



# LANIER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2026

**Adoption Date: June 8, 2026**



**Prepared by: Lanier County, Lakeland and Southern Georgia Regional Commission**

Adopted: June 8, 2026

Prepared by:

Lanier County and the City of Lakeland

*Photos courtesy of SGRC staff*

**sgrc**  
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REGIONAL COMMISSION

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A special acknowledgment for members of the Stakeholders/Steering Committee and SGRC Staff that dedicated their time and hard work to this project:

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# LANIER COUNTY AND THE CITY OF LAKELAND

## **HISTORY:**

Lanier County is the state's 157<sup>th</sup> county. It was named for the Georgia poet Sidney Lanier and was created in 1920. The land was taken from Berrien, Clinch and Lowndes counties. The majority of Lanier County is located on the Alapaha River, a sub-basin of the Suwannee River basin. Lanier County is famous for its excellent fishing in the Alapaha River, Banks, Lank and many other small lakes. Lanier County is part of the Valdosta, GA Metropolitan Statistical Area and shares Moody Air Force Base with Lowndes County on its western boundary.

In the early 1840s, a community known as Alapaha had come into existence along the road between Waresboro and Troupville, Georgia. By the late 1850s, Alapaha had become known as Milltown. Milltown was the designated seat of the newly formed Lanier County.

In 1928, the city was incorporated and renamed to its present form of Lakeland. Lakeland was given its name because of the many lakes that are located there. Banks Lake is a National Wildlife Refuge known for its shallow black water, studded with moss draped cypress trees, rimmed by marshes and uplands. Lakes received its current name to honor its proximity to Grand Bay Lake, Lake Irma, and Banks Lake. The city is the county seat of Lanier County.

It is also known as "The City of Murals." There are many murals painted on the building's exterior walls, depicting life in the early days of the 1920s.

They are also known for the Flatlanders Fall Frolic, aka the Flatlanders Arts and Crafts Show. The Flatlanders Fall Festival was started in 1971 as a one-day event organized by the Lanier County Lions



Club. Over the year, it has grown to a multi-day celebration, drawing crowds from across South Georgia. The festival continues to celebrate local craftsmanship and small-town charm, offering a curated lineup of regional artisans and handmade goods. ♦

# Introduction

The 2026 Lanier County Comprehensive Plan was prepared by following the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Rules 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective October 1, 2018.

As required by the Local Comprehensive Planning Standards, the 2026 Lanier County and the City of Lakeland Comprehensive Plan consists of the following elements:

1. Community Goals
2. Needs and Opportunities
3. Community Work Program
4. Broadband Services
5. Economic Development Element

*(As a community included in the Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 1 category) Although a separate summarized economic development element is included in this Comprehensive Plan, which by reference adopts the current regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), any economic development goals, policies, needs, opportunities, and objectives of Lanier County, and the City of Lakeland have also been integrated directly into their parallel components in this Comprehensive Plan.)*

6. Land Use Element

*(As a community with zoning or land development regulations subject to the Zoning Procedures Law)*

7. Transportation

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

All of the required elements have been developed with extensive opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders throughout the county and city. The following steps were taken to ensure that this plan reflects the full range of needs and opportunities from the many stakeholders and residents in the county:

# PARTICIPATION METHODS

- ✚ Stakeholders were identified. These included local city and county officials/employees, businesses and industries, and the general public.
- ✚ Participation techniques were identified. Notices were placed in the local newspaper, and information on the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's website and local government websites. A steering committee was formed to oversee and participate in plan development, including representatives from the stakeholders mentioned above.
- ✚ A participation program was conducted. Identified stakeholders were invited and attended, yielding specific input in plan content. The steering committee held regular meetings to provide information and feedback.
- ✚ Community Involvement Activities were documented. These include the list of stakeholders, overview of participation, photos, sign-in sheets, agendas, published advertisements, emails, etc.
- ✚ Vision Survey was completed online for those who could not attend meetings.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

### 1st Public Hearing – “Kick-Off”

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on **October 13, 2025**, at the Lanier County Extension Office, located at 162 W Thigpen Ave, Lakeland, Georgia, 31635. It was held to make any potential stakeholders and residents aware that the comprehensive plan update and review were now underway, explain the purpose of the update, and encourage residents and other stakeholders to actively participate in the plan update.

### 2nd Public Hearing – “Transmittal Meeting”

The public hearing and vote to transmit the comprehensive plan to the Department of Community Affairs process was held on **April 13, 2026**, at the Lanier County Extension Office, located at 162 W Thigpen Ave, Lakeland, Georgia, 31635. It was held to make any potential stakeholders and residents aware that the comprehensive plan update and review were now complete, explain the changes during the update, and encourage residents and other stakeholders to let the planner be aware of any final changes that were needed.

### Adoption of Comprehensive Plan

The 2026 Comprehensive Plan was adopted by resolution by the City of Lakeland on June 10, 2026 and Lanier County Board of Commissioners on June 8, 2026.

### *Identification of Stakeholders and Steering Committees*

A comprehensive list of potential stakeholders was put together with input from the Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, elected officials, and residents. A complete list of all the stakeholders is included in this plan.

### *Identification of Participation Techniques*

The following participation techniques were utilized during the update process:

- Two Public Hearings:
  - ✓ Kick-off
  - ✓ Transmittal
- Three Workshops:
  - ✓ Goals, needs, and opportunities
  - ✓ Report of Accomplishments & Community Work Program
  - ✓ Land Use
- Extensive e-mail correspondence with stakeholders (notices of meetings, e-mail requests for comments, distribution of revised drafts and final documents)
- Special Webpage on SGRC website.
- Dissemination of Information in the newspaper (public notices, advertisements)

### **WORKSHOP MEETINGS**

A foundational principle utilized by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in all of its planning projects is public and stakeholder participation from, and coordination with, multiple and diverse interest groups. Due to the relatively small population of Lanier County, and the City of Lakeland, the entire stakeholder group was utilized as the steering committee, ensuring the broadest buy-in and diversity of input into the comprehensive plan update. Outreach to the public, local governments, and other stakeholders and interested parties was accomplished by e-mail correspondence, direct communication, the project website, and updates at workshops, Council Meetings of the SGRC, and other group meetings. Opportunity for public comment was provided at public hearings and city and county commission meetings.

In addition to the two required public hearings, SGRC held a series of three workshops to discuss several elements of the plan.

1. The first workshop was used to review the existing goals, needs, and opportunities; in the form of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. Participants updated the list of goals, needs, and opportunities to meet current needs. This meeting was held on **November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025**, at 162 W. Thigpen Ave, Lakeland, Georgia.
2. The Policies and Report of Accomplishments were developed during the second workshop, held on **December 2, 2025**, at the Lanier County Annex, 162 W. Thigpen Ave, Lakeland, Georgia. We worked individually with the communities to create the draft of the updated Community Work Program. The participants developed the Community Work Program to include specific action items and projects that would be feasible for the County and the City to implement should funding become available.

3. The third workshop was utilized to update the Land Use Element and Maps as desired by the local governments. This meeting was held at the Lanier County Annex, 162 W. Thigpen Ave. Lakeland GA on **January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026**.



*Copies of the sign-in sheets are provided in the appendix, along with public hearing notices.*

# REGIONAL WATER PLANNING

## Environmental Criteria for Consideration

During the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the local governments must review both the Regional Water Plan covering its area and the GDNR Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, as laid out in Chapter 391-3-16, to determine whether any local implementation practices or development regulations need to be adapted to be consistent with both.

## SUWANNEE-SATILLA REGIONAL WATER PLAN

The Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan was initially completed in 2011 and subsequently updated in 2017 and 2023. The plan outlines near-term and long-term strategies to meet water needs through 2060. Lanier County is within the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan. The Suwannee-Satilla Council is one of 11 planning regions charged with developing Regional Water Plans and encompasses 18 counties in the southeastern portion of Georgia (shown in below). An overview of the updated findings and recommendations for the Suwannee- Satilla Region are provided in this Executive Summary. The Suwannee- Satilla Council’s Regional Water Plan is

available on the Council’s website.



The Suwannee-Satilla Council has identified 13 goals for the region. It is important to note that the goals are summarized below, not presented in order of priority, but instead were assigned a number to identify specific goals addressed as part of the water management practice selection process.

*“The Vision of the Suwannee- Satilla Regional Council is to manage water resources in a sustainable manner under Georgia’s regulated riparian and regulated reasonable use laws to support the state’s and region’s economy, to*

*protect public health and natural resources, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens; while preserving the private property rights of Georgia's landowners, and in consideration of the need to enhance resource augmentation and efficiency opportunities."*

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### **Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Goals:**

1. *Manage and develop water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial water needs, and agricultural water needs, including all agricultural sectors (this includes the agroforestry economy of the region).*
2. *Manage groundwater and surface water to encourage sustainable economic and population growth in the region.*
3. *Manage the region's and state's water resources in a manner that preserves and protects private property rights.*
4. *Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future human needs, while protecting environmental resources.*
5. *Identify opportunities to optimize existing and future supplies, and water and wastewater infrastructure.*
6. *Promote efficient use and management of surface and groundwater resources to allow for sufficient supplies for current and future generations.*
7. *Protect and manage surface and groundwater recharge areas to ensure sufficient long-term water supplies for the region.*
8. *Protect, maintain, and where appropriate and practicable, identify opportunities to enhance water quality, and river base flows.*
9. *Protect and maintain regional water-dependent recreational opportunities.*
10. *Identify opportunities to manage stormwater to improve water quantity and quality.*
11. *Identify and implement cost-effective water management strategies.*
12. *Seek to provide economically affordable power and water resource service to all citizens of the region.*
13. *Identify and implement actions to better measure and share water use data and information.*

### **Addressing Water Needs and Regional Goals**

This Section presents the Suwannee-Satilla Council's water management practices selected to address resource shortfalls or challenges identified and described in Section 5, and/or meet the Council's Vision and Goals described in Section 1.

### **Identifying Water Management Practices**

The comparison of Resource Assessments and forecasted needs presented in Section 5 identifies the Region's likely resource shortfalls or challenges and demonstrates the need for region and resource specific water management practices. In the cases where shortfalls or challenges appear to be unlikely based on the comparison of the Region's Resource Assessments and forecasted needs, the management practices described in this section have been selected to also meet those needs specified by the

Council (e.g., facility/infrastructure needs and practices, programmatic practices, etc.) that are aligned with the Region's Vision and Goals. In selecting the actions needed (i.e., water management practices), the Council considered practices identified in existing plans, the Region's

Vision and Goals, and coordinated with local governments and water providers as well as neighboring Councils who share these water resources.

***Review of Existing Plans and Practices***

The Council conducted a comprehensive review of existing local and regional water management plans and relevant related documents to frame the selection of management practices. The types of plans/studies that were reviewed to support identification and selection of management practices for the Suwannee-Satilla Region consisted of the following:

- Comprehensive Work Plans (local and regional scale)
- Regional infrastructure and permitting plans
- EPD databases (permitted withdrawals, planned projects, and proposed reservoirs)
- State-wide guidance documents (conservation, cost, and water planning)
- Best Management Practices (forestry, agriculture, and stormwater management)
- Water quality studies including Watershed Protection Plans (basin, watershed, and local scale)
- TMDL evaluations

When possible, successful management practices already planned for and/or in use in the Suwannee-Satilla Region formed the basis for the water management practices selected by the Council.

[Chapter 391-3-16, Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria](#)

The Environmental Planning Criteria that are part of the Minimum Planning Standards deal specifically with protecting water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors, and mountains, the last of which is not applicable in this region. These criteria were developed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as mandated in Part V of the Georgia Planning Act and the Mountains and River Corridor Protection Act.

The criteria require local governments to identify existing and future water supply watersheds and adopt a watershed protection plan for their jurisdiction. Some uses may be grandfathered, such as land uses existing before adopting a watershed plan, mining activities permitted by DNR, specific utility placements, special forestry, or agricultural services.

The environmental guidelines also spell out criteria for the delineation of small and large water supply watersheds, the protection of groundwater recharge areas, the protection of wetlands and river corridors. These criteria shall be incorporated into this comprehensive plan and addressed explicitly and in more detail through local ordinances and land development code regulations.

**SGRC ENVIRONMENTAL SUGGESTIONS FOR LANIER COUNTY**

The SGRC Environmental Department has listed areas needing more water quality data in Lanier County.

Ten-Mile Creek at State Road 64 near Lakeland, GA
Grand Bay Creek at Hwy 221 near Naylor, GA
Five-Mile Creek at State Road 64 near Lakeland, Ga
Dixon Mill Creek @ nr Purvis Rd nr Naylor, GA
Moore Branch nr Felt Lane nr Lakeland, GA
Reedy Creek nr US 129 SR11 nr Naylor, GA
Mill Creek at State Road 135 near Lakeland, GA
Big Creek at State Road 135 near Lakeland, GA
Big Creek at State Road 11 near Lakeland, GA

*(Complete report is attached as Appendix #1)*

# Plan Elements

## Vision and Community Goals

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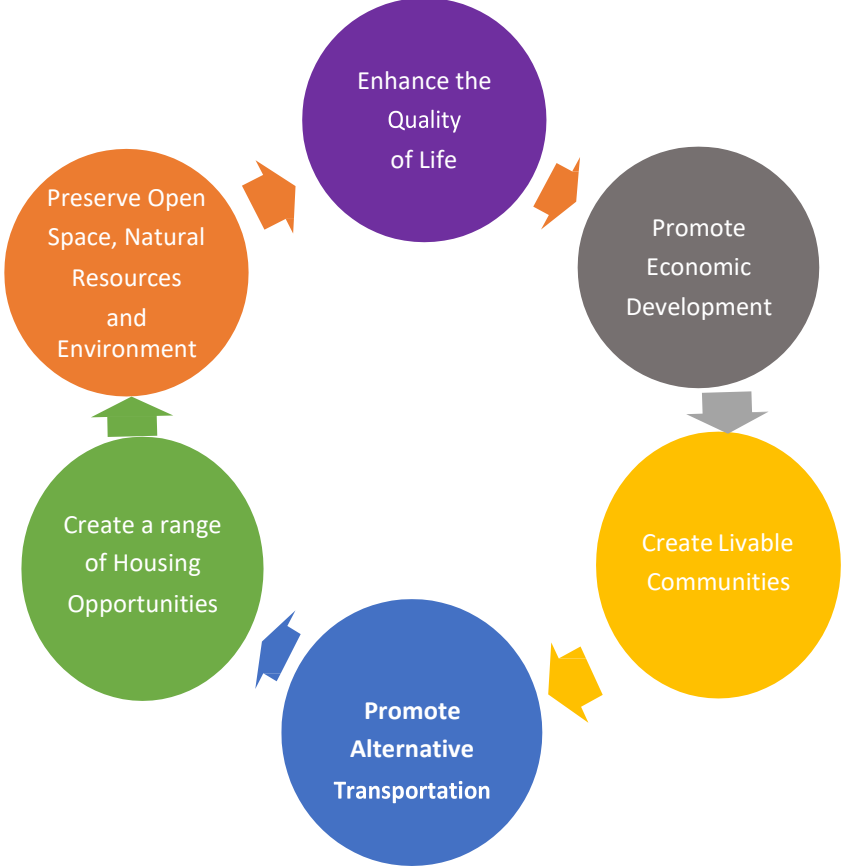
To improve the total lifestyle of our citizens with smart and controlled growth that takes advantage of our County's rich history.

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# Community Goals

Planning for future land use and development is an ongoing process for community goal setting and problem solving aiming at creating a better quality of life for all citizens in Lanier County and Lakeland. Planning focuses on ways of solving existing problems with the communities and providing an action-oriented tool for local leaders and residents to achieve their vision for the future. Communities are encouraged to amend and update the goals as necessary.



### Goal 1: Cultural Resources

Encourage the protection and conservation of the rich historical heritage and cultural resources in Lanier County and the City of Lakeland through such measures as regulations, adaptive reuse, and tourism and education programs focused on historic preservation.

### Goal 2: Natural Resources

Establish and maintain the conservation and protection measures for natural areas, where those areas would be endangered by development. These areas include, but are not limited to, floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, protected river corridors, forested hardwood areas, and areas where Georgia and Federally Endangered species and habitat exist.

### Goal 3: Economic Development

Create and maintain a long-term sustainable and diverse economic base that will attract new businesses, expand existing businesses, diversify the local economy, help Lanier County and the City of Lakeland, and compete in the regional economy.

### Goal 4: Housing

Ensure that residents within the County have access to quality and affordable housing. Provide for opportunities of homeownership and housing resources for all residents through public/private partnerships.

### Goal 5: Land Use

Establish and maintain conservation and protection of natural areas, where those areas would be endangered by development. Ensure the highest quality living environment possible through a mixture of compatible land uses and character areas reflecting the residents' needs, desires, and vision for Lanier County.

### Goal 6: Community Facilities & Services

Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing development and to encourage future sustainable growth in areas where community facilities and services are provided at adequate capacities.

### Goal 7: Intergovernmental Coordination

Enhance and maintain communication between each jurisdiction and surrounding counties to efficiently and effectively serve the county's residents.

### Goal 8: Broadband

Encourage coordination of planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, neighboring communities, and state and regional planning agencies.

### Goal 9: Transportation

Promote transportation facilities that protect our community resources and encourage efficient infrastructure use while supporting quality economic development.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## Goals, Needs, and Opportunities

The initial Needs and Opportunities were developed and identified in the 2026 Update for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. For this comprehensive plan update, the Needs and Opportunities were reviewed in the first of three workshops. Each of the previously identified Needs and Opportunities was reviewed and discussed by the participants and then either deleted, amended, or retained as deemed applicable to Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. This was done utilizing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis with stakeholders and residents, analysis of statistical data and information, and review and revision as applicable to the Needs and Opportunities. The needs and opportunities are addressed in corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program for Lanier County and Lakeland.

### *Strengths*

- **Positive Support for Local Attractions**
- **Strong sense of Community Identity: Banks Lake, murals, natural resources, and community pride for what the county is known for**
- **High access to essential emergency services like fire, EMS, polices**
- **Positive feedback on overall safety and government accessibility**
- **Growing interest in agritourism and support rural character with agricultural development**

### *Weaknesses*

- **Fire Safety concerns were the highest issue needing attention**
- **Poor road conditions identified as a problem**
- **Low interest in switching to public water/sewer and mixed satisfaction with water system**
- **Downtown parking limitations**
- **Limited local services causing citizens to go out of town for essentials like healthcare, groceries and retail**

### *Opportunities*

- **Strong demand for new commercial development downtown, ie restaurants and retail**
- **High desire for parks, recreation, and walking trails**
- **Growing support for multi-modal transportation**
- **Historic preservation interest**
- **Demand for small business growth**

### *Threats*

- **Aging or outdated water infrastructure**
- **Limited public transportation options**
- **Mixed perceptions of government relationships**
- **Dependence on other county for essential services**

# Needs and Opportunities by Goals

## Cultural Resources

**Goal 1: Strengthen and celebrate Lanier County’s cultural identity through downtown revitalization, community engagement, and preservation of historical assets.**

**Needs:**

❖ *Strengthen Community Participation and Access to Cultural Information*

**Policy 1.1: Offer public meetings, workshops, and cultural events at varied times and locations to increase resident participation.**

**Policy 1.2: Expand communication channels—including a centralized community calendar, social media alerts, and posted kiosks—to ensure residents can easily access information on cultural events and services.**

**Policy 1.3: Partner with schools, churches, civic groups, and nonprofits to promote volunteerism, cultural programming and wider engagement among youth and adults**

❖ *Enhance and Maintain Family-Friendly Cultural and Recreation Spaces*

**Policy 1.4: Invest in the development and improvement of parks, gathering spaces, and recreational facilities that support family-oriented cultural activities.**

**Policy 1.5: Ensure routine maintenance, cleanliness, and safety of parks, restrooms, community venues, and public spaces used for cultural programming.**

**Policy 1.6: Pursue grants and partnerships to fund upgrades to recreation and cultural facilities, including playgrounds, trails, and event spaces. Funding for public facility improvements that support cultural activities, including parks, events spaces, signage, and downtown streetscape enhancements.**

❖ *Preserve Historic Character and Integrate Preservation into Development*

**Policy 1.7 Encourage the identification, documentation, and conservation of historic properties through surveys, educational signage, tours, and partnerships with the historical society.**

**Policy 1.8 Support downtown and corridor development that respects historic character by adopting design guidelines and promoting compatible architectural styles.**

**Policy 1.9 Promote adaptive reuse of historic or older buildings as shops, restaurants, residences, or cultural venues to preserve their character while keeping them economically productive. Seek funding and partnerships to support arts, murals, heritage tourism, and community events that enhance local identity and visitation.**

❖ *Revitalize Downtown by Addressing Blight, Vacancies, and Under-utilized Buildings.*

**Policy 1.10 Encourage the redevelopment and activation of vacant, blighted, or under-utilized downtown buildings through incentives, code enforcement, and partnerships with property owners.**

**Policy 1.11 Support the creation of vibrant nighttime activity downtown through restaurants, entertainment venues, cultural events, outdoor markets, and live performances.**

**Policy 1.12 Prioritize beautification, storefront improvements, lighting, signage, and walkability enhancements to strengthen the appeal and functionality of the historic downtown core.**

### Opportunities:

- ❖ *Revitalize and re-activate Downtown as a cultural hub*
- ❖ *Expand Cultural Programming (Arts, History, Events, Youth Activities)*
- ❖ *Walking tours and historic interpretation*
- ❖ *Community Art Programs*
- ❖ *Year-round family friendly events*
- ❖ *Youth mentorships, clubs, and after school programs*
- ❖ *Uses of local venues for concerts, performances, or cultural workshops*
- ❖ *Improve and activate Historic buildings*
- ❖ *Develop a local “history brand” for Lakeland*
- ❖ *The majority of the historical inventory is located downtown, making it feasible to create a walkable historic district tour.*
- ❖ *Improve Inclusivity and access to community information for event notices, cultural programs, meeting schedules, and opportunities for engagement*
- ❖ *Promote Downtown Beautification and “Curb Appeal” as Cultural Identity.*
- ❖ *Lakeland Inn may qualify for historic designation.*
- ❖ *Jones Hotel, located at Oak and Main, has historic qualities.*
- ❖ *The old schoolhouse in Stockton is a historic structure.*
- ❖ *Lanier County has an active historical society.*
- ❖ *Tours of the downtown historic area using the guided trolley services will create tax dollars for local businesses.*



## Natural Resources

**Goal 2: Protect, enhance and sustain Lanier County’s Natural Resources to support recreation, water quality, tourism, and long-term community health. Establish and maintain the conservation and protection measures for natural areas where those areas would be endangered by development. These areas include but are not limited to floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, protected river corridors, forested hardwood areas, and areas where Georgia and Federally Endangered species and habitat exist.**

### Needs:

❖ *Improve water quality and modernize utility infrastructure*

**Policy 2.1: Prioritize upgrades to water treatment, distribution systems, and sewer infrastructure to ensure safe, clean, and reliable drinking water.**

**Policy 2.2: Promote water quality monitoring and public reporting to increase transparency and address community concerns**

**Policy 2.3: Seek state and federal funding (GEFA, USDA, CDBG) for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements**

❖ *Expand outdoor recreation and public access to natural areas*

**Policy 2.4: Develop and enhance access points to Banks Lake, the Alapaha River, and other natural areas for fishing, kayaking, hiking, and wildlife viewing.**

**Policy 2.5: Expand recreational amenities such as trails, docks, boardwalks, and outdoor activity areas to support year-round community use.**

**Policy 2.6: Encourage Partnerships with local organizations (Scouts, WWALS, civic groups) to support environmental stewardship, clean-ups, and trail development.**

❖ *Promote sustainable land management and reduce negative environmental impacts*

**Policy 2.7: Encourage environmentally responsible land clearing and site development practices to minimize erosion, protect waterways, and preserve natural features.**

**Policy 2.8: Promote maintenance of overgrown properties and implement vegetation management policies that support environmental quality and “curb appeal.”**

**Policy 2.9: Incorporate conservation and low-impact development strategies into zoning and land-use decisions to preserve long-term natural resource health.**

❖ *Support Agriculture and expand agribusiness opportunities*

**Policy 2.10: Promote and protect agricultural lands by supporting local farmers through incentives, education and agribusiness development programs.**

**Policy 2.11: Encourage agritourism opportunities such as farm tours, farmers markets, and agricultural events to strengthen the rural economy.**

**Policy 2.12: Support partnerships with state agencies (DNR, etc) and universities that offer technical assistance, grants, and training for agricultural producers. Secure funding, like LCWF to support agricultural retention, agribusiness development, and rural economic resiliency.**

- ❖ *Expand Access to Natural Gas, Renewable Energy, and Affordable Utility Options*

**Policy 2.13** Work with utility providers to expand natural gas service in underserved areas for residential, commercial, and industrial users.

**Policy 2.14** Encourage the adoption of renewable energy technologies such as solar and energy-efficient upgrades for homes and businesses.

**Policy 2.15** Promote affordability and competition among utility providers to reduce cost burden on residents.

- ❖ *Improve Park Maintenance, Cleanliness, and Outdoor Facility Quality*

**Policy 2.16** Implement routine inspection and maintenance schedules for parks, natural resource facilities, and public outdoor spaces.

**Policy 2.17** Support beautification efforts including trash removal, invasive plant management, and shoreline cleanups to protect natural landscapes.

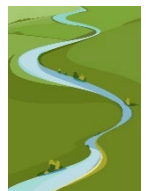
**Policy 2.18** Ensure that park equipment, signage, and recreation facilities are safe, and accessible for all

- ❖ *Clean-up of Lake Irma and Simpson Mountain Bike Trail will allow more people to enjoy the walking trail.*

**Policy 2.19** Consider clean-up of the Lake Irma and the Simpson Mountain Bike Trail a priority so that this area can be used to its potential.

### **Opportunities:**

- ❖ *Improve water quality and modernize utility infrastructure*
- ❖ *There are several public lakes and other water bodies throughout the county that are tourist attractions*
- ❖ *Enhance Banks Lake as a Major Recreation and Tourism Asset to attract tourists.*
- ❖ *Expand Trails, Blue ways, and Outdoor Recreation Networks*
- ❖ *Apply for federal & state grants for water, natural gas, and environmental improvements*
- ❖ *Capitalize on Agritourism & Rural Heritage like farm tours and farmers markets*
- ❖ *Improve natural resources education and stewardship*
- ❖ *Strengthen infrastructure supporting natural resources; replacing galvanized pipes with PVC in older areas*
- ❖ *Promote outdoor tourism & events like fishing tournaments, nature-based event, hiking challenges, and outdoor concerts or gathering in natural settings*



## Economic Development

**Goal 3: Create and maintain a long-term sustainable and diverse economic base that will attract new businesses, expand existing businesses, diversify the local economy, help Lanier County and the City of Lakeland, and compete in the regional economy.**

**Needs:**

❖ *Increase availability of skilled jobs and employment opportunities*

**Policy 3.1:** Promote the recruitment of employers that provide skilled, well-paying jobs aligned with the community's workforce availability.

**Policy 3.2:** Support partnerships with schools, technical colleges, and employers to expand workforce training, apprenticeships, and career pathways.

**Policy 3.3:** Pursue funding through programs such as the One Georgia Authority, EDGE Fund, Rural Site Development Initiative and other DCA-administered resources to support job creation and site development

❖ *Diversify the Local Economy with more industrial and commercial businesses*

**Policy 3.4:** Encourage a diversified mix of commercial, professional, and industrial development to reduce reliance on limited retail sectors.

**Policy 3.5:** Identify and market appropriate locations for light industrial and professional office development. Look for funding and applicable incentives for various new occupants and to support small business development.

**Policy 3.6:** Seek infrastructure-related grants to prepare industrial, commercial, and mixed-use sites for development, including water, sewer, natural gas, and road improvements

❖ *Support Downtown and Corridor Revitalization*

**Policy 3.7:** Promote the revitalization of downtown Lakeland through adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, façade improvements, and targeted business recruitment.

**Policy 3.8:** Encourage the development that increases foot traffic, destination appeal, and after-hours activity in the downtown area.

**Policy 3.9:** Apply for grants to support downtown revitalization initiatives, including façade improvements, adaptive reuse, and small business development assistance.

❖ *Address Traffic Impacts Related to Growth*

**Policy 3.7:** Coordinate economic development and transportation planning to ensure infrastructure supports current and future business activity

❖ *Improve Workforce Development and Training*

**Policy 3.8:** Work with educational partners to expand training and workforce readiness programs for youth and adults

**Policy 3.9:** Aggressively pursue state and federal economic development grants to support infrastructure, site development, and job creation.

**Policy 3.10:** Promote public-private partnerships to leverage local investment and reduce public financial risk

**Opportunities:**

- ❖ *Leverage Proximity to I-75, Rail, State Highways and the Rivers*
- ❖ *Revitalize Downtown Lakeland as a Destination*
- ❖ *Land Available to develop Light Industrial and Business Parks*
- ❖ *Expand Grant-Funded Economic Initiatives*
- ❖ *Position Lanier County as a Business-Friendly Community*



## Housing

**Goal 4: Ensure that residents within the County have access to quality and affordable housing. Provide for opportunities of homeownership and housing resources for all residents through public/private partnerships.**

**Needs:**

❖ *Increase Affordable and Workforce Housing Options*

**Policy 4.1:** Encourage the development of affordable and workforce housing to meet the needs of existing and future residents, including families, teachers, and essential workers.

**Policy 4.2:** Pursue federal and state housing grants, loans, and incentives to support construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units. Look into becoming a GICH community to become eligible for more housing funding and recruit workforce housing developers. Apply for housing related funding through USDA Rural Development, state housing programs and other federal sources.

**Policy 4.3:** Partner with housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, and private developer to leverage funding and expand affordable options

❖ *Expand Housing Inventory and diversification of housing types to include apartments, townhomes, and smaller homes*

**Policy 4.4:** Promote a mix of housing types, including single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, and smaller-scale housing to serve as variety of household sizes and incomes.

**Policy 4.5:** Encourage infill housing development and reuse of vacant or under-utilized properties where appropriate infrastructure exists.

❖ *Update Zoning and Land Use Regulations to Support Housing*

**Policy 4.6:** Review and update zoning regulations to ensure housing development aligns with community goals and supports diverse housing options.

**Policy 4.7:** Evaluate the adoption of a planned tiny home or small-lot housing ordinance to provide lower-cost housing options while maintaining neighborhood compatibility

**Policy 4.8:** Ensure zoning regulations protect established neighborhoods while allowing flexibility for innovative housing solutions. Maintain updated housing and land-use policies to remain competitive for state and federal housing grants.

❖ *Support First Time Homebuyer and Vulnerable Populations*

**Policy 4.9:** Support programs that assist first-time homebuyers through down-payment assistance, education, and access to favorable loan programs.

**Policy 4.10:** Coordinate with social service agencies and nonprofits to pursue funding and programs that support housing needs for elderly, low-income, and homeless individuals.

❖ *Maintain Neighborhood Quality and Compatibility*

**Policy 4.11:** Encourage property maintenance and neighborhood standards that protect residential character and quality of life.

**Policy 4.12:** Support enforcement of existing codes and explore adoption of maintenance standards to reduce blight and improve neighborhood conditions.

*Opportunities:*

- ❖ *Pursue State and Federal Housing Funding*
- ❖ *Encourage Innovative Housing Types*
- ❖ *Partner with Developers, Nonprofits, and Housing Authorities*
- ❖ *Use Planning Tools to Support Grant Eligibility especially for CDBGs*



## Land Use

**Goal 5: Establish and maintain conservation and protection of natural areas, where those areas would be endangered by development. Ensure the highest quality living environment possible through a mixture of compatible land uses and character areas reflecting the residents' needs, desires, and vision for Lanier County.**

### Needs:

#### ❖ *Improve Maintenance of Existing Buildings and Property*

**Policy 5.1:** Encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing buildings and properties to improve community appearance and protect property values.

**Policy 5.2:** Evaluate the adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code or similar standards to provide consistent guidelines for addressing neglect and blight

**Policy 5.3:** Support code enforcement strategies that prioritize education, compliance, and neighborhood improvement.

**Policy 5.4:** Pursue planning and implementation grants to support zoning updates, land-use studies, and code enforcement improvements

#### ❖ *Update Zoning Regulations to Support Growth and Clarity*

**Policy 5.5:** Review and update zoning regulations to ensure they support current development needs, land-use compatibility, and long-term growth objectives.

**Policy 5.6:** Ensure zoning standards are applied consistently and transparently to promote fairness and predictability for property owners and developers.

**Policy 5.7:** Seek funding to support redevelopment of blighted or under-utilized sites, including downtown and corridor revitalization projects.

#### ❖ *Improve Transparency and Public Awareness of Land Use Decisions*

**Policy 5.8:** Improve communication regarding land-use decisions, rezonings, and development proposals through timely public notice and accessible information.

**Policy 5.9:** Schedule land-use related public meetings at times that allow broader community participation.

#### ❖ *Support Residential, Commercial and Industrial Growth in Appropriate Areas*

**Policy 5.10:** Coordinate land-use planning with infrastructure investment to strengthen eligibility for state and federal funding programs.

**Policy 5.11:** Guide commercial development toward designated corridors and identified areas with appropriate infrastructure.

**Policy 5.12:** Encourage industrial development in locations suitable for job creation while minimizing conflicts with residential and agricultural uses

**Policy 5.13:** Support residential development patterns that are compatible with surrounding land uses and infrastructure capacity.

**Policy 5.14:** Promote beautification efforts, including regular mowing, trash removal, and streetscape improvements, to enhance overall community appearance.

**Policy 5.15:** Encourage redevelopment or removal of dilapidated structures that negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods.

**Opportunities:**

- ❖ *Adopt Clear Standards to reduce blight and improve appearance*
- ❖ *Use Planning and Zoning Update to Support Grant Competitiveness*
- ❖ *Strategically designate growth areas*
- ❖ *Leverage City and County Owned Land to make public land available for productive and private uses*



## [Community Facilities & Services](#)

**Goal 6: Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing development and to encourage future sustainable growth in areas where community facilities and services are provided at adequate capacities.**

**Needs:**

❖ *Improve Emergency Services (Fire, EMS, Disaster Response)*

**Policy 6.1:** Support improvements to fire, EMS, and emergency response services to ensure timely and effective public safety coverage.

**Policy 6.2:** Evaluate opportunities to expand full-time staffing, shared services, and regional partnerships to strengthen emergency response capacity.

**Policy 6.3:** Plan for and pursue the development of disaster shelters capable of serving residents during hurricanes and severe weather events

**Policy 6.4:** Participate in GEMA/FEMA required planning efforts to remain in compliance for funding.

❖ *Upgrade Age Public Facilities like the Courthouse, middle & high schools, hospital and recreational facility services*

**Policy 6.5:** Prioritize the assessment, renovation, or replacement of aging public facilities including the courthouse, schools, and government buildings.

**Policy 6.6:** Coordinate facility planning with future growth projections to ensure long-term adequacy and efficiency.

**Policy 6.7:** Coordinate grant applications across departments and jurisdictions to improve competitiveness and reduce redundancies.

❖ *Expand and Maintain Recreational Facilities*

**Policy 6.8:** Invest in the expansion and maintenance of parks, recreational facilities, and supporting amenities such as restrooms and lighting.

**Policy 6.9:** Ensure recreational facilities are safe, accessible, and adequately maintained to support community health, youth engagement, and quality of life.

**Policy 6.10:** Leverage public-private partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation to maximize investment outcomes while minimizing taxpayer burden.

❖ *Address Medical and Health Service Capacity with planning for a new hospital and health services*

**Policy 6.11:** Support long-term planning effort to improve access to medical facilities and healthcare services within Lanier County

**Policy 6.12:** Coordinate with healthcare providers to address transportation, emergency care, and future capacity needs.

**Policy 6.13:** Pursue funding to support improvements of healthcare facilities

**Policy 6.14:** Support facilities and programs that assist vulnerable populations, including seniors, low-income residents, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

**Policy 6.15:** Encourage partnerships with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, service providers to expand community support services

❖ *Improve Stormwater Drainage, water and sewer infrastructure*

**Policy 6.15:** Prioritize improvements to stormwater drainage systems to reduce flooding, erosion, and infrastructure damage, particularly in areas with recurring drainage issues.

**Policy 6.16:** Support upgrades and expansion of water and sewer infrastructure to improve service reliability, water quality, and system capacity for existing residents and future development.

**Policy 6.17:** Encourage replacement of aging water and sewer lines to improve system efficiency, reduce maintenance issues, and limit service disruptions.

**Policy 6.18:** Coordinate water, sewer, and drainage improvements with land use, housing, and economic development planning to ensure infrastructure investments support long-term growth goals.

**Policy 6.19:** Aggressively pursue state and federal funding—such as GEFA, USDA Rural Development, CDBG, and other infrastructure programs—to support drainage, water, and sewer improvements.

**Policy 6.20:** Maintain updated infrastructure plans, capital improvement schedules, and utility assessments to strengthen competitiveness for grant and loan funding.

**Policy 6.21:** Leverage public-private partnerships and intergovernmental coordination to reduce local cost burdens and maximize infrastructure investment outcomes.

**Opportunities:**

- ❖ *Pursue Grant and Loan programs for facilities*
- ❖ *Develop shared and multi-use facilities*
- ❖ *Improve Emergency Preparedness and Resilience*
- ❖ *Align Facility Investment with Long-Term Planning*



## Intergovernmental Coordination

**Goal 7: Enhance and maintain communication between each jurisdiction and surrounding counties to efficiently and effectively serve the county's residents.**

### Needs:

❖ *Improve coordination between the City of Lakeland and Lanier County*

**Policy 7.1: Encourage regular coordination between Lanier County and the City of Lakeland and to align priorities, share resources, and improve service delivery.**

**Policy 7.2 Support joint planning efforts for infrastructure, land use, housing, economic development, and public facilities to ensure consistency across jurisdictions.**

❖ *Increase transparency and public trust in decision-making*

**Policy 7.3: Promote transparent decision-making practices by providing clear public notice, accessible information, and opportunities for public input.**

**Policy 7.4: Encourage governing bodies to schedule meetings at times that allow broad public participation, including options after regular business hours.**

❖ *Improve community engagement across all governing bodies including the school systems, various boards and authorities*

**Policy 7.5: Support consistent community engagement practices across city, county, and school system governance to encourage participation and informed decision-making**

**Policy 7.6: Encourage the use of multiple communication platforms to keep residents informed on decisions, projects, and opportunities for involvement.**

❖ *Strengthen regional and interagency partnerships with MAFB, and neighboring counties or communities pertaining to workforce, housing, and infrastructure.*

**Policy 7.5: Strengthen partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, regional agencies, and major employers to address shared challenges and opportunities.**

**Policy 7.6: Coordinate with regional partners on workforce development, transportation planning, and economic development initiatives. Partner to improve fire rating, EMS and 911 operations**

❖ *Coordinate funding, planning and implementation effort to avoid missing opportunities for grants*

**Policy 7.7: Coordinate grant pursuit and funding strategies among local governments, authorities, and agencies to improve competitiveness and reduce duplication.**

**Policy 7.8: Encourage joint applications for state and federal funding where collaboration improves effectiveness and reduces local financial burden.**

**Policy 7.9: Maintain alignment between local plans, capital improvement programs, and strategic priorities to strengthen grant eligibility**

**Opportunities:**

- ❖ *Establish regular City-County Collaboration*
- ❖ *Improve Grant Competitiveness Through Collaboration*
- ❖ *Expand regional partnership with nearby jurisdictions and regional employers*



## Broadband

**Goal 8: Encourage coordination of planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, neighboring communities, and state and regional planning agencies.**

### Needs:

#### ❖ *Improve Broadband Affordability*

**Policy 8.1: Encourage the expansion of affordable broadband options to reduce cost burdens on residents, businesses, and vulnerable populations**

**Policy 8.2: Support initiatives that increase competition among broadband providers to improve service quality and affordability.**

#### ❖ *Expand Broadband Access in Rural and Underserved Areas*

**Policy 8.3: Promote the expansion of broadband infrastructure in rural and underserved areas to ensure equitable access countywide.**

**Policy 8.4: Coordinate with providers and regional partners to identify service gaps and prioritize expansion areas.**

#### ❖ *Improve reliability and resilience of broadband infrastructure*

**Policy 8.5: Encourage broadband infrastructure improvements that enhance system reliability, redundancy, and resilience during emergencies and severe weather.**

**Policy 8.6: Support broadband planning efforts that consider emergency management and critical communication needs.**

#### ❖ *Increase competition and service options. Continue expansion of high-speed fiber infrastructure.*

**Policy 8.7: Support continued expansion of high-speed fiber infrastructure to meet current and future residential, commercial, and institutional demands.**

**Policy 8.8: Encourage adoption of advanced broadband technologies to support innovation, remote work, and economic competitiveness.**

**Policy 8.9: Aggressively pursue state and federal broadband funding programs to support infrastructure expansion, particularly in rural areas.**

### Opportunities:

- ❖ *Leverage federal and state broadband funding*
- ❖ *Use broadband to support other community goals*
- ❖ *Coordinate with private providers*
- ❖ *Improve transportation and communication*



## Transportation

**Goal 9: Promote transportation facilities that protect our community resources and encourage efficient infrastructure use while supporting quality economic development.**

### Needs:

#### ❖ *Improve Traffic Control and Intersection Safety*

Policy 9.1: Prioritize improvements at high-risk intersections to enhance traffic safety and reduce accidents.

Policy 9.2: Coordinate with GDOT to evaluate the need for traffic signals, roundabouts, and other traffic-calming measures at key locations

#### ❖ *Improve Road Conditions and Maintenance*

Policy 9.3: Maintain and improve road conditions through systematic resurfacing, paving, and repair of both paved and unpaved roads

Policy 9.4: Encourage preventative maintenance programs to extend roadway lifespan and reduce long-term costs

#### ❖ *Address Growth-Related Traffic and Truck Impacts*

Policy 9.5: Evaluate alternatives to reduce heavy truck traffic through downtown and residential areas, including bypass routes and traffic management strategies.

Policy 9.6: Coordinate transportation improvements with economic development and freight movement needs.



❖ *Improve Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Downtown Mobility*

**Policy 9.7:** Encourage the development of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and bicycle accommodations in areas with higher activity and safety concerns.

**Policy 9.8:** Support downtown mobility improvements, including parking management, sidewalks, pedestrian safety features, and streetscape enhancements.

**Policy 9.9:** Maintain updated transportation plans, road assessments, and project lists to strengthen competitiveness for state and federal funding for CDBG, SPLOST, and TIA.

❖ *Improved Transportation Planning using data-based decision making and better coordination with GDOT*

**Policy 9.10:** Develop a data-driven transportation improvement strategy based on road conditions, traffic volumes, safety concerns, and growth trends.

**Policy 9.11:** Coordinate transportation planning efforts among the City of Lakeland, Lanier County, GDOT, and regional partners and participate in MPO meetings

**Policy 9.12:** Continue pursuing transportation funding through programs such as LMIG, TIA, SPLOST, and CDBG to support road, drainage, and safety improvements.

**Opportunities:**

- ❖ *Leverage state and federal transportation funding with LMIG, TIA, CDBG and SPLOST*
- ❖ *Improve downtown safety and functionality to redesign dangerous intersections, improve traffic flow and enhance walkability*
- ❖ *Develop a strategic, data-driven road improvement plan*
- ❖ *Coordinate transportation with land use and economic development*



# ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INFORMATION

## LANIER COUNTY POPULATION:

### Age and Gender:

As of the most recent population estimates, **Lanier County has an estimated population of approximately 10,464 to 10,488 residents.** The County has experienced modest population growth since the 2020 Census, reflecting relatively stable long-term trends with slow growth typical of rural South Georgia counties.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately **22.7 percent of Lanier County's population is under the age of 18, 61.5 percent is between the ages of 18 and 64, and 15.8 percent is age 65 or older.** The population is **approximately 49.2 percent female and 50.8 percent male.** The **median age is approximately 36.8 years,** indicating a population slightly younger than the national average.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#); [World Population Review](#))

### Race:

Based on recent Census Bureau estimates, the racial composition of Lanier County is as follows:

- **White:** approximately **70.4%**
- **Black or African American:** approximately **23.5%**
- **Asian:** approximately **1.3%**
- **American Indian and Alaska Native:** approximately **1.4%**
- **Two or More Races:** approximately **3.3%**

These figures indicate that Lanier County has become gradually more diverse over the past decade, with minority populations increasing modestly.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#))

### Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity:

An estimated **8.7 percent of Lanier County’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino**, regardless of race. This represents an increase from previous decades and reflects broader demographic trends across South Georgia.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#))

## CITY OF LAKELAND POPULATION:

### Age and Gender:

The **City of Lakeland**, which serves as the county seat and primary population center, has an estimated population of approximately **3,030 to 3,105 residents**. After experiencing population decline around the 2020 Census, Lakeland has shown gradual growth in recent years.

Approximately **28.7 percent of Lakeland’s population is under the age of 18, about 60 percent is between ages 18 and 64, and approximately 16 to 17 percent is age 65 or older**. The City’s population is relatively balanced by gender, with **slightly more males than females** according to recent estimates. The **median age is approximately 37.1 years**.

(Sources: [World Population Review](#); [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#))

### Race:

Recent population estimates indicate the **City of Lakeland** has a more racially balanced population than Lanier County as a whole:

- **White:** approximately **49–54%**
- **Black or African American:** approximately **48–49%**
- **Two or More Races, Asian, and Other Races:** less than **3% combined**

Lakeland’s racial diversity reflects its role as the urban center of the County and distinguishes it from the surrounding rural areas.

(Sources: [World Population Review](#); [City-Data](#))

### Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity:

An estimated **6 to 9 percent of Lakeland’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino**, regardless of race. While still a relatively small share of the population, this group has increased steadily over time.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#); [City-Data](#))

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## Population Trends and Growth Implications

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Recent Census trend analysis indicates that **Lanier County has experienced very limited population change since 2020**, reflecting overall population stability rather than rapid growth or decline. While this level of stability reduces pressures on infrastructure expansion, it also suggests **limited new household formation, modest school enrollment change, and long-term fiscal constraints tied to population-based revenue sources** (see Appendix A).

At the same time, stable population conditions provide an opportunity for the County and the City of Lakeland to **focus on reinvestment, community revitalization, and quality-of-life improvements** rather than growth-driven infrastructure expansion. Strategic investments in housing, workforce development, and downtown revitalization can help strengthen household stability and support gradual, sustainable growth over time.

(Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#); Population Change Analysis – Appendix)

Census analysis indicates that Lanier County has a relatively high dependency ratio, meaning that a sizable share of the population consists of youth and older adults relative to the working-age population (see Appendix A). While this demographic structure increased demand for education, healthcare, and public services, it also reflects opportunities to strengthen workforce participation, expand family-supportive policies, and plan for aging-in-place strategies.

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# LANIER COUNTY EDUCATION:

## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Lanier County reflects a population with a strong high-school-educated base and a smaller share of residents with post-secondary degrees. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, approximately **88.0 percent of adults age 25 and over possess a high school diploma or higher**, while **approximately 19.3 percent hold a bachelor’s degree or higher**. The majority of residents have completed some college coursework or obtained a high school diploma, but a comparatively smaller share has completed advanced degrees.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts, 2020-2024 ACS](#))

## Public School System

Lanier County is served by the **Lanier County School District**, which operates **three public schools**—one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school—serving approximately **1,550 to 1,680 students**. Recent enrollment figures indicate a modest decline in student population, consistent with shifting demographic trends.

(Sources: [South Georgia Times](#); [U.S. News Education](#))

## Educational Performance

The Lanier County School District reports a **high school graduation rate of approximately 88 percent**, which is close to the statewide average. Academic performance indicators show mixed outcomes across grade levels, with test proficiency generally below state averages, particularly at the high school level. These trends emphasize the importance of continued investment in education, workforce readiness, and student support services.

(Sources: [U.S. News Education](#); [South Georgia Times](#))

# CITY OF LAKELAND EDUCATION:

## Education Attainment

Educational attainment levels within the City of Lakeland differ slightly from those of Lanier County overall. Approximately **48.5 percent of residents age 25 and over have earned a high school diploma**, while **approximately 20.1 percent have completed some form of post-secondary education**, including associate, bachelor’s, or advanced degrees. A larger share of the population has not completed high school when compared to statewide and countywide averages.

(Source: [Statistical Atlas – ACS Data](#)) [[statisticalatlas.com](#)]

## Schools and Educational Access

The City of Lakeland serves as the educational center of the county, as all public schools in the Lanier County School District are located within city limits. Access to elementary, middle, and high school facilities within the city strengthens Lakeland’s role as a community hub but also places increased

responsibility on municipal infrastructure, transportation, and public services to support school operations.  
(Sources: [Lanier County School District](#)) [[lanier.k12.ga.us](#)]

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## Educational Attainment Trends and Workforce Implications

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Educational data for Lakeland indicates that a substantial portion of students come from **low-income households**, which can affect educational outcomes and long-term workforce readiness. Continued coordination among local governments, the school district, and community organizations will be important to support educational attainment, student retention, and post-secondary opportunities.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau ACS](#); [U.S. News Education](#))

Analysis of Census educational attainment data indicates that **most adult residents in Lanier County have achieved a basic level of education**, with a high proportion holding a high school diploma or equivalent. However, the share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher remains relatively low when compared to county, state, and regional benchmarks (see Appendix B).

This educational profile suggests that Lanier County's workforce is well positioned for **skilled trades, technical occupations, and locally based employment**, while facing constraints in attracting employers that require a large professional or degree-based labor pool. These conditions reinforce the importance of **career pathways, technical training, and post-secondary partnerships** rather than four-year degree recruitment alone.

By aligning workforce development strategies with existing educational strengths—while expanding access to training and credentialing opportunities—Lanier County can **grow human capital incrementally and support long-term economic diversification**. Demographic trends, including a relatively high share of dependent-age residents, help explain continued demand for education and youth services despite modest overall population growth.

(Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau ACS](#); [Educational Attainment Analysis](#))

# Lanier County Housing:

## Housing Market Context

Lanier County has approximately **4,260–4,420 housing units**, with the majority occupied. Average household size is approximately **2.7 to 2.9 persons per household**, reflecting a mix of family households and multigenerational living arrangements. Single-family detached housing continues to be the dominant housing type throughout the County.

Housing conditions in Lanier County are shaped less by rapid population growth and more by **stable population trends, limited household formation, and economic constraints**. Census-based population analysis indicates that while overall population levels have remained relatively steady, household composition reflects **larger household sizes, multigenerational living arrangements, and a comparatively high dependency ratio**. These conditions influence both housing demand and affordability outcomes across the County.

Rather than requiring large-scale residential expansion, current conditions create an opportunity to focus on **housing reinvestment, affordability, and long-term stability**, particularly for working families, seniors, and cost-burdened households.

## Housing Supply and Tenure

Lanier County's housing stock is predominantly **single-family detached units**, supplemented by mobile homes and small-scale rental properties. Owner-occupied housing remains the dominant tenure; however, rental housing plays a critical role in serving low- and moderate-income households, young families, and service-sector workers.

Given slow household growth, the County's most pressing housing challenges relate to **affordability, quality, and alignment with household incomes**, rather than supply shortages alone. (Disclaimer: data sets for census changes constantly, and every project will need to be reviewed fairly on the data available at the time of development)

## Rental Market Conditions –HUD Fair Market Rents

HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) data provides the most reliable and policy-relevant measure of prevailing rental costs. According to HUD's FY2026 estimates, gross monthly rents in Lanier County are approximately:

- **\$921** for a one-bedroom unit
- **\$1,192** for a two-bedroom unit
- **\$1,583** for a three-bedroom unit
- **\$1,915** for a four-bedroom unit

While these rent levels remain **below Georgia statewide averages**, HUD data confirms that **rents have increased steadily over recent years**, outpacing local wage growth in many occupations. As a result, affordability challenges persist even in a comparatively low-cost housing market.

## Housing Cost Burden and Affordability

HUD cost-burden analysis shows that a **significant share of both renter and homeowner households in Lanier County are cost-burdened**, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of income on housing. In several census tracts, **severe cost burden**—spending more than 50 percent of income on housing—is also present.

These conditions are particularly pronounced among:

- Low-income renter households
- Fixed-income seniors
- Larger households with single or limited wage earners

Cost burden patterns mirror broader demographic indicators, including **high poverty rates, modest household incomes, and the County's dependency ratio**, confirming that housing affordability challenges are **structural rather than temporary**.

## Qualified Census Tracts and Housing Investment Opportunities

Lanier County contains **three Census Tracts—9501, 9502.01, and 9502.02**—with **one or more tracts qualifying as HUD-designated Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs)**. QCT designation indicates that these areas meet federal thresholds related to income and poverty and qualifies housing developments within these tracts for a **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) basis boost**. ([neilsberg.com](https://neilsberg.com))

This designation represents a **significant opportunity rather than a liability**, improving the financial feasibility of:

- Affordable rental housing developments
- Mixed-income projects
- Rehabilitation of aging housing stock

QCT status enhances the County's competitiveness for **LIHTC, HOME, CDBG, and other federal and state housing programs**, positioning Lanier County to attract investment that aligns with local housing needs.

## Housing Implications

HUD and Census analysis confirm that housing challenges in Lanier County are driven primarily by **income constraints, demographic structure, and household composition**, rather than market overheating or rapid growth pressures. This context supports housing strategies focused on:

- Preserving and rehabilitating existing housing stock
- Expanding affordable and workforce rental options
- Supporting aging-in-place and multigenerational households
- Leveraging federal designations to attract housing investment

By aligning housing policies with HUD affordability metrics and demographic realities, Lanier County can **strengthen housing stability, reduce cost burden, and support long-term community resilience** rather than short-term expansion.

## City of Lakeland Housing

### Housing Context

As the county seat and primary service center, the City of Lakeland contains a **higher concentration of rental housing** and lower-value owner-occupied units than the County overall. Lakeland's housing market reflects its role as an employment, education, and service hub, but also experiences **greater affordability pressures**, particularly among renters.

Population stability combined with limited new housing construction places emphasis on **housing quality, reinvestment, and affordability**, rather than expansion alone.

### Cost Burden and Housing Stress

HUD cost-burden data indicates that **renter households in Lakeland experience higher rates of cost burden and severe cost burden than the County overall**, consistent with lower median incomes and higher rental reliance. Despite rental costs that remain below regional averages, **income limitations result in disproportionate housing stress** for many households.

These conditions reinforce the importance of:

- Affordable rental development
- Rehabilitation of older housing units
- Coordination between housing policy, economic development, and social services

## Strategic Housing Opportunities

Lakeland's location within **Qualified Census Tracts and HUD-defined affordability thresholds** positions the City as a prime candidate for:

- LIHTC-supported developments
- Public-private housing partnerships
- Targeted infrastructure and neighborhood reinvestment

Strategic housing initiatives can strengthen neighborhood stability, support workforce retention, and improve quality of life while leveraging available federal and state funding tools.

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## Housing Summary

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HUD-based analysis demonstrates that housing conditions in Lanier County and the City of Lakeland are best addressed through **targeted affordability strategies, reinvestment, and leveraging federal designations**, rather than expansion-driven growth models. Stable population levels provide an opportunity to focus resources on **housing quality, accessibility, and long-term sustainability**, aligning housing policy with economic development, public health, and community well-being.

*(Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Fair Market Rents; HUD CHAS / Cost Burden Data; HUD Qualified Census Tract Designations; U.S. Census Bureau / ACS)*

# Lanier County Income:

## Employment and Industry Profile

Employment in Lanier County is concentrated in a limited number of service-oriented sectors. The largest employment industries include **Health Care and Social Assistance**, **Retail Trade**, and **Accommodation and Food Services**, which together employ a significant share of the county's workforce. These industries provide essential services and stable employment but are generally associated with **lower wage ranges** than professional, technical, or industrial sectors.

Higher-paying employment in Lanier County is more limited and includes **Educational Services**, **Manufacturing**, and **Finance and Insurance**, reflecting a narrower base of higher-wage opportunities. This industry mix plays a key role in shaping household income levels and overall economic capacity within the County.

## Household and Per Capita Income

Based on the most recent American Community Survey estimates, **median household income in Lanier County is approximately \$44,000**, while **per capita income is approximately \$25,000**. These income levels remain **well below state and national averages**, reflecting the County's rural economy and employment structure.

While many households maintain stable employment, income growth has remained modest, limiting purchasing power and contributing to affordability challenges, particularly for housing, healthcare, and transportation.

## Poverty and Income Distribution

Approximately **one-quarter to more than one-quarter of Lanier County residents live below the federal poverty level**, indicating persistent economic vulnerability despite relatively low housing and living costs. Poverty is more prevalent among households with limited wage earners, larger household sizes, and fixed incomes.

Household income distribution is weighted toward the lower and middle income ranges, with a substantial share of households earning **less than \$25,000 annually**, and fewer households earning \$75,000 or more. This distribution highlights the importance of targeted economic development strategies that raise earning potential rather than relying solely on job quantity.

## Income Trends and Economic Implications

Analysis of Census income indicators (see Appendix D) suggests that Lanier County faces **structural income constraints rather than short-term economic volatility**. Modest per capita income relative to household income indicates that many households rely on **multiple earners, part-time employment, or shared living arrangements** to meet basic needs.

These conditions place long-term pressure on household stability while also reinforcing the importance of **workforce skills development, higher-wage job attraction, and small business growth** as core economic strategies.

At the same time, income stability within key service sectors provides a foundation upon which to build targeted improvements in earning capacity and economic resilience.

## City of Lakeland Income

### Household and Per Capita Income

The City of Lakeland exhibits **significantly lower income levels** than Lanier County overall. Median household income in Lakeland is estimated at **approximately \$30,000 to \$32,000**, while per capita income is **approximately \$16,000**. These figures reflect the City's higher concentration of service-sector employment, rental housing, and economically vulnerable populations.

### Poverty and Income Distribution

An estimated **over 40 percent of Lakeland residents live below the federal poverty level**, representing one of the most significant socioeconomic challenges within the County. A majority of households earn **less than \$25,000 annually**, while relatively few households fall into higher income brackets.

These income conditions are closely tied to housing cost burden, access to transportation, healthcare needs, and demand for public services. Despite lower nominal housing costs, income limitations result in **disproportionate affordability pressures** for many Lakeland households.

## Income Structure and Planning Considerations

Income conditions in Lakeland highlight the need for **coordinated strategies** that link economic development, housing affordability, workforce training, and social services. The City's role as the County's service and employment center means that improvements in Lakeland's income profile have **countywide impact**.

While challenges remain significant, Lakeland’s concentration of institutions, infrastructure, and potential investment areas—including Qualified Census Tracts—provides opportunities to support income growth through **downtown revitalization, workforce housing, and job-supportive services**.

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## Income Summary and Planning Implications

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Census-based income analysis confirms that **economic conditions in Lanier County and the City of Lakeland are defined by modest earnings, high service-sector employment, and elevated poverty levels**, rather than rapid labor market decline. These conditions reinforce the importance of policies focused on:

- Expanding access to higher-wage employment
- Strengthening workforce training and education pathways
- Supporting small business and entrepreneur development
- Aligning housing and transportation investments with income realities

Together, these strategies can help improve household stability, expand earning potential, and support long-term community resilience.

# Lanier County Transportation

## Commuting Patterns and Mode of Transportation

Transportation patterns in Lanier County reflect its **rural character, dispersed settlement pattern, and strong reliance on personal vehicles**. According to the most recent American Community Survey data, the overwhelming majority of working residents **commute by driving alone**, while a smaller share participate in carpools or non-automobile travel.

Approximately **nine out of ten workers commute by driving alone**, while only a small fraction carpool or use alternative transportation modes. Public transportation usage is **negligible**, reflecting limited transit availability and low population density. A modest share of residents walk, bicycle, use motorcycle or taxi services, or work from home, indicating some flexibility in commuting patterns despite the rural context.

## Commute Time and Employment Access

Average commute times in Lanier County remain **below state and national averages**, with mean commute times of approximately **24–25 minutes**. A notable share of workers travel **20 to 34 minutes** to reach their place of employment, reflecting a mix of local jobs and short-distance commuting to employment centers in neighboring counties.

Shorter commute times should not be interpreted as an indicator of abundant local employment. Instead, they reflect:

- Proximity to nearby service-sector jobs
- Small community scale
- Limited congestion

This pattern aligns with income analysis showing that many residents work in **local healthcare, education, retail, and service industries**, while others commute short to moderate distances for employment opportunities. (Source: [censusreporter.org](https://censusreporter.org))

## Vehicle Availability

Vehicle access remains high in Lanier County, with **the vast majority of households having at least one vehicle available**. A small but important share of households **do not have access to a vehicle**, creating transportation vulnerability for employment, healthcare access, and daily needs. (Source: [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov))

Given the lack of public transportation options, households without vehicles face **significant mobility constraints**, highlighting the importance of roadway safety, proximity of services, and coordination between transportation planning and housing policy.

## Transportation and Demographic Linkages

Transportation conditions in Lanier County are closely tied to:

- **Household income levels**
- **A relatively high dependency ratio**
- **An aging population**

These factors increase reliance on safe, efficient roadway access for:

- School transportation
- Healthcare access
- Emergency services
- Workforce participation

Transportation resilience—rather than expansion—emerges as the primary planning priority.

# City of Lakeland Transportation

## Commuting Patterns and Transportation Modes

As the county seat and primary activity center, the City of Lakeland exhibits slightly more diverse commuting patterns while remaining **heavily automobile-oriented**. A large majority of residents **drive alone to work**, while a somewhat higher proportion carpool or utilize non-automobile options compared to the County overall. Public transportation usage remains minimal. (Source: [censusreporter.org](https://www.censusreporter.org))

A small but meaningful share of Lakeland residents walk, bicycle, or work from home, reflecting the City's more compact development pattern and concentration of employment, schools, and services.

## Commute Time and Mobility Constraints

Average commute times for Lakeland residents are comparable to County averages, remaining in the **mid-20-minute range**. These commute times reflect short-distance travel patterns rather than congestion conditions. (Source: [censusreporter.org](https://www.censusreporter.org))

Despite relatively modest travel times, **transportation cost burden** is a significant concern in Lakeland due to lower household incomes and higher renter concentration. Transportation affordability therefore plays a critical role in **access to employment, education, and services**.

## Vehicle Access and Transportation Equity

Vehicle availability in Lakeland mirrors County-wide patterns, with most households having access to at least one vehicle. However, households without vehicle access are **disproportionately affected by income limitations**, making transportation costs and proximity to services especially important.

Improving transportation safety, walkability, and local connectivity can help **reduce transportation barriers**, particularly for low-income households, seniors, and youth.

## Transportation Planning Implications

Transportation analysis confirms that Lanier County and the City of Lakeland are not constrained by congestion or system capacity. Instead, transportation priorities center on:

- Maintaining and improving existing roadways
- Enhancing safety at intersections and along major corridors
- Supporting workforce access and school transportation
- Improving walkability and local connectivity in Lakeland

- Coordinating transportation investments with housing, income, and economic development strategies

Given stable population levels and limited growth pressures, **strategic, cost-effective transportation investments** offer the greatest return on investment for community resilience and quality of life.

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## Transportation Summary and Planning Implications

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Transportation conditions in Lanier County and the City of Lakeland reflect a **stable, automobile-dependent mobility system supported by short to moderate commute distances**. While infrastructure generally meets current needs, targeted investments focused on safety, accessibility, and coordination with land use and housing policies will remain essential.

Transportation planning that prioritizes **maintenance, equity, and strategic enhancement**—rather than expansion—will continue to support economic opportunity, public health, and long-term community stability. (Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), via Census Reporter.)

# **BROADBAND ELEMENT**

## **Purpose and Policy Context**

In recognition of the growing importance of broadband infrastructure to economic vitality, education, healthcare access, public safety, and overall quality of life, the State of Georgia enacted the **Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act (O.C.G.A. §50-40-1 et seq.)**. The ACE Act establishes a framework for broadband planning, deployment, and public-private coordination and requires comprehensive plans to include strategies that promote the expansion of broadband services.

Lanier County and the City of Lakeland recognize broadband infrastructure as **essential public infrastructure**, comparable to roads, water, and electric service, and critical to the long-term sustainability of rural communities.

## **Broadband as Essential Infrastructure**

Reliable, high-speed internet service enables residents and businesses to participate fully in the modern economy. Broadband access supports:

- Workforce participation, remote and hybrid employment, and small business development
- Distance learning, skill development, and digital literacy
- Telehealth, emergency communications, and access to essential services
- Agricultural operations, logistics, and modern business practices

For rural communities such as Lanier County, broadband is not a luxury, but a **foundational requirement for retaining population, attracting investment, and supporting existing residents**.

## **Rural Broadband Challenges and Opportunities**

Like many rural counties in Georgia, Lanier County faces challenges related to **low population density, dispersed development, and high deployment costs per location**. These factors have historically limited private-market expansion under purely commercial models.

At the same time, Lanier County offers several advantages that support broadband deployment:

- Compact population centers centered around the City of Lakeland
- Existing public rights-of-way and utility corridors
- Strong coordination potential between City, County, School System, and regional partners
- Alignment with state and federal broadband expansion priorities

The County's rural character positions it well for **state- and federally supported broadband investment programs**, which increasingly emphasize equity, rural access, and public-private collaboration.

## Technology Neutrality and Infrastructure Resilience

Lanier County supports a **technology-neutral approach** to broadband expansion that encourages deployment of the most effective solutions for local conditions, including:

- Fiber-optic infrastructure for long-term capacity and resilience
- Fixed wireless solutions where terrain and density warrant
- Hybrid systems that maximize coverage while controlling costs

Resiliency is a key consideration in broadband planning. Fiber-based infrastructure, particularly when buried, offers improved performance and durability compared to legacy systems vulnerable to storm damage and service interruption. Encouraging resilient infrastructure improves reliability during emergencies and severe weather events.

## Coordination, Planning, and Provider Readiness

Lanier County and the City of Lakeland commit to **supportive, cooperative engagement with broadband providers**, including:

- Facilitating access to public rights-of-way where appropriate
- Coordinating across jurisdictions to streamline planning and permitting processes
- Supporting data sharing and infrastructure planning with state and regional partners
- Aligning local policies with state broadband incentives and deployment programs

The County recognizes that **predictability, administrative efficiency, and long-term planning alignment** are critical factors for broadband providers evaluating rural investment opportunities.

## Broadband and Community Development Goals

Broadband expansion directly supports multiple Comprehensive Plan goals, including:

- Economic Development through business attraction and workforce participation
- Housing stability and affordability by enabling remote work opportunities
- Education access for students and adult learners
- Healthcare accessibility, especially for seniors and residents with limited mobility

- Emergency preparedness and public safety communications

Broadband should be planned and implemented as a **cross-cutting infrastructure investment**, integrated with housing, economic development, transportation, and community facilities planning.

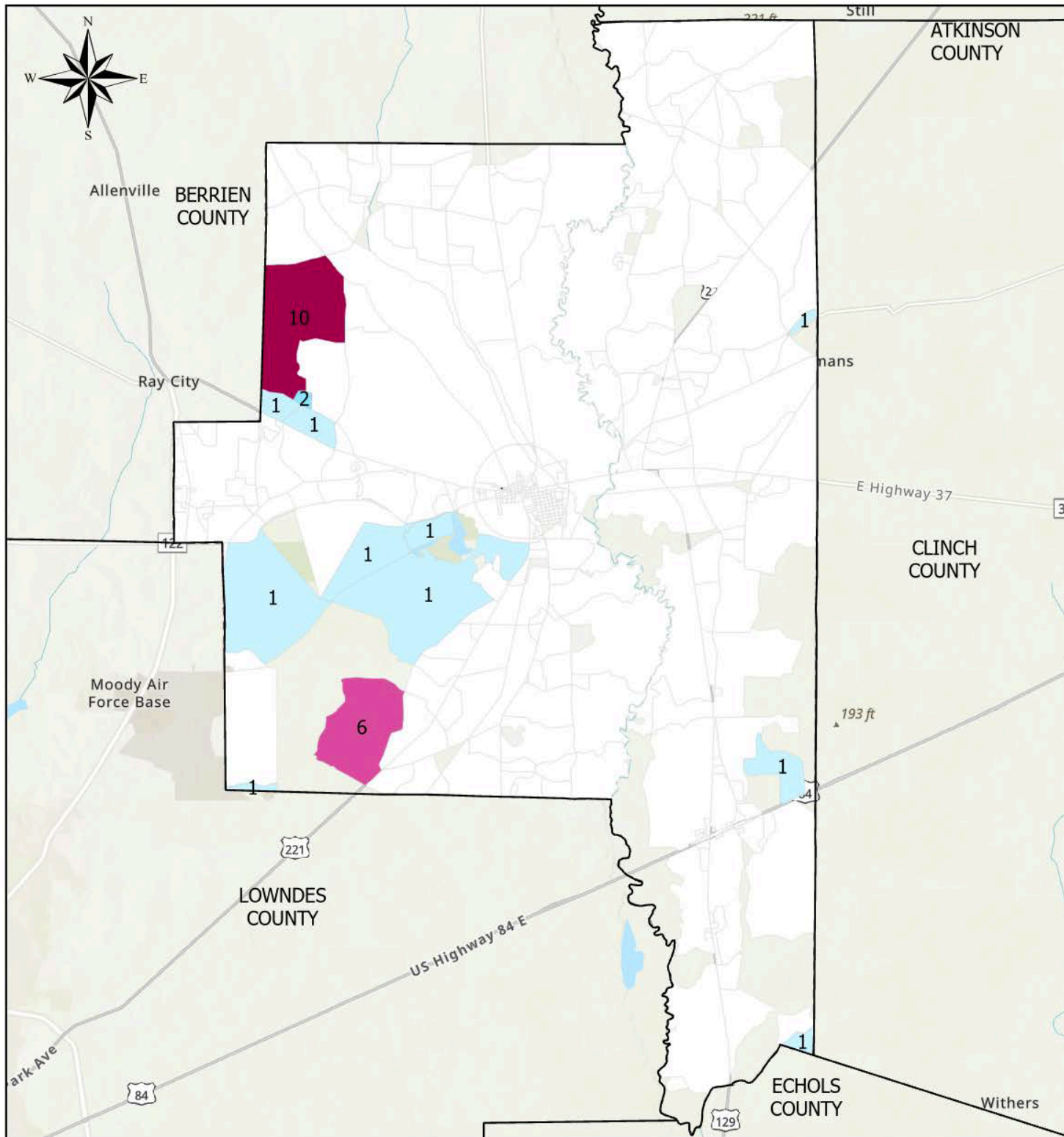
## Implementation and Investment Philosophy

Rather than pursuing short-term solutions, Lanier County emphasizes **long-term, scalable, and sustainable broadband deployment**. The County supports:

- Leveraging state and federal funding programs to reduce deployment risk
- Encouraging partnerships between local governments, utilities, cooperatives, and private providers
- Coordinating broadband expansion with other infrastructure projects where feasible
- Maintaining local policies that support innovation while protecting public resources

Lanier County positions itself as a **willing and prepared partner** for broadband deployment, recognizing that collaboration is essential to achieving universal access in rural areas.

# Lanier County's Underserved BSLs



Data Source: FCC Broadband Data Collection in June 2025  
 Data represents number of address points (households, businesses, etc.) within a given census block that was underserved when the data collection occur. Discrepancies may exist within this data and may not be fully representative of reality as of the creation of this map.  
 May 26th, 2026.

**Legend**

- Surrounding Counties
- Lanier Census Blocks
- # of Underserved Locations
- 10
- 0.0

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## Broadband Summary

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Broadband infrastructure is critical to the future competitiveness, resilience, and quality of life of Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. While rural challenges exist, the County's strategic location, cooperative governance, and alignment with state and federal objectives create meaningful opportunities for broadband expansion.

By emphasizing coordination, resiliency, equity, and long-term planning, Lanier County seeks to **support broadband providers, attract investment, and ensure residents and businesses are not left behind in an increasingly digital economy.**

# CONSIDERATION OF DCA COMMUNITY QUALITY OBJECTIVES

## **DCA Quality Community Objectives and Best Practices**

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has crafted a series of objectives dealing with a broad range of local government's needs. The goals listed below are only recommendations but provide local governments with a tool to assess their needs and opportunities and develop their implementation activities. Suppose they are used as such by many of the local governments in their planning efforts. In that case, these objectives also can result in consistent planning projects and goals, which may translate into greater efficiency and a better quality of life for the residents.

## **1. Economic Prosperity**

### **Objective:**

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to regional economic activity; impacts on local resources; and prospects for creating employment opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse workforce.

### **Best Practices Recommended**

- Support workforce development initiatives aligned with local and regional employment sectors
- Encourage small business development and entrepreneurship, particularly in Lakeland
- Coordinate economic development strategies with housing, transportation, and broadband planning
- Promote infrastructure readiness to attract and retain employers
- Leverage public-private partnerships and external funding opportunities

## **2. Resource Management**

### **Objective:**

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation, encouraging green building construction and renovation, utilizing appropriate waste management

techniques, fostering water conservation and reuse, and setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation preservation areas.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Guide development toward areas served by existing infrastructure
- Encourage water conservation and efficient utility systems
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas, floodplains, and waterways
- Coordinate land use and infrastructure planning to reduce environmental impact
- Promote responsible growth that preserves agricultural and rural lands

## 3. Efficient Land Use

### Objective:

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

## Best Practices Recommended

- Encourage infill development and redevelopment in Lakeland
- Promote adaptive reuse of underutilized properties
- Coordinate land use decisions with infrastructure capacity
- Preserve rural land for agriculture, forestry, and open space
- Avoid unnecessary infrastructure expansion

## 4. Local Preparedness

### Objective:

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges, and undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Maintain and update capital improvement planning
- Improve coordination between City and County governments
- Support emergency services, disaster readiness, and infrastructure resilience
- Prepare for future opportunities through ordinance and policy updates
- Maintain staff and leadership capacity to respond to growth or change

## 5. Sense of Place

### Objective:

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as the 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, and protecting scenic and natural elements that are important to define the community's character.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Preserve the City of Lakeland's downtown as a civic and cultural focal point
- Support streetscape, beautification, and community identity initiatives
- Encourage development that is compatible with existing character
- Protect historic and cultural resources
- Maintain the rural and scenic character of the County

## 6. Regional Cooperation

### Objective:

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 protecting shared natural resources, developing the transportation network, or creating a tourism plan.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Continue participation in the Southern Georgia Regional Commission
- Pursue joint planning and grant applications where feasible
- Coordinate transportation, workforce, and broadband initiatives regionally
- Share resources and services to reduce duplication
- Engage regional partners, like MAFB & surrounding jurisdictions in long-term strategic planning

# 7. Housing Options

**Objective:**

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging the development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community, and coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Support affordable and workforce housing initiatives
- Encourage rehabilitation of existing housing stock
- Promote housing options for seniors and aging-in-place
- Coordinate housing strategies with income and workforce realities
- Leverage state and federal housing programs where appropriate

# 8. Transportation Options

**Objective:**

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

## Best Practices Recommended

- Maintain and improve existing roadway infrastructure
- Enhance pedestrian safety and walkability in Lakeland
- Coordinate transportation planning with housing and employment centers
- Improve transportation access for seniors and non-drivers by contracting with SGRC Transit
- Focus on safety and accessibility rather than system expansion

# 9. Educational Opportunities

**Objective:**

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions.

This can be achieved by expanding and enhancing local educational institutions or programs, providing access to other institutions in the region, instituting programs to improve local graduation rates, expanding vocational education programs, and coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Coordinate with the Lanier County School System and regional institutions
- Align education and workforce development strategies
- Support career and technical education pathways
- Leverage broadband expansion to enhance learning opportunities
- Encourage lifelong learning and adult education initiatives

## 10. Community Health

### Objective:

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to participate in the community entirely.

## Best Practices Recommended

- Support access to healthcare and emergency services
- Promote housing stability and affordability
- Improve access to parks, recreation, and community facilities
- Encourage transportation safety and mobility access
- Support programs that strengthen overall quality of life

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The Quality Community Objectives serve as guiding principles rather than prescriptive requirements. By applying these best practices in a manner consistent with local conditions, Lanier County and the City of Lakeland can enhance quality of life, strengthen economic resilience, and ensure that planning decisions support both current and future generations.

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# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

## Lanier County 5-Year-Term Work Program Update Report of Accomplishments

(2022-2026)

Cultural Resources									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Conduct a county-wide historic resources Inventory	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund/GTC	X	X				Canceled due to under staffed to complete
Natural Resources									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Develop a campground site at Banks Lake	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund/GTC	X	X	X			Ongoing
Advertise and promote local natural resources	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X			Ongoing
Continue construction of new boat ramp at Hwy 37 and Alapaha River	\$100,000	City of Lakeland; Lanier County	General Fund; Grants	X	X				Completed

<b>Economic Development</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Seek funding to acquire additional industrial parkland and service with infrastructure, including industrial parkland near Stockton or Hwy 125	Staff Time	Lanier County/City of Lakeland	General Funds/DCA/ED	X	X	X	X	X	Underway
Consider designating and adopting an Opportunity Zone or Enterprise Zone	\$8,000	Lanier County/City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X			Completed
<b>Housing</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Continue to enforces codes to help with blighted structures	Staff Time	Lanier County/City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing
<b>Community Facilities And Services</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Construct 1-mile multi-use trail at new Parks & Recreation facility	\$150,000	Lanier County/City of Lakeland	General Fund		X	X	X		Ongoing

Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Construct a new Parks & Recreation facility and continue to build school ballfields	\$5 million	Lanier County/ Parks & Recreation	General Funds/Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Underway
Continue construction of the 2 EMA Command Centers	\$1 million	Lanier County	General Fund/CDBG/ FEMA/GEMA	X	X	X			Underway
Complete renovations of the Threatte Center	\$500,000	Lanier County	General Fund/Grants	X	X	X			Completed
Construct a new courthouse or courthouse annex, or expand and renovate the existing courthouse with updated wiring, plumbing, and other needed updates	\$5 million	Lanier County	General Fund/Grants				X	X	Canceled due to new plans to move to the Primary School
Hire 4 full-time firefighters	\$200,000	Lanier County	General Fund/Grants					X	Underway
Continue construction of the new Health Department	\$908,033	Lanier County	General Fund/Grants	X	X	X			Completed
Partner with surrounding counties to increase the ISO rating and to offer better services	Staff Time	City of Lakeland/Lanier County EMA/Fire Dept	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	Underway
Construct a New Election Offices Building	\$500,000	Lanier County	General Funds	X					Canceled; due to new plans
Pave parking lot at old recreation fields	\$20,000	Lanier County City of Lakeland	General Funds	X					Completed

Intergovernmental Coordination									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Continue Coordination of services with the city	Staff Time	Lanier County City of Lakeland	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	Underway
Seek funding to adequately support City and County public services (health dept., recreation, library, and the 911 center)	Staff Time	Lanier County City of Lakeland EMA	General Funds	X	X	X			Underway
Develop "My Gov" Code Red Program	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Funds	X	X	X			Completed
Broadband									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Establish broadband coverage for the county (including hot spots) and participate in Regional efforts in cooperation with GBDI	\$500,000	Lanier County City of Lakeland	General Funds SPLOST, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Research ways to enhance the communication network for the county	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund, SPLOST, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Completed

Transportation									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Resurface 15 miles of roads, including Teeterville Rd. and Empire Church Rd.	\$1 Million	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Widen and resurface River Rd	\$3.25 Million	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Widen and resurface Boyette Rd	\$1.70 million	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Resurface Giddens Rd/Royal Road	\$770,000	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Pave 1 mile of Smith Dairy Road	\$220,000	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	Cancelled—do not have the right-of-way
Construct two passing lands on US-221 from Lakeland south to Lowndes County Line	\$2.5Million	Lanier County	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Continue paving approximately 125 miles of dirt roads within the county on an annual basis	\$6 Million	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT/TSPLOST	X	X	X	X	X	Cancelled-priority is updating and maintaining drainage on these roads
Resurfacing and leveling of 135lbs/SY of asphalt plant mix for 20 feet wide and 3.0 miles of	\$348,938	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT /TSPLOST	X	X				Ongoing

surface on Ivey Road/CR56.									
Resurfacing and leveling of asphalt plant mix for 20 feet wide and 1.80 miles of roadway on Baskin Road-CR80	\$214,338	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT /TSPLOST	X	X				Ongoing
Resurfacing and leveling of asphalt plant mix for 20 feet wide and 2.40 miles of roadway on Burnt Church Road - CR 324	\$373,043	Lanier County	General Fund/GDOT/TSPLOST	X		X			Ongoing
Resurface Valdosta Hwy to Hwy 135	\$57,000	Lanier County	LMIG	X	X				*Canceled due to lack of funding

# Lanier County 5-Year-Term Work Program Community Work Program

(2027-2031)

Cultural Resources										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Recognition & Promotion of Existing Cultural & Historic Resources by adopting recognition resolutions, posting info on website & incorporating cultural reference into existing promotional materials	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	New	1
Revise "History & Cultural" info of Lanier Co on website to include links to state-maintained resources like Banks Lake or Historic Markers	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	New	1

Natural Resources										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Develop a campground site at Banks Lake	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund/GTC	X	X	X			Underway; delay due to hurricane damage	2,3
Advertise and promote local natural resources	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X				2
Economic Development										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Seek funding to acquire additional industrial parkland and service with infrastructure, including industrial parkland near Stockton or Hwy 125	Staff Time	Lanier County/City of Lakeland	General Funds/DCA /ED	X	X	X	X	X		3
Housing										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Continue to enforces codes to help with blighted structures	Staff Time	Lanier County/City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X		4
Adopt International Property Maintenance Codes for better enforcement of blight	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund	X					*NEW	4

Community Facilities										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal#
Construct 1-mile multi-use trail at new Parks & Recreation facility	\$150,000	Lanier County/City of Lake	General Fund		X	X	X			6
Construct a new Parks & Recreation facility and continue to build school ballfields	\$5 Million	Lanier County/Parks & Recreation	General Funds/Grants	X	X					6
Continue construction of the 2 EMA Command Centers	\$1 Million	Lanier County	General Fund/CDBG FEMA/GEMA	X	X	X				6
Hire 4 full-time firefighters	\$200,000	Lanier County	General Fund FEMA SAFER Grant AFG USDA Forest Service Grant Fireworks Tax Grants	X	X	X			Updated grants	6
Partner with surrounding counties to increase the ISO rating and to offer better services	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County EMA/Fire Dept.	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X		6
Renovate the old primary school to convert to a county administration and courthouse.	\$10 Million	Lanier County & Sherriff Office	General Fund Congressional Funds CDBG/SPLOST	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Move and renovate Election Office into old primary school	\$1 Million	Lanier County Board of Elections	General Funds Congressional Funds CDBGs SPLOST	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Renovate Primary School for Emergency Shelter & Supply Distribution	\$1 Million	Lanier County & EMA	General Funds DR-CDBGs	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Purchase motor graders for Road Department	\$700,000	Lanier County	General Funds; USDA Community	X	X	X			*NEW	6

			Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program LMIG							
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Community Facilities										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal#
Purchase a transportation van for Senior Center	\$60,000	Lanier County	General Funds; AARP Grants FTA Section 5310 MobilityWorks Foundation	X	X	X			*NEW	6
Purchase a transportation van for 4-H	\$60,000	Lanier County	General Funds; USDA Grants	X	X	X			*NEW	6
Create new development ordinance to bring quality development into Lanier County	\$5,000	Lanier County SGRC	General Funds; EPA Technical Assistance grants	X	X	X	X		*NEW	6
Demo of storm damaged housing in Lanier County	\$500,000	Lanier County	General Funds; DR- CDBG Private-Public Partnerships	X	X				*NEW	6
Modernization & expansion of Fire Stations facilities to meet needs	\$1 million	Lanier County	General Funds CDBG	X	X				*NEW	6
Fire Suppression Water Storage System	\$300,000	Lanier County	General Funds CDBG Funding	X	X				*NEW	6

Intergovernmental Coordination										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Continue coordination of services with the city	Staff Time	Lanier County City of Lakeland	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X		7
Seek funding to adequately support City and County public services (health dept., recreation, library, and the 911 center)	Staff Time	Lanier County City of Lakeland EMA	General Funds SPLOST CDBG HHS/HRSA Grants CDC Public Health Grants USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program LWCF UPARR Grants NRPA Grants IMLS Grants MRR Grants FEMA/GEMA SAFECOM	X	X	X	X	X	*Carryover; updated grants	7
Continue supporting Hyper Reach for Code Red Program and promoting it on county news outlets	Staff	Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	7
Continue Intergovernmental agreements with MAFB	Staff	Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	7
Broadband										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Research ways to enhance the communication network for the county	Staff Time	Lanier County	General Fund, SPLOST; HSGP; NG911	X	X	X	X	X	*Carryover; updated grants	8
Firestations to be equipped with fiber	\$100,000	Lanier County	General Funds; Broadband Grants; SPLOST	X	X	X			*NEW	8

Transportation										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Resurfacing and leveling of 135lbs/SY of asphalt plant mix for 20 feet wide and 3.0 miles of surface on Ivey Road/CR56.	\$348,938	Lanier County	General Fund GDOT TSPLOST	X	X					9
Resurfacing and leveling of asphalt plant mix for 20 feet wide and 1.80 miles of roadway on Baskin Road/CR80	\$214,338	Lanier County	General Fund GDOT TSPLOST	X		X				9
Resurfacing and leveling of asphalt plant mix for 20 feet wide and 2.40 miles of roadway on Burnt Church Road/CR 324	\$373,043	Lanier County	General Fund GDOT TSPLOST	X	X					9
Updating and maintaining drainage on approximately 125 miles of dirt roads within the county on an annual basis	\$1 Million annually	Lanier County	General Funds LMIG GDOT TSPLOST	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	9

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

## City of Lakeland 5-Year-Term Work Program Update Report of Accomplishments

(2022-2026)

Cultural Resources									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Public-Private partnership for a local trolley services for tours	\$20,000	City of Lakeland Tourism Dept	General Fund	X	X	X			Ongoing
Survey buildings for placement on the local or national historic registry	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X			Ongoing
Natural Resources									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Rebuild bridge on Robert Simpson Nature Trail	\$4,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X			Ongoing; Carry over due to hurricane damage
Construct Phase II of Robert Simpson Mountain Bike Trail	\$42,000	City of Lakeland	DNR, Grants	X	X	X			Ongoing; Carry over due to hurricane damage
Maintain the Robert Simpson Mountain Bike Trail	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	Postponed due to hurricane; Carry over
Annual clean-up of the Lake Irma area to allow for pedestrian activities	Staff Time	City of Lakeland River Keepers	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing

Rebuild boardwalk at Lake Irma	Staff Time	City of Lakeland River Keepers	General Funds	X	X	X	X		Completed
<b>Economic Development</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Research ways to become a Main Street	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Tourism Department	General Funds, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Survey dilapidated downtown buildings and design a plan for upkeep of these buildings	Staff Time	City of Lakeland SGRC	General Funds		X	X			Completed
Research funding to fill vacant downtown buildings	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Development Authority	General Funds, GDOT		X	X	X		Ongoing;
Coordinate with SGRC to apply for Age-Friendly Community Status	Staff Time and \$7,000	City of Lakeland/ Chamber of Commerce	General Funds		X	X			Completed
Promote the Local Farmer's Market	Staff Time	City of Lakeland/ Chamber of Commerce	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
<b>Housing</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Continue to enforce building codes to address blighted housing, including mobile homes	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Research grant funding to help with low-income housing	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund CHIP: CDGB	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing; Carried Over

Land Use									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Revised the Land Development Codes to integrate pedestrian/bicycle considerations and requirements for proposed subdivisions, and other developments	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County SGRC GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X			Ongoing; Carry Over
Revise development ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Streetscapes and Pedestrian Design Guide	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X			Ongoing;
Revise development ordinances to include requirements of Georgia Manual on Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X			Complete
Revise development ordinance to include requirements of the National Association of city Transportation Officials (NACTO) Guides for improved bicycle and pedestrian safety design	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X			Ongoing
Community Facilities and Services									
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Status
Resurface approximately 10 miles of streets, including Washington Street and North Pine Street	\$750,000	City of Lakeland	SPLOST LMIG	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Install a water filtration system and rehabilitate oxidation plant	\$42,000	City of Lakeland	Grants CDBG		X	X			Completed
Continue to rehabilitate sewers west of Oak Street and at Hospital Drive and Pine Street	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	USDA Loan CDBG	X	X	X			Completed
Rehabilitate sewer lines at E. Main St. E Grove St., N. 6 <sup>th</sup> St., Highsmith, Franklin Ave., Berrien	\$1 million	City of Lakeland	General Fund CDBG	X	X	X			Ongoing; Carry over

Ave. W. Bostick Ave., S. Penland St, Temple St., and Center Street									
Conduct rehabilitation and maintenance of all sewer lift station	\$750,000	City of Lakeland	USDA, CDBG, DCA Grants, Loan	X	X				Completed
Purchase new residential curbside garbage cans for residences citywide	\$715,000	City of Lakeland	Deep South Solid Waste	X					Ongoing
Continue to purchase police cars, safety equipment, cameras for inside police cars, and upgraded radar detectors for police	\$150,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing
Upgrade Intox Machine	\$25,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, Grants		X				Completed
Purchase radio for police cars as needed	\$6,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing
Purchase handheld radios for policy officer as needed	\$4,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing
Upgrade computers and software in City Hall and Police Department	\$50,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Purchase new equipment, including playground equipment, for children's park	\$20,000	City of Lakeland	General fund, Grants, SPLOST	X	X				Ongoing; Carry Over
Install ADA facilities at locations that are still not fully accessible	\$20,000	City of Lakeland	SPLOST	X	X	X			Ongoing; carry over
Bring all playground equipment up to ADA Regulations	\$20,000	City of Lakeland	SPLOST Grants	X	X	X			Completed
Continue to updated sewer system on West Howell Dr., East Howell Dr., Browning Ave., West	\$850,000	City of Lakeland SGRC	General Fund	X	X	X			Completed

Main St., Pine Breeze, and Chadwick Lane			Grants CDBG						
Research acquiring property on the east side of Lakeland to develop to park	\$100,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund Grants	X	X				Canceled; no public support
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Continue coordination of services with the county	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing;
<b>Broadband</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Research ways to enhance the communication network for the city	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	Ongoing;
Develop a public-private partnership that would offer more consistent, reliable, and equitable broadband services	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Fund SPLOST Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
<b>Transportation</b>									
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>Status</b>
Install reflective stop signs throughout the city	\$4,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST	X	X	X			Ongoing
Coordinate with GDOT to conduct a traffic study for installation of additional traffic lights	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT	X	X	X			Completed
Install sidewalks on South Valdosta Rd to John A Darsey Street	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT		X	X	X	X	Canceled due to funding

Install sidewalks on South Oak Street (west side) to Burnt Church Rd (new Parks and Recreation Facilities)	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST	X	X	X	X		Postponed; due to funding; carry over (adding funding sources LMIG)
Install new sidewalk on West Main Street	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST	X	X				Ongoing;
Install sidewalks on East and West Howell and West Patten	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST		X	X			Ongoing;
Continue repairs of approximately 500 feet of sidewalk and install handicap accessibility sidewalk on West Main St.	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST		X	X			Ongoing;
Work with GDOT to develop a Safe Route to School Plan for those walking to and from school	Staff Time	City of Lakeland SGRC	General Fund Grant			X	X		Ongoing;
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy for bicycle and pedestrian safety methods	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Funds GDOT SGRC		X	X			Ongoing;
Coordinate with SGRC to apply for Walk-Friendly Community Status	Staff Time	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Funds GDOT SGRC		X	X			Completed
Coordinate with SGRC to apply for Bicycle-Friendly Community Status	Staff Time \$5000	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Funds GDOT SGRC		X	X			Completed
Complete a bike ability analysis of all roadways that include a timeline to resurface/pave roads, adding bike lanes	Staff Time \$5000	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Fund GDOT SGRC		X	X			Completed

Complete a sidewalk gap analysis and develop a plan to fund sidewalk construction to fill gaps	Staff Time	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Fund			X			Completed
Coordinate with GDOT and SGRC to complete Road Safety Audits along key corridors/intersections as needs, based on crash data analysis and other metrics	Staff Time	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	GDOT		X	X	X	X	Ongoing;
Administer the Georgia Pedestrian Safety Attitudes and Behaviors Survey to the general public and transportation practitioners. Analyze results to determine target audiences, messages, and training needs for pedestrian safety.	Staff Time	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	SGRC		X	X			Completed
Coordinate with SGRC to distribute "See and Be Seen" safety materials	Staff Time	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	Completed

# City of Lakeland 5-Year-Term Work Program Community Work Program

(2027-2031)

Cultural Resources										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Public-Private partnership for a local trolley service for tours	\$20,000	City of Lakeland Tourism Dept	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X		1,3
Survey buildings for placement on the local or national historic registry	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X				1
Lakeland Historic Milltown Mural renovation	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Chamber	General Fund Historic Preservation Grants	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	1
Natural Resources										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Rebuild bridge on Robert Simpson Nature Trail	\$40,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X			Ongoing; updated cost Carry over due to hurricane damage	1, 2
Construct Phase II of Robert Simpson Mountain Bike Trail	\$42,000	City of Lakeland	GA DNR DR-CDBG RTP GOSP TAP	X	X	X			Ongoing; updated "grants" Carry over due to hurricane damage	1, 2
Maintain the Robert Simpson Mountain Bike Trail	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	Carry over	1, 2
Annual clean-up of the Lake Irma area to allow for pedestrian activities	Staff Time	City of Lakeland River Keepers	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	carry over	1, 2

Apply for RTP funds for recreational trails around Lake Irma	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds	X	X	X	X		*NEW	2
Participate in Hazard Mitigation Plan Update	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds GEMA FEMA			X	X	X	*NEW	2
<b>Economic Development</b>										
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY 27</b>	<b>FY 28</b>	<b>FY 29</b>	<b>FY 30</b>	<b>FY 31</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Goal #</b>
Research funding to fill vacant downtown buildings	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Development Authority	General Funds, GDOT		X	X	X			3
Promote the Local Farmer's Market	Staff Time	City of Lakeland/ Chamber of Commerce	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X		3
Maintain DDA Board meetings and create a master plan for DDA	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Tourism Department	General Funds, GCF DDRLF SPLOST	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	3
Expand Lakeland's Community park to connect to the Welcome Center and Darsey's Park.	\$100,000	City of Lakeland/ Chamber of Commerce	General Funds, GCF, SPLOST	X	X	X	X		*NEW	3
Purchase land and building for a commercial and industrial businesses	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	SPLOST General Funds PILOT program		X	X	X	X	*NEW	3
Partner with Moody AFB personnel expansion projects, including medical needs	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	3
Upgrade to power infrastructure for further commercial development	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Power Company	General Funds	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	3

Upgrade infrastructure such as water/sewer/power/paving sidewalks for hospital expansion	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds GEFA EDA EIP	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	3
Expand Natural Gas Capacity	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	EDA		X	X	X		*NEW	3
Promote nature trails and natural resources for tourism	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	DNR Grants, General Funds	X	X	X			*NEW	3
<b>Housing</b>										
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY 27</b>	<b>FY 28</b>	<b>FY 29</b>	<b>FY 30</b>	<b>FY 31</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Goal #</b>
Research grant funding to help with low-income housing	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund CHIP: CDGB	X	X	X	X	X		4
Create a housing resource guide to various public organizations to help residents	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund		X	X	X		*NEW	4
Adopt Minimum Property Standards for targeted areas	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General			X	X		*NEW	4
Create a housing survey for low-income- substandard housing	Staff Time	City of Lakeland/SGRC	General Fund	X	X	X			*NEW	4
Apply to be a GICH Community	Staff Time	City of Lakeland/ Chamber of Commerce	General Fund		X	X			*NEW	4

Land Use										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Revised the Land Development Codes to integrate pedestrian/bicycle considerations and requirements for proposed subdivisions, and other developments	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County SGRC GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X				5
Revise development ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Streetscapes and Pedestrian Design Guide	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X				5
Revise development ordinance to include requirements of the National Association of city Transportation Officials (NACTO) Guides for improved bicycle and pedestrian safety design	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland Lanier County GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X				5
Enforce requirements of Georgia Manual on Regulations for Driveway & Encroachment Control	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds SPLOST	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	5
Establish DDA Design guidelines	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund		X	X	X		*NEW	5
Promote the Opportunity Zones in Downtown Lakeland	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund		X	X	X		*NEW	5
Partner with DDA on landscape ordinance for downtown	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund		X	X	X		*NEW	5
Partner with SGRC on Gateway Corridor Overlay	Staff Time	City of Lakeland/SGRC	General Fund		X	X	X		*NEW	5

Community Facilities and Services										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Rehabilitate sewer lines at E. Main St. E Grove St., N. 6 <sup>th</sup> St., Highsmith, Franklin Ave., Berrien Ave. W. Bostick Ave., S. Penland St, Temple St., and Center Street	\$1 million	City of Lakeland	General Fund CDBG	X	X	X				6
Purchase new residential curbside garbage cans for residences citywide	\$715,000	City of Lakeland	Deep South Solid Waste	X						6
Continue to purchase police cars, safety equipment, cameras for inside police cars, and upgraded radar detectors for police	\$150,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, HSGP, USDA, BJA, DOJ COPS, GOHS	X	X	X	X	X	Update Grants	6
Purchase radio for police cars as needed	\$6,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, HSGP, USDA, BJA, DOJ COPS, GOHS	X	X	X	X	X	updated grants	6
Purchase handheld radios for policy officer as needed	\$4,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, Grants	X	X	X	X	X		6
Purchase new equipment, including playground equipment, for children's park	\$20,000	City of Lakeland	General fund, RTP Grants, SPLOST	X	X				Ongoing; Update grants;	6
Install ADA facilities at locations that are still not fully accessible	\$20,000	City of Lakeland	SPLOST	X	X	X			Ongoing;	6
Resurface approximately 10 miles of streets, including Washington Street and North Pine Street	\$1,119,000	City of Lakeland	SPLOST LMIG	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6

Rehabilitate Oxidation Pond to meet EPD requirements for phosphorus removal	\$1.2 Million	City of Lakeland	Grants CDBG GEFA	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Rehabilitate Darcey Avenue Well	\$2 Million	City of Lakeland	GEFA DCA DR-CDBG	X	X	X			*NEW	6
Construct new water tower on Patten Ave	\$3 million	City of Lakeland	ARPA, General Fund	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Rehabilitate Davis Ave. Lift Station	\$1 million	City of Lakeland	GEFA	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Install Generators at all sewer lift stations	\$1 million	City of Lakeland	GEFA	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
New Fire Station by City Hall	\$750,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, USDA	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Purchase a Fire Tanker Engine	\$500,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund; USDA	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	6
Purchase bullet proof vest, turn out gear, protective gear	\$25,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund, 50/50 Safety Grant	X	X	X	X	X	*New	6
Upgrade Darcey Park with gazebo & benches	\$100,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund & SPLOST		X	X	X		*NEW	6
Continue to update sewer system on Murrell Ave, Bostick Ave, Cherry Ave, Pafford St. and E. Banks Street	\$1 Million	City of Lakeland	General Fund, CDBG, GEFA			X	X	X	*NEW	6
Improved Lighting in Existing Lots (Add inexpensive LED pole lights or wall packets; replace burnt out bulbs)	\$10,000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Fund	X	X				*NEW	6

Add “public parking” signage & wayfinding (Attractive signage columns at lot entrances)	\$10,000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds USDA Rural Development		X	X			*NEW	6
Use a stenciled sidewalk marker (ie footsteps or bulldogs paws leading downtown)	\$1000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds, LMIG		X	X			*NEW	6
Create a simple one-page parking map	\$100	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds		X	X			*NEW	6
Fresh striping for parking lots and add a pedestrian walkway or crosswalk	\$1000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds, LMIG		X	X			*NEW	6
Run a friendly “Save the front spot for a shopper campaign” to encourage employees to park in the rear lot.	\$1000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds		X	X			*NEW	6
Add planters and outdoor seating along the walking route.	\$10,000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds		X	X			*NEW	6
Create 2-hour times for front door spaces” signs	\$10,000	City of Lakeland/DDA	General Funds		X	X			*NEW	6
Implement resurfacing streets, paving, drainage, curb and gutter sidewalks and other road improvements as needed	\$3 million	City of Lakeland	SPLOST, TSPOST, TIA, LMIG		X	X	X		*NEW	6
Create capital Improvement program for the City of Lakeland that supports current and future growth patterns	\$2 million	City of Lakeland	USDA, CDBG, GDOT, General Funds		X	X	X	X	*NEW	6

Intergovernmental Coordination										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Continue coordination of services with the county	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X		7
Review SDS in 2027	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Fund		X				*NEW	7
Broadband										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Research ways to enhance the communication network for the city	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Fund	X	X	X	X	X		3,8
Form Partnerships with ISPs to maintain & expand services	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Fund SPLOST Grants	X	X	X	X	X	*NEW	3,7,8
Establish a local broadband coordination & readiness framework	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Funds; SGRC;	X	X				*NEW	8
Adopt Broadband-supportive policies and procedures	\$10,000	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General funds	X	X				*NEW	8
Coordinate with State & Regional Broadband Initiatives	Staff Time	City of Lakeland Lanier County	General Funds	X	X	X			*NEW	8
Support Middle Mile and Last Mile Infrastructure Projects	\$250,000	Lanier County, City of Lakeland, Private Broadband Providers	State & Federal Broadband grants; private capital investment s; co-op partnerships		X	X			*NEW	8

Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Coordinate Broadband Deployment with Other Infrastructure Projects	Staff Time	Lanier County, City of Lakeland, Private Broadband Providers, GDOT, Utilities	CIP coordination; General funds		X	X	X	X	*NEW	8
Promote Broadband Access for Community Institutions and Priority Areas	\$200,000 (Project dependent)	Lanier County, City of Lakeland, School System, Providers	Federal State infrastructure grants; Education & healthcare connectivity grants; public-private partnerships		X	X	X	X	*NEW	8

Transportation										
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	Status	Goal #
Install reflective stop signs throughout the city	\$4,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST	X	X	X				9
Install sidewalks on South Oak Street (west side) to Burnt Church Rd (new Parks and Recreation Facilities)	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST LMIT	X	X	X	X		Adding funding sources LMIG	6,9
Install new sidewalk on West Main Street	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST	X	X					9
Install sidewalks on East and West Howell and West Patten	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST		X	X				9
Continue repairs of approximately 500 feet of sidewalk and install handicap accessibility sidewalk on West Main St.	\$250,000	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT SPLOST TSPLOST		X	X				9
Work with GDOT to develop a Safe Route to School Plan for those walking to and from school	Staff Time	City of Lakeland SGRC	General Fund			X	X		Update to remove grants	9
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy for bicycle and pedestrian safety methods	Staff Time \$500	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	General Funds GDOT SGRC		X	X				3,9
Coordinate with GDOT and SGRC to complete Road Safety Audits along key corridors/intersections	Staff Time	City of Lakeland GDOT SGRC	GDOT		X	X	X	X		3,9

as needs, based on crash data analysis and other metrics										
Coordinate with GDOT to conduct traffic study to create roundabouts and possible road restructuring	Staff Time	City of Lakeland	General Funds GDOT	X	X	X			*NEW	9
Extend sidewalk to the new hospital	\$1 million	City of Lakeland GDOT	General Fund GDOT		X	X	X	X	*NEW	9
Parking analysis to see which areas are eligible for redevelopment for parking	\$50,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund GDOT	X	X				*NEW	9
Install crosswalks and signage to create safe pedestrian walkways	\$500,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund GDOT		X	X	X	X	*NEW	9
Create Gateway Corridor and design plans	\$500,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund Gateway Grant Program		X	X	X	X	*NEW	9
Beautification of Gateway Corridor	\$500,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund Gateway Grant Program SPLOST		X	X	X	X	*NEW	9
Beautification and lightning of Alleys	\$100,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund Gateway Grant Program SPLOST		X	X	X	X	*NEW	9
Traffic Study at N Valdosta Road and Hwy 37 to slow down traffic	\$100,000	City of Lakeland	General Fund Gateway Grant Program SPLOST		X	X	X	X	*NEW	9

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ELEMENT

The 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) under a grant from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, is hereby incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan to serve as the Economic Development Element for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland.

The SGRC's CEDS was designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The CEDS contains an analysis of the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, investment priorities, and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, the CEDS plays a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunities for its residents by attracting job-creating private investment. The CEDS is a regionally owned strategy that is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with regional public- and private-sector participation. The CEDS sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

The Southern Georgia CEDS gives an overview of the region, briefly describing the geography, population, economy, labor and workforce development and use, education, transportation access, environment, and regional resources. It reviews the state of the regional economy and provides a list of achievable goals and objectives for the region, a plan of action to ensure success, and performance measures used to evaluate the strategy's successful development and implementation.

Policies, needs, opportunities, and projects drawn from the current comprehensive plans for each jurisdiction in the 18-county SGRC region were used extensively to develop the EDA Investment Priorities, CEDS Strategic Focus Areas, Goals and respective Action Plans. Furthermore, the CEDS was also used to provide guidance for developing the goals, opportunities, policies, and projects in this local Comprehensive Plan.

Goals, needs and opportunities, policies, and community work program projects related to economic development can be found in the "Economic Development" subsections of the relevant

sections of this Comprehensive Plan (goals in Section 1, needs and opportunities in Section 2, policies in Section 6, and work program projects in Section 7).

Furthermore, included below are strategic focus areas, goals, and action plans from the regional CEDS that are strongly aligned with the current economic development goals of Lanier County and the City of Lakeland.

**Strategic Focus Area # 1 - State of the Regional Economy**

- ❖ Promote economic development strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, support existing industries, attract new employers, and stimulate tourism.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
<b>Create regional groups to take ownership of existing, underdeveloped industrial parks to build out infrastructure for industry</b>	Identify existing industrial parks that could be considered regional
	Identify a funding source for infrastructure and ongoing maintenance
	Establish community collaboration or MOU for revenue sharing
<b>Implement programs to foster entrepreneurship growth</b>	Teach the value of entrepreneurship at the elementary level
	Development of entrepreneurial strategies for identifying assets in the community
	Connect with community network
<b>Recruit and encourage agribusiness</b>	Identify commodities for agribusiness
	Develop product infrastructure for food processing
	Partner with agriculture community
<b>Infrastructure assessment</b>	Analyze infrastructure age, capacity, and availability
<b>Adequate staffing industries</b>	Seek out resources to assist employers in filling positions
<b>Land availability for new growth</b>	Identify 3 to 5 regional mega sites

**Strategic Focus Area # 2 - Transportation, Community Facilities, Infrastructure, & Broadband**

- ❖ Protect, expand, and enhance critical infrastructure and connectivity for existing and future community growth.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
<b>Expand natural gas service</b>	Pursue funding to improve existing infrastructure
<b>Develop more family event venues</b>	Work with GDECD tourism to develop regional strategy for local community venues to attract tourism dollars
<b>Pass T-SPLOST (TIA-2)</b>	Submit regionally significant transportation projects
<b>EV Stations</b>	Expand the network of charging stations in the region
<b>Create better connectivity between I-75 and I-95</b>	Widen corridors that have a positive regional impact
<b>Provide broadband to all unserved and underserved people throughout the region</b>	Pursue funding to increase broadband availability

### **Strategic Focus # 3 - Education and Workforce Development**

- ❖ Facilitate the growth and development of an educated, skilled, prepared workforce by utilizing available programs and resources.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
<b>Start Career Education earlier in school system</b>	Recruit high school graduates for jobs with local industries
	Educate middle school students about the importance of careers in their home community
<b>Strong official partnership between school system, technical college, &amp; industries to address skills currently in demand and for future needs</b>	Identify responsible agency for facilitating and holding accountable the partnership
	Incentivize industry participation

<b>Increase labor force participation rate</b>	Better skills training
<b>Improve the quality of the workforce</b>	Target skills training to meet business and industry needs
<b>Increase accessibility to high-demand technical curriculum and programs</b>	Expand high-demand career education on high school and technical school campuses

**Strategic Focus # 4 - Population and Housing**

- ❖ Create an inviting sense of place through rural renewal and other strategies in order to retain population and to attract new members to our community.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
<b>Regional Housing Studies and cooperation</b>	Determine where the commuters are traveling from and whether or not there is a demand
<b>Regional recruitment</b>	Better marketing of regional assets and amenities
	Pool resources between the communities
<b>Increase housing stock</b>	Pursue funding for housing rehabilitation, reconstruction, and demolition in declining neighborhoods
	Strengthen code enforcement
	Develop incentives for construction of workforce housing
<b>Change mindset concerning multifamily affordable housing</b>	Analyze infrastructure age, capacity, and availability
<b>Limited Access to affordable workforce housing</b>	Seek out resources to assist employers in filling positions

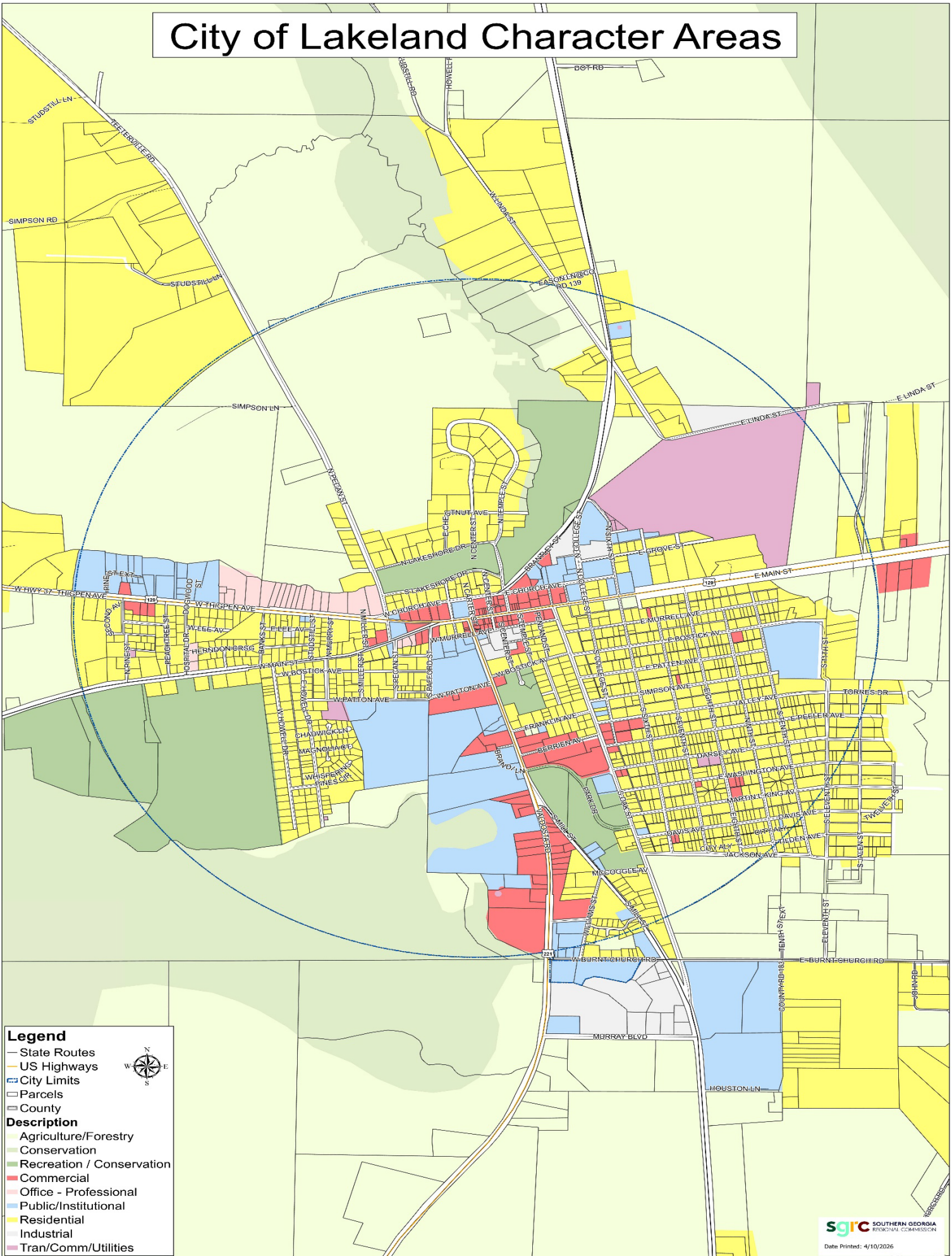
# LAND USE ELEMENT

## Character Areas

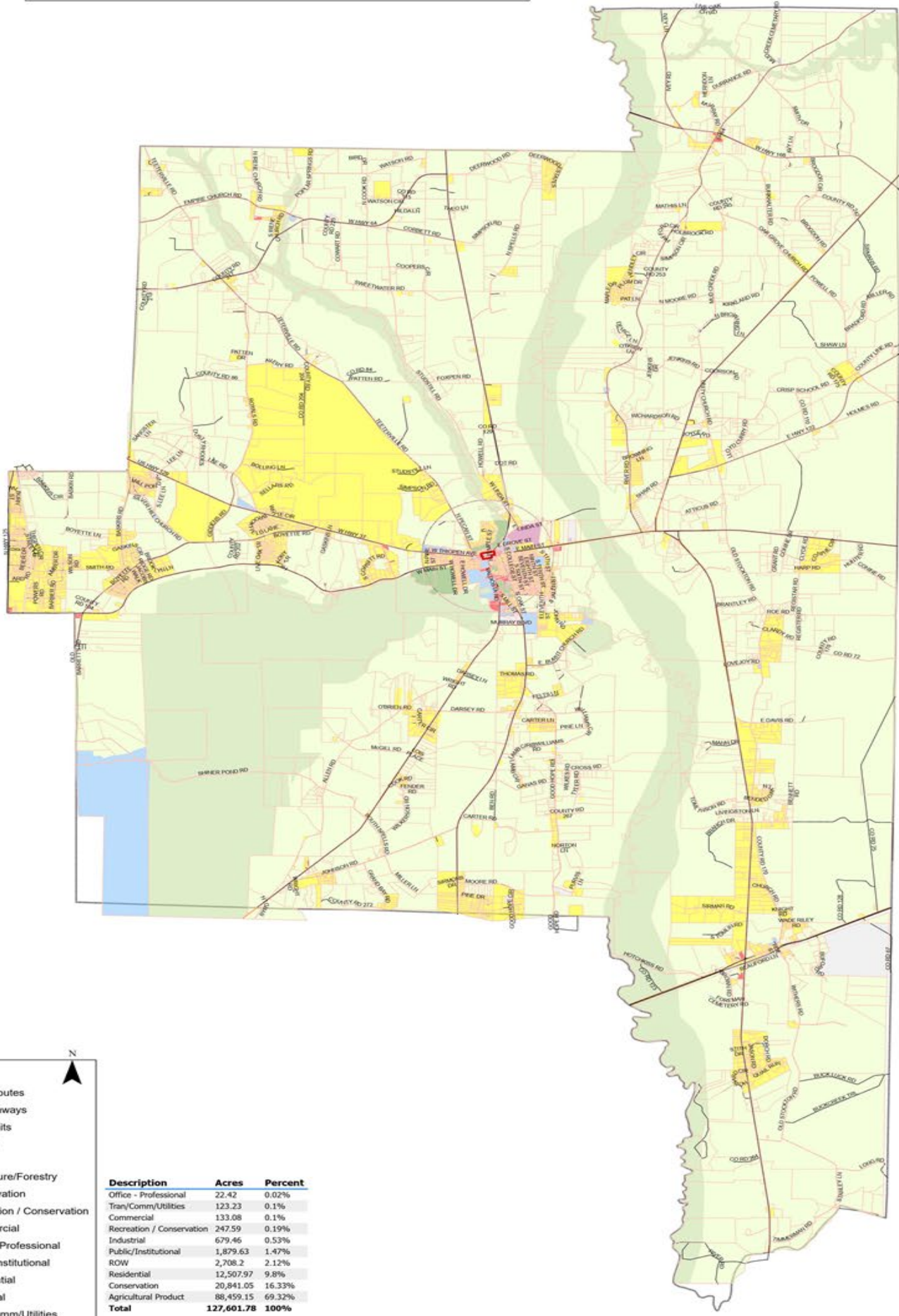
In keeping with State Minimum Planning Standards, every part of the Lanier County and City of Lakeland community was delineated into specific Character Areas. Character areas are intended to serve as guidance for future land use and land development. Each of the following character area narratives was developed based on stakeholder input, existing land uses, anticipated development, planned infrastructure improvements and expansions, and guidance found in the *State Planning Recommendations*. As with the Plan in general, these character area descriptions and goals should not be considered final. As the community gains a greater understanding of character areas' roles and values, their descriptions should be fine-tuned. Additionally, as the community continues to grow, specific character area depictions may need adjusting.

Each Character Area narrative has a unique **Description** stating either the existing or desired qualities for that area. (Please note the associated picture for each area represents the specific area's current state and should not be construed to necessarily represent the desired state, although this may be the case for some descriptions.) The stated **Development Strategy** should serve as a guide for all development and redevelopment in the Character Area. Adherence to these development strategies will ensure consistent and complementary growth, promoting a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life. The listing of **Permitted Zonings** guides as to the type of land uses encouraged within each Character Area. While many of the differences between uses can be masked through site design and development standards, specific uses are incompatible with surrounding uses and should not be permitted. As required by the State, the **Quality Community Objectives** demonstrate the unique ideals established for each Character Area. While there is certainly a value to regional planning, planning on the neighborhood (or character area) level allows for greater implementation of specific objectives, which ultimately promotes an improved quality of life. The **Implementation Measures** are the specific activities or programs that could occur within each of the Character Areas. While the suggested list of measures may or may not currently exist in the Lanier County and City of Lakeland Community, their implementation in appropriate areas would help achieve the established objectives and overall development strategy for each Character Area. In most cases, these measures should be considered joint efforts between the local government, development community, and citizens alike. The changes to the new character area map will change is to separate **Conservation and Recreation/Conservation**, and **Office-Professional Corridor**.

# City of Lakeland Character Areas



# Lanier Character Areas



**Legend**

- State Routes
- US Highways
- City Limits
- County

**Description**

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Conservation
- Recreation / Conservation
- Commercial
- Office - Professional
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Industrial
- Tran/Comm/Utilities

Description	Acres	Percent
Office - Professional	22.42	0.02%
Tran/Comm/Utilities	123.23	0.1%
Commercial	133.08	0.1%
Recreation / Conservation	247.59	0.19%
Industrial	679.46	0.53%
Public/Institutional	1,879.63	1.47%
ROW	2,708.2	2.12%
Residential	12,507.97	9.8%
Conservation	20,841.05	16.33%
Agricultural Product	88,459.15	69.32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127,601.78</b>	<b>100%</b>

# CHARACTER AREAS

## AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

Development in this category consists of agriculture and related activities, forestry, conservation, groundwater recharge areas, and very low-density residential development.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Preserve the rural/agricultural character of these areas by maintaining very low-density residential development primarily accessory to farm operations and large lot sizes. The use of conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive areas are encouraged. Roadways in these areas should be widened only when required to meet public safety standards.

## Implementation Measures

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ County A-U (Agricultural Use)
- ❖ County R-R (Rural Residential)
- ❖ County R-C (Rural Commercial)
- ❖ City RA (Residential Agricultural)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts

### QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Sense of Place

### IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Conservation Easements:** Encourage owners of critical properties (such as those in environmentally sensitive areas, included in the local greenspace plan, or designated for agricultural use in the comprehensive plan) to utilize conservation easements or sale of development rights to preserve their land from future development. Conservation easements allow private landowners to donate their property's development rights to a qualified conservation organization or government agency to exchange tax savings. The sale of development rights is an arrangement whereby private landowners sell their property's development rights to a qualified conservation organization or government agency. In both cases above, giving up the development rights will permanently protect property from development and ensures that it remains green space or farmland.

**Creating a Network of Greenways and Trails:** Landscaping and buffer requirements landscaping and buffer requirements should ensure that planting areas help screen unattractive land uses, create visual and sound barriers between incompatible properties, enhance community appearance, and protect water quality in rivers and streams. Communities may also want to adopt a tree protection ordinance to complement these standards. Poorly planned landscaping can harm the environment by requiring excessive water and pesticides or by interfering with sewers, sidewalks, and vehicle access. Promote environmentally responsible landscaping that uses low-maintenance, drought-tolerant, and native or non-invasive plants—and ensures the right tree is planted in the right place.

**Water Resource Management:** Managing and protecting water supply and watersheds; providing safe drinking water and wastewater treatment services.

**Storm Water Management:** Mitigating the impact of development on watersheds, aquatic habitat,

streamflow and geometry, and water quality.

**Preserve Agriculture Land Use:** Help contain sprawl development by preserving agricultural lands in your community. This may be accomplished by combining the following:

- Require an agricultural buffer for all new non-agricultural development adjacent to designated agricultural land. This will minimize future potential conflicts between ag and non-ag land uses.
- When a land use permit or building permit is applied, and the land is abutting, or within 1,000 feet of agricultural land, the applicant will be required to sign a waiver. The waiver shall indicate that the applicant understands that agricultural land exists near the subject property and that a farming operation is ongoing adjacent to his existing or proposed use.
- Develop a program to assist local farmers in selling their products or otherwise profiting from their farms. These include Agri-tourism, farmers' markets, farm festivals, and related activities.

## COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

The Commercial Node character area consists mainly of a designated area, that serves as a focal point for businesses, retail, offices, and services, acting as a localized hub for community needs, ranging from small neighborhood shops to larger regional centers, strategically placed for accessibility and economic activity.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The focus should be on reinforcing stability by encouraging maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for the infill development of new, architecturally compatible buildings. Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ County G-B (General Business)
- ❖ City GB (General Business)
- ❖ City CBD (Central Business)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Efficient Land Use
- 4) Sense of Place

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Economic Development Strategy:** Develop a collaborative, public/private local economic development strategy by involving stakeholders such as local business owners, the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority. Enlist stakeholder input to reveal what training or expertise exists within the community workforce, what types of businesses or industries need to be developed, and what constraints exist on the community's business growth.

**Flexible Parking Standards:** Revise land development regulations to remove rigid parking requirements to reduce unnecessary spaces in the community. This may include reducing the number of required parking spaces or allowing shared parking between adjacent facilities.

**Greyfield Redevelopment:** Provide assistance and incentives for redevelopment of Greyfield areas. A Greyfield is a declining or abandoned shopping mall or strip and has the advantage that infrastructure is already in place and lacks the environmental clean-up needs that a Brownfield would require. Ideally, these areas can be converted into walkable, higher-density, mixed-use developments.

**Brownfield Redevelopment:** To encourage redevelopment and reuse of abandoned Brownfields (old industrial properties) in your community, develop a program that includes any of the following elements:

- 1) Inventory all of the Brownfields in your community
- 2) Have each Brownfield site assesses to determine the likely cost of cleaning up or containing any residual on-site contaminants
- 3) Offer financial incentives (or at least financial aid information available from other sources) for remediation and redevelopment of these sites since the clean-up and containment of Brownfields is often very costly.

## INDUSTRIAL



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

Development in this category includes manufacturing and wholesale as well as warehousing and similar uses. Uses may or may not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

This land-use consists of industries related to silviculture, including millwork, construction services, manufacturing, motor freight transportation and warehousing, wholesale trades, and similar uses.

Development or, where possible, retrofitting should occur as part of planned industrial parks having adequate water, sewer, stormwater, and transportation infrastructure for all component uses at build-out. Incorporate landscaping and site design to soften or shield views of buildings and parking lots, loading docks, etc. Incorporate signage and lighting guidelines to enhance the quality of development. Also, incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts of external impacts on the adjacent built or natural environments. Encourage a greater mix of uses such as retail and services to service industry employees to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ County WLI (Wholesale-Light Industrial)
- ❖ County H-I (Heavy Industrial)
- ❖ City I (Industrial)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts 2, 3, warehousing, wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction, landfills, or other similar uses.

### QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Local Preparedness

#### IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Targeted Industry Analysis:** Strategically choose which types of business to recruit and support using relevant community characteristics to determine which will be the best fit for local job needs, workforce skills or to complement existing businesses. Also, consider growth rates, for various industries, in the region, the state, and the U.S.

**Access Control Measures:** To ensure neighborhoods and commercial properties are interconnected to allow for greater traffic circulation and increased public safety.

**Design Guidelines:** Evaluates buildings' appropriateness, properties, and land use to create an architecturally and physically cohesive area of a specified character.

**Flexible Parking Standards:** Revising land development regulations to remove rigid parking requirements typically resulting in an oversupply of unnecessary parking spaces. Revisions may include reducing the number of required parking spaces or allowing shared parking between adjacent facilities. Flexible parking standards enable developers to be more efficient and innovative in providing parking and reduce the amount of land consumed by parking lots.

**Infill Development Program:** A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community while also regulating this development to ensure the protection of the quality of life in affected neighborhoods. An effective program will include both: a) development incentives, improvements to public facilities and services, and streamlined regulations to encourage infill development; b) guidelines for appropriate design, density, and location of new infill projects.

**Landscaping and Buffer Requirements and Guidelines:** Require planting areas to mask unattractive land use or provide a visual and sound barrier between incompatible adjacent uses, increase aesthetic values, and protect rivers' water and quality and streams. Communities should consider adopting a tree protection ordinance in addition to landscaping and buffer regulations. Inappropriate landscaping can degrade the natural environment's quality by requiring excess water and pesticides or creating unnecessary conflicts with sewers, sidewalks, and vehicle access. It is important to promote environmentally sound landscaping, including the use of low-maintenance, drought-resistant, and native or non-invasive plants, and to ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place.

**Sign Regulations:** Language should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to regulate all exterior signs and signs' lighting. Attempt to control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertising signs.

**Streamlined Development Permitting:** Revising the local development review process to make it easier to obtain necessary approvals, particularly for innovative quality growth types

of development. Revisions may include removing or combining unnecessary approval steps or publishing a step-by-step guide to the review process.

**Reuse of Greyfield's:** Redevelopment of Greyfields can occur through programs such as the State's Redevelopment Fund. This fund gives local governments access to flexible financial assistance to implement projects that cannot be undertaken with the usual public sector grant and loan programs. The Redevelopment Fund finances locally initiated public/private partnerships to leverage investments in commercial, downtown, and industrial redevelopment and revitalization projects that wouldn't proceed otherwise.

**Utility Relocation:** Relocating overhead utilities out of view either below ground or at the rear of lots. This is intended to improve the appearance of commercial strip corridors that typically include tangles of overhead power and telephone lines stretching across and along the roadways.

**Stormwater Management:** Develop and implement a local stormwater management plan that includes:

- 1) Incentives for low impact development (LID), which uses innovative site design techniques to collect and drain or evaporate stormwater runoff onsite, rather than routing it into a typical stormwater collection system. LID techniques include bioretention, permeable pavers, tree box filters, rain barrels, disconnected downspouts, narrower streets, infiltration swales, rooftop gardens, bioretention cells, and rain gardens.
- 2) Requirements that impervious surfaces do not exceed a certain maximum percentage of total lot size, in particular sections of the community, particularly those that drain most directly into water supply streams or reservoirs.

## RECREATION/ CONSERVATION



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

The Recreation/Conservation Character Area includes lands where human interaction with natural resources is encouraged in a managed and environmentally responsible manner. These areas include parks, lakes, recreation facilities, eco-tourism destinations, and natural attractions such as Banks Lake Outfitters, RV parks, Lake Irma, the Governor's Home grounds, and public parks within the City of Lakeland.

Uses within this character area balance environmental stewardship with outdoor recreation, tourism, education, and small business activity that supports community quality of life and economic vitality.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development within the Recreation/Conservation Character Area should support managed public access while protecting the underlying natural resources. Eco-tourism, outdoor recreation, and nature-based commercial activities may be permitted provided they are low- to moderate-intensity, properly sited, and designed to minimize environmental impacts.

Facilities such as trails, picnic areas, boat launches, outfitters, RV accommodations, and small-scale visitor amenities are appropriate where infrastructure and environmental conditions allow. Development should incorporate best management practices for stormwater, litter control, shoreline protection, and habitat preservation. Public education regarding stewardship and cleanliness should be encouraged.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS

- ❖ County AU (Agricultural Use)
- ❖ County R-R (Rural Residential)
- ❖ County R-C (Rural Commercial)
- ❖ County G-B (General Business), where recreation-or tourism-oriented
- ❖ City RC (Residential Conservation)
- ❖ City RA (Residential Agricultural)
- ❖ City G-B and City CBD, where parks or urban recreation uses are present

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Efficient Land Use
- 4) Sense of Place
- 5) Community Health

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

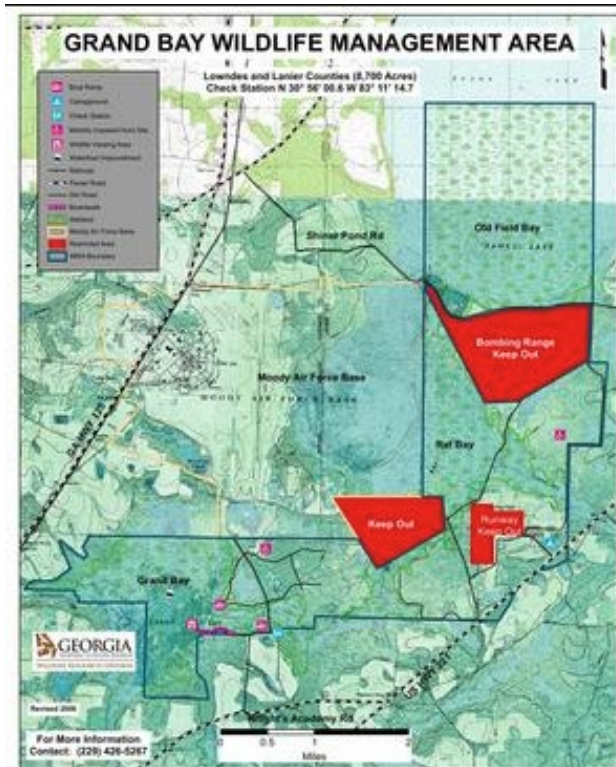
**Development Standards:** Encourage development standards that support eco-tourism and recreation while minimizing environmental impacts.

**Intergovernmental Coordination:** Coordinate with city and county departments to maintain and expand parks and recreation facilities.

**Signage:** Promote signage and education initiatives encouraging cleanliness and protection of waterways.

**Infrastructure Development:** Limit recreation-based development to areas with suitable access and infrastructure.

**Zoning:** Review zoning and development proposals for consistency with recreation and conservation goals.



## CONSERVATION



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

This category includes lands intended primarily for the long-term protection of natural resources and sensitive environmental features. These areas include significant water bodies, wetlands, river corridors, floodplains, and ecologically important landscapes such as Grand Bay, Banks Lake (waterbody), and associated riverways.

Land within this character area is largely undeveloped and is intended to remain so to preserve water quality, wildlife habitat, natural hydrology, and scenic character. Human activity within this area is limited and focused on conservation, environmental protection, and low-impact public access.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development within the Conservation Character Area should be very limited and restricted to uses that protect and maintain natural systems. The primary strategy is to avoid new intensive development, particularly structures, utility extensions, and land-disturbing activities that could negatively impact waterways, wetlands, or floodplain functions.

Where access is provided, it should be passive and low-impact, such as boardwalks, trails, observation areas, or educational signage. Development shall comply with federal and state floodplain and wetlands regulations, with site design emphasizing natural preservation rather than modification. Expansion of infrastructure to serve new development in this character area is strongly discouraged.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS

- ❖ County A-U (Agricultural Use)
- ❖ County R-R (Rural Residential)
- ❖ County R-C (Rural Commercial)
- ❖ City R-C (Residential Conservation)

❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts 1,2, 3

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 6) Economic Prosperity
- 7) Resource Management
- 8) Efficient Land Use
- 9) Sense of Place

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Resources Inventory:** Comprehensive mapping of the community's environmentally sensitive areas to create protection and preservation strategies

**Conservation Easements:** Encourage owners of critical properties (such as those in environmentally sensitive areas, included in the local greenspace plan, or designated for agricultural use in the comprehensive plan) to utilize conservation easements or sale of development rights to preserve their land from future development. Conservation easements allow private landowners to donate their property's development rights to a qualified conservation organization or government agency to exchange tax savings. The sale of development rights is an arrangement whereby private landowners sell their property's development rights to a qualified conservation organization or government agency. In both cases above, giving up the development rights protects the property permanently from development and ensures that it remains green space or farmland.

**Greenway Corridors:** Can be created utilizing public land, privately donated land, and existing river and stream corridors. While these corridors may begin at a local level, there is tremendous opportunity to create and protect regional greenway corridors.

**Farmland Protection:** Keeping productive farmland in agricultural use.

**Creating a Network of Greenways and Trails:** These greenways and trails can be made utilizing public land, privately donated land, and existing river and stream corridors. While these corridors may begin at a local level, there is tremendous opportunity to create and protect regional greenway corridors.

**Water Resource Management:** Managing and protecting water supply and watersheds; providing safe drinking water and wastewater treatment services.

**Storm Water Management Ordinance:** Mitigating the impact of development on watersheds, aquatic habitat, streamflow and geometry, and water quality.

**Tree Protection:** The Zoning Ordinance should incorporate language to protect and encourage preserving and planting native trees.

## OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

This category includes medical, health-related, administrative, and professional service uses that support essential community facilities, including hospitals and the county health department. This character area provides locations for low to moderate-intensity development that function as a transition between Public Institutional areas and surrounding residential or commercial development.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development within this character area is generally campus-style and professional in appearance, with buildings oriented toward service delivery rather than retail activity. Uses may be publicly or privately owned and should be compatible in scale and intensity with surrounding land uses.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS

- ❖ County G-B (General Business)
- ❖ City GB (General Business)
- ❖ City CBD (Central Business)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts 2, 3

### QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Efficient Land Use
- 4) Sense of Place
- 5) Community Health

### IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Targeted Industry Analysis:** Strategically choose which types of business to recruit and support using relevant community characteristics to determine which will be the best fit for local job needs, workforce skills or to complement existing businesses. Also, consider growth rates, for various industries, in the region, the state, and the U.S.

**Zoning:** Coordinate zoning and development standards to support medical and professional office uses.

**Landscape:** Encourage clustering of office–professional uses near institutional facilities to improve efficiency and shared access.

**Infill Development Program:** A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community while also regulating this development to ensure the protection of the quality of life in affected neighborhoods. An effective program will include both: a) development incentives, improvements to public facilities and services, and streamlined regulations to encourage infill development; b) guidelines for appropriate design, density, and location of new infill projects. Available historic buildings are avenues for preservation of character and heritage and opportunities for economic and community development utilizing existing infrastructure.

**Buffering:** Use buffering and site design standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential uses.

**Access Control Measures:** To ensure neighborhoods and commercial properties are interconnected to allow for greater traffic circulation and increased public safety.

**Design Guidelines:** Evaluates buildings' appropriateness, properties, and land use to create an architecturally and physically cohesive area of a specified character.

**Sign Regulations:** Language should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to regulate all exterior signs and signs' lighting. Attempt to control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertising signs.

## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

This category includes specific state, federal, or local government uses and institutional land uses that include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of other institutional land use include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Preserve, restore, and reuse historic buildings. Implement a balance of transportation options and design. Encourage the development of essential facilities in locations where they can be conveniently accessed and encourage new public/institutional uses at a scale compatible with surrounding uses. Design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between the institution and supporting uses. Direct connects to nearby networks of greenspace or trails, available to pedestrians and bicyclists should be provided.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ County R-C (Rural Commercial)
- ❖ County G-B (General Business)
- ❖ County WLI (Wholesale-Light Industrial)
- ❖ City GB (General Business)
- ❖ City CBD (Central Business)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay District 1, 2 & 3

This includes primarily specific institutional uses or federal, state, or local government uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land use include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. Facilities that are publicly owned but would be more accurately classified in another land use category are not included. For example, publicly owned parks and recreational facilities are placed in the RECREATION/

CONSERVATION category. Public landfills are placed in the INDUSTRIAL category, and office buildings containing government offices are placed in the COMMERCIAL category.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

**Community Health:** Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to participate in the community entirely.

**Efficient Land Use:** Maximize existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the community's periphery. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the community's traditional core, designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed, carefully planning an expansion of public infrastructure, or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

**Economic Prosperity:** Encourage the 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; and prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- ❖ Foster public/private partnerships to rehabilitate quality commercial and mixed-use developments and buildings
- ❖ Coordinate with the Lanier County Economic Development Commission and Chamber of Commerce to develop a list of target industries for Lanier County
- ❖ Provide adequate buffering and setbacks between agricultural and non- agricultural uses
- ❖ Provide land-use regulations that ensure that any proposed zoning will be compatible with the underlying Land Use designations as shown in the Comprehensive Plan

## RESIDENTIAL



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

Development in this category is predominantly residential, ranging from single-family densities to multifamily densities. Uses also allowed within this district include:

- Public and private schools.
- Churches.
- Other uses as allowed in the zoning districts

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The focus should be on reinforcing stability by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for the infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing. This land use should also provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ County R-1 (Single Family Residential)
- ❖ County R-1A (Single Family Residential)
- ❖ County M-H-P (Manufactured Housing Park)
- ❖ City RC (Residential Conservation)
- ❖ City R-1 (Residential Single Family)
- ❖ City R-2 (Residential Single Family)
- ❖ City R-3 (Residential Mixed Family)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts 1, 2, & 3

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Efficient Land Use
- 3) Resource Management
- 4) Sense of Place
- 5) Housing Options

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Rehabilitation Codes:** Adopt building codes with standards appropriate to the renovation of older buildings. Typical building codes were written with new construction in mind, and strict application of these codes to older buildings will significantly increase renovation costs. Rehabilitation codes help keep costs down, thereby encouraging the rehabilitation of older properties.

**Promote infill housing:** Develop incentive and rewards programs to utilize abandoned properties and demolish vacant unsuitable housing in favor of constructing new homes.

**Promote clean-up and improved maintenance of existing properties and buildings:** Consider working with Code Enforcement and the City Police to encourage clean-up and develop incentive and rewards programs to foster voluntary participation.

**Creating a network of continuous sidewalks:** This will increase neighborhoods' safety and provide a more coherent look to the community.

**Historic Preservation Ordinance and Design Guidelines:** These guidelines will define the district's characteristics and identify the contributing and non-contributing structures. The guidelines will also provide the appropriate treatment of properties within the district.

**Sign Regulations:** The Zoning Ordinance should incorporate language to regulate all exterior signs and signs' lighting. Attempt to control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertising signs.

**Tree Protection Ordinance:** Require preservation of a significant portion of the trees on a new development site, particularly the larger, more mature specimens. As a supplement to tree protection measures, a community may choose to adopt specimens or "heritage" tree protections, which protect individual trees considered necessary because of unique characteristics.

## TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATIONS/UTILITIES



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

This category includes major transportation routes, public utilities, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, and other similar uses. These areas may include public or private facilities for wastewater treatment, land application of effluent, landfills, energy generation, resource recovery, or similar uses that may require environmental permits.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The focus of development of these areas should be in cooperation with established or planned industrial areas. Where not feasible, such sites should be well buffered from surrounding residential and commercial properties for both aesthetics and quality of life.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ County R-C (Rural Commercial)
- ❖ County G-B (General Business)
- ❖ County WLI (Wholesale-Light Industrial)
- ❖ County H-I (Heavy-Industrial)
- ❖ City GB (General Business)
- ❖ City CBD (Central Business)
- ❖ City I (Industrial)
- ❖ Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts 1, 2, & 3
- ❖ And other compatible uses

### QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Efficient Land Use
- 4) Local Preparedness
- 5) Regional Cooperation
- 6) Transportation Opportunities

#### IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Access Control Measures:** To ensure neighborhoods and commercial properties are interconnected to allow for greater traffic circulation and increased public safety.

**Design guidelines:** Evaluates the appropriateness of buildings, properties, and land uses to create an architecturally and physically cohesive area of a specified character.

**Development Permitting:** Revising the local development review process to make it easier to obtain necessary approvals, particularly for innovative quality growth types of development. Revisions may include removing or combining unnecessary approval steps or publishing a step-by-step guide to the review process.

**Flexible parking standards:** Revise land development regulations to remove rigid parking requirements, typically resulting in an oversupply of unnecessary parking spaces. Revisions may include reducing the number of required parking spaces or allowing shared parking between adjacent facilities. Flexible parking standards enable developers to be more efficient and innovative in providing parking and reduce the amount of land consumed by parking lots.

**Infill Development Program:** A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community while also regulating this development to ensure the protection of the quality of life in affected neighborhoods. An effective program will include both: a) development incentives, improvements to public facilities and services, and streamlined regulations to encourage infill development; b) guidelines for appropriate design, density, and location of new infill projects.

**Landscaping and buffer requirements and guidelines:** Require planting areas to mask unattractive land use or provide a visual and sound barrier between incompatible adjacent uses, increase aesthetic values, and protect water and quality of rivers and streams. Communities should consider adopting a tree protection ordinance in addition to landscaping and buffer regulations. Inappropriate landscaping can degrade the natural environment's quality by requiring excess water and pesticides or creating unnecessary conflicts with sewers, sidewalks, and vehicle access. It is important to promote environmentally sound landscaping, including the use of low-maintenance, drought-resistant, and native or non-invasive plants, and to ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place.

**Local Preparedness:** Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support

or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and addressing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

**Sign Regulations:** Language should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to regulate all exterior signs and signs' lighting. Attempt to control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertising signs.

**Reuse of Greyfields:** Redevelopment of Greyfields can occur through programs such as the State's Redevelopment Fund. This fund gives local governments access to flexible financial assistance to implement projects that cannot be undertaken with the usual public sector grant and loan programs. The Redevelopment Fund finances locally initiated public/private partnerships to leverage investments in commercial, downtown, and industrial redevelopment and revitalization projects that wouldn't proceed otherwise.

**Right-of-Way Improvements:** Any public improvement made in a roadway's "right-of-way," which is the strip of land that includes the road itself and the narrow band of publicly owned property on either side of the road where sidewalks, curbing, and utility lines are typically located.

**Utility relocation:** Relocating overhead utilities out of view either below ground or at the rear of lots. This is intended to improve the appearance of commercial strip corridors that typically include tangles of overhead power and telephone lines stretching across and along the roadways.

**Other important Land Use Tools:**

**Moody Activity Zone (Overlay District)**

**Lanier County Moody Activity Zone Overlay Districts**

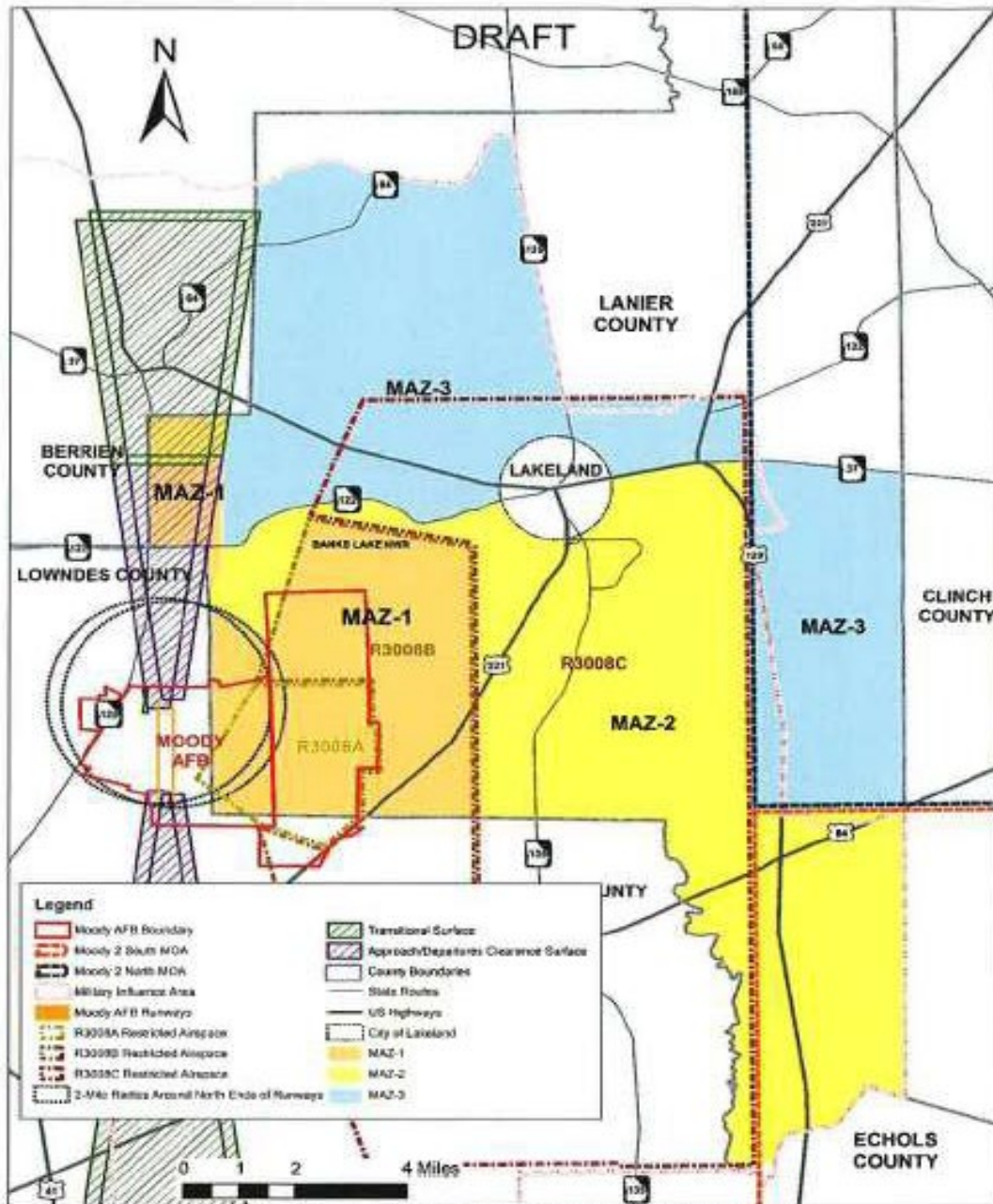


Figure 2. Map of MAZ Overlay Districts and MAFB Features



### PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

The Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) reflects the area surrounding Moody Air Force Base (MAFB) located in the northeastern portion of the County. The MAZ includes the Clear Zone, the Accident Potential Zones, and the areas of higher noise decibels from Base activities, as identified by the Base. Recognizing the value of MAFB to the community, the MAZ serves to protect the Base from incompatible uses, which could inhibit the Base's mission.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

In addition to protecting the Base in future growth and development plans, in 2017, Lanier County adopted **three additional zoning overlay districts** to regulate uses around and adjacent to the Base. These districts were developed in conjunction with planners at the Base to ensure their highest compatibility. Additionally, MAFB personnel will be included in all growth and development decisions for properties located within the MAZ. As growth and development continue to occur in our rapidly growing community, the MAZ enforcement will ensure MAFB remains a viable economic engine for our community.

### PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- ❖ MAZ-1
- ❖ MAZ-2
- ❖ MAZ-3

### QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Local Preparedness

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

**Identify Areas of Planning Coordination with Other Governments and Public Entities.** Local governments should strive to maintain consistency, regarding goals, objectives, plans and programs, with other local governments, agencies, and authorities.

**Establish Processes for Joint Decision-Making About Facilities and Infrastructure.** Create and maintain processes for joint decision-making and strategies for collaborative planning about facilities and infrastructure.



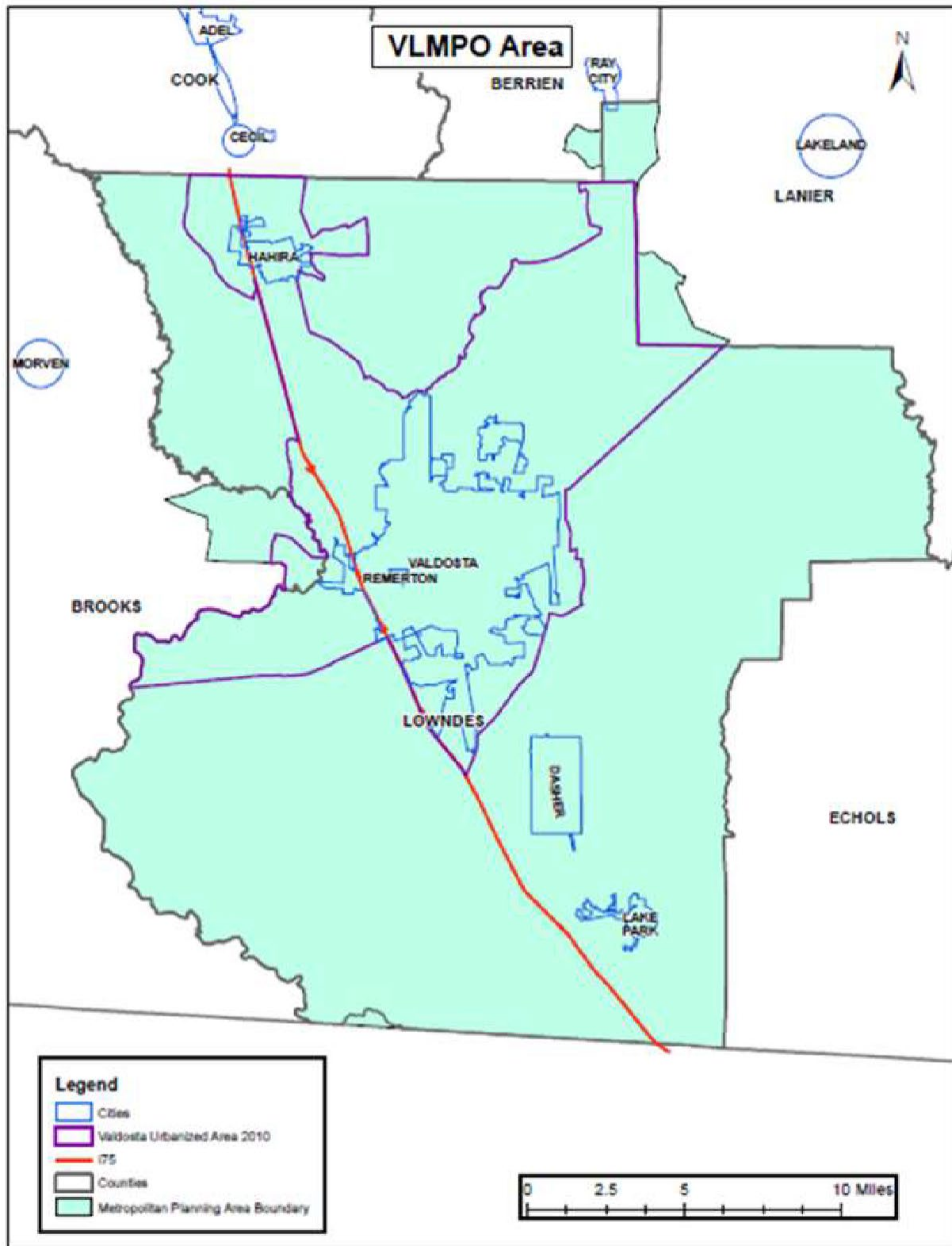
# **TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

Portions of Lanier County are included within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) of the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO), the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the greater Valdosta area. As such, the present Plan Update is required to include a Transportation Element. The 2045 Transportation Vision Plan (adopted September 2, 2020), which serves as the federally mandated Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the VLMPO under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), is now incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan to serve as the Transportation Element for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland.

The 2045 Transportation Vision Plan guides the transportation policies and projects to be implemented throughout the community over the next twenty-five years. The 2045 Transportation Vision Plan directs how the community plans to address its transportation needs, prioritizes those needs, and outlines funding resources for implementing projects from federal, state, local, and private sources for highways, mass transit, multi-use trails, airports, and freight/intermodal facilities. The 2045 Transportation Vision Plan is designed to be a regional multi-modal transportation plan that addresses transportation needs through a coordinated, cooperative, continuing planning process led by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Lanier County Urbanized Area.

Lanier County is not experiencing any deficiencies in its road network. The county continues to keep the existing road network in good condition through ongoing maintenance and repair funded with the state's assistance. Lanier County does not have public transit. However, the SGRC does provide coordinated human service trips in the community for eligible clients of the service. There are no significant deficiencies with the local rail lines in Lanier County. A minor issue with flooding at the railroad bridge over the Alapaha River has occurred periodically during significant storm events.

Freight continues to flow through Lanier County with few problems. The intersection of SR 37, SR 31, and US 221 in downtown Lakeland is problematic, particularly for larger logging and freight trucks traveling South. Difficulties with the alignments of the state routes continue to challenge state transportation planners. Overall, the Lanier County Transportation network's major components are in good working order and can adequately serve the community's needs throughout the planning period with regular maintenance and minor improvements.



The Aspirational Goals, Transportation Strategies, and Implementation Policies from the 2040 Transportation Vision Plan are reproduced in Table 1. The Aspirational Goals correspond to the goals of the Common Community Vision for Lanier County.

**Table 1. Aspirational Goals, Transportation Strategies, and Implementation Policies from the 2040 Transportation Vision Plan**

Aspirational Goals		Transportation Strategies	Implementation Policies
1	Support Regional Economic Engines and Public/Private Collaboration	Provide Accessible, Multi-Modal Transportation Systems for the Movement of People and Goods	The VLMPO Shall Complete a Downtown Truck Traffic and Regional Truck Route Study
2	Coordinate Affordable and Accessible Workforce Training Opportunities Through Public/Private Partnerships	Provide Affordable, Accessible, Multi-Modal Transportation Systems for the Movement of People	The VLMPO Will Work with Private Transportation Providers to Improve Workforce Mobility
3	Develop Basic Transportation and Utility Infrastructure that Promotes Economic Investment	Provide Accessible, Multi-Modal Transportation Projects for the Movement of People and Goods	The VLMPO Shall Require the Analysis of Roundabouts for All Projects with Intersection Improvements
4	Support Communitywide Partnerships that Encourage Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	Educate the Public on How Transportation Investments Impact Economic Development	The VLMPO Will Provide Information and Bidding Opportunities for Local Businesses
5	Maintain a Fully Funded and Coordinated Regional Economic Development Strategy Promoting Public/Private Partnerships	Educate Elected Officials on How Transportation Investments Impact Economic Development	The VLMPO Will Analyze and Report on Transportation Investment Impacts on Economic Development
6	Support Education Programs that Ensure Students are Ready to Meet the Needs of a 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Workforce	Provide Affordable, Accessible, Multi-Modal Transportation Systems for the Movement of People	The VLMPO Shall Prioritize Projects Near Schools that Provide Safe Walking and Bicycling for Students
7	Promote Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles Throughout the Community	Implement Principles of Livable Communities that Promote an Active, Healthy Lifestyle	The VLMPO Will be a Community Leader in Supporting Infrastructure for Healthy, Active Lifestyles
8	Provide Affordable, Accessible Healthcare to a Growing Regional Population	Implement Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Projects that Promote an Active, Healthy Lifestyle	The VLMPO Shall Adopt a Complete Streets Policy
9	Coordinate Emergency Response to Disasters for a Resilient Community	Provide Well-Maintained Transportation Infrastructure	The VLMPO Shall Develop an Asset Management Plan
10	Implement Land Use Techniques that Promote Environmental Conservation and Mitigation	Develop Transportation Projects that are Context-Sensitive to the Natural and Built Environments	The VLMPO Shall Develop and Support Transportation Investments that Minimize and Mitigate Environmental Impacts
11	Provide Housing that is Safe, Affordable and Accessible to All Income Levels.	Coordinate Context Sensitive Multi-Modal Transportation Investments with Existing and Future Land Uses	The VLMPO Will Work with Local Governments to Implement a Multi-modal Transportation System that is Affordable and Accessible
12	Develop Regional Leadership that Promotes Transparency, Citizen Engagement, and Coordinated Delivery of Government Services.	Solicit/Provide Information on Multi-Modal Transportation Planning to the Public and Stakeholders	The VLMPO Shall Implement Performance Measures in its UPWP, Participation Plan, TIP

			and LRTP (once available from state and feds)
13	Develop Land Use Policies that Promote Aesthetic Urban Design and Access to Community Infrastructure and Amenities	Coordinate Context Sensitive Multi-Modal Transportation Investments with Existing and Future Land Uses	The VLMPO Shall Actively Participate in Local Land Use Planning Discussions
14	Promote Conservation, Recycling and Renewable Energy Efforts	Support Programs for Alternative Fuel Technologies	The VLMPO Shall Support a Model Ordinance to Require Alternative Fuel/Energy Infrastructure
15	Develop Recreational Facilities and Programs to Improve Quality of Life, the Conservation of Natural Resources	Fully Fund and Implement the VLMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan	The VLMPO Shall Promote Active, Healthy Lifestyles and Encourage Investment in Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure
16	Provide Maintained, Efficient Public Utility Infrastructure that Meets the Needs of a Growing Community	Develop Transportation Projects that Support the Needs of a Growing Community	The VLMPO Will Encourage Growth in Areas Currently Within the Urban Service Area
17	Develop Public/Private Partnerships to Preserve and Promote Historic and Cultural Resources	Develop Transportation Projects that are Context Sensitive to Historic Resources	The VLMPO Shall Prioritize Gateway Projects that are Sensitive to the Context of the Community
18	Provide Regional Connectivity through an Efficient, Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Multi-Modal Transportation System	Develop a Fully Funded Transportation Plan that Identifies Multi-Modal Transportation Options	Funding a Multi-Modal Transportation System

# APPENDIX

1. APPENDIX A-E (Analysis Charts)
2. Sign-In Sheets
3. Lanier County Moody Activity Zone Overlay District Ordinance
3. Moody Airforce Zoning Map (MAZ)
- 4 Lanier County Existing Land Use Map
- 5 Lakeland Existing Land Use Map
- 6 Public Hearing Notices
- 7 Transmittal Letters
- 8 Surveys
- 9 Adoption Resolutions

# Appendix A

Population & Demographic Structure Indicators\*\*

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## Purpose of Appendix A

Appendix A documents the demographic indicators and analytical methods used to evaluate **population trends, age structure, household formation, and long-term planning implications** for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. These indicators use **U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census data and American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates** and are referenced throughout the Population, Housing, Education, and Community Facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

This appendix provides transparency for:

- Population change calculations
  - Dependency ratio analysis
  - Household size interpretation
  - Long-term demographic implications for services and fiscal planning
- 

## A.1 Population Change Rate

### Definition

Population change rate measures the percentage change in population over a defined period.

### Equation

Population Change Rate (%) =  $\frac{P_t - P_0}{P_0} \times 100$   
Population Change Rate (%) =  $\frac{P_t - P_0}{P_0} \times 100$

Where:

- $P_0$  = base population (e.g., 2020 Census)
- $P_t$  = most recent population estimate

## Planning Interpretation

A low or near-zero population change rate indicates:

- Limited household formation
- Stable or declining school enrollment
- Reduced growth pressure on infrastructure
- Increased sensitivity to fiscal conditions tied to per-capita revenues

For Lanier County, population change analysis confirms **stability rather than growth or decline**, supporting planning strategies focused on reinvestment and quality-of-life improvements rather than expansion.

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## A.2 Dependency Ratio

### Definition

The dependency ratio measures the balance between **dependent-age populations** (youth and seniors) and the **working-age population**.

### Equation

$$\text{Dependency Ratio} = \frac{(\% \text{Under 18} + \% \text{Age 65+})}{\% \text{Age 18-64}} \times 100$$
$$100 \text{Dependency Ratio} = \% \text{Age 18-64} (\% \text{Under 18} + \% \text{Age 65+}) \times 100$$

### Planning Interpretation

A higher dependency ratio indicates:

- Greater demand for education, healthcare, and social services
- Increased economic pressure on working-age households
- Long-term implications for workforce availability and service funding

Lanier County's dependency ratio reflects:

- A significant youth population
  - A growing senior population
  - The need to plan for **both family-supportive services and aging-in-place strategies**
-

## A.3 Average Household Size

### Definition

Average household size is used to evaluate household composition and housing needs.

### Equation

Average Household Size =  $\frac{\text{Total Population}}{\text{Total Households}}$

### Planning Interpretation

Larger household sizes often indicate:

- Multigenerational living arrangements
- Shared housing as a cost-coping strategy
- Increased demand for family-sized housing units

In Lanier County, household size analysis aligns with income and housing affordability indicators and supports policies encouraging **diverse housing types and affordability options**.

---

## A.4 Age Structure Indicator

### Definition

Age structure evaluates the distribution of population across major age cohorts:

- Youth (under 18)
- Working age (18–64)
- Seniors (65+)

### Planning Interpretation

Age structure analysis informs:

- School capacity planning
- Workforce development strategies

- Healthcare, recreation, and senior services planning

Lanier County's age structure reflects **balanced but shifting demographics**, requiring coordinated planning across multiple service systems.

---

## Appendix A Summary

Population indicators confirm that Lanier County and the City of Lakeland are experiencing **demographic stability rather than rapid change**. This condition reduces expansion-driven pressures while emphasizing the need for:

- Efficient use of existing infrastructure
- Targeted investments in housing, education, and services
- Workforce retention and participation strategies

These findings directly support the population-based policies and implementation actions contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

# Appendix B

Education & Human Capital Indicators\*\*

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## Purpose of Appendix B

Appendix B documents the educational attainment indicators and analytical methods used to assess **human capital, workforce readiness, and long-term educational implications** for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. The indicators rely on **U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data** and Georgia education benchmarks.

This appendix supports:

- Education and workforce policy development
  - Economic development alignment
  - Long-term labor force planning
- 

## B.1 Educational Attainment Levels

### Definition

Educational attainment measures the highest level of education completed by residents aged 25 and over.

### Key Indicators

- High school graduate or higher
- Bachelor's degree or higher

### Planning Interpretation

High rates of basic educational attainment paired with lower levels of higher-degree completion suggest:

- A workforce strong in skilled trades and service occupations
- Limited availability of professional-degree labor

- Constraints on diversification into higher-wage industries

This profile supports policies that emphasize **technical education, credentialing, and workforce pathways** rather than reliance on four-year degrees alone.

---

## B.2 Educational Attainment Gap

### Definition

The Educational Attainment Gap measures the difference between overall educational completion and advanced degree attainment.

### Equation

Educational Attainment Gap = (%HS Graduate or Higher) - (%Bachelor's Degree or Higher)  
$$\text{Educational Attainment Gap} = (\% \text{HS Graduate or Higher}) - (\% \text{Bachelor's Degree or Higher})$$

### Planning Interpretation

A larger gap indicates:

- Strong basic educational foundation
- Limited professional-degree workforce
- Opportunity to expand post-secondary and technical training options

This indicator reinforces the importance of aligning education policy with **labor market realities and economic development goals**.

---

## B.3 Workforce Readiness Indicator

### Conceptual Indicator

Workforce readiness is evaluated by:

- Educational attainment levels
- Alignment between education and dominant employment sectors
- Access to training and certifications

## Planning Interpretation

In Lanier County, workforce readiness is best strengthened through:

- Career pathways linked to healthcare, education, and skilled trades
  - Partnerships with employers and technical colleges
  - Support for adult education and continuing skill development
- 

## B.4 School Enrollment Context

### Definition

School enrollment trends provide insight into future workforce supply, facility needs, and fiscal planning.

### Planning Interpretation

Stable or declining enrollment aligns with:

- Modest population change
- Limited new household formation

This reinforces the need to prioritize **quality, efficiency, and educational outcomes** rather than capacity expansion.

---

## Appendix B Summary

Education indicators confirm that Lanier County possesses a **strong base of basic educational attainment** while facing challenges related to advanced degree availability and workforce diversification. Alignment between education, workforce development, and economic strategy will be essential to improving income outcomes and long-term community resilience.

# Purpose of Appendix C

Appendix C provides a technical summary of **housing affordability, cost burden, and investment eligibility indicators** used to inform the Housing, Economic Development, and Community Facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The indicators presented are derived from **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** datasets and **U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS)** data and are referenced throughout the plan narrative in plain-language form.

This appendix documents:

- HUD Fair Market Rents (FMR)
- Housing cost burden and severe cost burden measures
- Qualified Census Tract (QCT) designations
- Planning implications for housing investment and affordability strategies

---

## Data Sources

Primary datasets used in this appendix include:

- **HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) Data (FY 2026)**
- **HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data**
- **HUD Qualified Census Tract (QCT) Designations (2024)**
- **U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2018–2022, 5-Year Estimates)**

[\[censusreporter.org\]](#), [\[census.gov\]](#), [\[census.gov\]](#), [\[neilsberg.com\]](#)

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## C.1 Fair Market Rent (FMR) Analysis

### Definition

HUD Fair Market Rents (FMRs) represent the **40th percentile of gross rents** (rent plus utilities) for standard-quality rental housing and are used to determine **payment standards** for:

- Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)
- HOME program rent limits
- LIHTC rent feasibility benchmarks

[\[worldpopul...review.com\]](#)

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## Lanier County Fair Market Rents (FY 2026)

Unit Size	HUD Fair Market Rent
Studio	~\$915
1-Bedroom	~\$921
2-Bedroom	~\$1,192
3-Bedroom	~\$1,583
4-Bedroom	~\$1,915

These rents are **below statewide averages**, yet have increased steadily over recent years, reflecting regional rental inflation within the Valdosta, GA Metropolitan Fair Market Rent Area.

[\[censusreporter.org\]](https://censusreporter.org), [\[census.gov\]](https://census.gov)

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### Planning Interpretation

- Lower absolute rents **do not guarantee affordability**
  - Rising FMRs combined with **modest local incomes** result in increased housing stress
  - FMR benchmarks confirm feasibility thresholds for **LIHTC-supported rental housing** rather than purely market-rate development
- 

## C.2 Housing Cost Burden & Severe Cost Burden

### HUD Cost Burden Definitions

- **Cost-Burdened Household:**  
Pays **more than 30%** of income toward housing
- **Severely Cost-Burdened Household:**  
Pays **more than 50%** of income toward housing

These thresholds are federally standardized and used to determine **housing need and funding eligibility**.

[\[citypopulation.de\]](#)

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## Lanier County Cost Burden Conditions

HUD CHAS and dashboard data indicate that a **substantial share of renter and homeowner households in Lanier County are cost burdened**, with severe cost burden present among:

- Low-income renters
- Fixed-income senior households
- Larger households with limited wage earners

Cost burden is **geographically concentrated**, with certain census tracts exhibiting **higher-than-county-average burden levels**, particularly among renter households.

[\[census.gov\]](#), [\[georgia-de...aphics.com\]](#)

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## Planning Interpretation

Cost burden in Lanier County is:

- **Structural**, not cyclical
- Driven by income constraints rather than rent levels alone
- Closely linked to demographic factors such as household size, dependency ratio, and poverty rates

These conditions justify:

- Affordable rental strategies
  - Preservation and rehabilitation programs
  - Alignment with federal housing assistance frameworks
- 

## C.3 Qualified Census Tracts (QCT) – Affordable Housing Eligibility

### Definition

Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) are HUD-designated census tracts meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Poverty rate of **25% or higher**, or
- Median household income at or below **60% of Area Median Income (AMI)**

Projects located in QCTs are eligible for a **130% LIHTC basis boost**, significantly improving financial feasibility.

[\[neilsberg.com\]](https://neilsberg.com)

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## Lanier County Census Tracts

Lanier County contains the following Census Tracts:

- **Tract 9501**
- **Tract 9502.01**
- **Tract 9502.02**

HUD designation confirms that **one or more of these tracts qualify as Qualified Census Tracts**, enabling enhanced access to federal affordable housing investment tools.

[\[neilsberg.com\]](https://neilsberg.com)

---

## Planning Interpretation

QCT status represents an **investment opportunity**, not a deficiency. It:

- Improves competitiveness for LIHTC applications
  - Supports mixed-income and affordable rental development
  - Strengthens eligibility for HOME, CDBG, USDA, and ARC funding
  - Aligns affordable housing development with documented need
- 

## C.4 Housing & Demographic Linkages

HUD housing indicators align closely with broader Census-based demographic trends documented in the plan:

- **Slow population growth** limits new household formation
- **Higher dependency ratios** increase pressure on working-age earners
- **Larger household sizes** increase housing cost sensitivity
- **Modest income growth** constrains affordability despite lower rents

These relationships validate the plan’s emphasis on **reinvestment, affordability, and targeted housing strategies** rather than growth-driven expansion.

---

## C.5 Application to Comprehensive Plan Policies

The indicators documented in Appendix C directly support:

- Housing affordability and workforce housing policies
- Downtown and neighborhood reinvestment strategies
- Senior housing and aging-in-place initiatives
- Economic development and labor force retention goals

Use of HUD-based metrics ensures that housing policies are **aligned with federal definitions, funding criteria, and implementation standards**.

---

## Appendix C – Summary

HUD-based analysis confirms that housing challenges in Lanier County are defined by **income constraints, demographic structure, and affordability pressures**, rather than housing scarcity. At the same time, the presence of Qualified Census Tracts and favorable Fair Market Rent benchmarks positions the County and the City of Lakeland to **leverage federal housing tools for reinvestment and long-term community stability**.

# Appendix D

Income, Poverty, and Workforce Indicators\*\*

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## Purpose of Appendix D

Appendix D documents the **income and workforce indicators, equations, and analytical interpretations** used to inform the Income, Housing, Economic Development, and Community Facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The indicators presented rely on **U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data**, supplemented by HUD-recognized analytical standards used for funding eligibility, housing policy, and economic development planning.

The purpose of this appendix is to:

- Provide transparency regarding income and poverty calculations
  - Explain how Census indicators translate into real-world planning implications
  - Support grant applications and implementation decisions with defensible methodology
- 

## Data Sources

Primary data sources include:

- U.S. Census Bureau, **American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates**
- U.S. Census Bureau **QuickFacts**
- HUD-recognized affordability and poverty thresholds

These are the same sources used by HUD, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and federal funding agencies.

---

## D.1 Median Household Income

### Definition

Median household income represents the midpoint at which half of all households earn more and half earn less.

## Planning Use

- Indicates overall earning capacity
  - Used in housing affordability analysis
  - Key eligibility metric for HUD and DCA programs
- 

## D.2 Per Capita Income

### Definition

Per capita income is calculated by dividing total income by total population and reflects **average individual earning power**, not household earning strength.

### Equation

$$\text{Per Capita Income} = \frac{\text{Total Income}}{\text{Total Population}}$$

### Planning Interpretation

Lower per capita income relative to median household income suggests:

- Multiple wage earners per household
  - Shared or multigenerational living
  - Greater vulnerability to job loss or wage stagnation
- 

## D.3 Income Adequacy Ratio

### Definition

The Income Adequacy Ratio compares **individual earning capacity** to **household-level income**.

### Equation

Income Adequacy Ratio =  $\frac{\text{Per Capita Income}}{\text{Median Household Income}}$   
Income Adequacy Ratio =  $\frac{\text{Median Household Income}}{\text{Per Capita Income}}$

## Planning Interpretation

A **low ratio** indicates:

- Limited individual wages
- Higher reliance on pooled household incomes
- Reduced household resilience to economic disruption

This ratio is particularly important when evaluating housing affordability, cost burden, and workforce sustainability.

---

## D.4 Poverty Rate

### Definition

The poverty rate measures the percentage of individuals whose income falls below the federally defined poverty threshold, which varies by household size and composition.

### Equation

Poverty Rate =  $\frac{\text{Population Below Poverty Level}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$   
Poverty Rate =  $\frac{\text{Population Below Poverty Level}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$

## Planning Interpretation

Higher poverty rates:

- Increase demand for affordable housing and public services
  - Align with HUD affordability and CHAS indicators
  - Support eligibility for CDBG, HOME, USDA, and ARC funding
- 

## D.5 Poverty-to-Income Stress Ratio

## Definition

This ratio compares the local poverty rate to the statewide poverty rate to contextualize severity.

## Equation

Poverty Stress Ratio =  $\frac{\text{Local Poverty Rate}}{\text{State Poverty Rate}}$

## Planning Interpretation

A ratio greater than **1.0** indicates poverty levels exceed state norms.

Ratios approaching or exceeding **2.0** signal **structural economic stress**, not short-term hardship.

---

## D.6 Industry Wage Structure

### Definition

Industry wage structure examines the relationship between:

- Employment concentration by sector
- Median or average wages by sector

### Planning Interpretation

A workforce dominated by:

- Health Care, Retail, and Food Services supports job availability
- But constrains income growth due to wage ceilings

Limited representation in professional, technical, or industrial sectors reduces upward income mobility and household financial stability.

---

## D.7 Workforce Income Structure Indicator

### Conceptual Indicator

This composite indicator evaluates:

- Dominant employment sectors
- Median wages
- Per capita income
- Poverty prevalence

## Planning Interpretation

A service-heavy labor market with modest earnings:

- Increases cost-burden sensitivity even where rents are low
  - Reinforces the importance of workforce training and skills development
  - Supports economic diversification strategies rather than job quantity alone
- 

## D.8 Relationship Between Income and Housing Cost Burden

Income indicators in Appendix D align directly with **HUD cost-burden definitions**, where households paying more than:

- **30% of income** → cost burdened
- **50% of income** → severely cost burdened

Lower income levels and limited wage growth increase the likelihood of housing cost burden **even in low-rent markets**, reinforcing the importance of HUD-based housing strategies documented in Appendix C.

---

## D.9 Planning Implications

The income indicators documented in this appendix confirm that economic challenges in Lanier County and the City of Lakeland are **structural and demographic in nature**, rather than cyclical or market-driven. These conditions support planning strategies focused on:

- Workforce development and training
- Higher-wage job attraction
- Small business and entrepreneurship support
- Integration of housing, transportation, and employment planning
- Long-term household stability rather than short-term growth

---

## Appendix D Summary

Income and workforce analysis confirms that modest household earnings, elevated poverty rates, and service-sector employment patterns shape affordability and economic resilience across the community. By grounding policy decisions in Census- and HUD-aligned indicators, the Comprehensive Plan positions Lanier County and the City of Lakeland to pursue **targeted investment, sustainable growth, and improved household stability**.



# Purpose of Appendix E

Appendix E documents **quantitative transportation indicators** used to evaluate commuting behavior, access to employment, and transportation equity for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. These indicators are derived from the **U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates**, as presented through Census Reporter.

This appendix provides numeric support for transportation findings referenced in the Transportation, Housing, Income, and Community Facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Data Sources

Primary data sources include:

- U.S. Census Bureau, **American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates**
- U.S. Census Bureau **QuickFacts**
- **U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates**
- Census Reporter profiles for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland  
<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US13173-lanier-county-ga/>

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## E.1 Commuting Mode Share

### Lanier County – Means of Transportation to Work

Mode of Transportation	Percent of Workers
Drove alone	<b>88.2%</b>
Carpooled	<b>3.8%</b>
Public transportation	<b>0.1%</b>
Walked	~1.9%
Bicycle	~0.3%
Taxicab, motorcycle, other	~0.7%

Worked from home

~5.0%

**Planning Interpretation:**

Lanier County exhibits very high dependence on personal vehicles, with minimal public transportation use. Alternative modes are present but limited, reinforcing roadway safety and vehicle access as primary transportation priorities. **City of Lakeland – Means of Transportation to Work**

Mode of Transportation	Percent of Workers
Drove alone	81.1%
Carpooled	6.9%
Public transportation	0.2%
Walked	~5.1%
Bicycle	~0.6%
Taxicab, motorcycle, other	~0.9%
Worked from home	~5.2%

**Planning Interpretation:**

Lakeland shows **slightly greater modal diversity** than the County overall, reflecting shorter trip distances and more compact development, though automobile travel remains dominant.

[\[statisticalatlas.com\]](https://www.statisticalatlas.com)

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## E.2 Commute Time Distribution

### Lanier County – Commute Time to Work

Commute Time	Percent of Workers
Less than 10 minutes	~9.3%
10–19 minutes	~22.1%
20–34 minutes	20.4%

35–59 minutes	~27.6%
60 minutes or more	~20.6%

- **Mean travel time to work: 24.5 minutes**
- Total workers (16+): **~3,700 workers**

**Planning Interpretation:**

Commute patterns indicate **moderate travel distances**, consistent with employment in local and nearby counties and minimal congestion. [\[statisticalatlas.com\]](https://www.statisticalatlas.com)

### City of Lakeland – Commute Time to Work

Commute Time	Percent of Workers
Less than 10 minutes	~12.4%
10–19 minutes	~21.9%
<b>20–34 minutes</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
35–59 minutes	~25.7%
60 minutes or more	~19.6%

- **Mean travel time to work: 24.7 minutes**

**Planning Interpretation:**

Lakeland’s commute times closely mirror County averages, reflecting its role as the County’s employment and service center rather than a congested urban area. [\[statisticalatlas.com\]](https://www.statisticalatlas.com)

## E.3 Vehicle Availability

### Lanier County – Vehicle Access

Household Vehicle Availability	Percent of Households
No vehicle available	<b>2.7%</b>
1 vehicle available	~36.8%

2 vehicles available	~41.5%
3 or more vehicles	~19.0%

**Planning Interpretation:**

While most households have vehicle access, the **2.7% without vehicles represent a critical mobility-vulnerable population** in a rural, transit-limited environment. [\[statisticalatlas.com\]](https://www.statisticalatlas.com)

### City of Lakeland – Vehicle Access

Household Vehicle Availability	Percent of Households
No vehicle available	~2.7%
1 vehicle available	~39.6%
2 vehicles available	~38.2%
3 or more vehicles	~19.5%

**Planning Interpretation:**

Vehicle access patterns mirror County conditions, but **non-vehicle households are disproportionately low-income or renter-occupied**, increasing transportation-equity concerns. [\[Source: statisticalatlas.com\]](https://www.statisticalatlas.com)

## E.4 Transportation Dependency Indicator (Conceptual)

### Indicator Description

Transportation dependency increases where:

- Income is low
- Vehicle access is limited
- Public transportation options are minimal

### Planning Interpretation

In Lanier County and Lakeland:

- High drive-alone rates
- Low transit availability
- Pockets of zero-vehicle households

Together indicate **localized transportation vulnerability**, despite overall system adequacy.

---

## Appendix E Summary

Numerical transportation indicators confirm that Lanier County and the City of Lakeland operate within a **stable, automobile-dependent transportation system** characterized by:

- High personal-vehicle reliance
- Moderate commute times
- Limited modal diversity
- Small but critical mobility-vulnerable populations

These metrics support transportation strategies focused on **maintenance, safety, walkability in Lakeland, and coordination with housing and income policies**, rather than large-scale system expansion.

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TIME: 10 AM

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# LANIER COUNTY MOODY ACTIVITY ZONE

## Appendix B: Lanier County Moody Activity Zone Overlay District Ordinance

*The Lanier County Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts Ordinance, adopted as an Amendment to the Land Development Code of Lanier County, is included here as an Appendix to the Comprehensive Plan.*

### **Overview**

This Lanier County Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts Ordinance is adopted by Lanier County Commissioners in order to promote compatible land use between Lanier County's residents and Moody Air Force Base. This Ordinance accomplishes this goal through the establishment of three Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts (referred to in this document for the sake of brevity as MAZ-1, MAZ-2, and MAZ-3) in the vicinity of Moody Air Force Base. Geographically, the Ordinance pertains to lands within the jurisdiction of Lanier County as shown in Figure 1. For each of these three Districts, this Ordinance establishes a set of compatibility criteria applicable to new development.

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the three Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) Overlay Districts is to:

- a. Protect and promote the general health, safety, economy and welfare of Lanier County residents and Moody Air Force Base (MAFB);
- b. Prevent infringement upon, and promote the operation and safety of, MAFB;
- c. Promote land use compatibility between MAFB and surrounding Lanier County current and future land uses; and
- d. Protect MAFB from encroaching development that would hinder its continued safe and efficient operation.

### **1.2 Definitions**

The following definitions shall be used to interpret the terms used in this chapter.

**Accessory structures.** Structures that are clearly incidental to, and customarily found in connection with, the principal use and/or structure of the property (non-living quarters).

**Aircraft Noise Contours.** The geographic area that is affected by MAFB flight operations and that lies within the 65 Ldn and greater noise exposure area as defined by the noise zone map contained within the MAFB Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Study.

**Attenuation.** Special design and construction practices intended to lower the amount of noise and vibration that penetrates the windows, door and walls of a building.

**A-weighted sound level.** The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting network which discriminates against the lower frequencies according to a relationship approximating the auditory sensitivity of the human ear. The level is designated dBA.

**Building.** A building is any structure which:

- (a) is permanently affixed to the land; and
- (b) has one or more floors and a roof.

**Cutoff light fixtures.** A light fixture which prevents any light dispersion or direct glare to shine above a 90 degree, horizontal plane from the base of the fixture.

**Day-night average noise level (Ldn or DNL).** The noise criterion commonly used to describe the average A-weighted sound energy at a location over a 24-hour period with a penalty for nighttime noise when people tend to be more sensitive to noise disturbance.

**Decibel (dB).** A unit for measuring the level of a sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure, which is 20 micropascals (20 micronewtons per square meter).

**Habitable living area.** Any room or area within an occupied structure used for human habitation which may contain any of the following: seating areas; office space; area for listening to the television, radio, or other media; or provisions for sleeping, eating, or sanitation.

**Noise Level Reduction.** The decibels of sound decrease required as determined by comparing equivalent source sound level across frequencies.

**Noise-sensitive land use.** An activity on or use of property which is acutely sensitive to aircraft noise generation. Examples include, but are not limited to: site-built residential uses; educational, cultural and religious facilities; health services; tourist lodging services; enclosed recreational or entertainment facilities; theaters; and offices.

**Occupied structure.** An enclosed building on any real property developed and used for human habitation. Purposes may include, but are not limited to, residential buildings, religious facilities; hospitals and other medical facilities; public and private schools; indoor areas where the public is received, office areas, and indoor areas where typical noise levels are below 45 Ldn (day-night average sound level in decibels) for communication or to avoid distraction.

**Overlay District.** A special land development district or zoning district, placed over one or more existing land development districts, which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying districts.

**Planned Development District.** The PD land development district is intended to allow flexible site planning and building arrangement for residential, commercial, or mixed-use developments under a unified plan. The district allows for the utilization of innovative land planning methods, which foster natural resource conservation, neighborhood cohesiveness, interconnectivity, and a reduction in traffic congestion while creating a unique sense of place.

**Qualified Professional in Acoustics.** An individual who has education or training in environmental noise and has experience in designing environmental noise mitigation measures. The individual shall provide a statement of qualifications upon request.

**R3008a, R3008b, and R3008c.** Restricted airspace to protect the flying public from dangers of military air traffic.

**Sound transmission class (STC).** A single number rating for describing sound transmission loss of a wall, roof, floor, window, door, partition or other building components or assembly.

**Structure.** Any object, whether permanent, temporary, or mobile, including, but not limited to, a building, tower, crane, smokestack, earth formation, transmission line, flagpole or sign.

### **1.3 Applicability**

The standards of the three MAZ Overlay Districts shall apply to those properties that lie within those district boundaries. When a property is split by the boundary of a MAZ Overlay District, only that portion of the property within the Overlay District shall be required to meet the provisions of the District. Structures and uses existing on the effective date of these regulations shall not be required to change in order to comply with the requirements specified herein.

### **1.4 Exemptions**

The provisions of these regulations shall not be deemed applicable to the following when permitted in the underlying district:

**Accessory Uses and Structures.** Accessory uses and structures incidental to a permitted principal structure or use and within the intent, purposes, or objectives of these regulations.

**Agricultural Structures.** Bona fide agricultural buildings, structures, improvements, and associated nonresidential structures, provided such structures do not exceed the applicable height restrictions contained in these regulations.

**Existing Structures.** Structures existing on the effective date of these regulations shall not be required to change in order to comply with the requirements specified herein. However, the requirements set forth in this ordinance shall be applicable to the portion of the structure subject to enlargement, extension, conversion, reconstruction, or structural alteration, and not be retroactively applicable to the entire existing structure. Nothing shall prohibit the reconstruction of a building legally in use at the time of the adoption of this ordinance.

**Existing Uses.** Uses existing on the effective date of these regulations shall not be required to change in order to comply with the requirements specified herein. The pre-

existing use requirements of these regulations shall apply to the future applicability of the standards and requirements contained herein.

**Temporary Structures.** Temporary buildings and structures that are not used for residential purposes and that meet applicable height requirements in this ordinance, so long as such uses and associated structures are constructed incidental to a permitted primary use (as per the requirements of this Ordinance), do not generate excessive glare or electrical emissions that could interfere with standard MAFB aircraft operations, and that do not exceed the applicable height restrictions contained in these regulations.

**Temporary Uses.** Temporary uses, including, but not limited to, public celebrations and outdoor entertainment venues, so long as the period does not exceed five (5) days in any one (1) year period. A variance may be requested to extend the time period for a temporary use.

### **1.5 General Requirements For All Three MAZ Overlay Districts**

The following development standards shall apply to all proposed new uses and structures within all three Moody Activity Zone Overlay Districts (MAZ-1, MAZ-2, and MAZ-3).

**Electrical Emissions or Interference.** No development within any of the three MAZ Overlay Districts may create or result in electrical interference with navigational signals or radio communication between MAFB and aircraft operating within the affected areas.

**Air Emissions.** No development within any of the three MAZ Overlay Districts may emit smoke or particulate matter which, in sufficient quantities or concentrations, would impair pilot visibility in the vicinity of the base or clog aircraft engines.

#### **Notification Requirements**

1. Per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the County shall submit information to MAFB on plans, programs, actions and projects located within any of the three MAZ Overlay Districts that may affect MAFB. This may include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. Development proposals (including telecommunication towers)
  - b. Transportation improvements and plans
  - c. Sanitary waste facilities/infrastructure necessary to support development
  - d. Open space and recreation
  - e. Public works projects
  - f. Land use plans and ordinances
  - g. Rezoning and variances
2. Per the Memorandum of Understanding, the County and MAFB shall submit to each other, for review and comment, project notifications, policies, plans, reports, studies and similar information on development, infrastructure and environmental activities located within any of the three MAZ Overlay Districts.

In all cases where the requirements of this Ordinance conflict with the requirements of the Schedule of Permitted Uses in the Lanier County Land Development Code (Section 5-2), the more restrictive requirement shall apply.

### **1.6 MAZ-1 Overlay District Requirements**

In addition to the General Requirements of Section 0 above, which apply to all three MAZ Overlay Districts, the following development standards shall apply to all proposed new uses and structures within the MAZ-1 Overlay District.

**Lighting and Glare.** All new development within the MAZ-1 Overlay District must direct all exterior lighting toward the ground and utilize cutoff light fixtures and shielding to eliminate all up-lighting and light spillage at an angle greater than 90 degrees.

**Building and Structural Height.** The maximum height of any building or structure in the MAZ-1 Overlay District shall not exceed one (1) percent of its distance from the nearest runway terminus as drawn by a straight line from the property line nearest the runway, or 100' in height, whichever is less. Buildings or structures may be permitted in excess of 100' in height only with the express written approval of the Moody Air Force Base Installation Commander, or the designated representative.

**Minimum Lot Size.** The minimum required lot size in this district shall be the same as the minimum lot size required by the existing underlying Lanier County zoning.

**Applicability.** These standards shall apply to new construction or substantial renovations only.

**Land Use Regulations.** Land use regulations within the MAZ-1 Overlay District are shown in Section 0.

### **1.7 MAZ-2 Overlay District Requirements**

In addition to the General Requirements of Section 0 above, the following development standards shall apply to all proposed uses and structures within the MAZ-2 Overlay District.

**Lighting and Glare.** All new development within MAZ-2 must direct all exterior lighting toward the ground and utilize cutoff light fixtures and shielding to eliminate all up-lighting and light spillage at an angle greater than 90 degrees.

**Building and Structural Height.** The maximum height of any building or structure in the MAZ-2 Sub-District shall not exceed one (1) percent of its distance from the nearest runway terminus as drawn by a straight line from the property line nearest the runway, or 100' in height, whichever is less. Buildings or structures may be permitted in excess of 100' in height only with the express written approval of the Moody Air Force Base Installation Commander, or the designated representative.

**1.9 Land Use Regulations**

This section contains Section 5-2, the Table of Permitted Uses, from the Lanier County Land Development Ordinance, reproduced in full with additional columns for MAZ-1, MAZ-2, and MAZ-3.

The following terminology is used in this table:

X = permitted by right

SE = permitted by Special Exception only

Blank = not permitted

\* = same as underlying zoning district (for MAZs only)

**Land Use Regulations.** Land use regulations within the MAZ-2 Overlay District are shown in Section 0.

**1.8 MAZ-3 Overlay District Requirements**

The General Requirements of Section 0 above shall apply to all proposed uses and structures within the MAZ-3 Overlay District.

**Land Use Regulations.** Land use regulations within the MAZ-3 Overlay District are shown in Section 0.

SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3	
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
<b>RESIDENTIAL AND RELATED USES</b>														
<b>Accessory Buildings or Uses</b> not otherwise listed in this table, normally incidental to one or more permitted principal uses.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
<b>Animals</b> , non-commercial keeping of horses as an accessory use to residential land uses, provided that in R-R, R-1, R-1A, and MHP zones:														
a) shall only be permitted on a lot containing not less than two acres;														
b) all buildings used to house the animals shall be set back not less than 150 feet from any property line;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
c) all animals shall be maintained at least fifty (50) feet from any property line except property lines adjoining an A-U zones; and														
d) there shall be not less than 30,000 square feet of fenced lot area not covered by the principal structure for each animal.														
<b>Animals</b> , kennel, non-commercial, as an accessory use to residential land uses provided that:														
a) Minimum lot size of one acre (5 acres in A-U);	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
b) All buildings used to house the animals shall be setback 100 feet from any property line.														
<b>Boarding or Rooming House</b>							X	X					SE	*
<b>Church or other Place of Worship</b> , including Sunday School buildings, parish houses, convents, nursery school, kindergartens (subject to developmental standards listed in use item # 19) and other related uses on the same premises and operated by the church provided that within R-R, R-1, R-1A, MHP, R-C, G-B zones:														
a) Lot must front collector or arterial street;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				SE	SE	*
b) the lot size shall be no less than two (2) acres (five (5) acres required in A-U land development district);														
c) any building or structure established with any such use shall have minimum side and rear yards of fifty feet.														
<b>Dwellings</b> , located within a building containing another principal use.														

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3	
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
Dwelling, Single Family	X	X	X	X	SE							*	*	*
Dwelling, Two Family (Duplex)	X												SE	*
Garden, Private	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			*	*	*
Family Day Care Home in single-family detached dwellings.	X	X	SE	SE	SE	X						SE	SE	SE
Family Personal Care Home	X	SE	SE	SE		SE						SE	SE	SE
Garage Apartment, provided no more than one shall be permitted on a lot with the principal dwelling, and provided such shall be permitted only within the rear yard.	X													
Group Personal Care Home, provided that: a) Minimum lot size of one (1) acre in all zones; (except A-U, which requires five acres.) b) Parking is restricted to rear and sideyard and shall be screened per Section 3-19.	X						X	X				SE	SE	SE
Guest Quarters or Servant Quarters, provided no more than one shall be permitted on a lot with the principal building and provided such shall be permitted only within the rear yard. Within R-R, R1, and R1A zones, the lot on which such use is to be established must be fifty percent (50%) greater in lot area than the minimum standard lot size for the respective district.	X	X	X	X										
Home Occupation (See Section 9-1)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
Home Based Business (See Section 9-2)	X	SE	SE	SE	SE	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
Manufactured Home, individually sited, provided that: a) The manufactured home shall meet the same minimum square footage, setback and yard requirements as any other single family dwelling, and b) must be installed and anchored as per Georgia State minimum requirements, properly underpinned or skirted within 45 days with material comparable to the proposed manufactured home.	X	X											SE	*

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3	
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
Manufactured Housing Park, provided that: a) Access to manufactured housing parks shall be by paved street and directly abut an arterial or collector street as designated on the Major Thoroughfare Plan, Lanier County, Georgia, and, b) the manufactured housing park meets the requirements of Section 9-4 of this ordinance					X								SE	*
Public Owned Recreation Centers, Y.M.C.A. and Institutions of a Similar Nature	SE					X	X					SE	*	*
Schools (Public or Private) Elementary through high school.	SE	SE	SE	SE		SE	SE					SE	*	*
Schools, Kindergartens, Nurseries, and Child Day Care Centers, provided that: a) Off-street loading and unloading spaces are supplied; and b) at least one-hundred (100) square feet of outdoor play area is supplied for each child accommodated; and, c) the entire play area is enclosed by a steel mesh security fence with lockable gates approved by the Building Official or other substantial building material affording equal or better protection having a minimum height of at least four (4) feet and constructed in such a manner that maximum safety to the children is ensured. d) Lot must front collector or arterial street as specified on the Major Thoroughfare Plan.	SE						X	X	SE	SE		SE	*	*
Tourist Homes (Bed and Breakfast Inn)	SE					X	X					SE	*	*

SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3		
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA					
<b>BUSINESS USES</b>															
<b>Adult Entertainment Establishments</b> , provided that, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) No adult entertainment establishment shall advertise its location by signs more than six inches in height placed on the front of the building which shall state the name of the business and hours of operation only.</li> <li>b) No adult entertainment establishment shall advertise its location with flashing or other kinds of lights, signs, banners, or other devices, intended to attract the attention of the general public to its location.</li> <li>c) Adult book stores shall maintain all windows in a clear unobstructed manner so as to provide an open and unobstructed view through the interior of the book store.</li> <li>d) Adult movie houses shall maintain all windows in a clear and unobstructed manner, so that the entire reception area, lobby, ticket sales area of the theater is open and unobstructed to view by the public from all adjoining public thoroughfares and rights-of-way.</li> <li>e) Adult service establishments (bath houses, movie house, etc.) shall maintain all windows in a clear and unobstructed manner, so that the entire reception area, lobby, ticket sales area of the service establishment is open and unobstructed to view by the public from all adjoining public rights-of-way.</li> </ul>											X	*	*	*	
<b>Amusement or Recreational Activities (Commercial)</b> , carried on outside a building such as a golf or baseball driving range, miniature golf course, softball field, and uses of a similar nature.						X	X						*	*	*
<b>Amusement or Recreational Activities (Commercial)</b> , carried on outside a building which produces noise and/or noxious fumes, such as drag racing strips, race tracks, motorcycle races or ATV (all terrain vehicle) courses, and uses of a similar nature.								SE					*	*	*
<b>Amusement or Recreational Activities (Commercial)</b> , carried on wholly within a building, such as a cinema, theater, auditorium, and uses of a similar nature.							X						SE	SE	*

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3	
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
Radio and Television Studios						X	X						SE	*
Research, Scientific, and Testing Laboratories	SE					SE	SE							*
Restaurants, including drive-ins or drive-through facilities.						X	X						SE	SE
Retail Trade Establishments (enclosed)						X	X						*	*
Utility Substation, provided all buildings, masts, and other facilities are located at least two hundred (200) feet from adjacent property lines on any lot which adjoins any residential district.	X					SE	X	X	X				*	*
Railroad or Bus Passenger Station						X	X	X	X				*	*
Railroad Freight Station							X	X	X				*	*
Retail Auto Parts and Tire Stores						SE	X	X	X				*	*
Residential Mobile Home Sales Room and Sales Lot							X	X					SE	*
Security Worker Housing						SE	SE	SE	SE				SE	*
Shell Home Display Yards							X	X					*	*
Shrubbery Sales (Within a RC zone, must be wholly contained within the building.)						X	X	X					*	*
Specialty Shops, such as gift shops, jewelry stores, jewelry repair, antique shops, and stores of a similar nature.						X	X						*	*
Taxidermist							X	X					*	*
Taxi Office						SE	X	X					*	*
Telecommunications Towers (Commercial) Not to include HAM nor CB operations: a) Provided all structures are setback from property lines and right-of-way lines the required distances for that district, plus 1 foot for every 2 feet above the height requirements of that district. b) Towers for telecommunication services will not be permitted within 500 feet of each other measured from base of tower to base of tower.	SE						SE	SE	SE				*	*
Telegraph or Messenger Service							X	X					*	*
Trade Schools							X	X	X				SE	*

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Blank = not permitted  
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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3	
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
Travel Trailer Park, provided that: a) No travel trailer nor R/V park shall be located except with direct access to a principal or minor arterial with a minimum lot width of not less than fifty (50) feet for that portion used for entrance and exit. No entrances or exits shall be through a residential district, or shall require movement of traffic from the park through a residential district. b) The minimum lot area required for a travel trailer park shall be three (3) acres. c) Spaces in a travel trailer park may be used by travel trailers provided they shall be rented by the day or week only, and an occupant of such space shall remain in the trailer park for a period of not more than thirty (30) days. d) Management headquarters, recreational facilities, toilets, showers, laundry facilities and other uses and structures customarily incidental to operation of a trailer park are permitted as accessory uses in any district in which travel trailer parks are allowed provided such establishments and the area primarily related to their operations shall not occupy more than ten (10) percent of the area of the park. e) No space shall be located so that any part intended for occupancy for sleeping purposes shall be within twenty (20) feet of the exterior property lines. f) In addition to meeting the above requirements, the travel trailer park site plan shall be accompanied by a certificate of approval from the Lanier County Health Department.														
Utility Trailer Rentals and Rent-Alls							X	X	X				*	*
Vending Machines, located out-of-doors subject to yard and setback requirements for the respective districts (as an accessory use only).					X	X	X	X	X				*	*

**MANUFACTURING, WHOLESALE & INDUSTRY**

SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT											MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3
	AU	RR	R1	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
<b>Acid Storage and Distribution</b>										SE		*	*	*
<b>Feed, Grain, or Fertilizer Wholesaling and Storage</b>								X	X			*	*	*
<b>Freezer Locker Service, Ice Storage</b>								X	X			*	*	*
<b>Greenhouse and Plant Nursery (Commercial)</b> heavy equipment allowed only in AU, WLI, and H-I districts. In RC district must be wholly contained within a building.	X					X	X	X	X			*	*	*
<b>Heavy Manufacturing.</b> The like which produce noise, odor, dust, fumes, fire hazards or other nuisance features shall be setback not less than five hundred (500) feet from any H-I district boundary.													*	*
- Asphalt or concrete plant										SE		*	*	*
- Battery manufacturing										SE		*	*	*
- Bone distillation										SE		*	*	*
- <i>Breweries and Distilleries</i>										SE		*	*	*
- <i>Coating of cans, coils, fabrics, vinyl, metal, furniture, appliance surfaces, wire, paper, and flat wood paneling</i>										SE		*	*	*
- Corrosive acids manufacture										SE		*	*	*
- Drop forge industry										SE		*	*	*
- Explosives storage										SE		*	*	*
- Extraction industries - extraction and removal of sand, gravel, top soil, clay, dirt, precious metals, gems, and minerals	SE									SE		*	*	*
- Fat or oil manufacture (including fat rendering)										SE		*	*	*
- Fertilizer manufacture										SE		*	*	*
- Fiberglass insulation manufacturers										SE		*	*	*
- Food processing plants, including fish and poultry facilities										SE		*	*	*
- Grain mill product manufacture										SE		*	*	*
- Hazardous waste receiving, handling, and disposal facilities										SE		*	*	*
- Leather tanning manufacture										SE		*	*	*
- Linoleum manufacture										SE		*	*	*
- Luggage manufacture										SE		*	*	*
- Lumber manufacture (Lumber saw mill and storage)										SE		*	*	*
- Meat processing plant										SE		*	*	*

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT											MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
- Metal product manufacturing									SE			*	*	*
- Open storage yards as principal uses									SE			*	*	*
- Organic materials reduction									SE			*	*	*
- Petroleum refining and related industry									SE			*	*	*
- Pulp or paper mill									SE			*	*	*
- Recycling Centers, processing									SE			*	*	*
- Rubber or plastic product manufacture									SE			*	*	*
- Solid Waste transfer stations	SE							SE	SE			*	*	*
- Solvent metal cleaning									SE			*	*	*
- Stone, clay, or glass manufacture									SE			*	*	*
- Textile manufacturing and processing									SE			*	*	*
- Volatile organic liquid handling and storage									SE			*	*	*
- Transportation equipment manufacture								SE	X			*	*	*
<b>Junk Yard or Auto Graveyard</b> , provided that: a) Minimum lot size of five (5) acres is required; and b) front yard setback increased fifty (50) feet over requirements for other uses in WLI and H-I zones; and c) must be set back five hundred (500) feet from any district boundary. d) the entire junk yard or auto grave yard shall be screened as required in Section 3-19.								SE	SE			*	*	*
<b>Landfill, inert</b>								SE	SE			*	*	*
<b>Landfill, sanitary</b>									SE			*	*	*
<b>Light Manufacturing:</b> • Appliance and electronic device assembly plant including the manufacturing of parts for appliances and electronic devices; and • Manufacturing of food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products, but not including fish and meat products, sauerkraut, vinegar, yeast, and rendering plants; and • Machine shop and related activities; and								X	X			*	*	*
								X	X			*	*	*
								X	X			*	*	*

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA			
• Construction of signs, including painted signs; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Cooperage; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Bottling and canning plants; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Light sheet metal products such as ventilating ducts and eaves; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Ice manufacturing; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Laundry, cleaning, and dyeing plants; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Musical instruments, toys, novelties, and similar products; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Ceramic products provided that kilns shall only be by gas or electricity; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Assembly of products from previously prepared materials; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Tinsmith and roofing services; and								X	X		*	*	*
• Other manufacturing, processing, packaging, or handling of a similar nature which shall not omit or produce more smoke, noise, odor, dust, vibration or fumes than the uses listed herein.								X	X		*	*	*
• <i>Manufacturing, processing, recycling, and assembling within buildings, not otherwise specified in this table.</i>								SE	SE		*	*	*
• <i>Recycling centers, collection points</i>								SE	X		*	*	*
<b>Lumber Yard, Coal Storage Yards, or Other Storage Not Specifically Listed in this column</b> such yards if within a WLI district shall be enclosed by screening per Section 3-19.								X	X		*	*	*
<b>Petroleum Storage</b> (Wholesale storage and wholesale distribution)								X	X		*	*	*
<b>Railroad Classification and Repair Yard</b>									X		*	*	*
<b>Sale of Livestock</b> (Commercial Sales and/or Auction Facility)	SE								X		*	*	*
<b>Stock Yards and Slaughter Houses</b>								SE	SE		*	*	*
<b>Truck Terminal</b>								X	X		*	*	*

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT										MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3
	AU	RR	R1	R1A	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA			
<b>Warehousing</b> (not related to sales on the premises)								X	X		*	*	*
<b>Warehousing (Mini Storage Facility)</b> Storage for personal property - must be wholly contained within a building.								X	X		*	*	*
<b>Wholesaling of a Light Commercial</b> Nature when operated in conjunction with or as part of a retail outlet.							X	X	X		*	*	*
<b>Wholesaling</b> (not covered in other parts of this list)							SE	X	X		*	*	*
<b>Wood Products Manufacturing</b>								SE	X		*	*	*
<b>AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED USES</b>													
<b>Amusement or Recreational Activities</b> (Resource Oriented), such as parks; marinas, bird sanctuaries; botanical gardens, archery ranges and commercial fishing ponds.	X										*	*	*
<b>Amusement or Recreational Activities</b> - Hunting and shooting preserves and clubs and paintball ranges.	SE										*	*	*
<b>Agricultural Experimental Laboratory and/or Facilities</b>	SE										*	*	*
<b>Apiculture</b>	X										*	*	*
<b>Agricultural Worker Housing</b>	SE											SE	*
<b>Commercial Chicken Houses</b>	SE										SE	*	*
<b>Conservation Areas and Passive Recreational Facilities</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
<b>Cotton Gin</b>	SE							SE	SE		*	*	*
<b>Crop Dusting Service</b> - If landing strip or pad is associated with activity must be set back five hundred (500) feet from all property lines.	SE							SE	SE			SE	*
<b>Dairies</b>	X										*	*	*
<b>Farming and Farm Operations</b> , including related structures and other agricultural uses.	X										*	*	*
<b>Fish Hatcheries</b>	X										*	*	*
<b>Forestry Nurseries (Tree Farms)</b>	X										*	*	*
<b>Growing of Crops</b>	X							X	X		*	*	*
<b>Horticultural Production</b> , including related retail and wholesale activities.	X										*	*	*
<b>Peanut Drying Facility (Commercial)</b>	SE								SE		*	*	*
<b>Plant Farms</b>	X										*	*	*
<b>Riding or Boarding Stables</b>	X										SE	*	*

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SECTION 5-2 LAND USE	LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT											MAZ 1	MAZ 2	MAZ 3
	AU	RR	RI	RIA	MHP	RC	GB	WLI	HI	CA				
Rodeo or Horse Show	SE											SE	*	*
Rural Home Occupation	SE					X	X	X	X			*	*	*
Wineries	X											*	*	*
Worm Farm	X											*	*	*
Vegetable Packing and Sorting Facility	SE											*	*	*
Vineyards	X											*	*	*
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>														
Armories, for meetings and training organizations.							X	X	X			SE	*	
Carnival or Athletic Event, Community Fair or Other Event of Interest to the Public, not to exceed thirty (30) days.	X					X	X	X	X			*	*	*
Cemetery (Commercial)	SE					SE	X					*	*	*
Flea Market							X	X				*	*	*
Religious Meetings, held in a tent or other temporary structure not to exceed thirty (30) days.						X	X	X	X			SE	SE	
Temporary Buildings and Storage or Materials (in conjunction with construction of a building) on a lot where construction is taking place or on adjacent lots such temporary uses to be terminated upon completion of construction. No temporary building shall be used for residential purposes.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*	*	*
Temporary Batch Plants and Construction Related Facilities for a Single Development	SE									SE		*	*	*

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## Lanier County Moody Activity Zone Overlay Districts

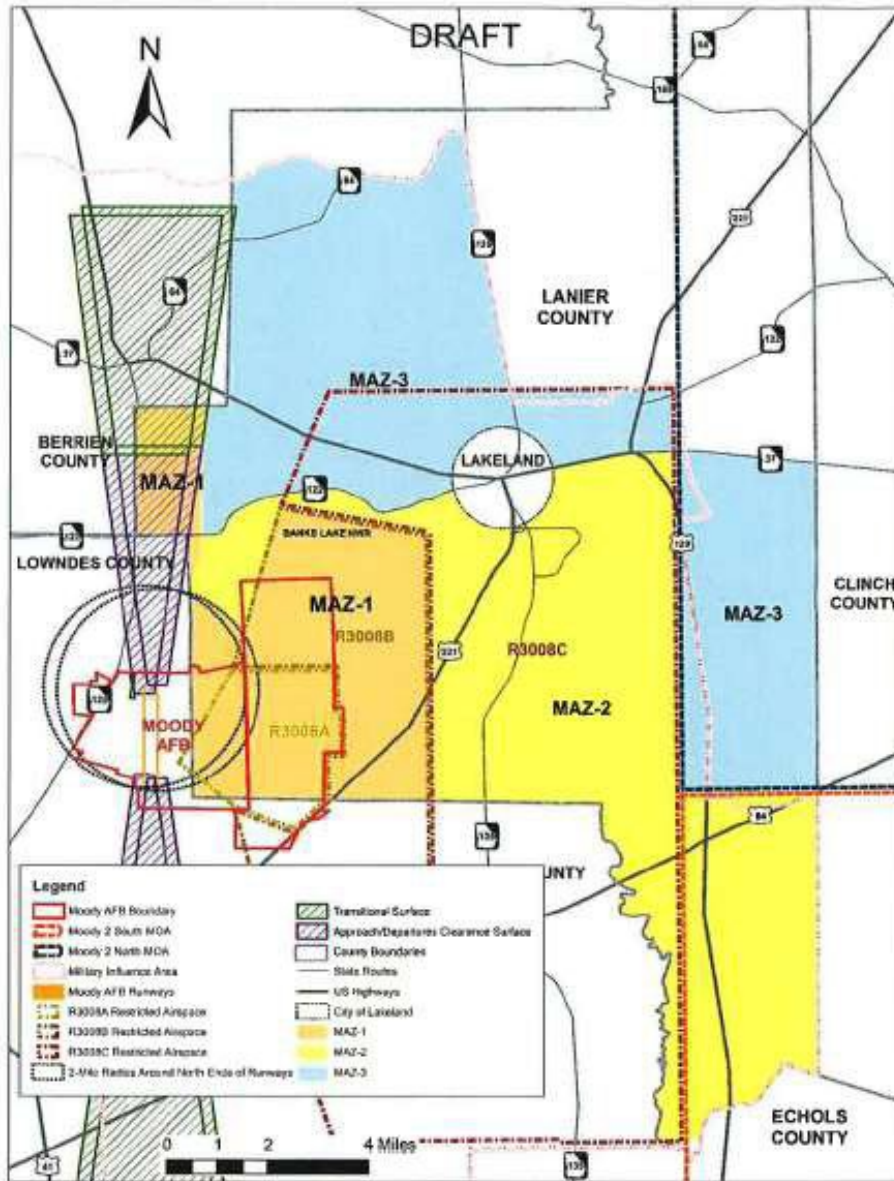
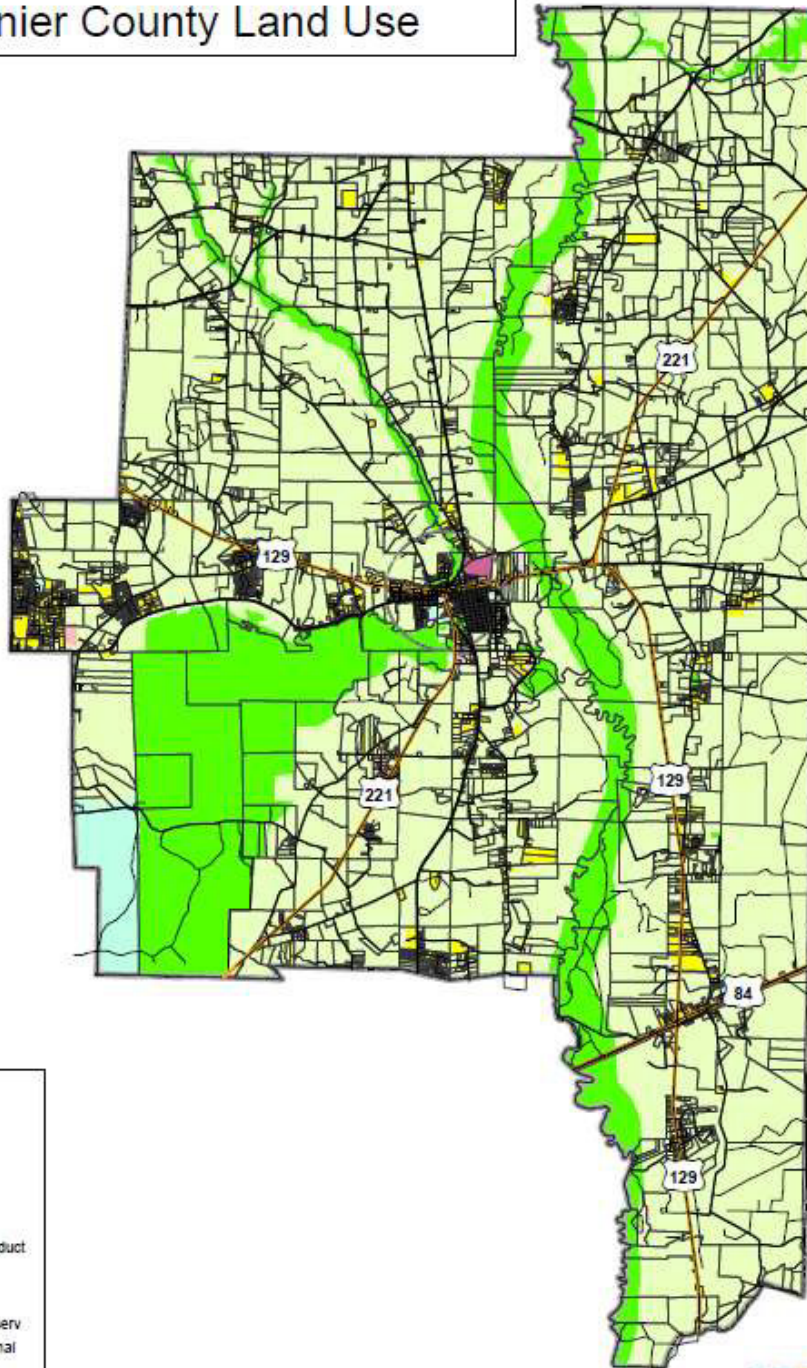


Figure 2. Map of MAZ Overlay Districts and MAFB Features

# Existing Land Use and Character Areas

# Lanier County Land Use

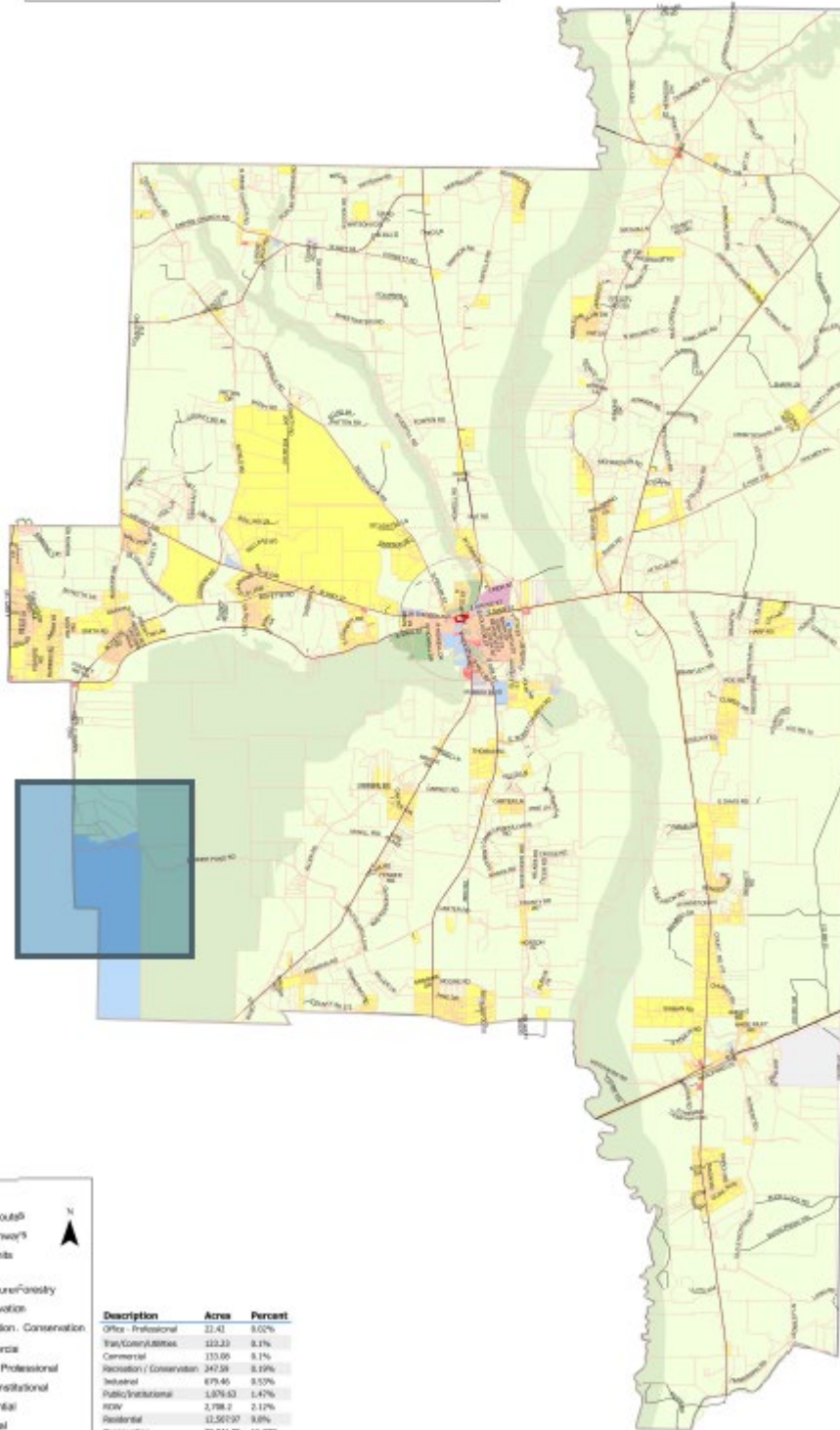


- Legend**
- State Routes
  - US Highways
  - City Limits
  - Parcels
  - County
  - Agricultural Product
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Park/Reor/Conserv
  - Public/Institutional
  - Residential
  - Tran/Comm/Utilities
  - Undeveloped/Unused

sgirc SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION



# Lanier Character Areas



**Legend**

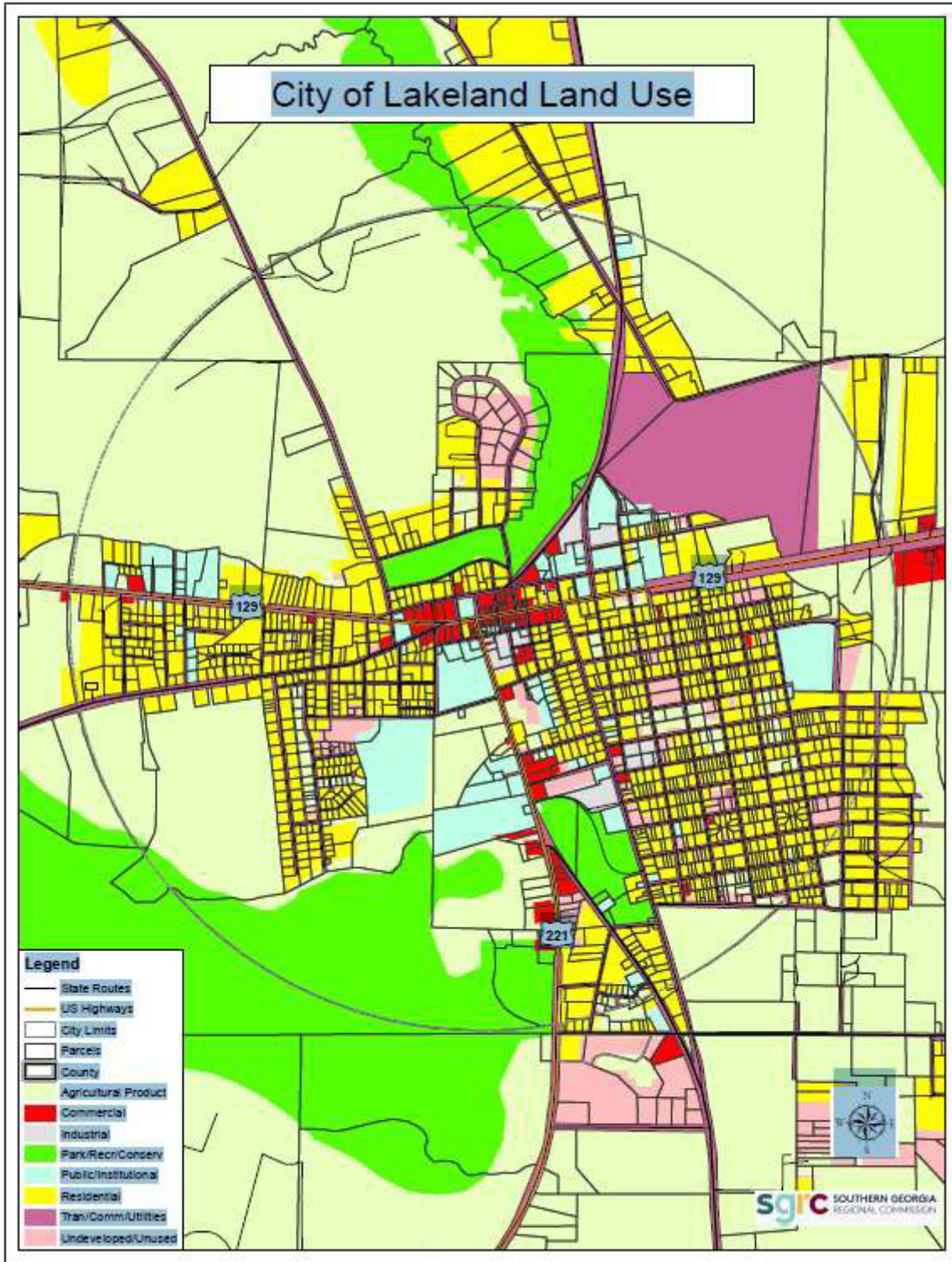
- State Route
- US Highway
- City Limits

**Description**

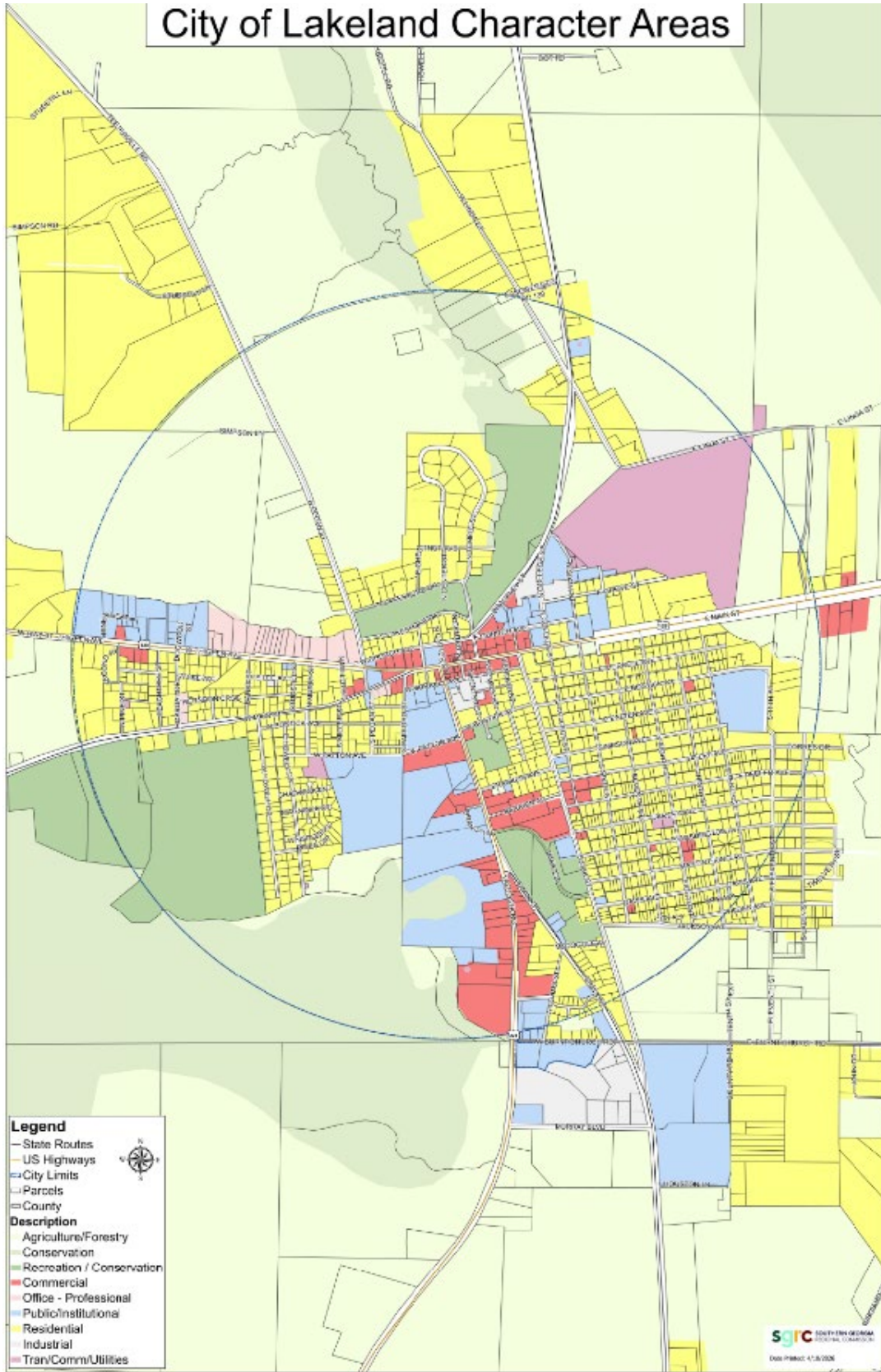
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Conservation
- Recreation, Conservation
- Commercial
- Office - Professional
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Industrial
- Trans/Comm/Utilities
- Water Application

Description	Acres	Percent
Office - Professional	22.41	0.02%
Trans/Comm/Utilities	122.23	0.1%
Commercial	133.06	0.1%
Recreation / Conservation	242.58	0.19%
Industrial	679.46	0.53%
Public/Institutional	1,876.52	1.47%
ROW	2,788.2	2.12%
Residential	12,561.97	9.8%
Conservation	20,841.29	16.33%
Agricultural Product	86,459.05	68.32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127,086.26</b>	<b>100%</b>





# City of Lakeland Character Areas



# Public Hearing Meetings

**Kick-Off for Comprehensive Plan  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
For Lanier County and the City of Lakeland  
Lanier County Board of Commissioners  
162 W Thigpen Avenue Lakeland, GA**

A public hearing will be held at 9:00 am October 13, 2025, at the Lanier County Board of Commissioners Office located at 162 W Thigpen Avenue, Lakeland, Georgia, to announce the beginning of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the process to be used to develop the Comprehensive Plan, announce opportunities for public participation in the development of the plan, and obtain input on the proposed planning process.

Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the County Clerk's Office at the Lanier County Commission Office at (229) 567-4313. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Lanier County Clerk at (229) 482-2088, or Alexandra Arzayus at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277 or email: [aarzayus@sgrc.us](mailto:aarzayus@sgrc.us)

**Transmittal Hearing for Comprehensive Plan  
2026 Comprehensive Plan Update  
For Lanier County and the City of Lakeland  
Lanier County Board of Commissioners  
162 Thigpen Ave  
Lakeland, Georgia 31635**

A public hearing will be held at 9:00 am Monday, April 13, 2026 in the Lanier County Annex, located at 162 Thigpen Ave, Lakeland, Georgia 31635 to announce the transmittal of 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update for Lanier County and the City of Lakeland. The purpose of the public hearing is to inform the community about the planning process and provide an opportunity to review and comment on the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the County Clerk's Office at the Lanier County Board of Commissioners Office at 229-482-2088. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Lanier County Clerk 229-482-2088, or Alexandra Arzayus at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277 or email: [aarzayus@sgrc.us](mailto:aarzayus@sgrc.us)

# Transmittal Letters

**CITY OF LAKELAND**  
**64 SOUTH VALDOSTA ROAD**  
**LAKE LAND, GEORGIA 31635**  
**PHONE (229) 482-3100 FAX (229)482-3390**

William P. (Bill) Darsey  
Mayor

Councilmembers

Otis Calhoun	Jason Walden
Johnny Reynolds	Vallentio Brockington
Mary Simons	Grace Mack

Diane Westberry, CMC  
City Clerk/Finance Officer  
Tommy Coleman  
City Attorney

April 13, 2026

Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
1937 Carlton Adams Drive  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

RE: Lanier County and Lakeland 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal


City of Lakeland has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Diane Westberry, City Clerk, at (229) 482-3100, or [dwestberry@lakelandga.gov](mailto:dwestberry@lakelandga.gov).

Sincerely,

  
William P. Darsey Mayor of Lakeland

Attest:

  
Diane Westberry, City Clerk

**LANIER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

28 S. Valdosta Rd.  
Lakeland, Georgia 31635  
Phone (229) 482-2088  
Fax (229) 482-8187

[boardofcomm@laniercountyvoc.com](mailto:boardofcomm@laniercountyvoc.com)

April 13, 2026

Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
1937 Carlton Adams Drive  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

RE: Lanier County and Lakeland 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

Lanier County has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Kirstie Durrance, County Clerk, at 229-482-2088, or [boardofcomm@laniercountyvoc.com](mailto:boardofcomm@laniercountyvoc.com).

Sincerely,



Alex Lee, Lanier County Chairman

Attest:



Kirstie Durrance, County Clerk

**Lanier County is an Equal Opportunity Service Provider and Employer**

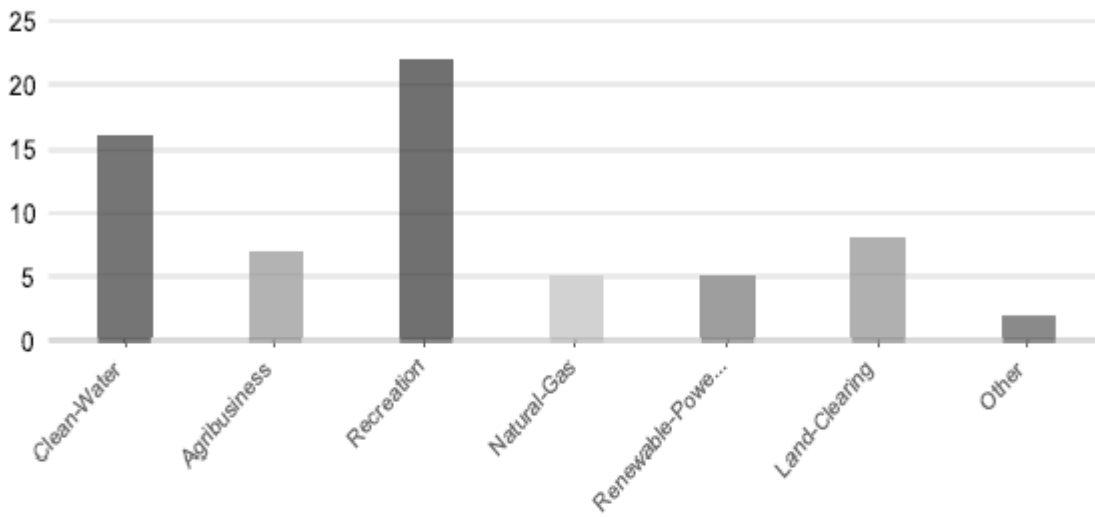
# Survey Questions

## SWOT Questions

- 1.** What County do you live in?
- 2.** What City do you live in?
- 3.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Natural Resources?
- 4.** Expand on Natural Resource Needs
- 5.** Opportunities for Natural Resource Improvement
- 6.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Cultural Resources?
- 7.** Expand on Cultural Resource Needs
- 8.** Opportunities for Cultural Resource Improvement
- 9.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Economic Development?
- 10.** Expand on Economic Development Needs
- 11.** Opportunities for Economic Development Improvement
- 12.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Housing?
- 13.** Expand on Housing Needs
- 14.** Opportunities for Housing Improvement
- 15.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Transportation?
- 16.** Expand on Transportation Needs
- 17.** Opportunities for Transportation Improvement
- 18.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Land Use?
- 19.** Expand on Land Use Needs
- 20.** Opportunities for Land Use Improvement
- 21.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Community Facilities?
- 22.** Expand on Community Facility Needs
- 23.** Opportunities for Community Facility Improvement
- 24.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Intergovernmental Coordination?
- 25.** Expand on Intergovernmental Coordination Needs
- 26.** Opportunities for Intergovernmental Coordination Improvement
- 27.** What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to Broadband?
- 28.** Expand on Broadband Needs
- 29.** Opportunities for Broadband Improvement
- 30.** Strengths
- 31.** Threats

**Natural Resources**

○ What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to...



Answers	Count	Percentage
---------	-------	------------

Clean-Water	16	48.48%
Agribusiness	7	21.21%
Recreation	22	66.67%
Natural-Gas	5	15.15%
Renewable-Power	5	15.15%
Land-Clearing	8	24.24%
Other	2	6.06%

Answered: 30 Skipped: 3

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Too much trash from moving in and out of trailer parks/apartments. They just put their trash on the side of the road. Not in cans.	1
Affordable shopping	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 31

o Other (2)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Traffic Light	1

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People burning yard debris within city limits!	1
------------------------------------------------	---

Answered: 2 Skipped: 31

o Other (3)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Over grown yards. Junk in yards.	1
Affordable groceries	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 31

o Other (4)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

**Response**

**Count**

Electricity options - Ga Power cost too much!!

1

Answered: 1 Skipped: 32

Response	Count
We've always seemed to have issues with our city water. I know there has been upgrades, but still seems to have issues.	1
We have beautiful lakes and rivers that seems like would be great opportunity to draw some tourism with guided boat rides or more hiking trails.	1
There is little attention to Banks Lake even though we are under federal government. We need better access and improvements to this gem as well as the Robert Simpson Trail and Lake Irma. Also few are aware of the bike trail established by the Boy Scouts, which has been ignored.	1
The water genuinely smells of bleach or other chemicals. There is a great need for more recreational activities for our youth besides sports.	1
The City of Lakeland must address concerns within its water distribution center and water treatment facilities as well as its sanitary sewer collection and treatment systems.	1
Replace old galvanize pipe and install new schedule 40 PVC piping.	1
More things for kids to do in the area, things like a new and updated park with a walking path	1
More recreational opportunities are needed and that is a viable goal based on the natural resources we have available here. Also, our agriculture community is struggling due to market conditions and weather related losses. A focus on making sure our agriculture community has the support and resources available to assist needs to be a focus.	1
Maintaining high-quality drinking water should remain a priority for the community. Additionally, expanding natural gas availability would support residential needs and future economic development.	1
Lanier County has great natural resources that should be capitalized on. We have the Alapaha river that dissects the county and Banks lake. This could be a major draw for the community. Fishing tournaments, Archery tournaments, River tours, ect. could bring in revenue. Other sports based natural resources could be a driving range incorporated with the future baseball complex (with tournaments).	1
Lakeland needs to expand. Property taxes are way too high!! Electric bills are way too high!! Groceries are way too high!!	1
Farmland is going away to development.	1
.	1

Answered: 13 Skipped: 20

o Opportunities for Natural Resource Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Write warnings/tickets for trash. Get the 2 pair of shoes off the lines over Pine St.	1
We need more family / kid friendly recreation possibilities... community amphitheater, walking tracks, splash pad, dog park.	1
USDA could improve programs to promote retention of agriculture	1
The City of Lakeland can pursue federal and state grants/loans to address these needs as it relates to clean water. The City of Lakeland also needs to pursue becoming a PlanFirst community to receive CDBG Grants on an annual basis and be given an opportunity for interest rates discounts through the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority.	1
Open a recycling cans, make the community recycle stop wasting so much open up the ponds do more of the nature trail	1
Make sure we have facilities that allow us to take advantage of the existing natural resources	1
Invest in completion of the Banks lake campground including walking trails, and boat tours. Add a driving range to the baseball park. Work with community partners such as the WWALS watershed coalition and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.	1
Hiking trails and guided tours	1
Complete the new recreation park and the RV park at Banks Lake	1
Be sure that the suggestion above is completed by state standards.	1
As noted repair Robert Simpson Trail, create fishing docks in Lake Irma, keep the weeds out since the city has the equipment to do so, complete the RV park at Banks Lake ( while the weather is dry); Federal government either attend to Banks Lake or give it to the state to become a state park.	1

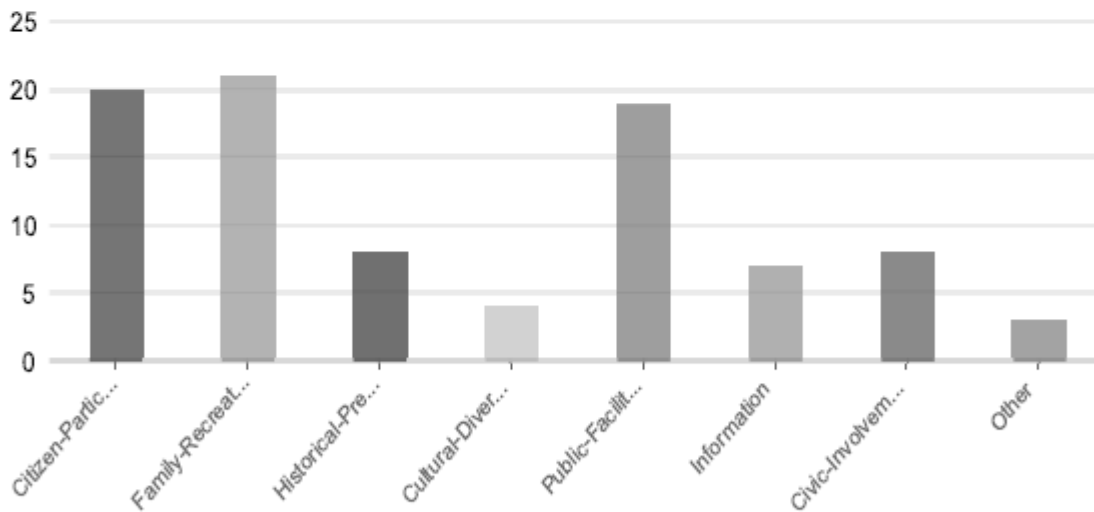
Affordable shops. Shops are local owned and way too expensive. Affordable groceries. Piggly Wiggly 1 is outrageous in prices!! An Aldis, Save A Lot, Food Lion would be a more affordable option. The traffic is growing and adding a traffic light or two would help especially in front of the courthouse. Allowing more electric companies in the area. Georgia Power is too high in prices!! \$500-\$600 a month electric bills are insane!! Clean water is a major one!! The water smells like chlorine and bleached clothes. It is undrinkable and horrible for your health. A filtration system for the city before water goes to the customers would be great choices. Recreation. The trail by Lake Irma needs repaired. Parks need more attention. Abolish property taxes if they own their home!! Lakelands property taxes are insane!! No commodities, nothing to do, all shopping is expensive.....at least give us some great things for the amount we pay.

1

Answered: 13 Skipped: 20

**Cultural Resources**

o What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to...



**Answers**

**Count**

**Percentage**

Citizen-Participation	20	60.61%
Family-Recreation	21	63.64%
Historical-Preservation	8	24.24%

Cultural-Diversity	4	12.12%
Public-Facilities	19	57.58%
Information	7	21.21%
Civic-Involvement	8	24.24%
Other	3	9.09%

Answered: 31 Skipped: 2

○ Other (1)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
we need to look into creating like a big attraction like wild adventures like that part of adventures. Jacksonville has a zoo I mean, bring something like that to Lakeland so we can get more people in our town spend more money.With our small business	1
Junk in yards. Buming yard debris within city limits.	1
Educational opportunities	1

Answered: 3 Skipped: 30

○ Other (2)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Club involvement	1

Answered: 1 Skipped: 32

o **Expand on Cultural Resource Needs**

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>
Times & meetings need to be available for the working class people to attend	1
The community should focus on revitalizing the downtown area by attracting more businesses and restaurants. A stronger downtown would support local economic growth and provide more places for residents to gather and spend time.	1
Signage is critical, mural restoration, downtown restoration completed with limit to replication of services (ie tire stores, convenience stores, vape stores) and improved choice of services/retail, eliminating vacant buildings; more access to parking; steer clear of special interest projects and focus on greater needs of community; improve access to the arts.	1
Parents of students should encourage involvement in educational activities and development	1
Need more community participation	1
Library and parks need improvement	1

Lanier County and the City of Lakeland has a need for community involvement to help offset cost of providing services. Citizen groups that volunteer to act as mentors for local youths, A walking tour of downtown Lakeland that showcases the history of the city establishing a soup kitchen to help feed the needy are all excellent examples.	1
Lakeland needs to create a historic district to keep things like circle k, pawn shops and liquor stores out of the downtown area	1
Historical-Preservation - need to ensure that the oldest still habitable homes and businesses are highlighted, and prevent from falling into disrepair. Family-Recreation - We need to continue on the sports complex. Explore more options for youth development and mentoring outside of the school hours. Public-Facilities - finish the Banks Lake RV section and find more places and expand facilities at the boat ramps (maybe camp site, restrooms, etc)	1
Have town hall community meetings so that elected officials can hear the complaints and dilemmas from their constituents to help better their lives.	1
.	1

Answered: 11 Skipped: 22

o **Opportunities for Cultural Resource Improvement**

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

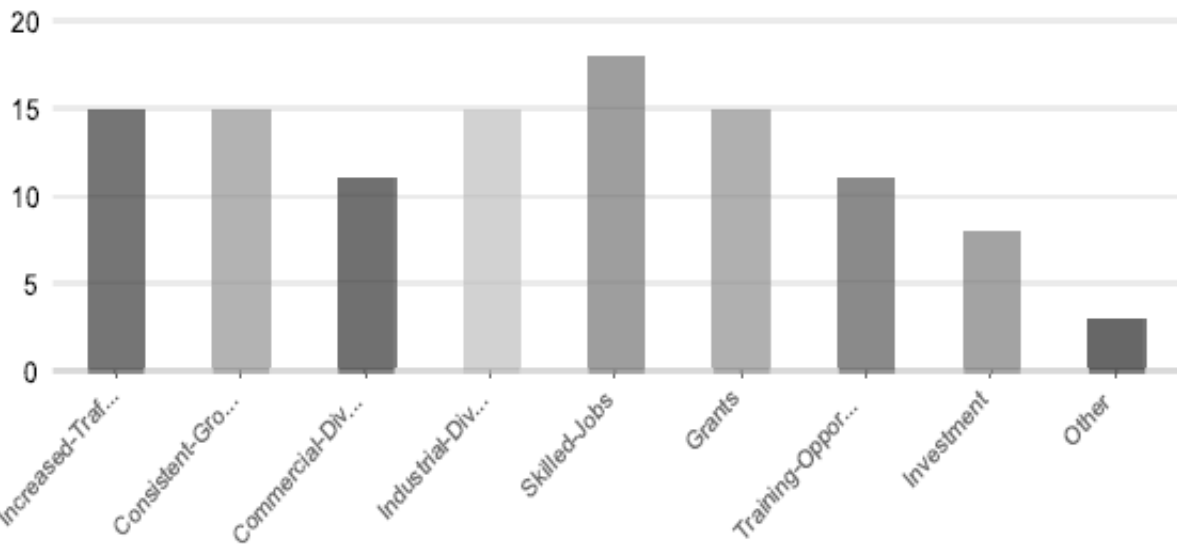
Response	Count
Write warnings/tickets.	1
They really need to inform the public with plenty of notice and let others get involved, not just people with certain last names.	1
The community could improve cultural resources by revitalizing downtown areas for more development	1
Recruit more people to have input and participation	1
Participation involvement.	1

Hard for Citizens to be involved in their community when their civic leaders intentionally hold meetings at times that they know their working constituents can't attend. They also refuse to consider any feedback, to the point of being rude & unprofessional during public portions of the meetings.	1
Enforcement of ordinances/blight tax on vacant or blighted properties; create attractive/consistent signage for county, city and retail as well as public parking; don't advocate for a historical district then allow the destruction of two of the oldest homes in the city —as well as a 300 year old oak tree—only to erect another convenience store across the street from three of the oldest, most historic homes in the "district." City/county support unified, quality restoration of murals per Roquemore/Patten family vision ( or remove them). Access grants and local funds for this art project, future maintenance as well as other fine arts ventures (community concerts, art center, workshops, drama production, visiting artists, ); utilize the Threatte Center for what it was intended—an art center ( not a meeting place, a GED center, batting cage).	1
Cultural resource needs involve the protection, preservation, and management of tangible and intangible evidence of past human activity that holds cultural, historical, or archaeological value. The needs range from identifying and documenting resources like historic buildings, artifacts, and landscapes to implementing laws like the National Historic Preservation Act to ensure they are maintained for future generations	1
Continue to give the community "Curb Appeal" through code enforcement. Market community events through local avenues such as 99.5 radio and social media outlets to brand the community. In short, we need to create interesting, family-oriented events and a marketing agency to help advertise.	1
And let's think outside the box and stop thinking inside the box and building extra buildings to just move already. It's already here if it ain't broken don't fix it. Create something new you got a strip mall down there, but I mean you're moving businesses from town to outside of town, you got elementary schools and we got an old school over there beside the patent detention center I mean come on build us. Let's make something I mean use it for if nothing else homeless people shit don't waste resources that we have here and build more stuff. I mean come on Useful stuff and just let the building sit there and let's and let's stop people that have more money than others buy up all the empty spaces in town and just throw their merchandise in. They never have no intentions on using it or opening the buildings when there's a lot of people in this town that can open in small business, but they don't got no business Room because they're full of junk and trash.	1
An after business hours (6pm or later) option should be required for all called public meetings from the city, county, and school board.	1
.	1

Answered: 12 Skipped: 21

**Economic Development**

○ What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to...



**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Answers	Count	Percentage
Increased-Traffic	15	45.45%
Consistent-Growth	15	45.45%
Commercial-Diversity	11	33.33%
Industrial-Diversity	15	45.45%
Skilled-Jobs	18	54.55%
Grants	15	45.45%
Training-Opportunities	11	33.33%
Investment	8	24.24%
Other	3	9.09%

Answered: 32 Skipped: 1

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>
Trash/junk in yards.	1
Property available - retail and industrial	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 31

Response	Count
With the growth of our town becomes more traffic. It may be time to invest in traffic lights on Main Street.	1
Where I think is to be fixed and worked on is or the Lakeland oil is at all that needs to be unblocked from everybody. That cannot see you coming from the sign or go behind inside the hospital that company now that is there, Lakeland tire there's no better than anybody else that he has been there for years I mean Lakemore Pump, gas station convenience store and they never one time blocked the view of anybody they never trashed up this middle of Lakeland either and then come on. We need some freaking lights in this town. You can't get out of the courthouse. You can't get away from the courthouse. You can't get on Oak Street. You can't go by the post office. Let's get some traffic lights town	1
We need more industrial jobs that have good paying wages. Which can help with consistent growth.	1
We need more businesses and jobs	1
Too many empty buildings that owners will not fix up.	1
The City of Lakeland and Lanier County need investments into the community via retail locations (i.e. Tractor Supply), commercial and industrial growth (relative proximity to I-75), etc. to continue to grow.	1
Not many employment opportunities	1
Need tech related programs increased or put back in the schools to prepare skilled labor for future growth. The increased traffic is killing the small town... need a by-pass from Ga31/221 to 122 east/ 37	1
Lanier County would benefit from attracting more businesses and investing in the revitalization of downtown Lakeland. Improving storefronts, infrastructure, and bringing in more restaurants, retail, and small businesses would make downtown a destination for residents and visitors. This would increase economic activity and create more local job opportunities.	1
Lanier County has areas that could be used for light industrial business. We have multiple major state highways running through the county, as well as a major railroad. The areas around the southern end of the county could serve as a light industrial park.	1
Lack of all of the above	1
I would like to see county and city merge together	1
Commercial Diversity - identify locations for more professional business (optometry, engineer, architects etc) Skilled Jobs - promote workforce development (any grants, apprenticeships?)	1

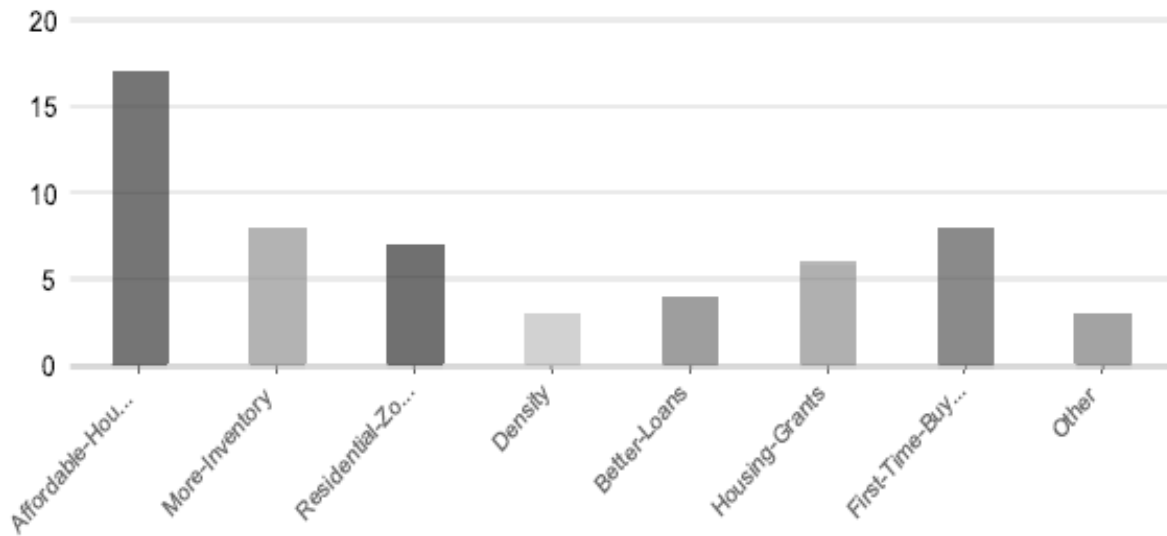
o Opportunities for Economic Development Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Write warnings/tickets.	1
We do not need seven gas stations nor do we need government entities buying commercial properties limiting the businesses that could open (the board of ed buying the old badcock building for "storage", a waste of economic potential)	1
The City of Lakeland can pursue grants through DCA's OneGeorgia Authority for EDGE funds, Rural Site Initiatives, and Rural Workforce Housing.	1
Schools can put technical training back in and increase the tech programs	1
Improve parking, improve signage ( people are thru town before they know of our restaurants); need to actively recruit retail and dining opportunities and not give up best properties to non-tax revenue producing entities (ie BOE Badcock building, Valdosta Hwy property to church expansion, historical properties destroyed to replicating/competing convenience store)	1
Continue to build "curb appeal" through code enforcement, invest in infrastructure such as water, natural gas, and emergency services and offer tax breaks to incoming businesses. To add to the appeal, businesses should be made aware that Lanier County is committed to personal attention for business. Make it known our local businesses are not just a number, they are a vital community partner. There should be an effort to "sell" our personal commitment to being a business-friendly community.	1
Bring better jobs to Lanier county	1
And let's open something for the smaller kids and teenagers. Come on get them off the streets drugs and guns and violence. Yeah we have churches. We got children right corner. They need something they can do on the weekends that doesn't cost their parents to arms and two legs.	1

## Housing

○ What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to...



Answers	Count	Percentage
---------	-------	------------

Affordable-Housing	17	51.52%
More-Inventory	8	24.24%
Residential-Zoning	7	21.21%
Density	3	9.09%
Better-Loans	4	12.12%
Housing-Grants	6	18.18%
First-Time-Buyers	8	24.24%
Other	3	9.09%

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9

o Other (1)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
----------	-------

Trash/junk, dogs/cats and burning yard debris within city limits.	1
-------------------------------------------------------------------	---

More resources for the elderly and the homeless people doesn't matter what they're doing or what they have been doing. They're homeless let's help them pick them up. Let's open soup kitchen let's feed people and not ask for a dollar for.	1
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Expensive property taxes!!	1
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Answered: 3 Skipped: 30

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Zoning is HUGE. No-one wants a trailer or trailer park next to a 1/2 million dollar home	1
We do not have enough affordable housing for our population. We are low income yet do not have enough housing for that population.	1
There is not enough opportunities for housing needs.	1
The price of houses and land have increased at almost double the national rate over the last five years. Is this a product of the real-estate valued too cheap five years ago, cost of manufacturing homes, more people moving to the area?	1
Our community needs more housing inventory. There are not enough homes available for people who want to live and work in Lanier County. More affordable housing, new construction, and support for first-time homebuyers would help attract families, teachers, and workers to the area and support long-term growth.	1
Lanier County should value affordable housing for residents. Adding a "Tiny Home" zoning section to the local codes could be used to develop smaller 1 and 2 bed homes built to all national building codes. These communities could be strictly governed by the development authority to assure the future beauty of the community.	1

Answered: 6 Skipped: 27

o Opportunities for Housing Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Zoning	1
Write warnings/tickets.	1
provide low-income grants to people in need.	1

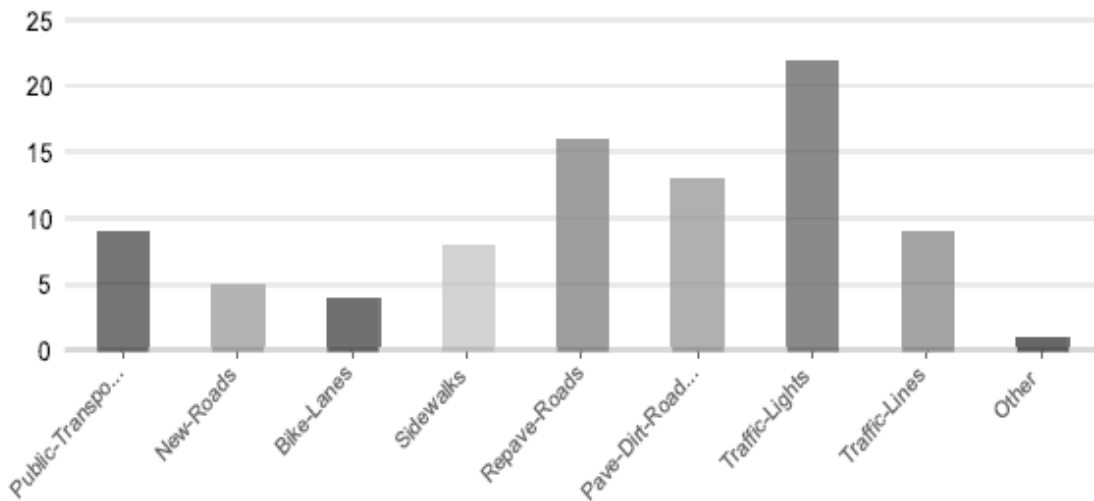
Lanier County needs more housing options for single individuals and smaller households. Currently there are very limited apartments, townhomes, or smaller homes available. Developing more single-person and workforce housing would help attract teachers, young professionals, and workers who want to live in the community. 1

Develop and adopt a tiny home ordinance that would allow for planned, tiny home developments. 1

Answered: 5 Skipped: 28

### Transportation

What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to...



Answers Count Percentage

Answers	Count	Percentage
Public-Transportation	9	27.27%
New-Roads	5	15.15%
Bike-Lanes	4	12.12%
Sidewalks	8	24.24%
Repave-Roads	16	48.48%
Pave-Dirt-Roads	13	39.39%

Traffic-Lights	22	66.67%
Traffic-Lines	9	27.27%
Other	1	3.03%

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0

o Other (1)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

**Response**

**Count**

High School students trespassing instead of using sidewalks or roads.

1

Answered: 1 Skipped: 32

Response	Count
The majority of roads in the county are dirt and verry narrow. This can cause an increase in traffic accidents and place a strain on road department resources trying to provide upkeep. Building a strategic data-based plan that addresses the most urgent road improvement needs would help focus resources.	1
The intersection on main street and lakeland highway is a disaster.	1
The City of Lakeland has done a good job with improving roads within the City Limits.	1
Required Truck bypass, repave US 221 between Valdosta & Lakeland; new truck stop/convenient store adds to already congested traffic on US 129/221—daily near misses	1
Please!	1
Please fix dangerous city intersections	1
Our community needs better traffic control at several dangerous intersections. Installing traffic circles or traffic lights at key locations would improve safety and help manage increasing traffic. As Lakeland grows and more vehicles travel through the area, improved intersection design will help reduce accidents and make roads safer for residents, students, and visitors.	1
Major issue with parking.	1
Downtown is too congested with large trucks and other vesicles trying to through Lanier county.	1
County roads need paving sooner or better. Caution lights for safety are needed in several intersections, a round-about is needed in front of the courthouse	1
Be more open to outside businesses want to come in here I mean come on we're the only town that does not have resources or stores or shopping centers because certain people in this town do not want them to come to our town or if they do, they try to run them out because oh my God they're putting me out of business. What put you out of businesses Sorry customer service.	1
A better bypass for Hwy 135 south is needed. Hwy 221 south needs to be completely repaved. We need to request from the state to look at traffic lights at the intersections on Main St	1

Answered: 12 Skipped: 21

o Opportunities for Transportation Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
The City of Lakeland can improve on transportation needs by continuing to pursue grants related to road improvements including LMIG, TIA, and CDBG Projects for Street and Storm Drainage.	1
The city needs to resurface existing streets and properly repair holes or damage caused by city projects. Roads should be restored to a safe condition after work is completed so residents are not left with potholes and rough pavement.	1
Required truck bypass, repave US 221	1
Provide Lanier with Traffic lights and Lanes can help with the congestion down town.	1
Perform a road survey to determine the areas of greatest needs. Look at traffic flow and count, occupancy and environmental issues to determine where to direct resources. Develop a capital outlay budget to address projects. Apply for grants and utilize SPLOST funds for improvements.	1
Have coaches/teachers talk to them about respecting private property.	1
Could use a light in town to help with traffic	1
Better roads	1
ask elected officials to look into the traffic lights.	1

Answered: 9 Skipped: 24

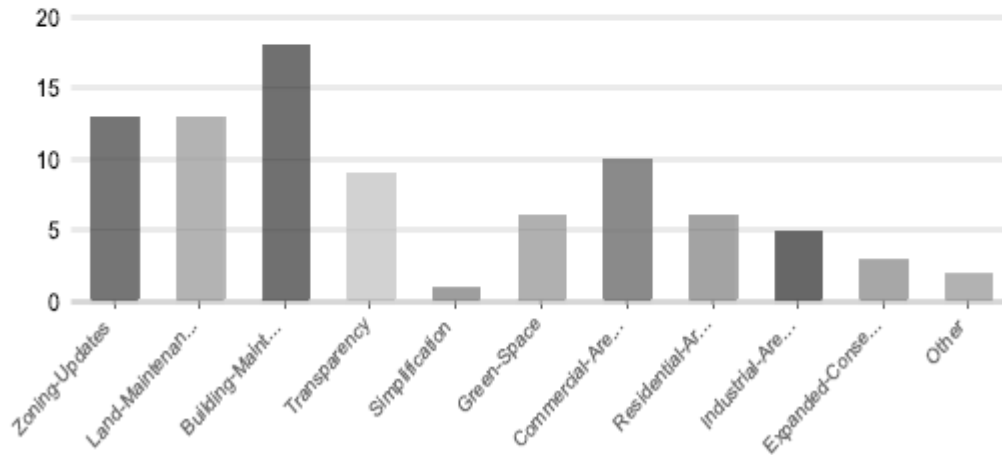
**Land Use**

o What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to...

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Answers	Count	Percentage
Zoning-Updates	13	39.39%
Land-Maintenance	13	39.39%
Building-Maintenance	18	54.55%
Transparency	9	27.27%
Simplification	1	3.03%
Green-Space	6	18.18%
Commercial-Areas	10	30.3%
Residential-Areas	6	18.18%
Industrial-Areas	5	15.15%
Expanded-Conservation	3	9.09%
Other	2	6.06%

Answered: 29 Skipped: 4

○ Expand on Land Use Needs

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
We need more commercial real estate available on the main corridors. Most land we had available is not taken up by government owned property	1
Too much private owned land that no one will clear and/or make available for growth	1

Tear down or renovate the dilapidated buildings on main st to allow for other business to move in.	1
Sides of roads need to be mowed more often and rec areas need to be cleaned better	1
Let's stop worrying about who can make the most money and let's open like community things. Let's get a big old greenhouse. Everybody can come in there and just sharing helping another one another work as a community county 4-H office man back in the day in 2000 to do everything about the highway vague sales car washes I mean all kind of stuff there's nothing here for you. No more OK yeah we got a youth impact center. We got some daycare, but that's nothing. That's gonna teach these kids come on. Let's take responsibilities the value of a dollar let's get off the street and tell him we don't have to have drugs and violets.	1
Lanier County desperately needs to address the overabundance of derelict buildings in the community. This would increase "curb appeal" and help raise the reputation of the community as a whole.	1
Land use planning should focus on creating space for more housing, new businesses, and improvements to the downtown area. The community would benefit from designated areas for commercial growth, residential development, and revitalization of existing properties to support long-term economic growth.	1
High School students trespassing instead of using sidewalks or roads.	1
County and city could do a better job on appearance by mowing more often and trash pick-up	1
Blighted buildings are an eyesore, too many convenience stores, if zoning exists it's not enforced ( or minutia is enforced)	1
Being more transparent of land being up for sale.	1

Answered: 11 Skipped: 22

o Opportunities for Land Use Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

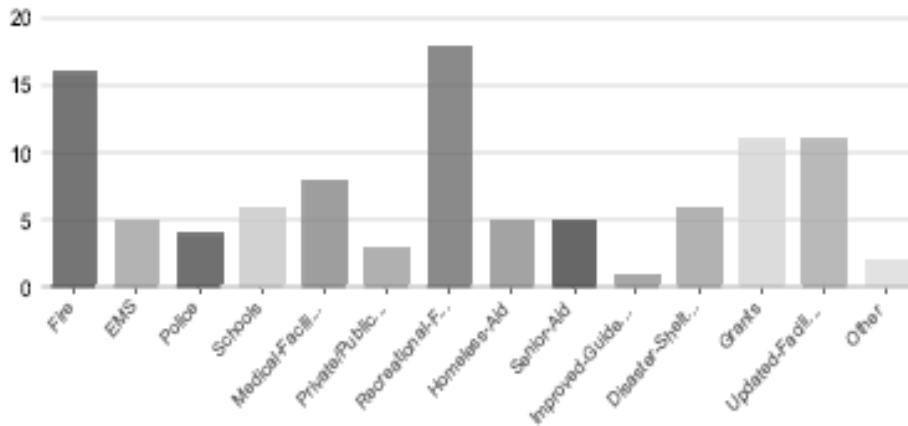
Response	Count
The city has an opportunity to use available city-owned land to encourage new business development. Making this land available for commercial projects could attract investment, bring new businesses to the area, and create more job opportunities for residents.	1

State contracts that include mowing state roads more often	1
Have coaches/police talk to them about respecting private property.	1
Do a better job at long range planning around land use	1
Creating industrial areas for business to grow.	1
City/county government needs to tell people what they're doing, why they're doing it, what resources are being used and schedule meetings convenient to the public ( not the elected officials).	1
Adopting the International Property Maintenance Code would provide Code Enforcement with guidelines to abate these issues.	1

Answered: 7 Skipped: 26

Community Facilities

o What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to ...



**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Answers	Count	Percentage
Fire	16	48.48%
EMS	5	15.15%
Police	4	12.12%

Schools	6	18.18%
Medical-Facilities	8	24.24%
Private/Public-Partnerships	3	9.09%
Recreational-Facilities	18	54.55%
Homeless-Aid	5	15.15%
Senior-Aid	5	15.15%
Improved-Guidelines	1	3.03%
Disaster-Shelters	6	18.18%
Grants	11	33.33%
Updated-Facilities	11	33.33%
Other	2	6.06%

Answered: 30 Skipped: 3

Other (1)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Students trespassing on private property.	1
Courthouse	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 31

o Expand on Community Facility Needs

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
There is no place for the people of Lanier county to seek shelter from hurricanes or tomadoes.	1
Ongding lack of appropriate staff & oversight	1
Need to look at a fulltime fire department and more ambulances within the county. So many times mutual aid is called for the ambulance service and the distance between the counties can and has led to very long wait times (stroke and heart attack patients not receiving timely service). We need to look at other services of medical transportation for non critical patients.	1
Need a new hospital in the future due to the age of our current infrastructure	1
Need a new courthouse and new high school	1

Many of our public facilities are aging, including the courthouse and our middle and high school. While neighboring counties have been able to build multiple new schools over the years, our facilities remain very old. Investing in updated educational and government buildings (courthouse) would improve services for residents, support students and teachers, and help the county keep pace with surrounding communities.	1
Lanier county depends on a volunteer fire department and has contracted Emergency Medical Services to South Georgia Medical Center. These two emergency services together only account for 5% of the overall county budget while the Sheriff's Office receives upwards of 23% of the overall budget. This disproportionate distribution of funds leaves response weaknesses for the fire and EMS.	1
How about not messing with the fire departments and causing our preparedness rating to go down, increasing our insurance premiums and causing a high tax burden (looking at you Hank Smith)	1
Fulltime firemen and sharing resources with the city by working together. Schools waste too much money and has too many extra curricular activities... we cant afford to fund everything. need a new hospital, not a new ball park.	1
City/county needs to quit infighting no recycling	1
All rec facility bathrooms are disgusting and usually don't have toilet paper, hand soap or paper towels. Have regularly found massive spider webs and old trash in the facilities.	1

Answered: 11 Skipped: 22

o Opportunities for Community Facility Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

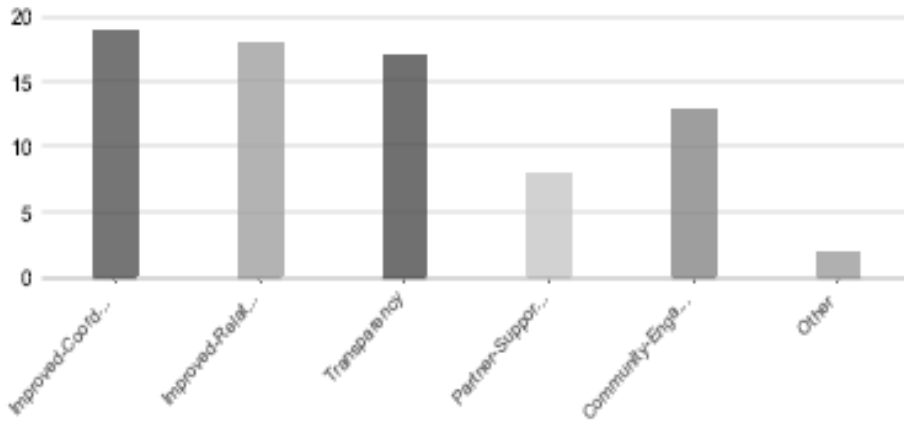
Response	Count
Would love to have a community closet type building for needy families	1
We're too small a community to have duplication of services—usually as a result of a conflict ( fire department—no need for a new proposed city fire station on valuable Valdosta Hwy property—, police/sheriff department, garage collection, recreation services/fields).	1
Support the hospital with their plans for a new facility	1
quit calling the EMS service to be transported for weekly treatment.	1

Middle school, high school, courthouse	1
Have coaches/police talk to students about respecting private property.	1
Examine the budget requirements for each emergency department and redirect a more even distribution of funds to support all local emergency operations.	1
Creates a place so that people can report to when a hurricane or tornado is reported	1
Better county government focused on the BASIC need of the community	1

Answered: 9 Skipped: 24

Intergovernmental Coordination

o What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to ...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Improved-Coordination	19	57.58%
Improved-Relations	18	54.55%
Transparency	17	51.52%
Partner-Support	8	24.24%

Community-Engagement	13	39.39%
Other	2	6.06%

Answered: 29 Skipped: 4

o Other (1)

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Respect private property. Stop burning yard debris within city limits.	1
Communication	1

Answered: 2 Skipped: 31

o Expand on Intergovernmental Coordination Needs

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Too many closed session decisions. County board is not transparent.	1
The community would benefit from stronger coordination between the city, county, school system, and neighboring communities. Improved communication when planning infrastructure, housing, and economic development projects would help ensure resources are used effectively. There is also an opportunity to coordinate more closely with nearby communities such as Valdosta and Moody Air Force Base to support regional growth, workforce development, and economic opportunities for residents.	1
The city and county cant agree on the issues that may harm or benefit the people of Lanier county to improve on the relationships.	1
See above.	1
Our city, county, school, chamber all need to work together more for the betterment of the community.	1
On a score out of 5 our board of ed and commissioners get a 1. You guys fucking suck at community engagement, encourage an air of secrecy (no meetings at convenient times) and a "good ole boys club", pick fights with other departments (sheriff), are sore losers when elections don't go your way (probate judge election), utterly FAILED to reevaluate properties for nearly twenty years and passed on a massive tax increase to property owners. All of you should loose your jobs for the monetary damage you have caused as well as the erosion trust in our local government.	1
Nothing's need to be better communicated and done at a time when the general public can actually attend meetings.	1
Just need everyone to work together	1
City and County government need to work TOGETHER instead of against	1

Building joint committees between the City of Lakeland and Lanier County to address the overall needs of the community. Help join efforts to attain goals that benefits everyone.	1
Backroom/after hour meetings by commissioners and hiring good old boys that they can control needs to stop.	1

Answered: 11 Skipped: 22

o Opportunities for Intergovernmental Coordination Improvement

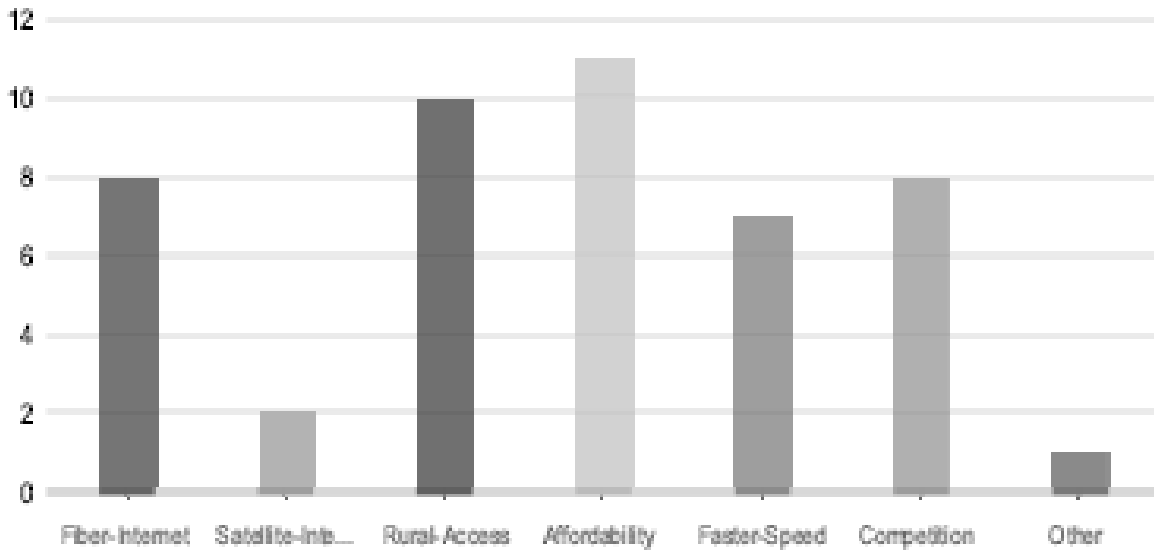
The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
Write warnings/tickets.	1
Need to consolidate as many city/county services as we can as quickly as possible. Opens the door for more Grant initiatives.	1
I believe the city/county should work together better. I'd love to see the two consolidate.	1
Dissolve the current board of ed and commissioners and force a forensic audit by the state to be completed before a new election is held.	1
Develop joint community improvement projects and coordinate efforts of local resources. Building stronger teams between County and City fire would be one example. Developing easy access/use mediums for citizens to express their concerns to local governments. Provide a more published announcement process to keep citizens informed of upcoming projects would help lower conspiracy theories.	1
Coordinated planning on the community level	1
better county governing officials	1
Being more transparent and honest each other can help agreements between the two.	1

Answered: 8 Skipped: 25

**Broadband**

o What are some issues or needs you have noticed within your community relating to ...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Fiber-Internet	8	24.24%
Satellite-Internet	2	6.06%
Rural-Access	10	30.3%
Affordability	11	33.33%
Faster-Speed	7	21.21%
Competition	8	24.24%
Other	1	3.03%

Answered: 21 Skipped: 12

o Expand on Broadband Needs

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
The current broad-band is not working for Lanier county to full potential. During the recent hurricane, the internet was not working well enough for outside family members to check on their family that were affected by the storm.	1
less expensive connectivity	1
Lanier County has welcomed an internet company that provides fast, dependable fiber optic internet to citizens.	1
Continued expansion of fiber in the rural areas	1

Answered: 4 Skipped: 29

o Opportunities for Broadband Improvement

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
I think in this area, we've made great improvements.	1
Finding ways and being more transparent on what can work and will work for the people of Lanier county.	1
Continue to upgrade the new fiber internet options in the county.	1
competition	1

Answered: 4 Skipped: 29

Overall Strengths and Threats to your Community

o Strengths

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
We support our school and our churches; we care about each other.	1
We do watch out for our neighbors.	1
We are very family oriented town	1
Several great local owned business that have well established customer base. The community does a great job of supporting school events (sports and community events).	1
Response to fire and medical issues.	1
Property availability	1

Please fix dangerous intersections, build new courthouse and schools. Bring in more businesses to downtown Lakeland	1
People are willing to help each other in community	1
Our community's strengths include a strong sense of community, good schools, and a great location near Valdosta and Moody Air Force Base. Lakeland and Lanier County have a lot of potential for growth if we continue improving infrastructure and supporting local development.	1
Lanier County has an abundance of outdoor areas that can bring tourists to the community. Lanier County has strong ties with its citizens and can pull together in emergencies. There are a lot of local experts on various topics throughout the county that can provide insight if needed. Lanier County has connections to other local communities and is surrounded by other counties that share the same issues and enjoy the same outdoor activities.	1
Great community.	1
Come together in a crisis.	1
Amazing natural resources	1

Answered: 13 Skipped: 20

o Threats

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Response	Count
This good old boy network that is still in place, old families still running and controlling the city and county, only 1 bank that needs competition.	1
There are 2 pair of shoes over a power line on Pine St/2nd Ave. Would really like them taken down.	1
The board of Commissioners and their inability to govern.	1
Some threats to the community include a lack of housing, limited business development (grocery stores), aging public facilities, and outdated infrastructure in some areas. If these issues are addressed, the community could attract new residents, businesses, and investment while maintaining the small-town quality of life that makes this area special.	1

Nothing affordable.	1
Need to update and get more business in the area	1
Lanier county is like many other communities and faces financial struggles. As with most communities, a dispersion of resources can lead to disagreements between agencies. Lanier County has a small work force and according to census information, has a disproportionate number older people and economically challenged people.	1
Lack of long range planning around land use. Lack of good paying jobs to recruit and retain young people	1
Lack of industry, high property taxes	1
Lack of EMS for multiple calls. Lack of local government agencies in relation to cooperation. Drugs. Gangs and gang affiliation. Criminal activities (theft).	1
Flood threats and the flow of drugs through Lanier county	1
Educated citizens moving away	1
Constant infighting between elected officials and making decisions that are self-serving ( as opposed to the greater good); high taxes; limited industrial growth because of limited water and sewer access in the county ( growth must occur in county as city is maxed out in land); our water quality is a threat. A lack of code enforcement in both the city and the county limits growth. Efforts to bring in the arts receive limited support. Failure to follow through on plans (is the 2021 Comprehensive Plan). Increased traffic—especially big trucks—increases likelihood of accidents and the appearance of the inability to plan strategically to reach long term goals ( reactive instead—is when hurricane came, no plan, only personal reactions by government officials)	1

Answered: 13 Skipped: 20

# VISION SURVEY

## Lanier County Vision Survey

11 Responses   95:57 Average time to complete   Active Status

1. Do you live and work in Lanier County (includes Lakeland and unincorporated areas)?

- Yes, I live and work here      9
- No, I just live here              0
- No, I just work here              2



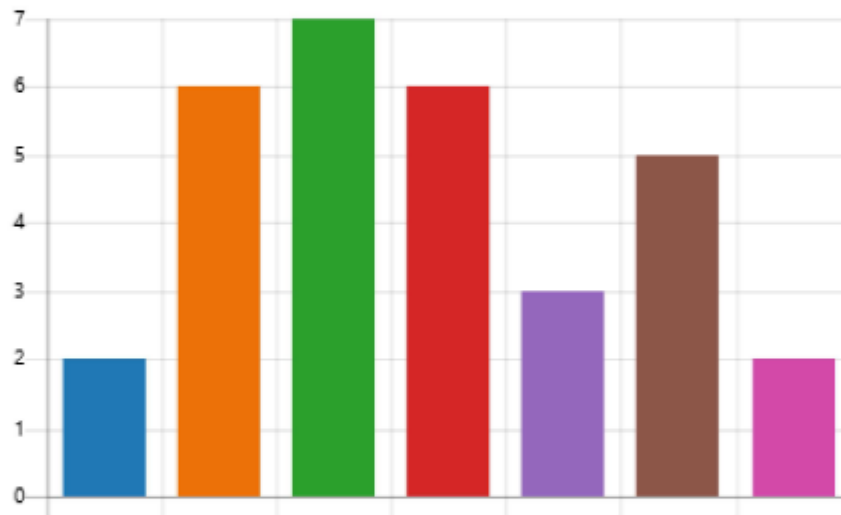
2. What best describes your primary place of residence?

- Owner-occupied Non-Farm Re...    6
- Owner-occupied Farm Resident    3
- Rental Property                      0
- Own land in Lanier County, bu...   1
- Other                                    1



### 3. Which critical services do you have in/near your residence?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> City Hall/County Commission	2
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Police	6
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Fire	7
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Hospital/EMS	6
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Nursing Home/Elder Care Faci...	3
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> School/College/University	5
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Municipal Water Services only	2



### 4. Do you have to leave your community for any services, essential or non-essential?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Yes	6
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> No	5



## 5. Which services do you travel to receive?

6  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Healthcare, groceries and retail. "

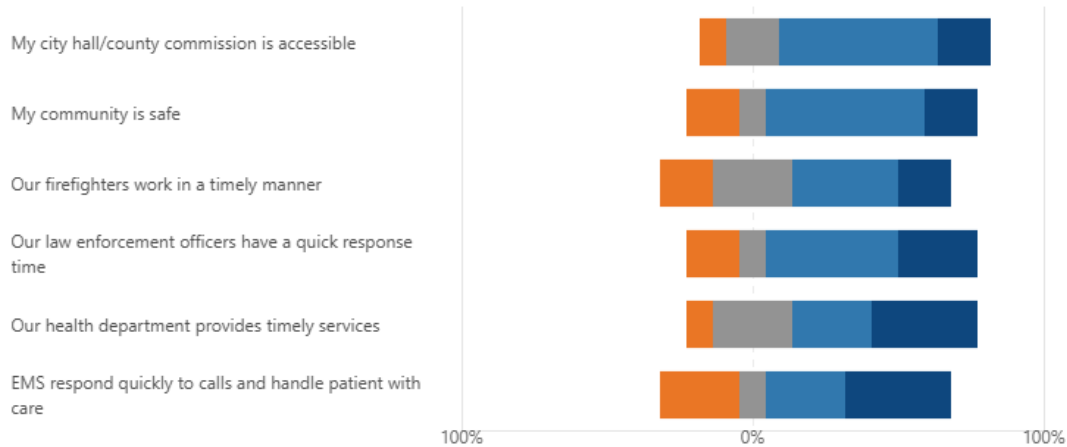
## 6. How do you get around your community?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Personal Vehicle	6
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Bicycle	0
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Walking	0
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Public/Regional Transportation	0
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Private Rideshare Services (Ub...	0



## 7. Please indicate your confidence in your critical services

■ Strongly Disagree  
 ■ Disagree  
 ■ No Opinion/Does Not Apply  
 ■ Agree  
 ■ Strongly



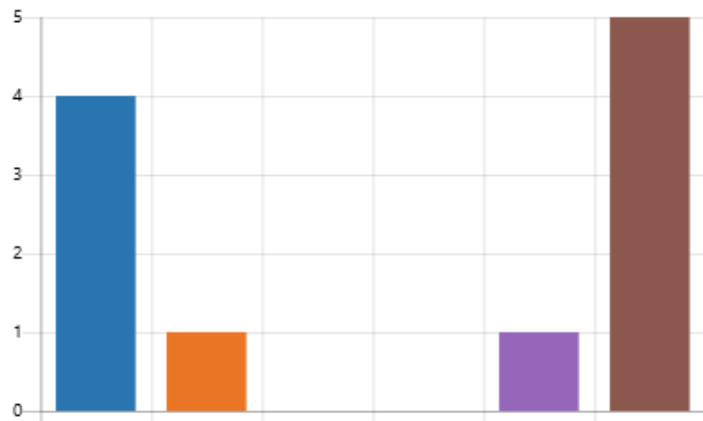
8. Do you have a fire extinguisher in your home?

● Yes	6
● No	5
● Don't Know	0



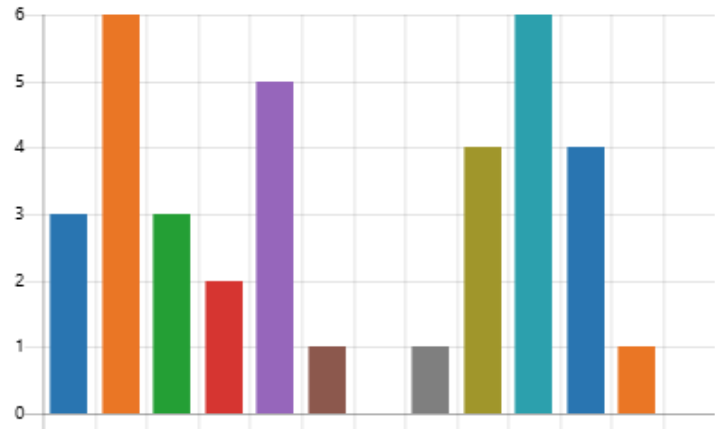
9. What services need the most attention to improve or maintain the quality of life in Lanier County?

● Conditions of the Roads	4
● Education	1
● Parks and Nature Resources li...	0
● Health Care	0
● Drinking Water	1
● Fire Safety	5



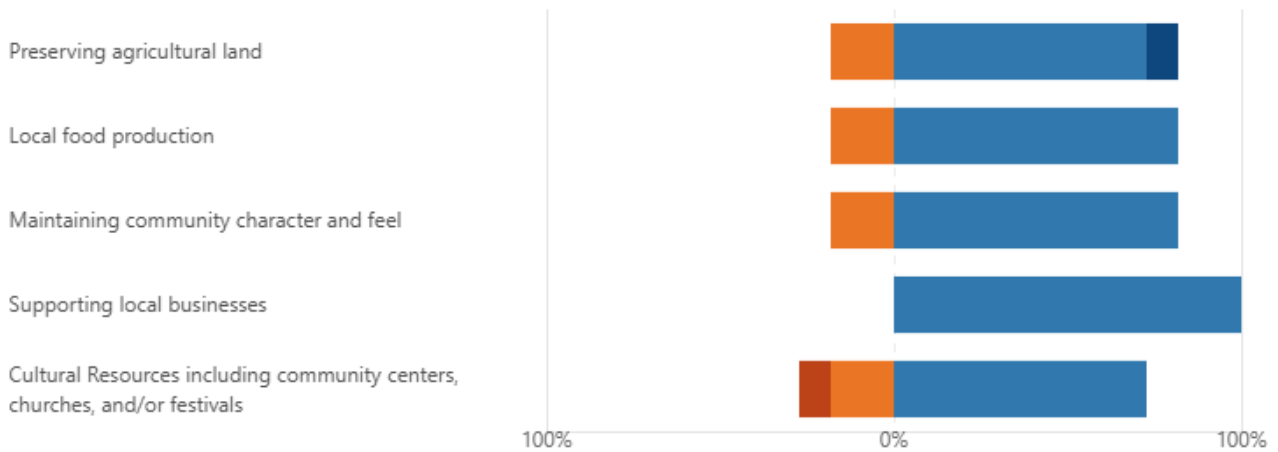
### 10. What would you like to see more of in your community?

- Affordable Housing 3
- Preservation of Historic House... 6
- Green Space/Open Space 3
- Trees/Shade/Landscaping 2
- Parks & Recreation Centers 5
- Other Community Facilities (li... 1
- School/College/University 0
- Affordable Public Transportati... 1
- Multi-modal Transportation In... 4
- Small businesses 6
- Paved roads 4
- All of the above 1
- Other 0

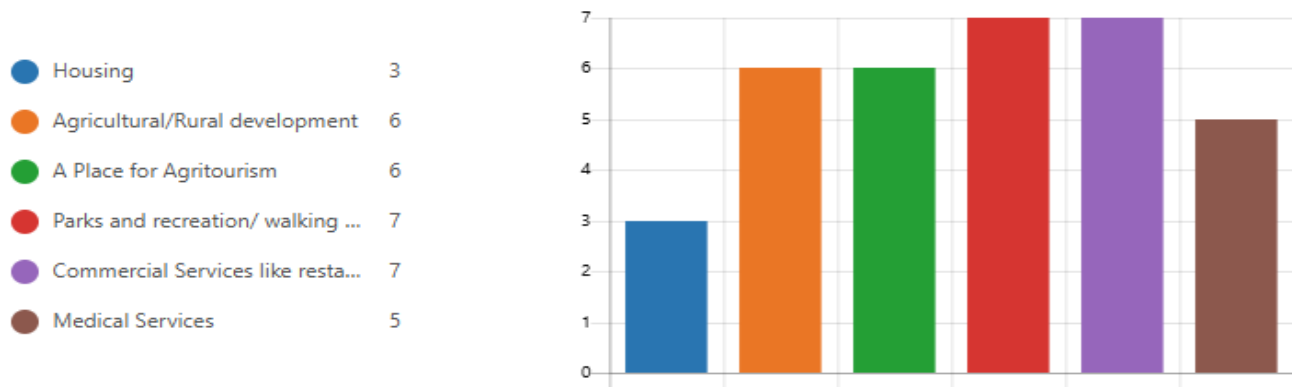


### 11. Please indicate how important the following are to you

- Not Important
- Somewhat Important
- Very Important
- No Opinion



12. What kind of services/development would you like to see in Lanier County?



13. How satisfied are you overall with community events?

11  
Responses



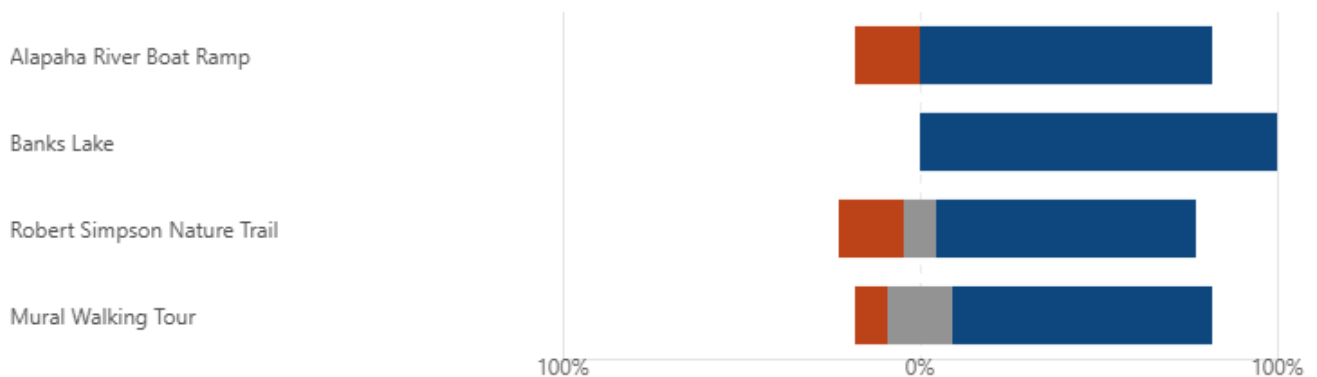
14. If your community could add another event to the calendar, what would it be?

11  
Responses

Latest Responses  
 "Sports Tournaments"  
 "Town Hall meetings for debate candidates who are running for office."  
 "Entertainment- Threatte Center "

15. Please indicate your familiarity with the following attractions in/near your community

■ Never Heard of It/Never Been 😞 ■ Sounds Familiar 😐 ■ Heard of it/I have been! 😊



16. What other attractions exist in/near your community that were not mentioned?

4  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"none"

17. What is the best thing about your community? What are you known for?

11  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Banks Lake and Murals"  
"I provided heating and cooling services for my community."  
"Natural resources "

18. What are your thoughts on the relationship between your community's government and others (in the county, at state level, federal level)?

11  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Good but could always improve. "  
"There is open and trustworthy relationship. "  
"Poor "

19. How important is increasing alternative modes of transportation (such as bus, biking, walking, public transit) to the future of Lanier County?

- Extremely important 3
- Somewhat important 7
- No important 1



20. If you are on well and septic, would you like to change to community water and sewer if available?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Yes	1
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Yes, just water.	0
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Yes, just sewer	0
<span style="color: red;">●</span> No, not interested at all	9



21. How satisfied are you with the community water system?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Very satisfied	1
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Somewhat satisfied	5
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Somewhat dissatisfied	1
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Very dissatisfied	1



22. How could water systems be improved in the County and unincorporated areas?

7  
Responses

Latest Responses  
""

*"Removing old GALVANIZE piping and installing schedule 40 piping."*

23. Is there anything you would like to add?

4  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"none"

# ADOPTION LETTERS

LANIER COUNTY

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT  
2026 JOINT LANIER COUNTY and CITY OF LAKELAND

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

**WHEREAS**, Lanier County has completed the 2026 Joint Lanier County and the City of Lakeland Comprehensive Plan Update.

**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that Lanier County does hereby adopt the 2026 Joint Lanier County and the City of Lakeland Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this June 8, 2026

Alex Lee  
Alex Lee, Chairman

Kirstie Durrance  
ATTEST: Kirstie Durrance, County Clerk


**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT**  
**2026 JOINT LANIER COUNTY and CITY OF LAKELAND**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

**WHEREAS**, Lanier County has completed the 2026 Joint Lanier County and the Cities of Lakeland Comprehensive Plan Update.

**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that Lanier County does hereby adopt the 2026 Joint Lanier County and the Cities of Lakeland Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this June 10, 2026

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William P. Darsey, Mayor



ATTEST:,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dione Woodberry  
City Clerk