

# Consolidated Needs & Opportunities

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# CONSOLIDATED NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

## DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE

### REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

The areas of Peachtree Corners along Buford Highway offer opportunities for redevelopment. These sites receive high visibility, and they are along a busy commercial corridor.

The multifamily developments on Peachtree Corners Circle and Holcomb Bridge Road are also potential redevelopment sites; the buildings are aging, and the City and community might be well served by discussing potential upgrades. In addition, the City should consider upgrades to Holcomb Bridge Road itself to make it safer and more walkable.

### DEVELOPMENT SITES

There are several tracts of vacant land in Peachtree Corners that should be considered for development. The vacant parcels along the Chattahoochee offer opportunities for recreation and river access. The vacant parcels along Peachtree Parkway are ideal for commercial infill development. The vacant land on the west of Peachtree Corners should be considered as part of the overall office or industrial plan for the City. And the site across the street from the Forum is ideal for mixed use development, high quality commercial, and development that helps meet the City's need for a downtown and more public gathering places.

### INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES

In several places, residential uses are adjacent to industrial ones. Many properties are zoned for manufacturing even though they are developed for office or retail uses. The City should develop a strategy for resolving these conflicts in the future and updating the zoning and future development maps to prevent similar adjacencies.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### PLANNED GREENWAY

Gwinnett County has plans for a network of greenways that includes one along the length of the Chattahoochee River. The City of Peachtree Corners should work with the County to implement this plan and provide greater access to the river to all members of the community.

### HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

While Peachtree Corners has several historic sites, only one of them is on the national register. The City should work to designate the others as historic and publicize them as cultural resources. A number of them are on the banks of the Chattahoochee, and these will provide an opportunity to increase use of the river while building awareness of the city's history.



## CONSOLIDATED NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following are needs and opportunities identified in each area of analysis. They are restated at the end of each section, as well.

### LAND USE

#### Needs

- The **Future Development plan** of Gwinnett County is overly broad and the City will need a more fine-grained one.
- There is **not enough park space**, particularly on the southern side of the city (see Cultural Resources and Community Facilities section).
- There is no downtown or town center. The Forum is the only “destination” in the City, and there are no **civic or public gathering spaces**.
- Arts and cultural facilities, civic and community facilities, and nightlife and entertainment options are inadequate in Peachtree Corners.
- There are few **housing options for older adults** in the City, such as cluster homes or “live/walk/play” communities.
- In certain areas, residential districts are adjacent to **incompatible uses**.

#### Opportunities

- Transitions between incompatible uses can be enhanced, and the City can develop a strategy for managing **residential/industrial adjacencies** in the future.
- Several locations throughout the City, particularly commercial and industrial areas, are ripe for **redevelopment** or will be within the next few years.
- There are large **vacant parcels** along the Chattahoochee.
- There are **infill opportunities** along Peachtree Parkway.
- There are large vacant parcels on the western side of the City.
- There is an opportunity to develop a **variety of housing types**, including live/work units, condominiums, lofts/flats, townhouses, and small lot detached single-family homes. These housing types can provide options to first-time home buyers or empty nesters.
- The City can encourage accessory dwelling units, or “granny flats” to create additional dwelling units in single-family neighborhoods without changing the urban form. They provide opportunities to **increase diversity in age or**

**stage of life** in established neighborhoods; they allow grandparents to age in place, close to their grandchildren while maintaining independence; and they create options for renters who do not wish to live in high-density multifamily zoning districts.

- Investing in the community will help maintain its vibrancy for the next several decades. The City can invest in acquiring vacant commercial space and revitalizing aging buildings.
- Several sites within the city provide good opportunities for future public gathering spaces.
- Technology Park can be upgraded with more **advanced infrastructure** to meet current standards.

## POPULATION

### Needs

- One quarter of households in Peachtree Corners earn less **than \$35,000 per year**.
- Peachtree Corners' **diverse, multi-ethnic community** requires programs and resources for non-native English speakers.
- **Apartment dwellers** are perceived as transient and not invested in the community.
- Options for **aging in place** will need careful planning for the 16% of the population over 65 years old by 2030. The community needs to consider how City infrastructure and transportation can coordinate to assure housing, health care, and access for an aging population
- The population of Peachtree Corners is projected to grow by almost 55% over the next twenty years. The City must address and manage this impending growth.
- 13% of the population lives below the **poverty** threshold.
- The population that is between **15 and 44 years old** is expected to make up a smaller share of the population by 2037. Young adults, or cohorts in the 25-44 year age range, are in their prime "family forming" years; they have children, buy houses, settle down and invest in the community. If this segment of the population makes up less of Peachtree Corners by 2037, demand for housing types may change as well.

## Opportunities

- A **highly educated** population means potential for informed constituents for wise decision making, higher incomes, attractive labor force for new business, flexible futures as industry and labor markets shift in the future.
- Increased **racial diversity** brings both opportunity and issues. Non-native speakers experience a need for programs, resources, and services. These needs will vary within different ethnic and racial groups, of course. Opportunities include potentially increased cultural exposure; innovation for business and community life; and community building programs.
- The population of Peachtree Corners is projected to grow by almost 55% over the next twenty years.
- The perception of safety throughout the City is generally high, which particularly appeals to families with children.
- Peachtree Corners can continue to attract young families to the City as current residents age, in order to build a stable and diversified long-term community.
- Gwinnett County's **excellent school system** is an asset that attracts many families with children to the community.

## HOUSING

### Needs

- Peachtree Corners has a **home ownership rate of 59%**, but based on some feedback at community meetings and in the survey, some citizens desire a higher home ownership rate.
- There are 1,083 **vacant rental units** in the City.
- There are not enough **affordable rental units** to meet the needs of households at various income levels in Peachtree Corners to avoid housing cost burden (paying more than 30% of their monthly income on housing). Inadequate affordable housing makes it challenging for local business to find entry level and low-wage workers, especially since these workers may not have access to a car and must live near their jobs.
- There are many apartments in the City, but there is a need for **higher-end rental apartments** that appeal to young professionals and older adults.
- Some older apartment complexes are **deteriorating**.
- Peachtree Corners has few housing options for **empty-nesters**, like active adult communities with low maintenance lots, high-end condominiums, cluster homes, or "live/walk/play" communities.

## Opportunities

- Peachtree Corners has a **range of housing types**, from single-family homes to townhouses and multi-unit housing complexes.
- Rental units are likely to be occupied by families. Some citizens have indicated concern that renters are “transient” and not invested in the community. However, the data indicate that renters—as families—have incentive to invest in the community and remain. There are opportunities to **embrace renters as an important segment** of the Peachtree Corners community and make sure they have opportunities and reason to invest in the community.
- There are **2.43 jobs per household** in Peachtree Corners, but only 10% of employed Peachtree Corners residents work within the city limits. There are opportunities for Peachtree Corners citizens to work closer to where they live.
- Allowing for and promoting **mixed use development** in key locations can create opportunities for individuals to live, work, play, and shop in one place.
- There are many strong **homeowners’ associations** in Peachtree Corners. These groups can be used to promote community development and build a sense of identity.
- Peachtree Corners is a well-established and desirable “bedroom community” with high home values that should be maintained and protected.
- There are opportunities to **redevelop aging multi-family residential apartment complexes** to add value to the community by providing other housing types and newer multi-family units.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Needs

- Peachtree Corners **lacks a sense of identity** or a unifying element. Other nearby communities have adopted uniform signage or streetscape standards, installed gateway signage, and promoted a theme in order to create a City identity and sense of place. A strong community identity can spur investment and create a destination that draws consumers from other markets.
- Reinvestment is needed on some commercial and industrial sites, or “**grayfields.**”
- There is **no “downtown” or town center** that functions as an economic, civic, and social destination.
- There is no **mixed-use development** in Peachtree Corners with both residential and retail components.
- There are several **underutilized commercial areas** located on main corridors in the City. 2013 vacancy rates for retail space range from 6.8% to 15.9%.

- Technology Park remains a jobs center, but it is beginning to **age**. Implementing modern, efficient technology and infrastructure can allow Technology Park to compete with other newer jobs centers, like Perimeter, far into the future.
- Growth in metro Atlanta has continued to expand outward, and older inner suburbs are passed over for new, outer suburban locations. Peachtree Corners should not “**go out of style**” but continue to remain an innovative, desirable place to live even as growth in Gwinnett County slows.
- Small business owners have identified a need for small office spaces or “office condos” in Peachtree Corners.

### Opportunities

- The **vacant property** on Peachtree Parkway/SR 141 across the street from the Forum presents prime development opportunities.
- Peachtree Corners has **2.43 jobs per household**. A strong jobs-housing balance like this can help reduce travel distances and times by providing options for people to work near their homes.
- Peachtree Corners’ **location in metro Atlanta** offers good access to two interstates and Doraville’s park-and-ride MARTA station.
- **Strategic locations of commercial centers** can capitalize on the high number of vehicles that pass along Peachtree Parkway/SR 141 every day.
- Pursue a **Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)** corridor or town center study to establish a framework for redevelopment and growth; this study can also serve as a development guide to capture a catalyst development project.
- **Office and healthcare sector employment** is replacing the industrial economic base throughout the region. Peachtree Corners has a large amount of office space, making it well suited to capitalize on this trend. The City should identify growing industry sectors and create specific opportunities to target them.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Needs

- Address mobility for **all types of users**, including pedestrians. There are areas of the City where pedestrian facilities are limited, including from the south to the north parts of the City and in many single-family residential neighborhoods, and transportation improvement plans may focus on these areas.
- Minimize **congestion and traffic**. Major corridors through the City suffer from congestion, including Peachtree Parkway and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, due to heavy peak period traffic volumes.

- A **lack of wayfinding or gateway signage** contributes to the lack of identity in the City and increases the difficulty of navigating.
- Some parts of the City have **few alternatives** to using a car for travel.
- Both regionally and locally, traffic congestion is a significant concern. Many major roadways in the City already operate at **failing levels of service**, and more are projected to reach failing levels over the next 20 years. As the Atlanta region continues to grow, traffic will also continue to increase.
- There are **no bicycle facilities** in the City aside from the multi-use trails.

### Opportunities

- There are opportunities to implement a **walkable network** so people can get around in certain areas without a car.
- Certain areas of the City could benefit from street connections that follow a **grid pattern**.
- New development may be designed with **access management policies**, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and mixed uses, which all serve to reduce vehicular travel demand.
- Peachtree Corners has **two bridges** that cross the Chattahoochee River, allowing for easy access to areas to the north and creating opportunities to link to job centers and attract pass-through traffic to local businesses.
- The City can expand on the **existing multi-use trails** in the City, providing opportunities for recreation and transportation.
- The City can adopt uniform **streetscape standards** on major roadways to improve the aesthetics along major transportation corridors as well as create a sense of identity. Peachtree Parkway, in particular, would benefit from design enhancements.
- Promoting good access management and interparcel connectivity can keep vehicles off of major arterials for short, local trips, which will help reduce traffic volume.
- Implementing facilities for **alternate modes of transportation** would help decrease traffic congestion.
- Considering the **land use and transportation connection** can also help reduce traffic congestion. Locating complementary land uses near each other, like residences and neighborhood commercial centers, can help reduce trips.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Needs

- There is not enough public access to the **Chattahoochee River**.
- There are not enough **public arts venues or programs**.
- The City needs more greenways and other public facilities for **recreation**.
- There are no small, neighborhood pocket parks.
- The City lacks a **signature open space, plaza, or town green** that could help shape a “downtown” Peachtree Corners identity.
- Local protection of historic and archaeological resources is inadequate.
- Old septic systems need to be replaced with **sewers**.

### Opportunities

- The City can work with Gwinnett County to implement the planned greenway.
- Working with Gwinnett County to maintain **high quality of education** will ensure that the needs of Peachtree Corners’ students and families are met.
- Creating a system to preserve **historical and archaeological sites** and make them more publically accessible is a way to strengthen the city’s identity, draw attention to its assets, and increase recreational opportunities.
- A **city center** could provide locations for restaurants and dining, open space, an entertainment venue, civic institutions, retail, and cultural destinations. A community gathering space would help unify the community, celebrate diversity, and build an identity.
- The **property across from the Forum** presents an opportunity for a public greenspace.
- The City can explore ways to use **alternate energy sources** over the next twenty years.
- Many members of the Peachtree Corners community enjoy an **active lifestyle**, and there should be adequate community facilities for these activities.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Needs

- The **Chattahoochee River** is a tremendously underutilized community asset. There is not enough public access to the river, and the access points that do exist are limited and difficult to find.
- Peachtree Corners does not participate in any land conservation programs, either at the state or national level or on its own. There is a large amount of **vegetated land** in the City, which is currently unprotected.
- **Wetlands and streams** are at risk by land development patterns.

### Opportunities

- The City has the opportunity to ensure that its policies acknowledge and protect limited natural resources, including **water, land, and the tree canopy**.
- Stormwater regulations can preserve the high amount of **pervious land** that Peachtree Corners currently has.
- A **plan for the vacant parcels** on the Chattahoochee could increase access, water quality protection, and recreational opportunities along the river.
- Stream buffers and undeveloped flood zones, which are required in the County's development regulations, could be converted to **accessible community greenspace**.
- Gwinnett County is in the process of updating its Greenways Master Plan, creating opportunities to pursue grants and financing for **multi-use greenway trails**.
- Parks and greenspace can be used to naturally retain and treat stormwater, reducing runoff.
- The City can explore ways to introduce **alternative energy production**.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

### Needs

- Enhance coordination with **Gwinnett County Board of Education** to maintain a strong, well-regarded school system.
- Coordinate with the **Gwinnett Chamber** in implementation of the Partnership Gwinnett Strategy.
- According to Gwinnett County's Unified Development Plan, the **costs** of operating and maintaining public services and providing public safety are rising.

### Opportunities

- The ARC's **PLAN 2040** outlines strategies for local government implementation, which aims to sustain metro Atlanta's livability and prosperity as its population continues to grow.
- Continue to review **Service Delivery Strategy**, as the City may choose to take on services from Gwinnett County.
- Increase involvement at **local and regional group meetings**.
- Continue to coordinate with **county, regional, and state agencies** regarding infrastructure, environmental issues, and water management.
- Create a mechanism for **county coordination** related to all infrastructure and program needs, such as public works, parks and recreation, and community development.