated to small business/entrepreneurial development in partnership with Tech Alpharetta	AL, TA												D	Annual
Objective 2.3	Scale proactive marketing and recruitment efforts to best leverage the City's resources and market reach														
Action 2.2.1	Partner with local and state entities to market through relevant digital and print mediums annually	AL, BA, CC, FC, ID, MC	C											C/D	Annual
Action 2.2.2	Host a searchable online database of available commercial space and land for prospectus businesses to review	AL												A	Annual
Action 2.2.3	Create a 'tip line' for citizens to call/Email/text ideas on business recruitment and any leads they may have on businesses that may wish to relocate or expand to Amherst	AL	C											Included 5.5.1	One Time
Action 2.2.4	Develop/refine the City's business recruitment collateral (see OUTREACH, COMMUNICATION, AND MARKETING section)	AL												Included 5.1.1	Annual

[illegible]

[illegible]

City of Alpharetta, Georgia Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix			Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)										Estimated	Cost
			Public/NP	Private	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Cost	Type
OUTREACH, MARKETING, AND COMMUNICATION																
Objective 5.1	Create marketing collateral necessary for effective retention and recruitment efforts															
	Action 5.1.1	Create all materials listed below in print and digital format, updating regularly (minimum once a year)	AL	C											C	Annual
	Action 5.1.2	Create target industry-specific fact and information sheets	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.3	Refine the existing marketing document to reflect recommended changes where applicable (e.g., incentives)	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.6	Create a property prospectus book detailed in 3.3.3 (digital only)	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.4	Create quality of life information sheets on livability and amenities in Alpharetta	AL	C											Included	Annual
	Action 5.1.5	Create materials to market the new ombudsman program	AL	C											Included	Biannual
	Action 5.1.7	Create employment marketing brochure detailed in 3.1.4	AL	C											Included	Biannual
Objective 5.2	Enact a monthly newsletter detailing market and economic development activities															
	Action 5.2.1	Highlight recent economic development activity and successes, maintaining a 'running tally' dashboard of accomplishments for the year	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.2	Publish regular opinion editorials from business owners, partner organizations, or invited guests focused on topics that influence (or are influenced by) economic development in Alpharetta	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.3	Include separate topic-themed Mayor/Economic Development Director messages in each newsletter	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.4	Implement, monitor, and report the results of opinion polls and business surveys through the newsletter	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.5	Highlight a different Alpharetta business (preferably from the target industries) in each newsletter that have invested, expanded, or created new jobs	AL, AB												ST	Monthly
	Action 5.2.6	Target writing two (2) or three (3) industry/market white papers each year focused on educating local businesses and residents about current or impending market shifts and how they will impact local/regional businesses	AL, AB, ID	O, I, R											ST	Monthly
Objective 5.3	Activate existing business leaders in economic development efforts															
	Action 5.3.1	Develop at least five (5) business ambassadors, individuals who can work with economic development staff to promote Amherst and engage existing/prospective business owners in targeted industries. Train more as necessary	AL, AB	O, I											A	Biannual
	Action 5.3.2	Develop a network of mentors in each of the target industries, focusing on developing women, minority and young business owners to reach the city's diverse business base	AL, AB	O, I											Included 2.2.4	Annual
	Action 5.3.3	Develop at least four (4) engaged Alpharetta residents as advocates that can assist in community outreach and resident interaction	AL, AB	N											A	Biannual
	Action 5.3.4	Create a Business-2-Business database that businesses can access to find specific services/networking opportunities	AL, AB												A	Continuous
Objective 5.4	Implement a proactive community engagement and education initiative															
	Action 5.4.1	Hold an annual "town hall" meeting open to the public (and televised) to discuss accomplishments and ongoing efforts for the previous/upcoming year	AL	N											A	Annual
	Action 5.4.2	Implement a biannual resident survey to gauge the goals and concerns of Amherst residents about the town's economic development efforts. Use the results to inform any changes to approach	AL	N											ST	Biannual
	Action 5.4.3	Hold a community outreach meeting in each employment center annually to engage business leaders and residents on economic development issues, opportunities, and challenges those areas are facing	AL	N											A	Annual
	Action 5.4.4	Host semiannual panelist discussions on topics of economic development each year. These discussions should address specific market/location opportunities and challenges facing local businesses	AL	C											B	Semiannual
	Action 5.4.5	Provide an online portal for citizens and groups to submit questions, provide feedback on content, or request meetings on the economic development website	AL												Included 5.4.1	One Time

