

# Lovejoy 2014-2034 Comprehensive Plan



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# Introduction and Overview

## Introduction and Overview

The City of Lovejoy has completed a state-mandated update of Its Comprehensive Plan. This process was managed with the guidance and involvement of a Stakeholder Committee, City Staff, a consultant team and the residents of the City of Lovejoy via a community Open House held in October 2014.

The Comprehensive Plan contains three components required by the State of Georgia: a Community Vision, a summary of Community Issues and Opportunities, and a Community Work Program. State guidelines also mandate the development of a Future Land Use Plan and require the City to maintain a Transportation Plan and Housing Element

The Stakeholder Committee members and Open House participants focused on defining Lovejoy's key assets to build upon for the future, as well as the major challenges facing the City in the near-and long-term future. These assets and challenges are discussed in detail throughout this document.



The Assets Identified Are:

- Location
- Diversity
- Small Town
- Safety
- Community Garden

The Challenges Identified Are:

- Coordination with Surrounding Jurisdictions
- Public Transportation
- Business Recruitment
- Community Boundaries

# ***Vision Statement***

**A Great Place to Grow and Prosper.**

## Lovejoy by the Numbers

6,422

*City of Lovejoy's Population*

56%

*Homeownership Rate in the  
City*

83.9%

*Residential Occupancy rate in  
the City*

\$40,739

*Median Household Income in  
the City*

2,364

*Households in the City*

26.6

*Median age of Residents in the  
City*

Source: US Census Quick Facts, and 2008-2012 American Community Survey





City of Lovejoy, Georgia

# Yesterday and Today

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LOVEJOY

Known as Lovejoy Station during the Civil War, an act creating and incorporating the Town of Lovejoy, in the County of Clayton, was approved September 16, 1861. For many years, the city did not have an organized government. In 1972, citizens of the community-established boundaries began operating under the old City Charter. A junk ordinance was passed and a beautification program began. In 1975, the Georgia General Assembly approved a new charter for the city establishing the foundation for all that Lovejoy is today.

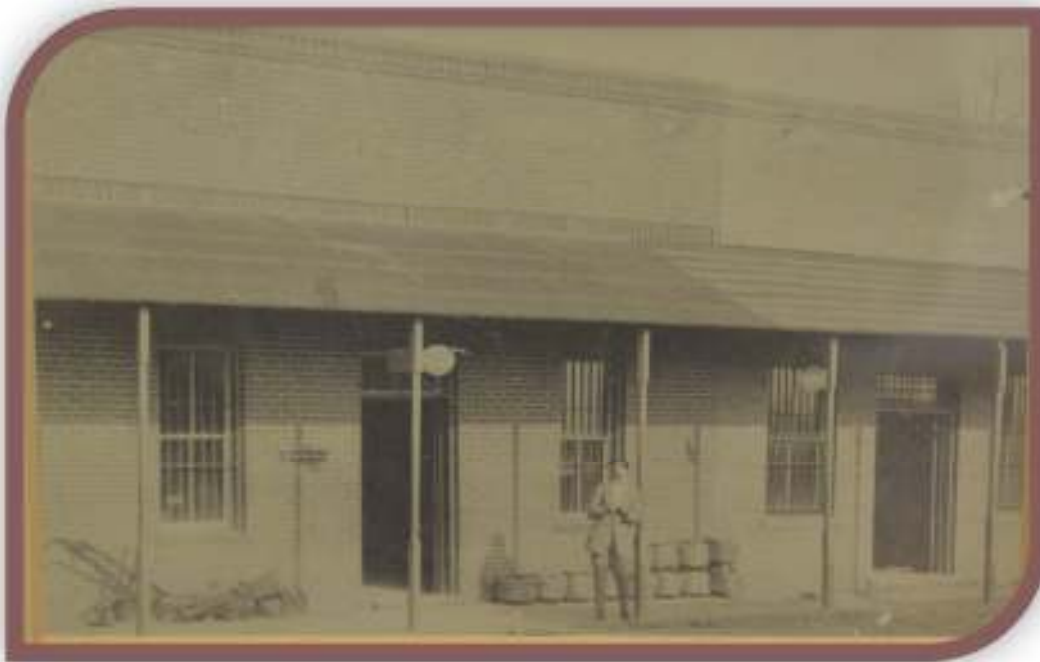


Before and during the Civil War, farmers brought cotton and watermelons to the city to be transported by rail to other states. Lovejoy was the site of a cotton gin until 1932. Early on, the community included six stores: a bank, post office, depot, 2 warehouses, and a garage. The later years generated two major additions when Lovejoy became home to Hastings Seed Farm and the site of a quarter-horse farm.

In the past, Lovejoy was best known as the home of former Senator Herman Talmadge and the home of Talmadge Farms. Senator Talmadge resided in Lovejoy until his divorce. Mrs. Betty Talmadge was granted use of the Talmadge home where she entertained politicians and corporation members with her recipes and southern décor.

Frank Lovejoy, whom the city was named for, is buried in the Lutheran Church Cemetery on Lovejoy Road. The church, established in the early 1800s, burned in 1896. One of the best-known citizens of the community was the late Dr. J.K. Wallis. He began his medical practice in Lovejoy in 1904 and continued until his death in 1956. People from all over the country came to Dr. Wallis in horse and buggy. The Wallis House has been restored and is now called Lovejoy Manor.

Many of the old buildings in Lovejoy are over 100 years old because the brick walls are crackin. Lovejoy is divided by a railroad track once used to transport cotton and watermelons throughout Georgia and the US. On the West side of town are two aged brick buildings: one, the old Farmer's Exchange and the other the former post office. These are just two of the many buildings that have become landmarks in Lovejoy.



The City of Lovejoy, the City of Peace, is growing rapidly. Its small neighborhood community atmosphere continues to attract new residents and businesses. City leaders and residents are at work every day to keep Lovejoy a great place to live and work.



## Lovejoy Community Center



## The Mayor's Park





## Community Garden



The community garden is a great asset for the City of Lovejoy, so far in 2014, the garden has produced over 80,000 pounds of produce that has been given away to the citizens of Lovejoy. Currently, there are 1018 registered household with a total of 3134 family members that the community garden provided fresh vegetables to.

Here is a list of the Fall/Winter crop that are grown in the community garden:

Turnip Greens

Collards

Mustard Greens

Beets

Radishes

Carrots

Cabbage

Kale

Cauliflower

Rutabagas

Broccoli

Sweet Potatoes

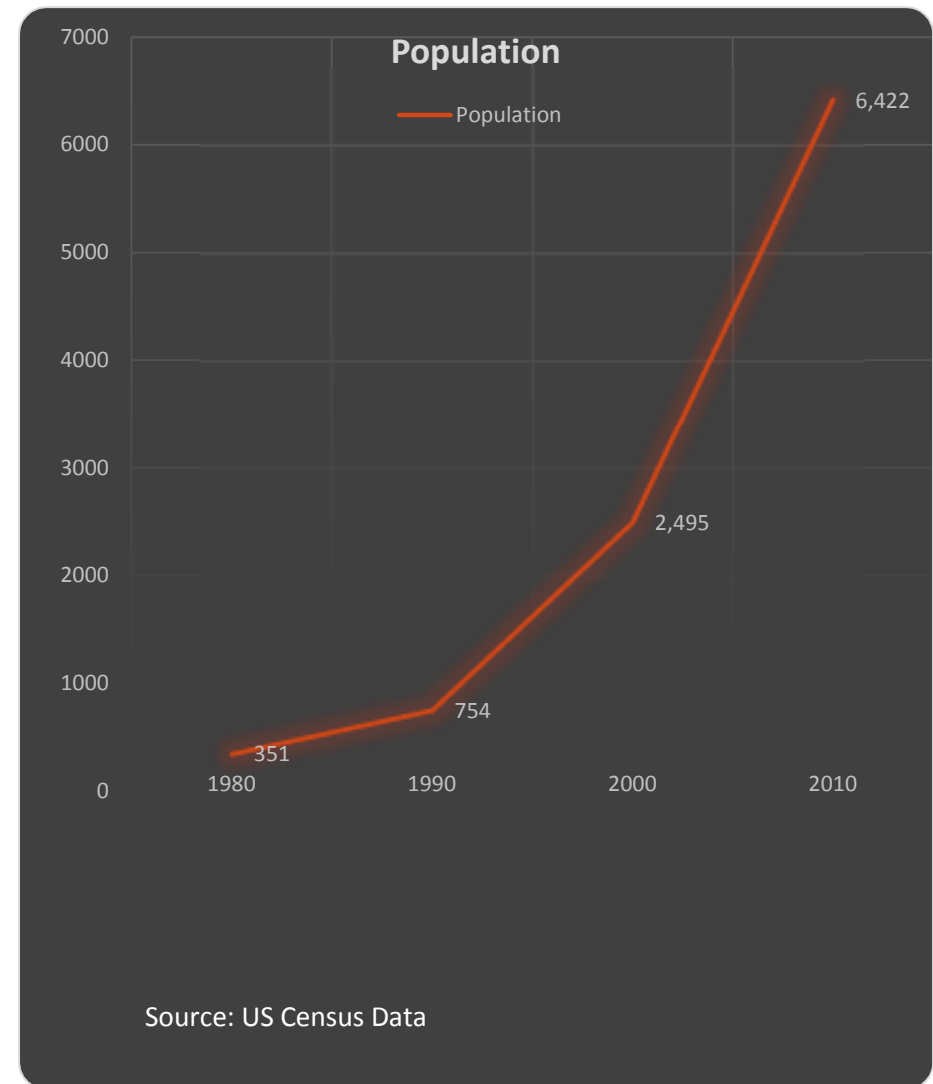


## GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHIC

The City of Lovejoy's population has grown rapidly and will continue to grow in the future. Lovejoy currently has available vacant land for new residential growth opportunities.

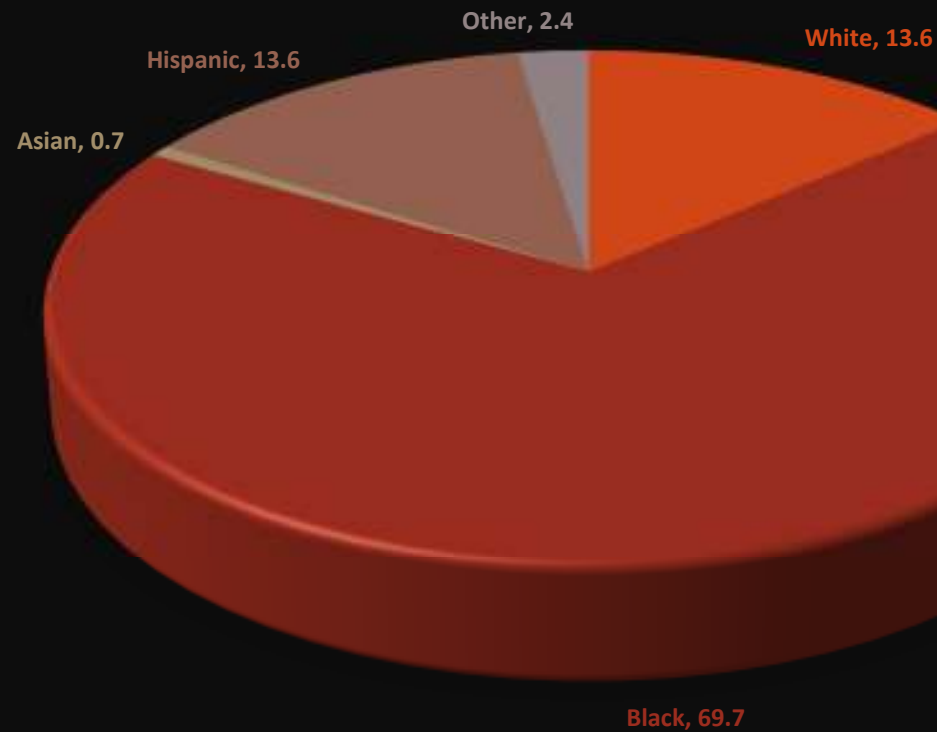
Lovejoy is virtually confined to the present city limits which comprise an area far less extensive than Clayton County. This will limit population growth as the land area is projected to be "built out" by 2025.

The projected population anticipates continuing demand for housing at varying densities influenced by growth of the region and specifically propelled by initiation of the planned commuter rail service. Property is available in Lovejoy to accommodate the projected growth at densities appropriate to the surrounding residential development.



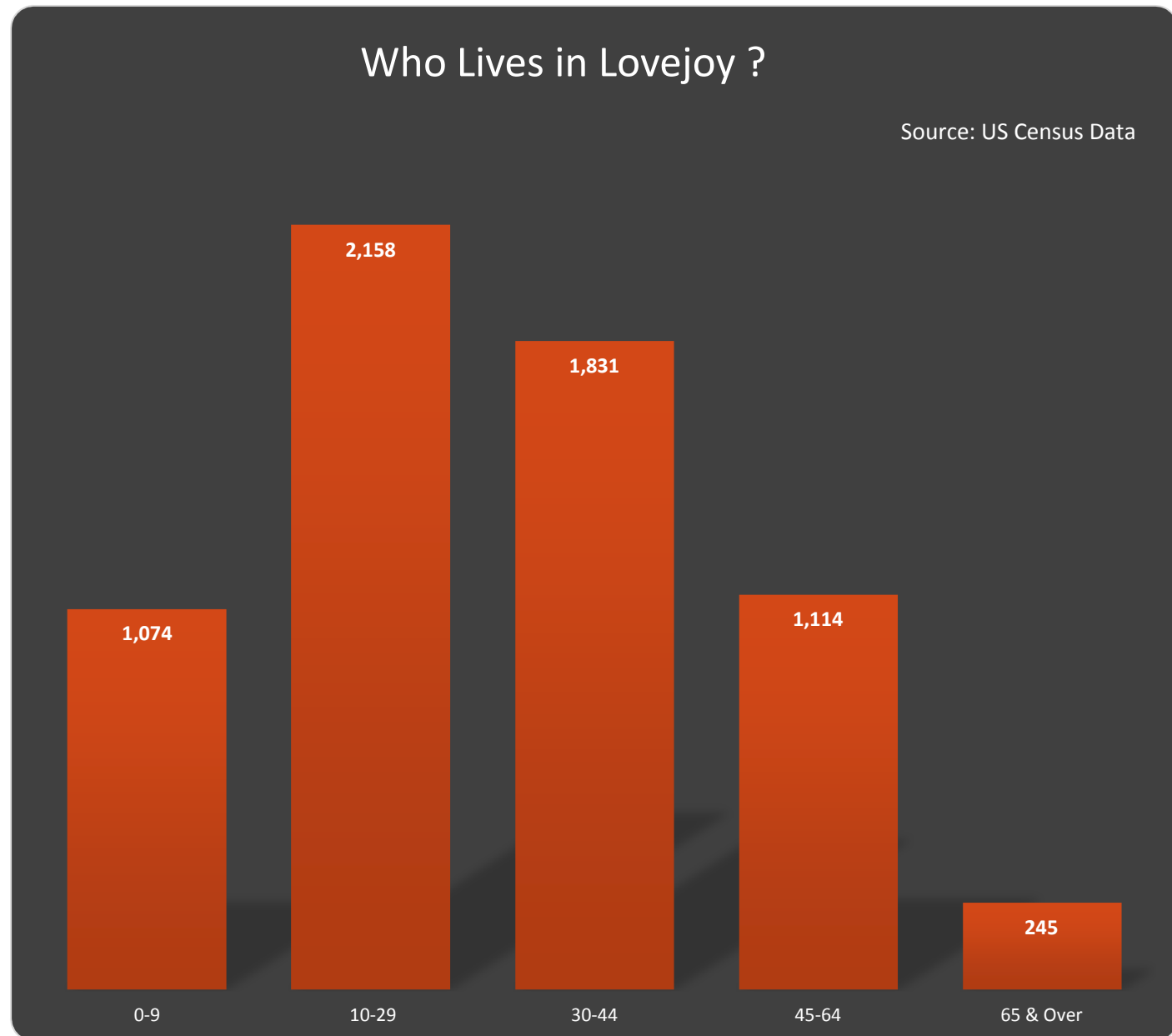
Lovejoy over the last decade has become a diverse community of White, African American, Hispanics and Asian American.

## WHO LIVES IN LOVEJOY ?



Source: US Census Data

Lovejoy is a relatively young city with a Median age of 26.6 and the majority of the population is under the age of 45.

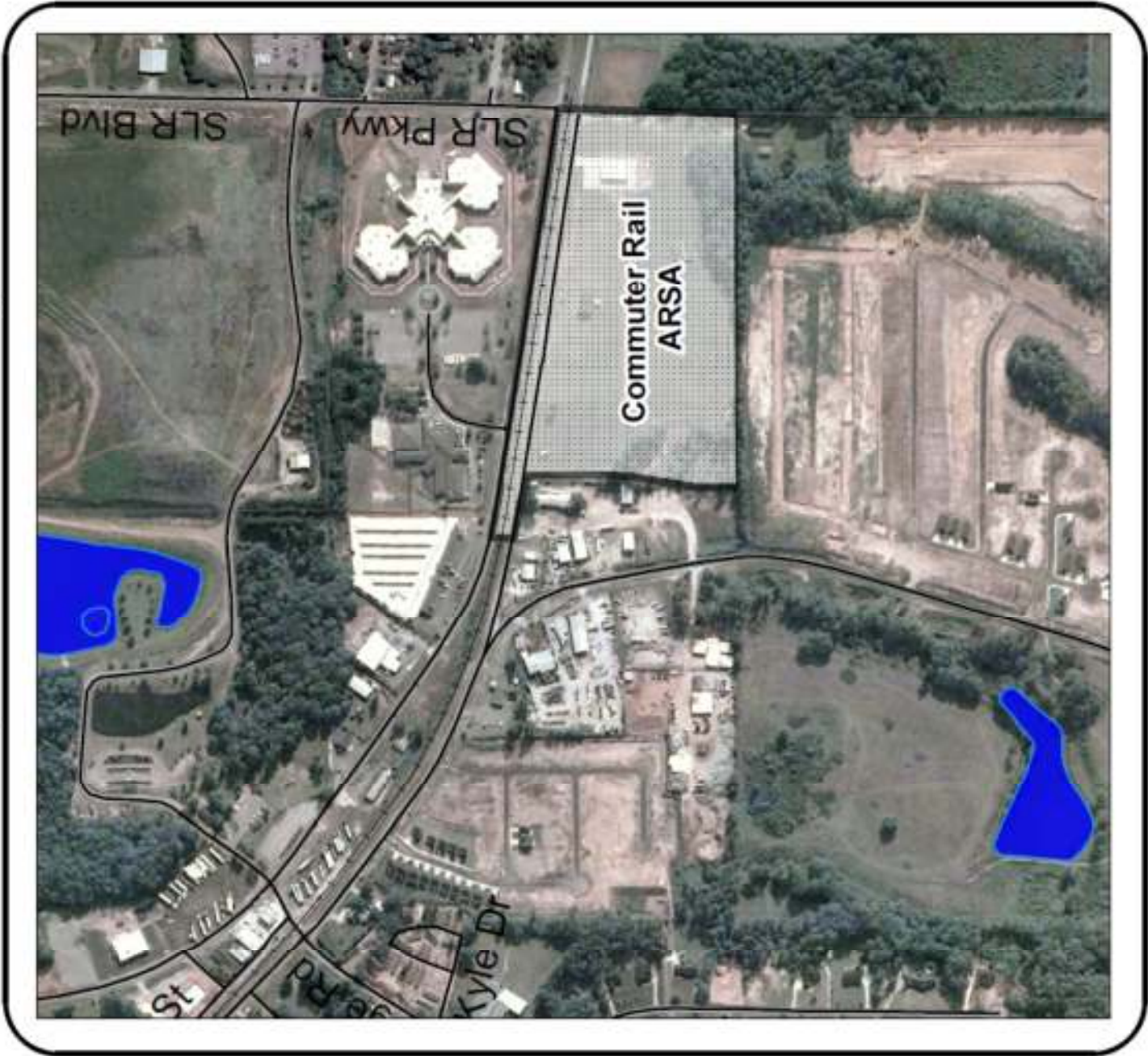


# Key Areas Needing Attention

## **Commuter Rail Site**

This area is located at the intersection of Lovejoy Road and Steele Road and continues along Lovejoy Road south to the county line. It includes the site of the proposed commuter rail station and the surrounding properties, both developed and undeveloped. The Future Land Use Plan depicts a mixture of land uses including single family residential, light industrial, public institutional and undeveloped/unused property and validates the need for a study of this area. Extensive research is needed to determine appropriate land use, density levels and roadway plans to service the future development of this facility. Initial efforts should include collaboration with multi-jurisdictional entities in Clayton, Henry and Fayette counties.

CITY OF LOVEJOY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
2014-2034



**Prepared by:**  
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Commuter Rail ARSA

## **Downtown District**

This site as identified on the map encompasses Lovejoy's main downtown area and continues west along Talmadge Road toward Tara Boulevard (Hwy 19/41). It includes the Community Center, Lovejoy Manor, the public safety facility and portions of the Clayton County Landfill and the detention facility sites. The City has officially identified the boundary for the downtown overlay phase I and has plans to add an additional phase II. Unlike many downtown areas and with the exception of few properties, Lovejoy has a minimum amount historical buildings remaining in its downtown, thus allowing a more flexible design.



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DATE: 10/20/2014

Downtown ARSA



## **Hastings Bridge East**

This site as identified on the map is located on the east side of Hastings Bridge Road between Lovejoy's Community Center and the Clayton/Henry county line. Properties within this site contain Clayton County's landfill and a detention facility. Due to the intense use of these sites and their level of visibility to both the downtown area and the proposed commuter rail station, the city may consider identifying these sites in a study area to examine potential redevelopment opportunities.

CITY OF LOVEJOY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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HASTINGS BRIDGE EAST SITE ARSA

# Needs and Opportunities

## Economic Development

- We need to improve our public facility capacity in order to attract new development
- We need to promote revitalization of our downtown
- We'd like to create more jobs or economic opportunities in our community
- We'd like to develop a strategy for appropriate economic development of our community

## Development Patterns

- We'd like to avoid more sprawl (or unplanned) development
- We'd like to develop and promote tourism opportunities in our community
- We'd like to improve the appearance of all, or parts of, our community
- We'd like to promote development of vacant sites or abandoned structures in our community

## Mobility

- We'd like to improve or provide public transportation
- We'd like to provide more sidewalks and pedestrian facilities
- We'd like to size our streets (width, etc.) to better fit neighborhood needs

## Community

- We'd like to discourage visual clutter (such as excessive signage) along roadways
- We'd like to improve the curb-appeal of commercial or shopping areas
- We'd like to increase the amount of greenspace or parkland in our community
- We'd like to increase the mix of housing (by size, type, and price range) in certain neighborhoods

## Conservation

- We like to better protect our natural resources (such as streams, wetlands, etc.)
- We'd like to encourage development to locate in areas most suitable for new growth
- We'd like to protect our trees, particularly where new development takes place

## Livability

- We need to manage traffic congestion and commute times
- We'd like more affordable housing in our community
- We'd like to provide more community gathering spaces

## Governance

- We'd like to coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions on shared needs
- We'd like to improve community services for underserved neighborhoods
- We'd like to institute new zoning or similar development regulations
- We'd like to reduce the cost of providing public services/facilities
- We'd like to streamline our local development review process

# Community Input

## APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The City and planning team designed a number of communication tools and activities to ensure that meaningful community input would form the backbone of this plan. A Stakeholder Committee, convened to oversee the process, was the main instrument for guiding development of the plan. The Stakeholder Committee played an essential role in providing input to the comprehensive planning process and represented a diverse cross-section of the City. The members' role was to provide input so that the plan was in line with the City of Lovejoy's community values.

Stakeholder Committee members played a key role in the Comprehensive planning process in that they provided plan oversight and input. At each phase of the planning process, they provided the planning team with a valuable perspective that helped refine the comprehensive planning process.

The Stakeholder Committee met several times beginning with a kick-off gathering in October 2014. A subsequent meeting was held to identify the city's assets and challenges, City's Goals; and a final meeting to review the final plan.



## The Open House

Lovejoy's open house on October 23, 2014 hosted over 35 residents who shared feedback on what they imagine for the future of their city. Having already collected feedback from the stakeholder committee at several meetings, the open house provided an opportunity for the community-at-large to participate in interactive planning activities that speak to the values and needs of Lovejoy.

Attendees thoroughly enjoyed the activities and stated they would like more opportunities to offer input to city government in a fun, interactive way.

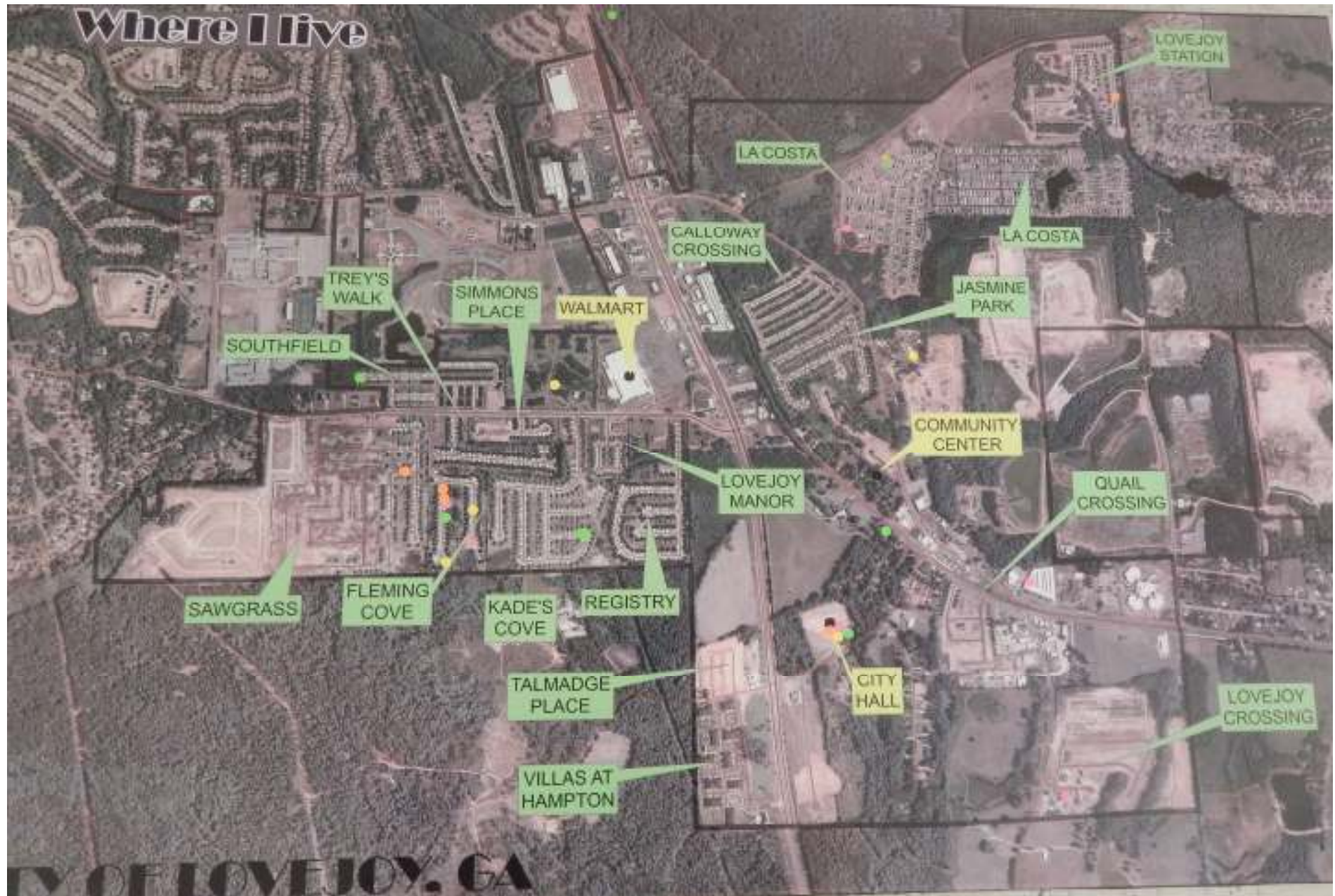
## Where Do You Live?

Lovejoy residents located their homes on a map of Lovejoy to better understand which areas of Lovejoy were most represented in the feedback. Representation was balanced across multiple areas of the City.





## OPEN HOUSE PARTICIPANTS



## Favorite Places

A few spots in Lovejoy were strong favorites among attendees. Downtown Lovejoy received the most sticker tags, while the retail district and the community garden also received significant numbers. This placement represents a theme communicated by residents and the stakeholder committee throughout the planning process: Lovejoy's unique small-town charm, represented by downtown, and its surrounding area are what most residents appreciate about their community.





## Places Needed Improvements

Downtown Lovejoy received a lot of attention as places needing improvement. Those who placed their sticker's downtown primarily focused on the need for more economic development and transportation improvements. The majority of the other sticker's placed where for transportation improvements, which included traffic lights and pedestrian facilities.

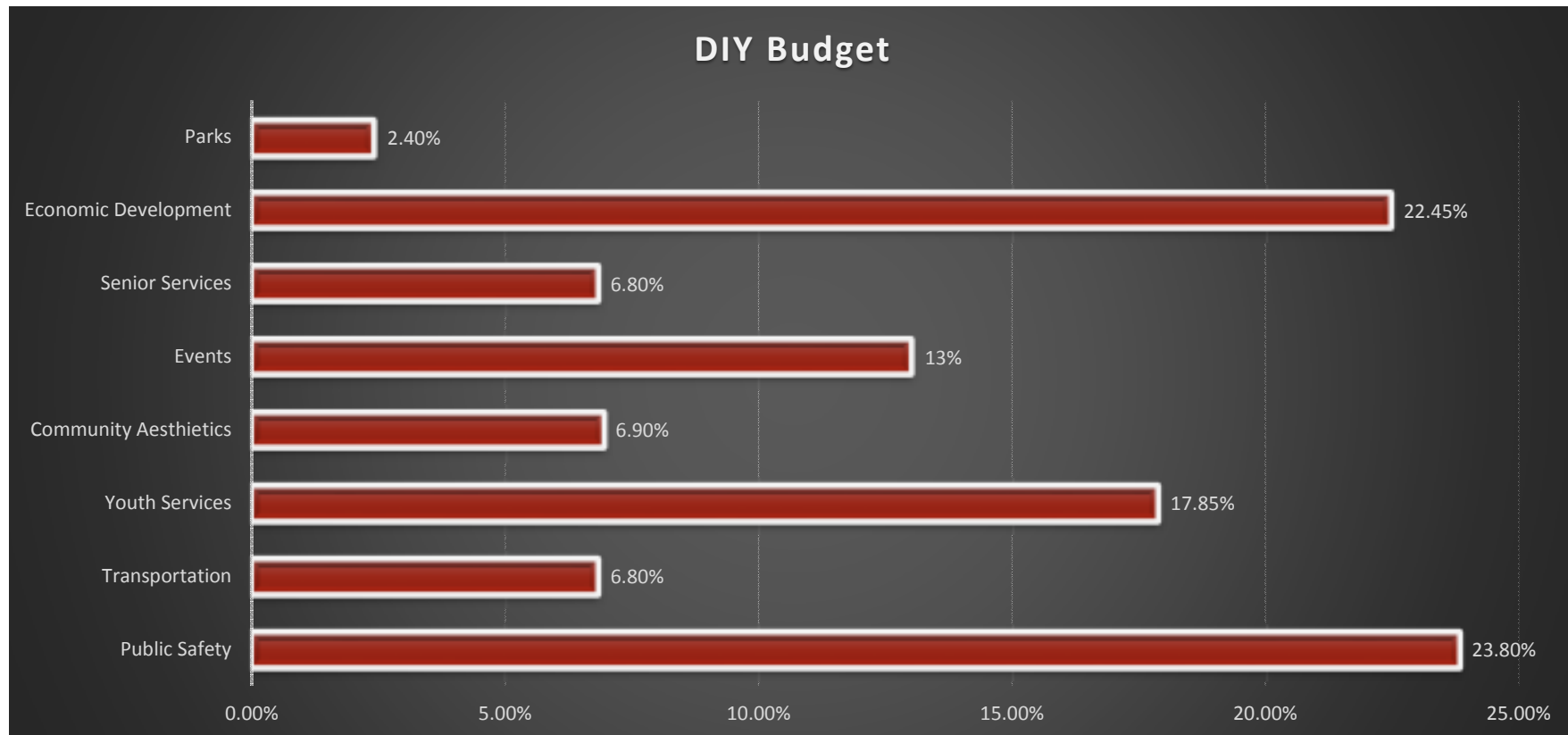


## DIY (Do it Yourself) City Budgeting

Residents prioritized where they would like to see investment made in Lovejoy in the future. Each resident was given a pack of “decision money” to spend on 8 different priorities, ranging from public safety to senior services to community aesthetics. Each money packet included one bill each in six different denominations: \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. All priorities are listed on the graphic below.

Four planning areas emerged as attendees’ favorites: public safety, economic development, youth services and events.

This exercise was a fun way for residents to make choices about where they would money while also ranking their priorities for the future.



## Community Now and Later

Many residents in Lovejoy are used to driving to get where they need to go. However, the image below shows information shared by residents on their current Lovejoy commute to their daily destinations within thirty to sixty minutes. Overall, Lovejoy residents travel the furthest for shopping, work, entertainment, and restaurants. There is always room for improvement. When residents were asked to complete the same exercise but instead mark their stickers for how long they would like their drive times to be for these locations in the future, almost all participants placed all their stickers within the 5 minute ring. The largest changes occurred in the segments of the circle for shopping, restaurants, entertainment, and work. All of the outreach methods described above provided hundreds of observations and ideas for considerations.



## Photos From The Open House Meeting





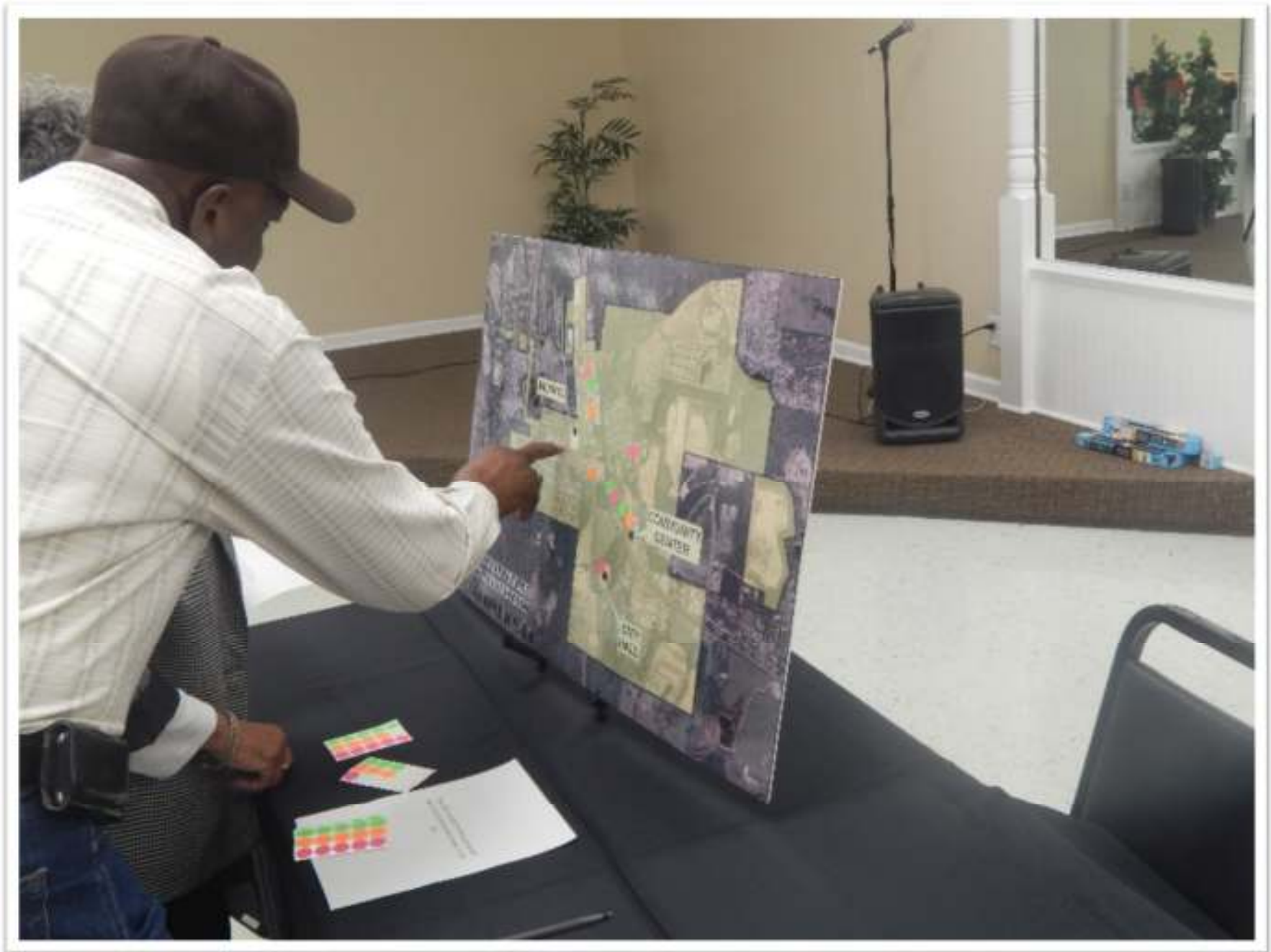










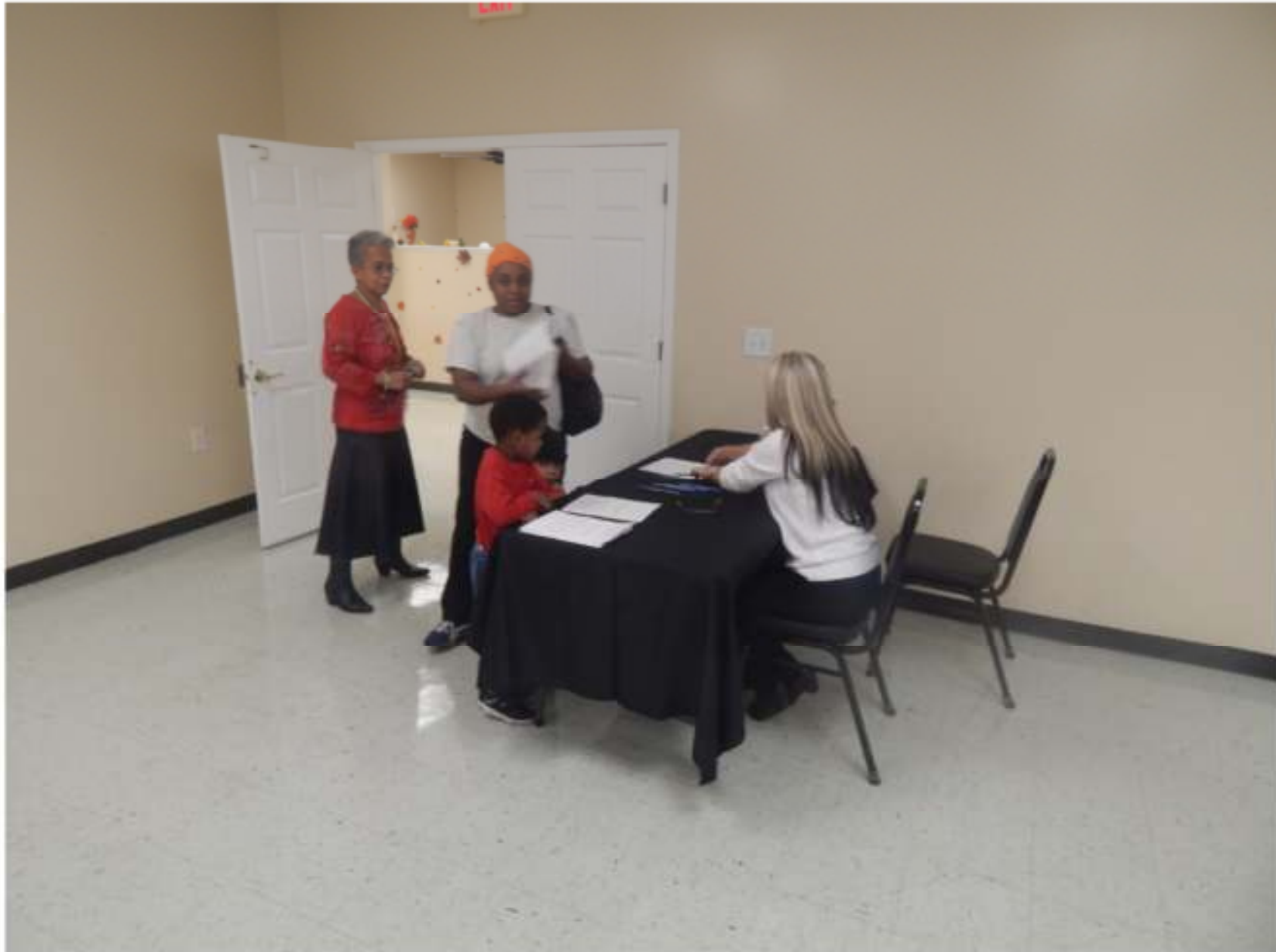














## Stakeholder Committee Meeting





# Community Goals

## Community Goals

The Community Work Program lists all proposed projects, along with timelines, the parties responsible for implementation, and cost estimates. The matrix is intended to serve as a blueprint for achieving the community's vision for the future. The Community Work Program is updated every five years. As the City of Lovejoy moves forward in implementing this Comprehensive Plan, the Goals should continue to be monitored to ensure that they are still relevant to the community.



## **The Community Goals identified in this Comprehensive Plan are as follows:**

### **Economic Prosperity:**

The City of Lovejoy will encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

### **Efficient Land Use:**

The City of Lovejoy will maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

## **Sense of Place:**

The City of Lovejoy will protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

## **Regional Cooperation:**

The City of Lovejoy will cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

## **Housing Options:**

The City of Lovejoy will promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; instituting programs to provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

## **Transportation Options:**

The City of Lovejoy will address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.



# Future Land Use and Development

The Future Land Use Map is a tool to implement the City of Lovejoy's vision and to address the challenges and improve the assets of the city. Please refer to the future land use map for the City of Lovejoy, which is included in this document as well as a separate document due to the size and scale of the map to identify specific areas within the city. Twelve future land uses categories have been classified and mapped. Guidelines and recommendations for each of these categories are described as follows:

## **Residential.**

Residential land uses are defined by housing type which also bears a relationship to density.

**Single Family Residential** represent the lowest density and are established on building lots ranging from one-fifth of an acre to more than one acre.

**Multi-family Residential** represents a variety of housing types, like apartments, townhomes, and condos.

**Manufactured Home developments** are single story and reach a density between the detached and attached dwelling types, with individual units generally established on 2,400 to 3,200-square foot lots. Dwellings dominate land use in the residential category although customary uses in these districts include places of worship, schools and parks. The Future Land Use Map differentiates between single family detached, townhouse, manufactured and multifamily units.

## **Mixed Use**

The mixed use land category is an appropriate location for Planned Unit Developments (PUD), which could have a mixture of uses including single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial and openspace.

## **Commercial.**

Commercial uses consist of non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities. Hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, offices, banks, automotive repair shops and dry cleaners are examples of commercial land uses. In Lovejoy, the commercial uses are located in single story structures. Development intensity depends on the size of individual structures, although surface parking needs tend to limit the building coverage of commercial sites.

## **Light Industrial.**

The light industrial category consists of land dedicated to warehousing and wholesale trade facilities and “clean” manufacturing facilities. The category is differentiated from Heavy Industrial not by lot coverage and size of structures, rather by the limited impacts of activities conducted on the site compared to heavy industrial uses.

**Heavy Industrial.**

This category includes processing plants, factories, mining or mineral extraction activities, landfills and similar uses. Potential impacts of these uses normally excludes their establishment near residential uses in particular, but a range of other uses as well.

**Public/Institutional.**

The public/institutional land use category includes state, federal and local government uses and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools and military installations. Institutional land uses also include colleges, churches, cemeteries and hospitals.

**Transportation/Communication/Utilities.**

This “TCU” category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, electrical power plants and substations, railroad facilities, radio towers, water and sewer plants and facilities, airports, port facilities and similar uses.

**Park/Recreation/Conservation.**

Park/Recreation/Conservation land uses include “active” recreation, that is, ball fields, courts and swimming, among others, and “passive” recreation, including trails, picnic areas and natural habitats. PRC lands may be either publicly or privately owned and also include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses and recreation centers.

**Agriculture.**

Agricultural land is dedicated to farming, for example, crop fields, feed lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms and livestock production or similar rural uses.

**Undeveloped.**

This category represents uses on land that has never been developed and land that has been developed, but has since been abandoned. The category also includes vacant portions of residential subdivisions or industrial parks and water bodies.





# Citywide Polices

## Development Patterns

- Encourage conservation subdivision development whenever feasible.
- Our decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
- Our community will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
- Our gateways and corridors will create a "sense of place" for our community.
- Encourage various housing types.
- Encourage the development of downtown as the vibrant center of Lovejoy in order to improve the overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
- Promote and support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment that complement downtown.
- Enhance and expand our public parks and community facilities.
- Support new land uses that enhance our housing options.
- Mandate pedestrian connectivity for all new developments.
- Encourage new development that supports the commuter rail system.
- Seek out and promote unique opportunities for developments that aren't typical to the region.
- Incorporate traffic calming designs throughout Lovejoy.

## **Resource Conservation**

- Ensure that protection and preservation of our natural resources play a vital role in the decision making process for future development
- Utilize the GIS system and data collections to direct new growth in a way that preserves open space and protects our natural resources
- Promote low impact development to preserve the natural topography and existing conditions of the land
- Protect all ground and surface water sources
- Expand and promote recycling initiatives

## **Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

- Protect and preserve existing infrastructure investments through routine inspections and maintenance
- Ensure that capital improvements needed for future development are provided for concurrently
- Ensure that new development does not cause a decline to existing levels of service
- We will ensure that capital improvements needed to accommodate future development are provided concurrent with new development.
- We will invest in parks and open space to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

## **Social and Economic Development**

- Seek to balance the housing supply and employment opportunities.
- Provide for a more diverse housing supply, in terms of cost and density.
- Support in-fill housing developments within the downtown district.
- Seek opportunities for more higher-income housing.
- We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
- We will accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in each neighborhood.
- We will encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (home-ownership).

## **Governmental Relations**

- Provide and support opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Collaborate planning issues on a regional level with neighboring jurisdictions and/or various local entities.
- We will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decision that are likely to have an impact on our community or our plans for future development.



# Community Work Program

Project or Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Actively participate in with Regional Economic Development Organizations	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$0	
Seek grant sources to fund staff, coordinate, develop and implement an Economic Development Plan	X	X	X	X	X	City	Included in salary of staff	Grants/General
Continue support for the Commuter Rail System and develop a Focus Group to perform studies as they arise	X	X	X	X	X	City	Varied according to project need	General Fund
Completely revise Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan	X					City	\$45,000	General Fund
Review and revise accordingly all development regulations to support the state's adopted planning practices for quality growth								
Land Development Regulations			X	X		City	\$20,000	General Fund
Zoning Ordinance		X	X				\$25,000	
Landscape/Tree Ordinance		X					\$12,000	
Downtown District Overlay Phase II		X					\$15,000	
Subdivision Regulations		X	X				\$12,000	
Promote educational /job training efforts from regional sources	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$0	

<b>Project or Activity</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Seek opportunities to promote Lovejoy's economic efforts through various state agencies and interstate clearinghouses	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$0	
Solicit and encourage community participation in upcoming work to the Comprehensive Plan	X					City	\$0	
Revise Capital Improvements Plan		X	X			City	\$15,000	General Fund
Seek grant funds for installation of Severe Weather Alert System		X	X			City	\$0	
Expand or construct new post office				X	X	Private	\$400,000	Private
Plan, design and construct an amphitheater			X	X		City	\$200,000	General Fund
Summit traffic signal application to GDOT for Talmadge Road at Tara Boulevard	X	X	X			City	\$7,500	General Fund/SPLOST
Design and complete right-of-way acquisitions to Talmadge Road from Tara Boulevard to Hastings Bridge Road		X	X			City	\$90,000	General Fund/SPLOST
Complete construction and improvements to Talmadge Road to Hastings Bridge Road				X	X	City	\$250,000	General Fund/SPLOST
Develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan				X	X	City	\$17,500	General Fund/SPLOST
Cooperate with Georgia Regional Transportation Authority in ensuring that the Commuter Rail Station is established in Lovejoy	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$0	
Develop a package of incentives to leverage employment for Lovejoy residents	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$10,000	General Fund

<b>Project or Activity</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Sidewalks Lovejoy Road from Highway 41-19 to Talmadge Road	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$50,000	SPLOST
Sidewalks Lovejoy Road from Talmadge Road to Henry County Line	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$50,000	SPLOST
Paving city streets - all streets within the five year period	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$2,500,000	SPLOST
Park expansion for Mayors Park	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$500,000	SPLOST/General Fund/CDBG
East Lovejoy Road from Wallis Drive to Hastings Bridge Road	X	X				City	\$200,000	LMIG/SPLOST/General Fund
Sidewalks Hastings Bridge Road from Calloway Crossing to Jonesboro Road	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$35,000	SPLOST

<b>Report of Accomplishments</b>					
<b>Project or Activity from Previous STWP</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently Underway</b>	<b>Postponed</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>	<b>*Explanation for Postponed or Not Accomplished Project or Activity</b>
Sign Ordinance	X				Completed 2013
Downtown District Overlay Phase I	X				Completed 2012
Coordinate with local schools educational opportunities for students through community involvement in census data collection and or work on the upcoming Comprehensive Plan.	X				Completed 2010
Complete construction and occupy Public Safety Building	X				Completed 2009
Complete Traffic light installation at Hastings Bridge and East Lovejoy Road	X				Completed 2011

# Appendix



The Atlanta Regional Commission and The Georgia Department of Community Affairs require specific elements within a Comprehensive Plan. For ease of review these are called out in the Appendix.

## **Housing Element**

As a Municipality within a “HUD Entitlement Community”, The City of Lovejoy is required to have a housing element. The Clayton County Consolidated Plan fulfills this requirement, and the Community Work Program has housing elements to address future needs.

## **Transportation Element**

The City of Lovejoy is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization of metro Atlanta. The PLAN 2040 Regional Transportation Plan meets this requirement.

## **Regional Important Resource Map**

The City of Lovejoy is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization of metro Atlanta. The ARC Regional Important Resource Map satisfies this requirement.