

# NORCROSS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2017





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COLLECTIVE WISDOM GROUP

This document reflects the input of hundreds of Norcross residents and City employees engaged in strengthening the Norcross community. Led by a local government deepening its commitment to providing a balanced quality of life for all of its residents, Norcross counts among its greatest assets:

- An active network of civic and faith-based organizations contributing community support daily
- A historical fabric now being protected for future generations
- A vibrant economy, built on a mix of business sectors and anchored in a thriving downtown
- Increasingly accessible parks and green space amenities and a mature tree canopy, and
- One of the most ethnically diverse populations in the state of Georgia.

As the City celebrates the achievement of more than 70 sustainability practices recognized by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Green Communities Platinum certification, it continues to aspire to greater heights. This first Sustainability Plan for the community articulates these aspirations, presenting a matrix of actions towards goals and objectives that will **require City leadership and critical partnerships**. These actions are the result of the synthesis of community-voiced priorities, studies and plans created for the City in the past five years, and national best practices (detailed in the STAR Communities Framework).



*Connie Weathers, Founder of Sustainable Norcross*

The plan commits Norcross to increasing accountability towards goals of **Healthy People, Healthy Places, and Healthy Economy** provides a roadmap by identifying the current status of conditions, where available, and identifies nationally-recommended outcome metrics for tracking progress over time. At least five major initiatives are underway in Norcross, which will establish new baselines for the community around green space and tree canopy, housing affordability, active recreational opportunities, parks accessibility and acreage, and educational assets. These in addition to the many actions captured in this plan, set Norcross on a steady path towards an enhanced quality of life for all residents.

Given the magnitude of these ongoing and new actions being implemented before 2020, this plan presents a **three-year timeline for achievable results**. This timing allows for completion of these major initiatives and new actions, prepares the City for maintaining ARC Green Communities Platinum certification (2020 recertification) and exploring STAR Communities certification for national recognition. It also provides the opportunity for integration of sustainability planning with the next cycle of Comprehensive Planning, ensuring that sustainability is further woven into the culture and finance of Norcross.

In these times of rapid change and increasing competition for jobs, resources, and talent, no city can afford to be content with excellent management alone, nor can rest on singular significant achievements. With its many assets fully leveraged through ongoing internal and external collaborations identified in this plan, Norcross is well positioned to compete as a national leader and best-in-class city that provides for the health of its people, places, and economy.

**Thank you for the opportunity to help Norcross in this new chapter.**

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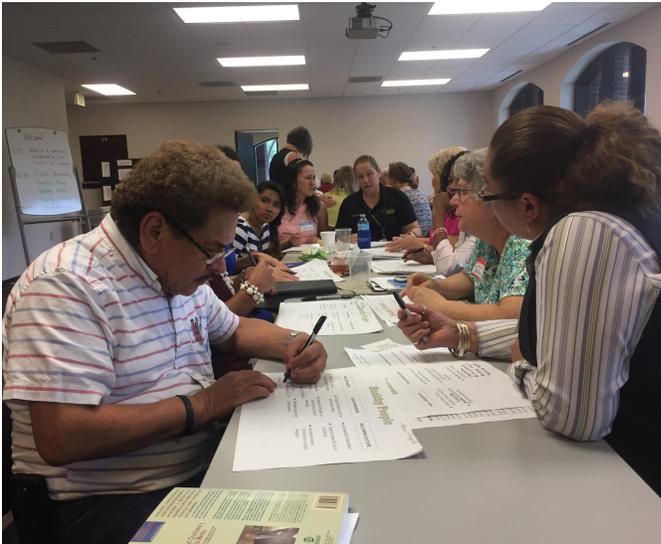
PLAN ACTIONS

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THANK YOU

# CREATING OUR PLAN

## BACKGROUND



# SUSTAINABLE NORCROSS COMMISSION

STARTING IN 2008

Shortly after the adoption of the City of Norcross Comprehensive 2030 Plan in 2008, the City saw the need to begin to incorporate sustainable practices into the business of everyday life. With the help of a number of volunteers, the Sustainable Norcross Commission (Sustainable Norcross) was officially created in November of 2008. Starting as a five-person official Commission of the City, the current Commission of seven members exists to assist the City in becoming a more sustainable and thus more attractive place to live. Early in its formation, the Commission resolved to focus on supporting the City in participating in the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities program as a tool to accelerate adoption of sustainable practices.



## GREEN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

2010-PRESENT

In 2010, the City of Norcross was one of the first communities to be certified under the Green Communities Program. The city reaffirmed its commitment to being green twice, as it progressed up the ranks in the program and was ultimately recertified at the Platinum level in 2016 - making Norcross one of only two certified Platinum communities in the region. Currently, 19 local governments across metro Atlanta participate in Green Communities.

Measures required by Green Communities are intended to help local governments reduce their environmental footprint while moving towards greater engagement of their communities in green practices. As the program has evolved to continue to raise the bar and reflect national trends in local government sustainability, it now provides credit to local governments for developing sustainability plans.

# CONSULTANT-SUPPORTED SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRATION AND PLANNING

## 2016-PRESENT

As the City prepared to meet the laudable goal of Platinum Green Communities certification, the Sustainable Norcross Commission shifted its efforts to building support for City funding to fully operationalize all Green Communities measures, build capacity internally to lead and to develop the City's first sustainability plan. Collective Wisdom Group (CWG, or Consultant) was selected as the firm to lead the City in this work.



In early 2017, the City of Norcross convened a cross-departmental Sustainability Team, including representatives of all city departments. Team meetings have focused on education on a variety of topics to raise awareness of sustainability opportunities and considerations throughout city operations, and to begin to solidify the City's "sustainability DNA."

This internal ownership of sustainability accountabilities has recently culminated in the formation of a new Office of Community Engagement and Sustainability, comprised of three staff members focusing on the most substantial elements of this plan.

## SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

As ARC recognizes in its Green Communities program, sustainability planning is a major step in the maturation of any local government's efforts to comprehensively address quality of life issues. These plans are tools to achieve goals that **foster environmental, community and financial sustainability.**

Their function is to create a structure for:

- Identifying priorities for a wide-range of community stakeholders
- Setting aspirations for the quality of life desired (goals and objectives)
- Prioritizing actions intended to achieve these aspirations
- Accountabilities for implementing these actions, and
- Outcomes sought through the implementation of these actions.

Local governments in Georgia are required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to create and maintain Comprehensive Plans. These plans are the formal documents that drive land use management, infrastructure and other capital investments, and staffing priorities of local governments. They typically cover long time horizons (20 years), yet must be updated every five years, and completely re-created every ten years. While they are “comprehensive” in many ways, they historically have not been scoped to address quality of life aspects outside of the direct mandate of local governments.

Thus arises the need for sustainability planning, a new process that is undertaken collaboratively between local governments, community members, and other community organizations to create a shared vision and sense of accountability in moving a community towards greater quality of life for all of its residents, and in attracting private sector investments seeking forward-thinking communities. There is no government mandate, no prescribed template, no minimum requirement for a sustainability plan, yet available guidance does encourage the inclusion of programming and partnership activities, to complement Comprehensive Plans.

In Georgia, this is still new-territory - only the cities of Decatur, Dunwoody, and Atlanta currently produce sustainability plans, a notable correlation with the economic and reputational strength of these communities. Sustainability plans send a signal to peer cities, talent, and the marketplace: we aren’t just complying, we are leading the way towards the future.



# STAR AS A GUIDE

In the early 2010s, a group of national organizations including the National League of Cities, U.S. Green Building Council, convened hundreds of subject matter experts from cities and towns around the country to build a new framework that could assist local governments in moving towards sustainability.

**Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating Communities (STAR)** was born, providing a source for best practices in topics from local food to recycling, cultural diversity to public safety, workforce readiness to education. By using STAR to guide their sustainability efforts, local governments can be assured that they are helping their communities prepare for a vibrant, thriving future, and can be measured apples-to-apples against their peers (regardless of their size, wealth or geography). Hundreds of cities, towns, and counties around the U.S. are now using the STAR framework to guide their work, with dozens pursuing STAR certification for their achievements.

Built Environment	Climate & Energy	Economy & Jobs	Education, Arts, & Community	Equity & Empowerment	Health & Safety	Natural Systems	Innovation & Process
BE-1: Ambient Noise & Light	CE-1: Climate Adaptation	EJ-1: Business Retention & Development	EAC-1: Arts & Culture	EE-1: Civic Engagement	HS-1: Active Living	NS-1: Green Infrastructure	IP-1: Best Practices & Processes
BE-2: Community Water Systems	CE-2: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation	EJ-2: Green Market Development	EAC-2: Community Cohesion	EE-2: Civil & Human Rights	HS-2: Community Health	NS-2: Biodiversity & Invasive Species	IP-2: Exemplary Performance
BE-3: Compact & Complete Communities	CE-3: Greening the Energy Supply	EJ-3: Local Economy	EAC-3: Educational Opportunity & Attainment	EE-3: Environmental Justice	HS-3: Emergency Management & Response	NS-3: Natural Resource Protection	IP-3: Local Innovation
BE-4: Housing Affordability	CE-4: Energy Efficiency	EJ-4: Quality Jobs & Living Wages	EAC-4: Historic Preservation	EE-4: Equitable Services & Access	HS-4: Food Access & Nutrition	NS-4: Outdoor Air Quality	IP-4: Good Governance
BE-5: Infill & Redevelopment	CE-5: Water Efficiency	EJ-5: Targeted Industry Development	EAC-5: Social & Cultural Diversity	EE-5: Human Services	HS-5: Health Systems	NS-5: Water in the Environment	
BE-6: Public Parkland	CE-6: Local Government GHG & Resource Footprint	EJ-6: Workforce Readiness	EAC-6: Aging in the Community	EE-6: Poverty Prevention & Alleviation	HS-6: Hazard Mitigation	NS-6: Working Lands	
BE-7: Transportation Choices	CE-7: Waste Minimization				HS-7: Safe Communities		

# PROCESS: REVIEW AND ENGAGEMENT



Community sustainability, particularly as framed by STAR and is increasingly being referenced nationally, is a macro-level lens on the different, interconnected dimensions of community. As such, any effort to plan so broadly must begin with a review of other existing plans. Planning fatigue is real, and rather than duplicate prior related efforts, this plan seeks to integrate the most relevant incomplete recommendations of these other plans.



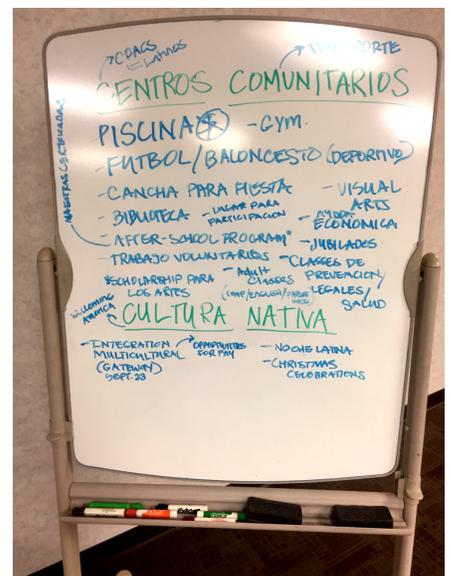
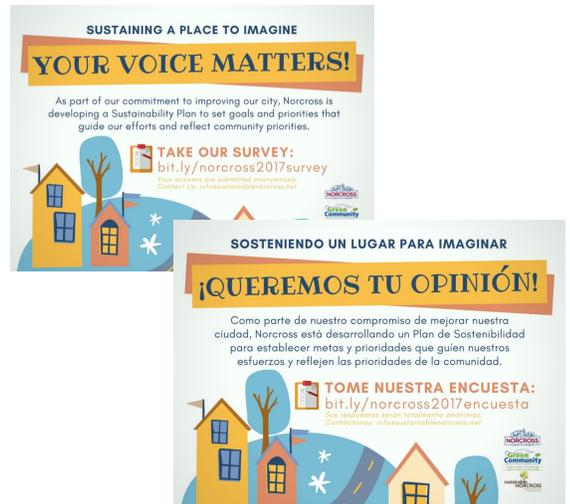
While each prior plan included some community outreach process, these processes tend to follow a familiar recipe: conduct an online survey, hold a planning charrette where all stakeholders are expected to come to you, capture input and check the box. The plan in some cases goes on a shelf. In some cases drives investments and decision-making. Typically, community stakeholders are invited to one narrow portion of the process, and unless they attend City Council meetings, they are unlikely ever to know what came of their input, nor what actions resulted from it.



Community sustainability planning aspires to approach community engagement and accountability differently - in fact, the success of these plans requires the ongoing participation of community members. The Consultant's approach to engagement, particularly in a community divided such as Norcross with historically low levels of civic engagement, is to meet people where they are- in many cases quite literally. Over a five-month period in mid-2017, CWG engaged community stakeholders using several tactics.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Stakeholder Mapping** with Norcross Sustainability Team and Sustainable Norcross Commission
- Telephone and email **outreach** with more than two dozen community leaders/members
- Various **email updates** with community leaders
- **One-on-One Meetings** with one dozen community leaders, and presentations to meetings of local civic organizations
- **Feedback Boards** in English/Spanish at Norcross Community Market, Summer Concert Series, Summer Movie Series, Summerour Middle School Market Day, and the Norcross Library.
- **Open House** event at City Hall
- Creation of a **survey** (English/Spanish) soliciting priorities around topics such as energy use, recycling, housing, transportation, food, and safety.
  - Printed copies were distributed at offices of Good Samaritan, Latin American Association (LAA), Holy Name of Jesus Chinese Catholic Mission, and Hopewell Church.
  - More than 150 responses were received, nearly one-half from Spanish-speakers.
- **Community Workshop Sessions**
  - Norcross Citizen's Academy (30)
  - City Hall Luncheon (50)



# SURVEY RESULTS

## ENGLISH-LANGUAGE

78/155 Responses

- 66%** Female/ **44%** Male
- 26%** Ages 18-44
- 43%** Ages 44-64
- 31%** Ages 65+
- 53%** Employed Full-Time
- 13%** Employed Half-Time
- 27%** Retired
- 72%** Caucasian/White
- 16%** Asian
- 5%** African-American/Black
- 5%** Latino/Hispanic
- 2%** Multiple Races
- 94%** Home Owners
- 6%** Renters

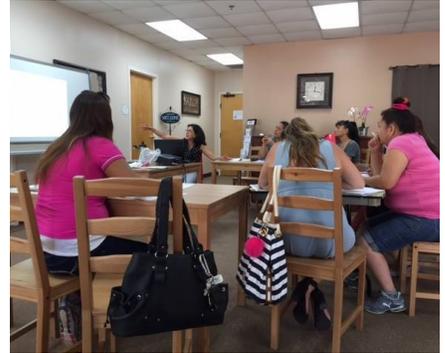
## SPANISH-LANGUAGE

77/155 Responses

- 88%** Female/ **12%** Male
- 73%** Ages 18-44
- 19%** Ages 44-64
- 8%** Ages 65+
- 27%** Employed Full-Time
- 16%** Employed Half-Time
- 13%** Looking For Work
- 31%** Homemaker
- 3%** Retired
- 95%** Latino/Hispanic
- 5%** Multiple Races
- 29%** Home Owners
- 71%** Renters

WANTS & NEEDS





# NORCROSS TODAY

OUR FRAMING & STARTING POINT

# HEALTHY PLACES, PEOPLE, & ECONOMY

The City of Norcross today is in many ways a glimpse of the America of tomorrow. The tremendous diversity of its population - in ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age - reflects the New South that will be a predominant dynamic in towns and cities across the region within the next 25 years. In the midst of what may seem to be insurmountable divides for the Norcross community, there is significant common ground. And in this common ground, the opportunity for innovation, leadership, and prosperity for all exists. Sustaining a Place to Imagine aspires to serve as a roadmap to this common ground for the City of Norcross, and the people who live and work there.

Many voices were heard from across the community during the creation of this plan. There are many differences in our cultures, our needs, and our priorities. Some enjoy the high quality of life, and most aspire to achieve it. Among the many commonalities we share, one serves as the foundation for all others: health. Health is not a luxury for anyone - it is a core condition upon which all other parts of quality of life are based.

When thinking in a long-term sense, health is the perfect context for considering sustainability and the interdependence of our social, built and natural systems. The developing science around the social determinants of health suggests that much within the control of local government has an impact on the health of its tax payers: from public safety to economic development, from education to environmental protection.

Investments that support residents' healthy living also become a magnet for business seeking healthy workforce and quality of life amenities - feeding a virtuous cycle with a long-term return on investment and reduced costs for all.

Placing Healthy People, Healthy Places, and Healthy Economy as the guiding aspiration for our first sustainability plan provides a way for all to connect, all to contribute, and all to benefit from its implementation.

## **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

### ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Poverty
- Employment
- Food Insecurity
- Housing Instability

### EDUCATION

- High School Graduation
- Enrollment in Higher Education
- Language and Literacy
- Early Childhood Education and Development

### SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- Social Cohesion
- Civic Participation
- Discrimination
- Incarceration

### HEALTH & HEALTH CARE

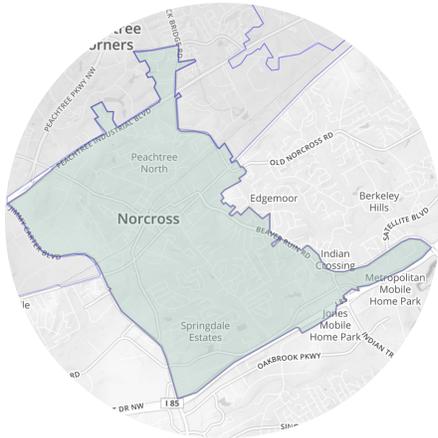
- Access to Health Care
- Access to Primary Care
- Health Literacy

### NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Access to Foods that Support
- Healthy Eating Patterns
- Quality of Housing
- Crime and Violence
- Environmental Conditions

Source: US Dept. of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

# NORCROSS TODAY\*



**16,103**

POPULATION

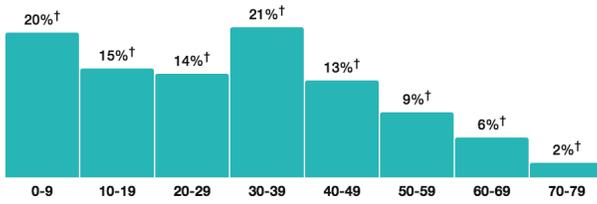
**6.1** SQ MILES

**2,632.4** PEOPLE/SQ MILE

## AGE

**30.4** Median Age

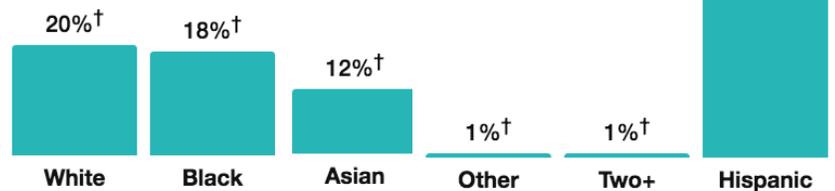
POPULATION BY AGE RANGE



## RACE & ETHNICITY

**49%** Hispanic

more than double the rate in Atlanta Metro Area



## INCOME

**\$19,412** Per Capita Income

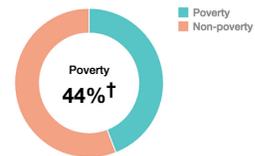
**\$39,519** Median Household Income

## POVERTY

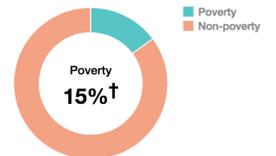
**29.6%**

Persons Below Poverty Level

CHILDREN UNDER 18



SENIORS 65+



## TRANSPORTATION TO WORK



**29.4** Minutes

Mean travel time to work

## HOUSING

**5,283**

Number of Housing Units

OCCUPIED vs VACANT



OWNERSHIP

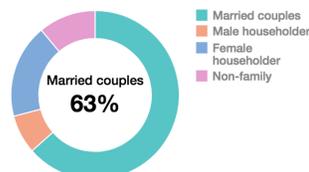


**56%** Paying 35%+ of Income on Rent

## HOUSEHOLDS & FAMILIES

**4,857** Number of Households

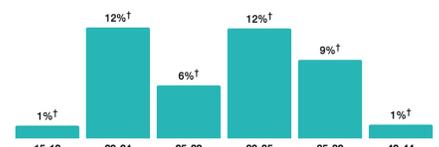
**3.3** Persons per Household



**6.6%**

Women who Gave Birth during the Past Year

WOMEN WHO GAVE BIRTH BY AGE



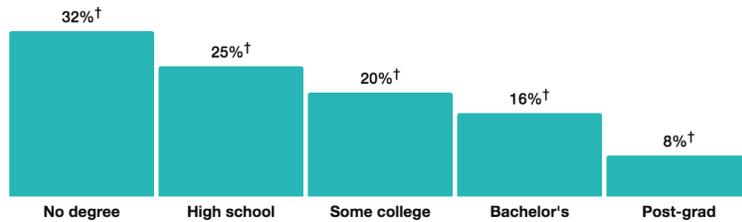
\* Data only available for documented residents, there is a significant population under the poverty line that are not reflected in these numbers. Norcross Today Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Norcross, GA.

## EDUCATION

**68.5%** High School Grad or Higher

**23.6%** Bachelor's Degree of Higher

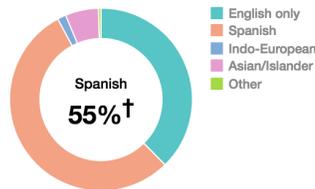
POPULATION BY MINIMUM LEVEL OF EDUCATION



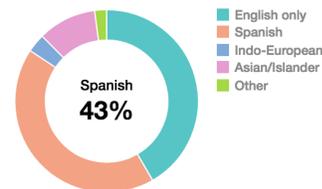
## LANGUAGE

**59.4%** Persons with language other than English spoken at home

CHILDREN LANGUAGE AT HOME



ADULTS LANGUAGE AT HOME



## PLACE OF BIRTH

**39.1%** Foreign-born Population  
**24%** Asia  
**70%** Latin America

## GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

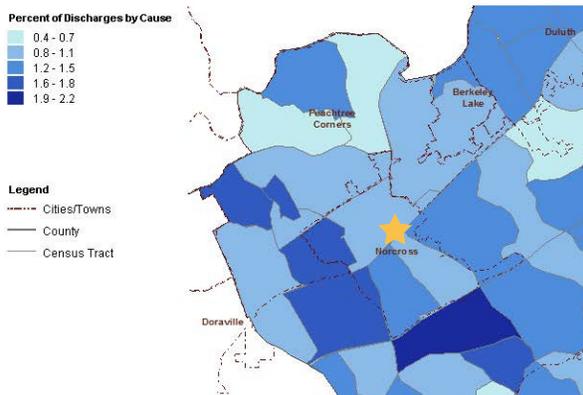
**14%** Moved Since Previous Year

Category	Percentage
Same house year ago	86%
From same county	10%
From different county	2%
From different state	2%
From abroad	1%

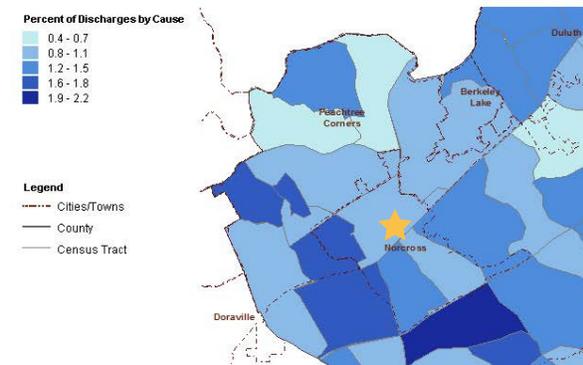
# TOP HEALTH CONCERNS

What sends Norcross residents to hospitals?

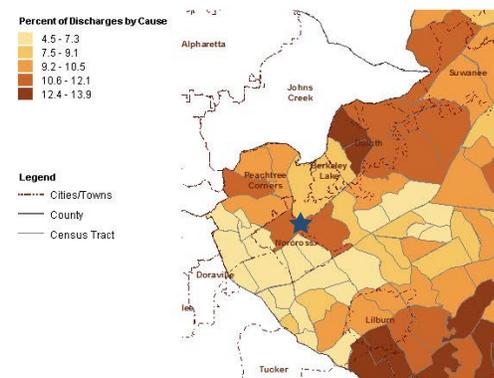
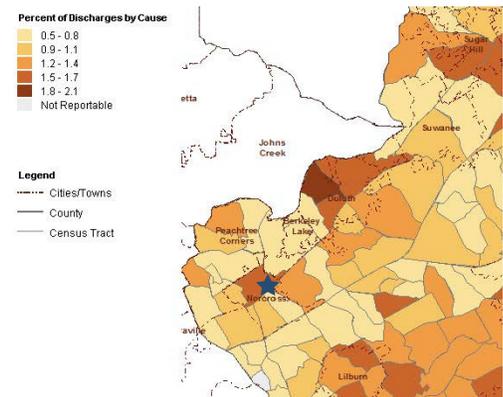
DIABETES



ASTHMA



KIDNEY DISEASES  
 CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES



# HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION

True Affordability and Location Efficiency

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTIC SCORES (1-10)

**7.1** Job Access    **4.2** All Transit Performance Score    **6.0** Compact Neighborhood

## TRANSPORTATION COSTS

 **\$11,845**  
Annual Transportation Costs

 **1.67**  
Autos Per Household

**2%** Transit Ridership % of Workers

**8.79 TONNES** Annual Greenhouse Gas per Household

## HOUSING COSTS

**\$1,156** Average Monthly Housing Cost

**\$1,140** Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs

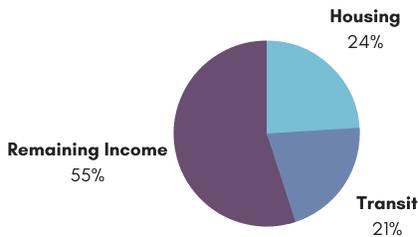
**\$996** Median Gross Monthly Rent

## AFFORDABILITY

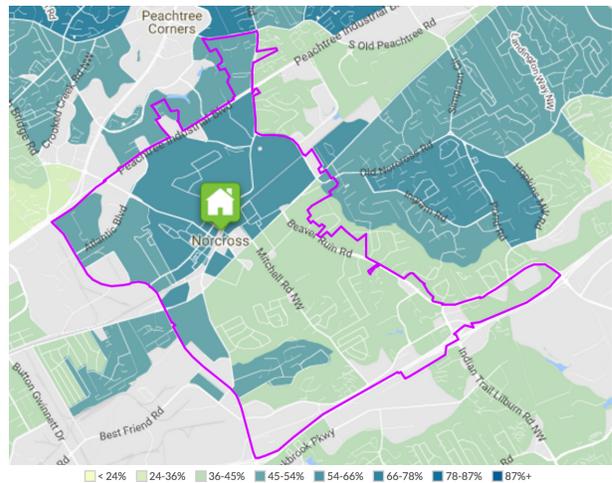
**45%** Housing & Transportation Costs % Income

**24%** Housing Costs % Income

**21%** Transportation Costs % Income



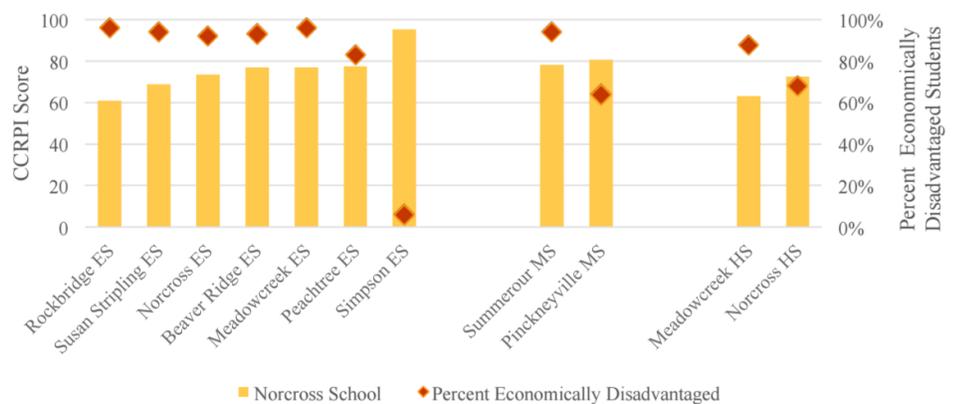
AVERAGE HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION COSTS % INCOME



## EDUCATION

Not All Schools Are Equal

Norcross School Scores v. Percent Economically Disadvantaged



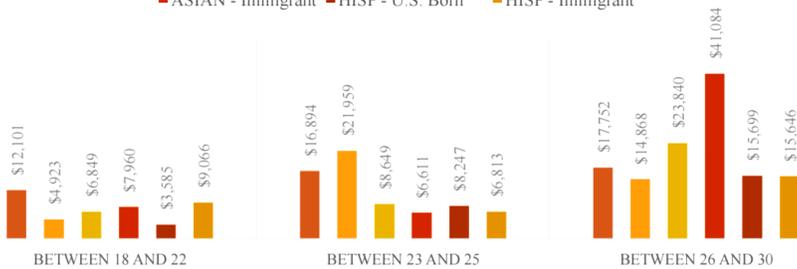
Source: Imagine Our Norcross, Figure 8, Scores vs. Economic Disadvantage, from Georgia Department of Education 2014.

# INFLUENCE OF IMMIGRATION

## Key Impacts for Immigrants from the Imagine Our Norcross: Planning for Immigrant Integration Report

**AVERAGE INCOME BY ETHNICITY  
(IMMIGRANT VS. U.S. BORN)**

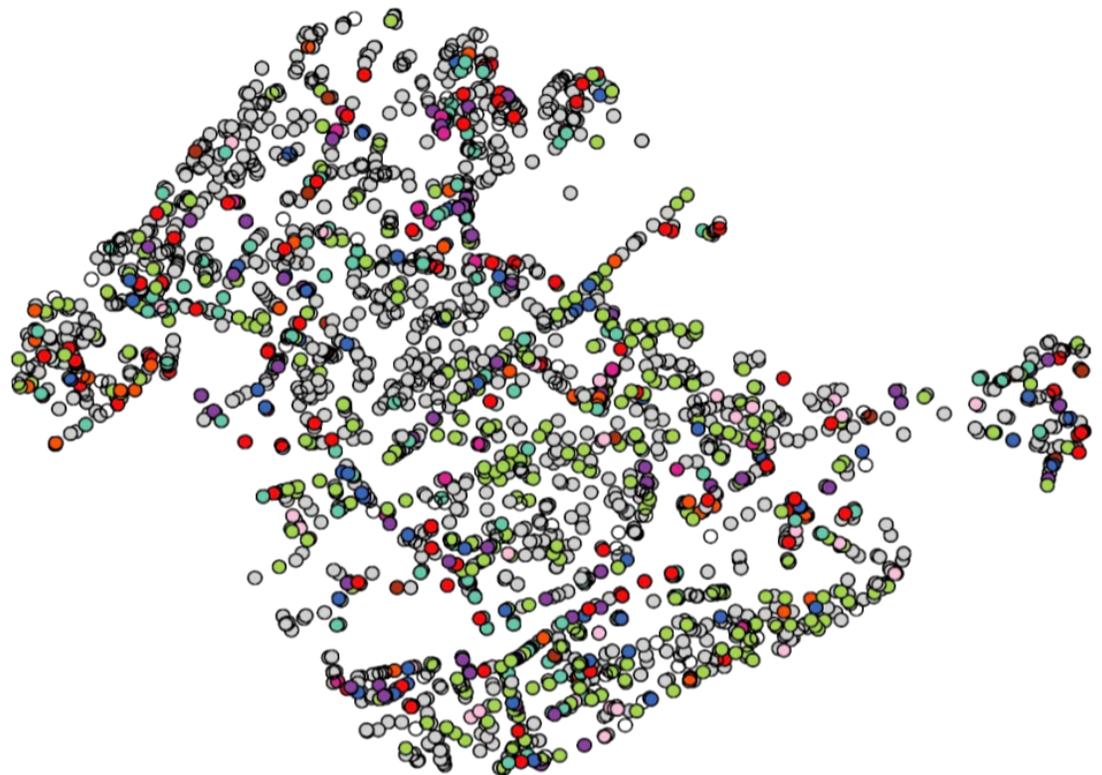
■ WHITE - U.S. Born ■ WHITE - Immigrant ■ ASIAN - U.S. Born  
■ ASIAN - Immigrant ■ HISP - U.S. Born ■ HISP - Immigrant



	Upper	Middle	Lower
<b>Population</b>	2,620	15,439	7,585
<b>White</b>	59%	13%	9%
<b>Asian</b>	19%	7%	16%
<b>Black</b>	17%	15%	28%
<b>Latino</b>	4%	64%	47%
<b>Citizens by Birth</b>	82%	52%	57%
<b>Median Income</b>	\$100,588	\$36,000	\$39,000
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	8%	31%	22%
<b>Median Home Value</b>	\$248,000	\$105,000	\$101,000
<b>Owner Occupied Homes</b>	84%	31%	36%
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	1.10%	14%	7.50%

### Businesses by Ethnicity

- Hispanic
- Indian
- Chinese
- Korean
- African/Middle Eastern
- Vietnamese
- Filipino/a
- Asian (unspecified)
- Japanese
- White; x
- Unknown



This figure from the Imagine Our Norcross Report of 2015, shows that ethnic businesses are scattered throughout the city. While the visible businesses in Norcross are retail, ethnic businesses cover a wide range of sectors. They bring in **\$897 million in annual sales** for the Norcross economy and employ approximately 9,500 people.

# OUR PROGRESS

ACHIEVEMENTS & EXISTING PLANS



This plan builds on the efforts of hundreds of Norcross citizens and staff over the past five-plus years to address pressing community needs and seize timely opportunities to improve and promote the City. This section provides a summary of these efforts and context for future actions.

## ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNIZED BY ARC GREEN COMMUNITIES

*From 2009-2016, the Sustainable Norcross Commission, and City staff worked diligently to gather documentation on sustainability efforts for three rounds of ARC Green Communities certification. Measures achieved focus on the green side of sustainability. The city is committed to full implementation and maintaining certification.*

### GREEN BUILDING

- Requires all new city-owned buildings greater than 5,000 square feet to be LEED certified.
- Encourages all new city-owned buildings less than 5,000 square feet to seek LEED for New Construction certification. Where LEED certification is not feasible, buildings will be certified under the Energy Star or Earth Craft Light Commercial program.
- Requires city building renovations that affect more than 50 percent of occupied space or occupants to achieve LEED for New Construction certification and all other building renovations to achieve LEED for Existing Buildings certification.
- Encourages residential and commercial buildings to be built green by offering a floor area ratio bonus of 0.25 for projects in the Redevelopment Area Overlay District that achieve LEED silver or higher certification.
- Offers expedited plan reviews and site inspections for builders of affordable housing developments that seek LEED or EarthCraft certification.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Completed energy audits on all city-owned buildings. Programming building thermostats save \$8,106 in energy costs annually.
- Adopted an Energy Star purchasing policy to purchase or lease energy-efficient equipment and appliances.
- Retrofitted all traffic signals with LED signals in conjunction with Gwinnett County. The upgrades use substantially less power and have a longer effective life.
- Adopted a lights-out/power-down policy for all city employees and facilities to ensure all non-emergency building lighting and electronic equipment are turned off when not in use and at the end of the work day.

- Replaced decorative lighting in the downtown area with LED lights and installed photocells for dusk to dawn operation. The lights on the city Christmas tree were replaced with C9 LED lights. Through these changes, over 57,000 kWh of electricity are saved each year for a cost savings of \$6,400. As part of a pilot project, the city replaced High-Intensity Discharge lighting on 11 poles with LED lighting. The city adopted a policy to require the installation of LED fixtures in all security light fixtures when repair is needed. This policy will save 330 kWh per unit annually, as well as \$1,500 per fixture over a ten-year period.
- Installed Energy Star rated cool roofs on both City Hall and the Public Works building to decrease the urban heat island effect and save on cooling bills.
- Maintains an active inspection program for residential and commercial compliance with the Georgia energy codes.

## GREEN POWER

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- Offers expedited plan review and site inspections and reduced permitting fees for solar energy projects.

## WATER EFFICIENCY

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- Completed energy audits on a majority of the city's buildings and plans to audit the remaining buildings within the next four years.
- Captures HVAC condensate and rainwater in rain barrels, and uses the water on landscaping at the Norcross Welcome and History Center. A second site at The Rectory of the Norcross Cultural Arts and Community Center collects rain water for use in the adjacent community garden. Workshops for creating and maintaining a rain barrel for home use are offered at both locations.
- Completed an audit with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and is in compliance with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, Wastewater Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan.
- Offers expedited plan review and inspections for projects that achieve WaterSense certification.

## TREES AND GREENSPACE

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- Designated as a Tree City USA Community for the past 12 years. To maintain this designation, the City of Norcross has a Tree Commission, a community tree ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita and an annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation. Encourages 50 percent shade coverage of parking lots through landscape development standards that require a minimum of one canopy tree for every seven parking spaces and provide that no parking space will be more than 40 feet from a canopy tree.

- Opened the Norcross Community Garden facility at the newly built Discovery Garden Park, giving the community access to raised gardening beds, cooking equipment, a community pavilion and educational programs.
- Supported the original farmers market for the past seven years by providing the location, utilities, parking, garbage and recycling collection and use of the city's media. Worked with Sustainable Norcross to undertake a survey and feasibility study which led to the creation of the new Norcross Community Market in 2016.
- Ensures that all residents are within ½ mile of a publicly accessible park or green space.
- Adopted a no net loss of trees policy for all city-owned property.
- Adopted the Parks Master Plan in 2011 (and subsequent 2016 update), which includes natural areas, open spaces, and greenways and provides for connectivity of green spaces.
- Adopted landscaping maintenance specifications for landscape contracts to include integrated pest management, drought-tolerant and native landscape plantings, minimal irrigation with potable water and reduced chemical and fertilizer use.

## TRANSPORTATION & AIR QUALITY

- Offers commute incentives to encourage employees driving alone to consider alternatives. Employees that carpool with at least two passengers can receive \$30 per month and preferred carpool parking.
- Adopted a green fleet policy to purchase fuel-efficient and lowest emission vehicles with a preference for alternative fuel and/or hybrid fleet vehicles. The city police department has a Smart Car and Nissan Leaf. All police patrol vehicles purchased are V-6, flex-fuel or multi-fuel vehicles which have lower emissions and higher fuel efficiency. A miles-per-gallon tracking system is utilized to monitor the police staff driver performance to ensure efficient driving practices. A number of the city's diesel vehicles are also being retrofitted from diesel to CNG fuel.
- Installed a level II electric vehicle recharging station for the city's fleet vehicles.
- Adopted a complete streets policy in 2011 to incorporate pedestrian and bike oriented streetscapes throughout the city.
- Partnered with Gwinnett County to upgrade and incorporate the traffic signals along Buford Highway into a traffic synchronization program managed by the Gwinnett County Traffic Control Center. With the implementation of the Intelligent Transportation System Plan, per corridor annual fuel consumption can be lowered by seven percent, CO by 17 percent and VOCs by 12 percent.
- Promotes the Safe Routes to School program to the Summerour Middle School. The city has worked with area schools to identify infrastructure projects and has completed a number of these projects to improve the walking and biking environment around the schools.
- Installed bicycle racks at all existing community facilities, and requires bicycle racks to be installed at all new community facilities.

- Works with Gwinnett County and other cities in the county to implement the Comprehensive Transportation Plan that includes bicycle and pedestrian policies, specifically in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning section and the Bicycles and Pedestrians section. The city requires bicycle parking at all new developments that require vehicle parking lots.
- Adopted an anti-idling policy to prevent city vehicles from idling over thirty seconds when not in traffic.
- Encourages shared parking in areas with land uses that operate at different times or have variations in peak load requirements.
- Installed a level II electric vehicle recharging station at City Hall for public use.

## RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION

- Adopted an environmentally preferable purchasing policy to purchase materials, products and services that reduce resource consumption and waste and promote human health and well-being, including products that are recyclable, reusable or contain recycled materials.
- Provides all employees with deskside bins for recycling paper. Recycling containers are placed throughout city facilities to collect plastic containers, aluminum and steel cans, and cardboard for recycling. The recycling program recycles an estimated 30,591 gallons a year.
- Collects electronics, ink cartridges, copier toner, batteries and cell phones at city facilities and recycles them through a private vendor.
- Purchases paper with at least 30 percent recycled content for copy, computer and fax paper.
- Provides curbside recycling to the single-family residence for paper, metal containers, plastic and corrugated cardboard.
- Provides curbside recycling for commercial properties for paper, metal containers, plastic containers and corrugated cardboard.
- Hosts drop-off recycling events in the spring and fall for residents to recycle electronics, cell phones, and batteries.
- Provides weekly curbside collection of yard debris that is processed at a local facility into compost, mulch and soil products. These products are then made available to the city for mulching.
- Offers glass recycling at drop-off container at the Public Works building.

## LAND USE

- Redeveloped Lillian Webb Park, which was previously a historic baseball park in downtown Norcross, into a passive park with fountains, a gazebo and open lawn for concerts and special events. During the redevelopment of this site, a portion of the park was remediated due to contaminated soils that were discovered during the construction of a restroom facility.

- Designing and constructing a new parking deck and library on a 1.68 acre infill site at Buford Highway and Britt Street in the heart of the community, rather than constructing the facilities on an undeveloped parcel of land. Promotes smart growth through its Conservation Subdivision Ordinance (CSO) and its Livable Centers Initiative plans. The Adams Vineyard development recently took advantage of the CSO incentives and features 62 homes with 40 percent of its 20 acre parcel protected as greenspace.
- Purchased and renovated a circa 1930 house that had fallen into disrepair into the Norcross Welcome Center and History Museum. The Cotton Gin Building, which was constructed 145 years ago, was converted from a vacant warehouse into a mixed use facility.
- Incentivizes redevelopment through the Redevelopment Area Overlay District and Opportunity Zone, which encourages the revitalization of underused commercial and residential areas into pedestrian-oriented developments that provide a complementary mix of uses.

## EDUCATION

- Educates city employees and elected officials about the city's sustainability efforts at staff meetings, through newsletters, website and e-mail updates.
- Partners with Sustainable Norcross to maintain a Facebook page to inform residents of the city's sustainability efforts, events, volunteer opportunities and other outreach initiatives. Updates on the city's efforts are posted on displays in the lobby of city hall, signage around the city, the website, social media, through flyers and a monthly newsletter.

## INNOVATION

- Implemented a paperless policy for all city meetings. Agendas and handouts are no longer provided at city council meetings and work sessions; instead, agendas and handouts are made available in advance on the city website where they can be viewed on council members' tablets and projected on-screen at meetings. In addition, potential vendors are encouraged to respond to RFPs/RFQs electronically.
- Received a grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for special event recycling that included a travel trailer and recycling collection bins. Through volunteer efforts and city council support, recycling is available at all city sponsored special events for beverage containers, plastic bags, cardboard and mixed paper. The success of the special event recycling effort has led to the city's purchase of permanent recycling containers that have been placed throughout downtown Norcross and at parks. These efforts have resulted in an additional 3,375 gallons of waste recycled annually.

- Reuses materials for artistic purposes through several initiatives. The ReImagine! exhibition combines recycling and environmental awareness through the creative re-use of materials to create innovative, thought-provoking sculptures. Doors of Hope invited artists to create decorative features from used doors from Habitat for Humanity for display during ArtsFest. A kinetic sculpture challenge was issued by the Norcross Public Arts Commission to local art, math and science students in grades 6-12. Requirements included the need for sculptures to have movable parts and an energy source such as solar, wind, human or a combination of sources. Due to school funding restraints, many of the components were recycled or repurposed. Participating classes received awards of money or art supplies.
- Involved students in the creative reuse of materials. The city's Bicycle Recycle event collected over 60 bicycles and assorted bicycle parts and delivered them to Communicycle in Chamblee. The city then paid for transporting students to Communicycle workshops where they received the newly refurbished bicycles and were mentored by volunteers on bicycle safety and maintenance. In another event, the Mayor's Book Club collected over 40,000 gently used books from the community that would have otherwise been sent to the landfill. The books were made available for students to check out via book mobile and apartment-based mini libraries.

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## NORCROSS COMMUNITY MARKET

As referenced above, the establishment of the new Norcross Community Market by members of the Sustainable Norcross Commission has been a significant accomplishment as a result of hundreds of hours of volunteer support, bringing a treasured new community asset to life. The market operates in Lillian Webb Park from June through August annually, with special markets offsite at the beginning and end of each season. The market provides an opportunity for residents in the area to access locally-produced fruits, vegetables as well as local meat, baked goods and other prepared foods. It also presents an opportunity for local farmers and food vendors to tap into demand for their products and grow their businesses. Since its launch, the market has engaged more than 40 vendor participants in total, with nearly 20 participating on a weekly basis, serving as an incubator for several new food-based entrepreneurs getting their businesses off the ground.

The market has received much attention state-wide for its outreach to and the inclusion of immigrant/minority providers (more than 50% of vendors are foreign-born, African American, women-owned or veterans) and customers, including off-site market events at Summerour Middle School to engage students and their families in healthy eating.

The Norcross Community Market has also become a vital partner in increasing food security for area seniors, serving as one of only four markets in metro Atlanta participating in ARC's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Fifty seniors this season have benefited from doubling their dollars at the market through program subsidies. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants have also doubled their dollars through the market's partnership with Wholesome Wave.

Other highlights of market achievements include:

- Participation in the Georgia Farmers Market Association (GFMA) Nourish program, along with local non-profit Norcross Cooperative Ministries, to conduct food preparation demonstrations using market ingredients.
- Partnering with the University of Georgia County Extension service and regional nonprofit Food Well Alliance with diversity outreach, bilingual ServSafe training and canning classes for prepared food vendors.
- Assisting the city/county with Gateway International Food and Music Festival and Hispanic Heritage Month in featuring our Serv Safe-certified prepared food vendors.
- Partnering with GFMA to conduct extensive surveying, focus groups, and data collection activities, enabling comparisons with 14 other participating farmers markets and national trends, while quantifying the economic and social impacts of the market.

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## OTHER QUALITY OF LIFE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the many outstanding Norcross projects of recent years highlighted in the Green Communities program, the City has seen a number of new/expanded efforts in the City of Norcross in the past year that are enhancing quality of life in the community. Highlights include:

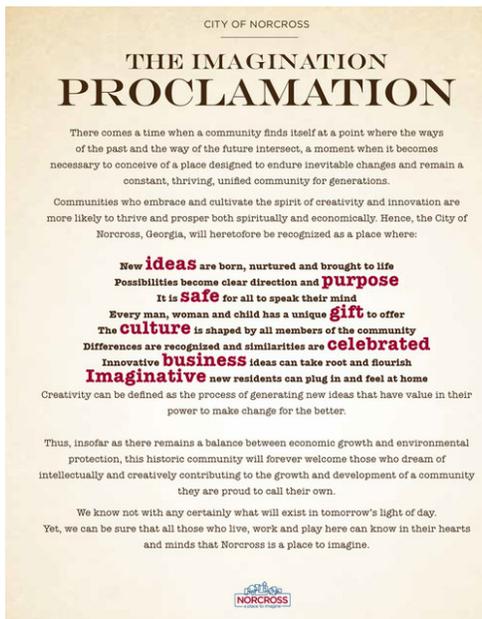
- **Citizens Police Academy** - This program focuses on understanding police department operations as well as enhancing partnerships within Norcross, for two classes of 20 each year. This program is building leadership and civic engagement within the community, and the Spanish-language version of the Academy, in particular, is proving to be an essential way that the City develops relationships within the Spanish-speaking Norcross community.
- **Norcross Walking Group** - Committed to supporting each other in meeting fitness goals, members of the community have been gathering each weekend for one year for walking - building community while improving health!

- **2017 Historic Preservation District** – After many years of community conversation around preservation of Norcross’ historic assets and character of its historic neighborhoods, in July 2017, Norcross City Council passed Ordinance No. 02-2017 to establish a Historic Preservation Commission to provide for the designation of historic properties or historic districts. This achievement will provide opportunities for grants to support the preservation of community assets, as well and a community-supported structure for balancing new development with historic preservation.

## EXISTING PLANS

The City of Norcross has invested significantly in well-executed planning efforts, intended to guide city investments efficiently and effectively, informed by outside expertise. This sustainability plan lifts up the recommendations of these reports, particularly those not already implemented, which are most aligned with priorities voiced by community members through this process.

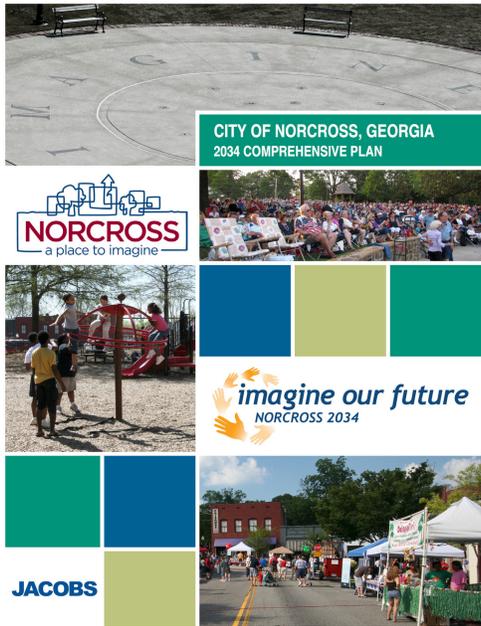
## IMAGINATION PROCLAMATION



In 2008, the City of Norcross sought to redefine itself, actively embracing both the historic nature of the city and the growing diversity of its population. The result of this process was the 'Imagination Proclamation', a statement of community values and aspirations meant to build community and attract new ideas and investments.

The Imagination Proclamation in some ways set the stage for the city’s embrace of sustainability, calling out that *“insofar as there remains a **balance between economic growth and environmental protection**, this historic community will forever welcome those who dream of intellectually and creatively contributing to the growth and development of a community they are proud to call their own.”* This guiding vision remains ever more relevant today.

## 2034 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

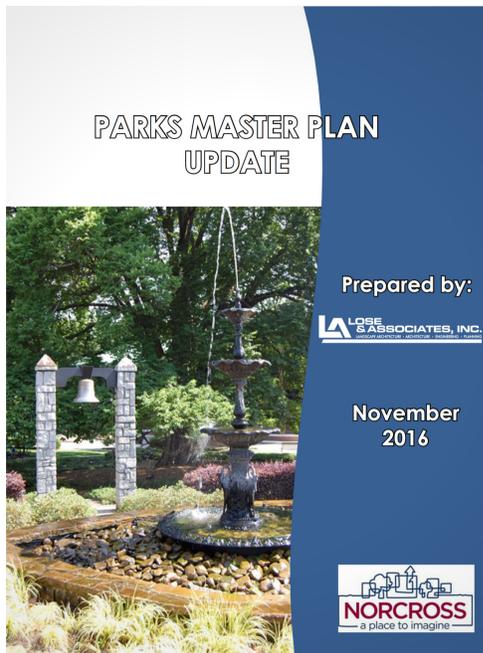


The City of Norcross 2034 Comprehensive Plan, developed in 2013 and adopted by City Council in 2014, was a 5-year update to the 2008 Comp Plan. With the annexation of over 2.1 square miles of land area, completion of several other planning studies and the Great Recession occurring in the interim, 2014 was a significant one. Building on A Place to Imagine, it articulates a refreshed Vision for the city and recommends rezoning and capital investment decisions to address a Sense of Place, Livable & Safe, Transportation, Economy, and Leadership & Service. Those engaged in the development of the 2034 Comprehensive Plan will find reinforcements throughout this document. Where specific recommendations are reflected here, they will be noted by **[2034 CP]**.

### VISION STATEMENT

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

## PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE, 2016



Just as the Norcross annexation required revisiting the Comprehensive Plan, this addition of 40% more residents to the city also necessitated that the 2011 Parks Master Plan be revisited to ensure that investments and decisions regarding Norcross parks were being made in consideration of this new population. The 2016 Parks Master Plan Update identified gaps in parks coverage in the new portion of the community and applied the 2011 plan priorities and recommendations to the new area. Where specific Parks Master Plan recommendations are reflected in this plan, they will be noted by **[PMP]**.

City investment in 2011/2016 Plan implementation has resulted in creation of enormous new quality of life assets for the community: Lillian Webb Park, Summerour Park, Discovery Garden Park, enhancements to Rosie Brundage Park Playground, and soon, Pinnacle Park.

#### PLAN PRIORITIES

- Parkland in the Southeast
- Connectivity
- Soccer Fields/Informal Play Fields
- Play Facilities
- Picnic Facilities and Passive Recreation

## LOCAL FOODS ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL EVALUATION FOR THE NORCROSS COMMUNITY MARKET (2016)

Norcross Community Market partners Georgia Farmers Market Association (GFMA) and Merkata, LLC conducted extensive surveying and data collection in the first year of the new market, specifically focused on assessing the market's potential to build bridges with Norcross immigrant communities through economic inclusion and food. The evaluation analyses the market's use of the Local Foods Accountability Model (LFAM), a best practices model designed to introduce accountability in the local foods marketplace. The analysis found the location of the market in the primarily white and affluent section of the city to be a significant barrier to deeper representation and participation by immigrant community members. However, outreach and engagement in the immigrant community has begun to show positive results and should be expanded and formalized. Where specific recommendations from this analysis are reflected in Sustaining a Place to Imagine, they will be noted by **[LFAM]**.



## IMAGINE OUR NORCROSS: PLANNING FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION REPORT (2015)

Commissioned by the City of Norcross and Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District in 2015, this research project was led by Georgia Tech's School of City and Regional Planning, in collaboration with Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ)- Atlanta, and the Latin American Association (LAA). The focus of the project was to better understand the overall immigrant community in Norcross and what they would need to engage more in the life of the city. Extensive outreach, interviews, focus groups and statistical analysis resulted in recommendations which are woven throughout this report as they relate to sustainability priorities and opportunities. Specific recommendations stemming from this report are indicated in this plan by **[IIR]**.



## LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE GREENWAY CONCEPT PLAN (2017)

The City of Norcross recently launched the LCI Greenway Concept Plan with support from ARC, which integrates regional stormwater improvements with a proposed bicycle and pedestrian network in the Beaver Run Creek Watershed (south side of Norcross). Implementation ahead includes off-road bicycle facilities, sidewalks, stream restoration projects, and shared-use trails will provide a host of sustainability benefits. The city is making great strides in implementing this plan, particularly with the development of Pinnacle Park, which is key to the formation of the greenway.

### **SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS OF GREENWAY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Improved connectivity between neighborhoods and community destinations
- Accessible recreational opportunities for all residents
- Reduced automobile traffic congestion
- Attraction and leverage of private sector investment
- Better public and environmental health



# OUR ASPIRATIONS

HEALTHY PEOPLE, PLACES, & ECONOMY

# PLAN FRAMEWORK

	GOALS	OBJECTIVES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES (from STAR Communities)
HEALTHY PLACES	1. Safe & Affordable Communities	Range of housing options for all life-stages and incomes Homes free from hazards Neighborhoods free from crime	BE4: H+T% HS7: Violent Crime Rate
	2. Efficient & Resilient Buildings	Fewer tax dollars to operate city buildings Homes are efficient to heat and cool Historic buildings and assets are preserved	CE6: 10% reduction in energy/water use EAC4: Inc. % protected historic structures
	3. Flourishing Nature	Protected natural spaces and enhance existing ones Comprehensive and convenient recycling, supported by community education	NSI: Inc. % of land cover pervious CE7: Inc. % recycling rate
HEALTHY PEOPLE	4. Well Residents	Affordable, local, healthy food Accessible parks, recreational classes, programs, leagues Accessible treatment for common ailments at nearby clinics	HS4: Inc. % users of SNAP/WIC at NCM, Red. % food insecure BE6: Inc. % within 1/2 mile walk of park
	5. Good Neighbors	Opportunities to get to know each other Accessible events and public art celebrating cultural diversity Build trust and keep residents safe	EAC2: Inc. % residents volunteering EAC2: # residents assisted
	6. Welcoming Culture	Accessible city-wide information Opportunities for all to contribute Engaged residents	EE1: Inc. voter turnout along demographic lines EE1: Inc. # Latino/Asian members of boards/commissions
HEALTHY ECONOMY	7. Accessible Transportation	Workers are able to get to jobs efficiently Safe walking and cycling areas protected from vehicles Build connectivity between neighborhoods	BE7: Transit mode split BE7: W/B Friendly Certification BE7: Red. # bike/ped incidents/fatalities
	8. Work-Ready Employees	Community support for non-native English-speaking students Accessible training and mentors Opportunities to thrive at all life-stages	EAC3: Inc. HS graduation rate non-native speakers EAC3: % employed
	9. Future-Ready Businesses	Businesses are supported in sustainability innovation Entrepreneurs have access to training and financing options Harness a diverse economy	EJ5: Inc. total food-based jobs, immigrant-owned businesses



## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- The **housing challenge** is both about **affordability and quality**.
- **Affordability** ranks true both for those seeking affordable **home ownership** opportunities, as well as for **apartment and home rentals**.

### FEEDBACK

- Varying price points of homes in the City
- Rental housing free from health hazards (mold, rats, etc.)
- Housing for Millennials

### CHAMPIONS

"There was a disconnect with the Hispanic community [and the Police Department]. There were a lot of crimes of robberies and burglaries/home invasions, but only 1 in 4 were being reported. If delinquents know that this community won't go to the police, then they become targets."

"[The Citizen Police Academy] program allows us to be more open, eliminating fear, so they're able to call when they're victims of a crime and report them. The [Hispanic] community would call me directly and feel safe to communicate with me. Reports were coming in, even from other cities."

- **Arelis Rivera,**  
**Norcross Police Department**

# SAFE & AFFORDABLE COMMUNITIES



### OBJECTIVES

Connecting Goals: *Accessible Transportation; Good Neighbors; Welcoming Culture*

- Range of housing options for all life-stages and incomes
- Homes free from hazards
- Neighborhoods free from crime

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Explore feasibility of adopting the National Healthy Housing Standard or equivalent local code for existing residential buildings that includes implementation and enforcement provisions.
  - National Healthy Housing Standard: A living tool that bridges the health and building code communities by putting modern public health information into housing code parlance.
- 2 Explore adoption of partnership structure to reduce crime in extended stay hotels and multi-family housing.
- 3 Expand the Citizens Police Academy programming and support it by neighborhood. Assign community liaisons to further education efforts.
  - Citizens Police Academy: A 20-hour course where Norcross residents or local business owners receive instruction in the day-to-day operations of the Police Department. The Hispanic Academy is presented in Spanish and includes key topics relevant to the immigrant community.
- 4 Collaborate with other jurisdictions to address affordable housing and location efficiency needs in the region.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Norcross Housing Authority  
 Norcross Cooperative Ministries  
 Gwinnett Dept. of Health Services  
 Norcross First United Methodist Church  
 Gwinnett Public Schools  
 Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

Gwinnett Village CID  
 Ambient, Inc.  
 SunTrust Bank  
 Norcross Police Department  
 Holy Name of Jesus Chinese Catholic Mission  
 Atlanta Legal Aid



## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- **Solar energy** was ranked number one for energy-related services residents want access to.
- Residents are interested in making **energy efficient upgrades** to their homes with help through the City.

### FEEDBACK

- Add solar panels
- More energy efficient homes and buildings/incentives
- Go more green!
- Protect the historic buildings

### CHAMPIONS

*"In particular having the City investigating ways to make city-owned facilities more energy efficient is just good stewardship. The City is not only saving the taxpayers money, but also leading by example. Implementing improvements to energy and water efficiency in the city's buildings can inform the policies and incentives the city has for privately owned commercial and residential structures. It pays to evaluate the cost of a project over the life of it and not just the initial expense. Reduced annual operating costs can lower the overall cost of a project. Everybody wins, even if the initial cost is a little more."*

- **Connie Weathers,**  
Sustainable Norcross Founder  
Norcross Community Market

# EFFICIENT & RESILIENT BUILDINGS



### OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Well Residents; Future-Ready Businesses*

- Fewer tax dollars to operate city buildings
- Homes are efficient to heat and cool
- Historic buildings and assets are preserved

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Conduct annual energy, water and waste audits for City buildings and implement retrofits to reduce consumption 10% from baseline.
  - Energy performance contracting is one business model that enables building owners to implement whole building retrofits and significantly lower energy consumption and operating costs.
- 2 Develop a pilot program to provide grant-funded incentives for residents to improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality in their homes.
- 3 Implement the 2017 Historic Preservation District.
  - To maintain the historic appearance of buildings in the area while encouraging economic vitality. As proposed, the Historic Preservation Committee would have no say in the color buildings are painted, or the property's landscaping, but would have approval over the size and scale of any physical additions.
- 4 Develop a Solarize Norcross initiative and explore community solar opportunities.
  - Solarize/Community Solar: A community-based solar photovoltaic (PV) group-purchasing program. Think of it as buying solar at wholesale prices—the more people who sign up, the more everyone saves on the cost of solar power—together. It serves to help homeowners, businesses, and non-profits access solar options.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Norcross Housing Authority  
Norcross Cooperative Ministries  
Ambient, Inc.  
SunTrust Bank  
Georgia Historic Preservation  
Division, Dept. of Natural Resources

City of Atlanta  
Solarize Campaign  
Southface  
Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation



## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- As the best way to **protect natural resources**, residents want to see a **plan developed** on how to protect, restore, and connect natural spaces.
- **Clear directions on what items are recyclable** is in high demand, including translation to multiple languages.

### FEEDBACK

- More recycling programs throughout the year, especially for lightbulbs, paint, chemicals
- Stronger protection rules
- Reliable recycling services for apartment complex's

### CHAMPIONS

"I was working at city hall, and one day got panicked calls that bulldozers were 'ripping through the woods' (behind my house). The city had recently sold its water system to the county, so turns out county bulldozers were clearing the sewer easement that parallels the creek. My neighbors and I were upset, then a friend said we'd been gifted about \$60K worth of clearing to start a new trail! So we rallied volunteers and extended the path to create a 1/4 mile loop trail. Now, these "Friends of Johnson Dean Forest" maintain the area as a real forest preserve for our whole community to enjoy."

- **Tixie Fowler,**

**Gardens for Growing;**

**Friends of Johnson Dean Forest**

# FLOURISHING NATURE

## OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Good Neighbors; Well Residents; Efficient & Resilient Buildings*

- Protect natural spaces and enhance existing ones
- Comprehensive and convenient recycling, supported by community education

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Expand recycling events and drop-off options for hard-to-recycle materials.
  - Hard-to-recycle materials include paint, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, styrofoam, carpeting, televisions, mattresses, tires, light bulbs, batteries, electronics, and textiles. These items can leach various chemicals and elements into our groundwater that can be harmful.
- 2 Develop Beaver Ruin Greenway. [PMPU]
  - The proposed plan consists of a greenway trail along an existing Georgia Power easement and a connecting trail along Beaver Ruin Creek and Mitchell Road. It also calls for an extensive evaluation of existing conditions including road crossings, driveway entrances, and school crossings as well as watershed impacts.
- 3 Complete Green Infrastructure Assessment and prioritize implementation of top recommendations.
  - Green Infrastructure: An interconnected network of a wide range of landscape elements that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources, and contribute to the health and quality of life for communities and people.
- 4 Study needs and opportunities to increase recycling (particularly in multi-family residential). Create an education and awareness campaign, in multiple languages, to increase recycling rates.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

*Norcross Tree Board  
Green Infrastructure Center  
GA Urban Forest Council  
Gwinnett Village CID  
Gardens for Growing  
Friends of Johnson Dean Forest*

*Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials  
Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful  
Sierra Club, Georgia Chapter  
Sustainable Norcross Commission  
Discovery Garden Park*

## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- 'Recreational and fitness opportunities' ranked as the highest priority for family needs.
- When asked what should be the highest priority to helping our elders thrive, 'health and medical support' ranked highest. It was followed by 'better connections to transportation services'.

### FEEDBACK

- Affordable Farmers Market
- More grocery stores
- More access to affordable dental care
- Local dialysis provider
- More vendors at the NCM
- Reduced rates of diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease

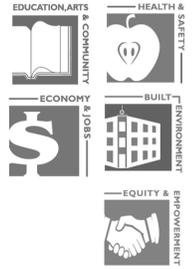
### CHAMPIONS

"We are a very busy charity clinic and will serve about 25,000 people this year. Most of our patients are minorities and immigrants who often have serious complications from untreated chronic diseases, such as diabetes related kidney failure. Unfortunately, there is no charity dialysis service available in the area, and these patients are left with little hope. We struggle to find the necessary medical resources for them."

- **Greg Lang,**

**Good Samaritan Health Center of Gwinnett**

# WELL RESIDENTS



### OBJECTIVES

Connecting Goals: Accessible Transportation; Safe & Affordable Communities; Flourishing Nature

- Affordable, local, healthy food
- Accessible parks, recreational classes, programs, leagues
- Accessible treatment for common ailments at nearby clinics

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Continue to support and grow the Norcross Community Market (NCM), by expanding the partnership with city public schools, and increasing Latino/Asian representation as vendors and customers through community outreach and mentorship. [LFAM]
  - NCM is a premier producer-only market that features fresh food, chef demonstrations, children's activities and live entertainment. a proud partner with Wholesome Wave Georgia in doubling the value of food purchased with EBT/SNAP (food stamps) through the Georgia Fresh for Less program.
- 2 Develop Pinnacle Park, engaging community as key stakeholders in design and construction. [PMP]
  - Purchased green space in the Pinnacle Center business park that will convert the property into a combination of a storm water retention facility and a public park. Plans include a redevelopment of the area with new trails, a picnic pavilion, playground, lighting, and signage. Amenities will include a ropes course, nature trail, fitness stations, tree house, canoe and kayak launch, and new bathrooms.
- 3 Expand offerings of outdoor fitness classes, cooking classes, walking club, in accessible locations and including senior activities.
- 4 Create partnership to seek funding opportunities for dental care and dialysis services.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

*Good Samaritan Health Center of Gwinnett*  
*Norcross Community Market*  
*GA Farmers Market Association*  
*Merkata, LLC*  
*Norcross Cooperative Ministries*  
*Gwinnett Public Schools*  
*Sustainable Norcross Commission*

*Gwinnett Health & Human Services Coalition, Food Insecurity Committee*  
*Gardens for Growing Families First*  
*Gwinnett Human Services Center,*  
*OneStop Norcross Partnership*  
*Gwinnett Village CID*  
*Discovery Garden Park*



## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- Top **cultural amenities** include: public art and installations, events that celebrate cultural diversity, and live performing arts.
- For Latinos that participated, they ranked having **representatives that spoke their language** as a top need.

### FEEDBACK

- More events to bring the community together
- Municipal representation reflective of its population
- Accessible events outside of Historic Downtown
- Cultural exchange opportunities

### CHAMPIONS

"There aren't that many parks on this side of Buford Highway, we need more parks and community centers to gather. It's hard for us to expect [the Latino community on Buford Highway] to WALK over to the other side, [Downtown Norcross]. No city events happen on this side, since there aren't any facilities over here. Thrasher Park and Lillian Webb Park are on the other side...the Cultural Arts & Community Center won't appeal or attract the Latinos and other communities that live on this side of the divide."

- **Pastor Terri Hoye,**  
**Norcross First United Methodist Church**

# GOOD NEIGHBORS

### OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Safe & Affordable Communities; Welcoming Culture; Work-Ready Employees*

- Opportunities to get to know each other
- Accessible events and public art celebrating cultural diversity
- Build trust and keep residents safe

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Identify opportunity to partner in hosting regular multi-cultural events in the city, both in and outside of downtown. [IIR]
- 2 Develop an advisory board staffed by representatives of immigrant communities. [IIR]
- 3 Expand and support the faith community and city partnership to organize volunteer assistance days for low-income residents facing code violations.
- 4 Engage local artists in the creation of a culturally-relevant and community-supported mural project on Norcross thoroughfare.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

*Norcross First United Methodist Church*

*Latin American Association*

*Asian Americans Advancing Justice Gwinnett Village CID*

*Norcross Cooperative Ministries*

*Good Samaritan Health Center of Gwinnett*

*Christos Community Church*

*St. Patrick's Catholic Church*

*Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS)*

*Gwinnett County Outreach*

*Gwinnett Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee*

*Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO)*

*Unify BuHi*

*Los Vecinos de Buford Highway Living Walls*

*Forward Warrior*

*Atlanta Streets Alive*

*Norcross Public Arts Commission*

*We Love BuHi*

## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- For Latinos that participated, they ranked **Spanish-language communications** as their #1 way to be more involved with the City. This ranked high for other languages as well.
- Residents would like to participate in more **listening sessions and community forums** for feedback.

### FEEDBACK

- Feel welcomed and respected
- For all residents to have clear ways to volunteer
- For non-native English speakers to have easy access to information about city services, events, mtgs.
- Foster unification of Historic Norcross and Buford Highway

### CHAMPIONS

*"There aren't enough community events that are marketed to the communities that live outside of Historic Norcross. There needs to be more cultural exchange and understanding... Most people don't even know that a big part of the Hispanic population is attributed to the desperate construction needs of the Olympics that pushed officials to notify the Mexican Consulate the urgent need for workers; what Atlanta didn't anticipate is that these immigrants would stay."*

**- Nolly Pabon,**  
**Latin American Association**

# WELCOMING CULTURE

## OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Good Neighbors; Safe & Affordable Communities; Work-Ready Employees*

- Accessible city-wide information
- Opportunities for all to contribute
- Engaged residents

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Make city communications accessible in various languages, online and offline. Specifically, city newsletter sent with the utility bill.
- 2 Create a Volunteer Norcross web platform to aggregate opportunities and remove barriers to resident engagement in service and contribution.
- 3 Develop Lead Norcross (modeled after LEAD in Duluth) as a path to leadership to serve on city boards, commissions, and elected positions.
  - Learn, Engage, Advance Duluth: The leadership program will encourage citizens to become engaged in government operations and participate by serving on various boards and committees and exploring other opportunities in the community and in the City to become involved. Citizens will be empowered to create insightful solutions to important community issues and needs. In addition, the program will spark interest in local issues, present information about important questions facing the City, provide an avenue for residents to help plan the community's future, and give citizens hands-on experience in City government operations.
- 4 Promote Gateway International as a priority, prominent community event that highlights local makers and community members.
  - Held in conjunction with Welcoming America's Welcoming Week, this event showcases the region's best multicultural talent and highlights the rich cultural contributions of Gwinnett's diverse communities through food, dance, and music.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

*Latin American Association  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice  
Gwinnett Village CID  
Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS)  
Gwinnett Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee*

*Unify BuHi  
Los Vecinos de Buford Highway L.E.A.D.  
Welcoming America  
Norcross Police Department*





## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- #1 way residents would like to see Norcross improve is by adding **more sidewalks to increase safe pedestrian connectivity.**
- #1 reason residents are **inhibited** from using public transportation is that their **commute would take too long** due to transfer needs, low frequency, and access.

### FEEDBACK

- Safe walking/cycling
- Safe railroad crossing
- More Gwinnett Transit bus routes
- Higher frequency of bus service
- More bus stop shelters
- Better connections from Historic Norcross to Buford Highway
- More public parking

### CHAMPIONS

"Norcross has just celebrated one year of regular walking events focused on keeping the 50+ year old citizens healthy and mobile. Norcross has also had bike events with multi-city collaboration with the inclusion of local businesses that build community cohesion. As well as bike rodeo events for kids. All this to help the city become a certified Bike/Walk friendly community."

- **Jolyn Barrow,**  
**Sustainable Norcross, Bike/PEDS**

# ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION



### OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Safe & Affordable Communities; Work-Ready Employees; Future-Ready Businesses*

- Workers are able to get to jobs efficiently
- Safe walking and cycling areas protected from vehicles
- Build connectivity between neighborhoods

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Establish a Sidewalk Connectivity Program to fill gaps in existing pedestrian network and pursue Walk Friendly Community certification. [2034 CP]
  - Sidewalk Connectivity Program: This program would allow for general sidewalk repair and gap-filling based on the sidewalk prioritization inventory conducted. Priorities include connecting residential, commercial, and civic uses as well as completing gaps in heavily traveled areas.
- 2 Advocate for transit expansions in Connect Gwinnett Transit Plan process. Especially focus on efficient connections between Norcross employment, residential centers, and the Doraville MARTA Station.
  - Gwinnett County Transit (GCT) has initiated a Comprehensive Transit Development Plan (CTDP) to review all fixed route and paratransit services. This Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan will culminate in short-, medium- and long-term plans constrained to identified current and future funding sources and vetted through a broad community outreach effort.
- 3 Advocate for bike/pedestrian accessibility in Gwinnett County DOT Holcomb Bridge Rail Crossing Project.
  - Holcomb Bridge Rail Crossing Project: The 2014 study identified the traffic and safety problems of the at-grade railroad crossing and provides options for its relocation and/or reconstruction.
- 4 Develop and implement a Norcross Bicycle Master Plan and pursue the Bike Friendly Community certification.
  - The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America<sup>SM</sup> (BFA<sup>SM</sup>) program provides a roadmap, hands-on assistance, and recognition for communities to make bicycling a real transportation and recreation option for all people.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

*Gwinnett Village CID*

*Georgia DOT*

*Gwinnett County Transit*

*Atlanta Bicycle Coalition*

*Sierra Club, Georgia Chapter*

*Sustainable Norcross Commission*

*PEDS*

*Gwinnett County DOT*

*Citizens for Progressive Transit*



## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- Residents would like Norcross to provide **more support services and training** tailored to the needs of the local workforce; including language barriers
- Residents believe the City should require companies that get city contracts or incentives to **prioritize hiring local residents.**

### FEEDBACK

- Equitable access to high quality, diverse schools
- Support and resources to develop local entrepreneurs
- Affordable and accessible opportunities to gain soft-skills (language, financial literacy, etc.)

### CHAMPIONS

"There are 200-300 homeless children in the Norcross school system, which causes them to move from school-to-school as their parents search for stable, affordable homes. This causes a big wave of high-risk children, which led to build junior-achievement programs, to give them a reason to stay in school and finish. The focus is on these high-risk families and parents to know the importance of finishing high school, so finding those ways to keep them engaged is the main focus. There's an average 50% turnover-rates of students, which influences the graduation rates."

- **Ranae Heaven,**

**Norcross Cluster Schools Foundation**

# WORK-READY EMPLOYEES

## OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Accessible Transportation; Future-Ready Businesses; Welcoming Culture*

- Community support for non-native English-speaking students
- Access to training and mentors
- Opportunities to thrive at all life-stages

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Create an internship portal that links Norcross high school students with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce/ Bi-National Chambers of Commerce. [IIR]
- 2 Develop a program to recognize and engage teachers, administrators, and school-based social workers as critical connections to the immigrant community. [IIR]
- 3 Mentor underrepresented community members and partner to increase access to small business certifications.
  - Example: Make ServSafe certification accessible to individuals who are interested in being food vendors at Norcross events and marketplaces by providing different training locations and offering it in different languages.
- 4 Partner with local schools and other community organizations to support parents so that they can fully engage in the Norcross economy.
  - Support for parents can be provided through childcare options, early childhood education, afterschool programming, etc.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

SW Gwinnett Chamber  
 Norcross Economic Development  
 Gwinnett Village CID  
 Gwinnett County Public Schools Foundation  
 Norcross First United Methodist Church  
 Norcross Cluster Schools Foundation  
 Breakthrough Norcross  
 Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE)  
 Sustainable Norcross Commission  
 Gwinnett Public Schools

Latin American Association  
 SCORE  
 eDea, LLC  
 Junior Achievement  
 GA Center for Opportunity  
 Great Promise Partnership  
 Partnership Gwinnett



## community voices

### SURVEY RESULTS

- #1 way Norcross can prepare its Hispanic residents is by offering more **job training and resources in Spanish**.

### FEEDBACK

- Support and resources to develop local entrepreneurs
- Bridges to the businesses on Buford Highway
- Diversify local businesses
- Access to grants and low-interest loans for ventures
- Mentorship for immigrant entrepreneurs
- Increased awareness of Buford Highway local business economic impacts

### CHAMPIONS

"Norcross is one of the main centers of international business and economic growth in the State of Georgia. Immigrants have a big impact on the economy, but increasing inequality is a still a threat. There are high levels of racial segregation in Norcross, despite the overall success of the ethnic economy. It certainly isn't a given that immigrant entrepreneurs will always stay in one place: as is commonly said, immigrants often 'vote with their feet'. For that reason, among others, on-going attitudes that welcome and embrace diversity will be key to sustainability for the city."

- Anna Joo Kim

**Georgia Institute of Technology;  
Immigrant Integration Report**

# FUTURE-READY BUSINESSES



### OBJECTIVES

*Connecting Goals: Accessible Transportation; Work-Ready Employees; Welcoming Culture; Efficient & Resilient Buildings*

- Businesses are supported in sustainability innovation
- Entrepreneurs have access to training and financing options
- Harness a diverse economy

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Support the diversity of entrepreneurs by communicating business and economic development services, events, and key documents in multiple languages; contracting with partners for multilingual support as needed. [IIR] [2034 CP]
- 2 Host property management classes that teach owners how to properly care for investments, improve safety, and increase property values. [IIR]
- 3 Launch a voluntary business conservation challenge and recognize participants in an annual event.
  - Modeled after the Better Buildings Challenge which aims to make commercial, public, industrial, and residential buildings 20% more energy efficient over the next decade. This means saving billions of dollars on energy bills, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating thousands of jobs.
- 4 Hold regular Buford Highway roundtable discussions to promote business and redevelopment of the corridor and learn about sustainability innovations in different sectors. [2034 CP]

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

*SW Gwinnett Chamber  
Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE)  
Latin American Association  
SCORE  
eDea, LLC  
GA Center for Opportunity  
Center for Pan Asian Community Services  
(CPACS)*

# PLAN ACTIONS

(UPDATED MARCH 2018)

LEAD	ACTIONS	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	FY 2019-2020
Community Engagement Coordinator	Develop a plan to recognize and engage teachers, administrators, and school-based social workers as critical connections to immigrant community.	<----->		
Community Engagement Coordinator	Develop an advisory board staffed by representatives of immigrant communities.	<----->		
Community Engagement Coordinator	Make city communications accessible in various languages, online and offline. Specifically city newsletter sent with utility bill.	<----->		
Community Engagement Coordinator	Expand Citizen Academy programming and support by neighborhood. Assign community liaisons to further education efforts.	<----->		
Community Engagement Coordinator	Develop Lead Norcross (modeled after LEAD in Duluth), as a path to leadership to serve on city boards, commissions, and elected positions.	<----->		
Community Engagement Coordinator	Promote Gateway International as priority, prominent community event that highlights local makers and community members.	<----->		
Community Engagement Coordinator	Identify opportunity to partner in hosting regular multi-cultural events in city, both in and outside of downtown.	<----->		
Economic Development	Collaborate with other jurisdictions to address affordable housing and location efficiency needs in the region	<----->		
Economic Development	Create an internship portal that links Norcross high school students with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce/ Bi-National Chambers of Commerce.	<----->		
Economic Development	Create partnership to seek funding for dental care and dialysis services.	<----->		
Economic Development	Mentor underrepresented community members and partner to increase access to small business certifications.	<----->		
Economic Development	Host property management classes that teach owners how to properly care for investments, improve safety, and increase property values.	<----->		
Economic Development	Partner with local schools and other community organizations to support parents so that they can fully engage in the Norcross economy.	<----->		
Economic Development	Support diversity of entrepreneurs by communicating business and economic development services, events, key documents in multiple languages; contracting with partners for multilingual support as needed.	<----->		
Economic Development	Hold regular Buford Highway roundtable discussions to promote business and redevelopment of the corridor and learn about sustainability innovations in different sectors.	<----->		
Economic Development	Launch a voluntary business conservation challenge and recognize participants in annual event.	<----->		
Police Department	Explore feasibility of adopting the National Healthy Housing Standard or equivalent local code for existing residential buildings that includes implementation and enforcement provisions.	<----->		
Police Department	Expand and support faith community and city partnership to organize volunteer assistance days for low-income residents facing code violations.	<----->		
Police Department	Explore adoption of partnership structure to reduce crime in extended stay hotels and multi-family housing.	<----->		

# PLAN ACTIONS

(UPDATED MARCH 2018)

LEAD	ACTIONS	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	FY 2019-2020
Sustainability Coordinator	Develop and implement a Norcross Bicycle Master Plan and pursue Bike Friendly Community certification.	<----->		
Sustainability Coordinator	Establish a Sidewalk Connectivity Program to fill gaps in existing pedestrian network and pursue Walk Friendly Community certification.	<----->		
Sustainability Coordinator	Create Volunteer Norcross web platform to aggregate opportunities and remove barriers to resident engagement in service and contribution.	<----->		
Sustainability Coordinator	Develop pilot program to provide grant-funded incentives for residents to improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality in their homes.	<----->		
Sustainability Coordinator	Expand recycling events and drop-off options for hard-to-recycle materials.	<----->		
Sustainability Coordinator	Engage local artists in the creation of culturally-relevant and community-supported mural project on Norcross thoroughfare.	<----->		
Sustainability Coordinator	Study needs and opportunities to increase recycling (particularly in multi-family residential), and create education and awareness campaign (multiple languages) to increase recycling rates.	<----->		
Sustainable Infrastructure Coordinator	Conduct annual energy, water and waste audits for City buildings and implement retrofits to reduce consumption 10% from baseline.	<----->		
Sustainable Infrastructure Coordinator	Develop Pinnacle Park, engaging community as key stakeholders in design and construction.	<----->		
City Engineer	Implement 2017 Historic Preservation District.	<----->		
City Engineer	Develop Beaver Ruin Greenway.	<----->		
City Engineer	Complete Green Infrastructure Assessment and prioritize implementation of top recommendations.	<----->		
Sustainable Norcross Commission	Continue to support and grow the Norcross Community Market (NCM), by expanding the partnership with city public schools, and increasing Latino/Asian representation as vendors and customers through community outreach and mentorship.	<----->		
Sustainable Norcross Commission	Advocate for transit expansions in Gwinnett Transit Assessment process, particularly focused on efficient connections between Norcross employment and residential centers and the Doraville MARTA Station.	<----->		
Sustainable Norcross Commission	Advocate for bike/pedestrian accessibility in Gwinnett DOT Holcomb Bridge Rail Crossing Project.	<----->		
Sustainable Norcross Commission	Develop Solarize Norcross initiative and explore community solar opportunities.	<----->		
Sustainable Norcross Commission	Expand offerings of outdoor fitness classes, cooking classes, walking club, in accessible locations and including senior activities.	<----->		

# THANK YOU

RECOGNIZING THOSE WHO HELPED



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## **Community Organizations**

Norcross People Drinking Coffee (PDC)

Latin American Association, Norcross Office

Good Samaritan Health Center of Gwinnett

Norcross Citizens Academy Class of 2017

Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church

Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Mission

Norcross Community Market

Gwinnett-Norcross Library

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