

ORDINANCE NO. 1609-01-2026

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE, TEXAS, ADOPTING THE GUIDING GAINESVILLE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FINDINGS; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND USE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Section 213.003 of the Texas Local Government Code empowers the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gainesville has prepared the Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide for future growth, development, public investment, and decision-making; and

WHEREAS, the Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan addresses land use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, economic development, community character, and other elements important to the orderly development of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City has provided opportunities for public participation in the development of the Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan and transmitted its recommendation to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has held a duly noticed public hearing on the Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan in accordance with state law and considered public testimony and written evidence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE, TEXAS:

Section 1. Adoption.

The Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, dated January 2025, and attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted as the official comprehensive plan of the City of Gainesville, Texas.

Section 2. Use and Effect.

The Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan shall serve as a policy guide for the City Council, boards, commissions, and staff in making decisions regarding land use, capital improvements, infrastructure investment, and other matters affecting the physical development of the City.

Section 3. Consistency.

Future plans, programs, ordinances, and development decisions of the City should be made in a manner consistent with the goals and policies of the Guiding Gainesville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, as practicable.

Section 4. Severability.

If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions.

Section 5. Effective Date.

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

INTRODUCTION, FIRST READING, CHARTER SUSPENSION

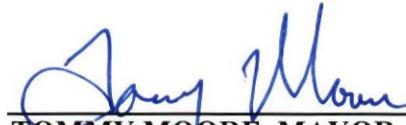
INTRODUCED AND READ FOR THE FIRST TIME BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE ON THE 20TH DAY OF JANUARY 2026, AT WHICH THE CHARTER PROVISION OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE REQUIRING THE READING OF THE ORDINANCE ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS WAS SUSPENDED BY A VOTE:

11 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT, AND 0 ABSTENTIONS, 1 VACANCY

ATTEST:



DIANA LOCH, CITY SECRETARY



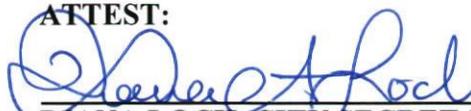
TOMMY MOORE, MAYOR

ADOPTION

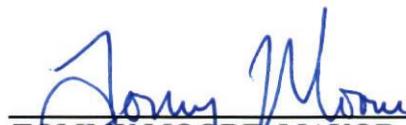
ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE ON THE 20TH DAY OF JANUARY 2026 BY A VOTE OF:

11 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT, AND 0 ABSTENTIONS, 1 VACANCY

ATTEST:



DIANA LOCH, CITY SECRETARY



TOMMY MOORE, MAYOR





JANUARY 2026

GUIDING GAINESVILLE 2040

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



LET'S SHAPE OUR FUTURE
TOGETHER 



PREPARED FOR:

City of Gainesville
200 S. Rusk Street
Gainesville, TX 76240

PREPARED BY:

Antero Group
109 N. Elm Street
Denton, TX 76201

Adopted January 20, 2026

FACILITATED BY:



Valley Quest
DESIGN

URBAN3

Acknowledgments

It takes the dedication of an entire community to shape a vision for the future. The City of Gainesville extends its gratitude to the residents, business owners, and community partners who contributed their time and ideas to the **Guiding Gainesville 2040** planning process. Special thanks are due to the following individuals for their leadership in guiding this Plan to adoption.

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- ▶ **Linda Lewis**
Ward 1 Council Member
- ▶ **Mary Jo Dollar**
Ward 6 Council Member
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Executive Summary

The City of Gainesville is a community in motion. Situated in one of the fastest-growing regions in the United States, the City possesses a unique combination of historic charm, economic potential, and regional connectivity. ***Guiding Gainesville 2040*** is the strategic roadmap designed to harness this momentum.

This Plan moves beyond simply reacting to growth; it is a proactive declaration of how Gainesville will shape its own future. By balancing the preservation of its “friendly,

patriotic, and growing” identity with the demands of a modern economy, Gainesville is positioning itself to be a premier destination for families, businesses, and visitors.

Why Plan Now?

The impetus for this Plan is opportunity. As development expands northward from the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Gainesville has the chance to capture high-quality investment. However, **capitalizing on this opportunity requires a strategic shift in how the City manages its physical footprint and financial resources.**

Currently, the City services a substantial 19.4-square-mile area. To ensure long-term prosperity, the City must align its infrastructure investments with development patterns that generate sufficient revenue to maintain them. **This Plan provides the “Fiscal Resiliency” framework necessary to close the gap between maintenance needs and available resources,** ensuring that Gainesville remains fiscally strong for generations to come.

The Community Vision

Guided by thousands of resident voices heard through months of public engagement involving surveys, workshops, and stakeholder interviews, **the Plan is anchored by a shared aspiration:**

“Gainesville will be a thriving, patriotic, family-oriented community that embraces its heritage and provides a high quality of life for all. We will achieve this through sustainable growth, a vibrant downtown, ample parks and natural spaces, and a strong commitment to education and cultural opportunities.”

Data-Driven Insights

The planning process integrated a deep analysis of existing conditions with extensive stakeholder feedback to identify Gainesville’s distinct strengths and opportunities:

- ▶ **FISCAL STRENGTH IN THE CORE:** The analysis confirms that Gainesville’s historic downtown and traditional neighborhoods are high-performing fiscal assets. Investing in these areas yields the highest return on investment for the City’s tax base.
- ▶ **HOUSING DEMAND:** There is a robust market demand for diverse housing options. To retain essential workforce talent such as teachers, healthcare workers, and first responders, the City has an opportunity to expand its stock of “missing middle” housing, including townhomes and duplexes.
- ▶ **INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION:** As the City grows, modernizing water, wastewater, and street networks is a top priority. Strategic investments in these systems will unlock new development potential and enhance service reliability.
- ▶ **QUALITY OF LIFE ASSETS:** Gainesville boasts exceptional regional assets like Leonard Park and the Frank Buck Zoo. The data indicates that upgrading amenities in neighborhood parks will significantly increase utilization and resident satisfaction.

Strategic Pillars for 2040

The Plan establishes five focus areas to translate this vision into reality:

1. FISCAL RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The Plan establishes a model for responsible stewardship to ensure growth strengthens the City's bottom line.

- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Utilize the Development Evaluator Tool to ensure new projects contribute positively to the City's long-term financial health.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Adopt a Future Land Use Map that encourages development along existing corridors, maximizing the value of current infrastructure.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Diversify the local economy by recruiting target industries in advanced manufacturing and logistics.

2. FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

The Plan fosters neighborhoods that serve residents at all stages of life.

- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Implement a Mixed-Use Zoning District to create vibrant hubs for living, dining, and shopping.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Adopt Citywide Design Guidelines to ensure new construction complements Gainesville's historic character.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Streamline development regulations to enhance predictability, reinforcing Gainesville's reputation as the most business-friendly city in the Texoma region.

3. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY

The Plan prioritizes a safe, connected, and modern infrastructure network.

- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Systematically improve roadway conditions through the Street and Utility Maintenance Program (SUMP).
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Secure funding from the new \$20 billion state water infrastructure fund to support capacity upgrades identified in the Water and Wastewater Master Plans.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Enhance corridor aesthetics and resilience by prioritizing the burial of overhead utility lines in key districts.

4. PARKS, PUBLIC SPACE, AND NATURE TRAILS

The Plan envisions a park system that connects the community and promotes wellness.

- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Establish a “Standard Park Amenity” Policy to ensure every neighborhood park features essential comforts like pavilions and restrooms.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Pursue a partnership with the GEDC to transform the M-K-T rail corridor into a signature linear park.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Implement a Tree and Shade Plan to expand the urban canopy and improve outdoor comfort citywide.

5. DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE REVITALIZATION

The Plan reaffirms Downtown as the cultural and economic heartbeat of the City.

- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Pursue designation as a Cultural District to elevate Gainesville’s profile as a destination for heritage tourism.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Catalyze downtown activity through signature projects like the Main Street Promenade and the Red River Woonerf.
- ▶ **STRATEGY:** Enhance the visitor experience with a comprehensive Parking Management strategy and digital wayfinding tools.

Commitment to Implementation

Guiding Gainesville 2040 is a living commitment to action. **Chapter 6** details a robust framework to ensure these ideas become reality:

- ▶ **FINANCIAL ALIGNMENT**
Plan priorities will be integrated directly into the Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- ▶ **DATA-DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION**
Projects will be ranked based on their fiscal impact and community benefit to ensure efficient resource allocation.
- ▶ **TRANSPARENCY**
Progress will be tracked through Annual Reports and key performance metrics, ensuring the City remains accountable to the vision established by its residents.

By following this guide, Gainesville will move forward with confidence, building a resilient and prosperous legacy for the next twenty years. ▶

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- Appendix B: Population Projection Methodologies
- Appendix C: Fiscal Analysis Results
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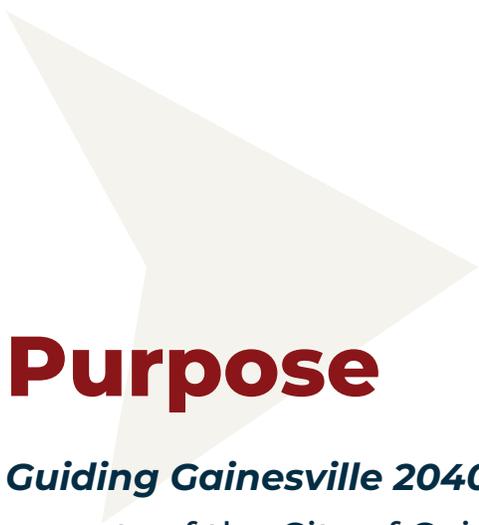
Acronyms

- CAGR:** *Compound Annual Growth Rate*
- CIP:** *Capital Improvement Plan*
- ETJ:** *Extraterritorial Jurisdiction*
- FHWA:** *Federal Highway Administration*
- FLUM:** *Future Land Use Map*
- FRA:** *Federal Railroad Administration*
- GEDC:** *Gainesville Economic Development Corporation*
- GISD:** *Gainesville Independent School District*
- GLO:** *Texas General Land Office*
- HMAP:** *Cooke County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan*
- MLS:** *Major League Soccer*

- NCTC:** *North Central Texas College*
- NFL:** *National Football League*
- PCI:** *Pavement Condition Index*
- RCP:** *Texas GLO Resilient Communities Program*
- SS4A:** *Safe Streets and Roads for All*
- SUMP:** *Street and Utility Maintenance Program*
- TCA:** *Texas Commission on the Arts*
- TCOG:** *Texoma Council of Governments*
- TPWD:** *Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*
- TxDOT:** *Texas Department of Transportation*
- USDOT:** *United States Department of Transportation*



01 INTRODUCTION



Purpose

Guiding Gainesville 2040 (“Plan”) provides strategic direction for all aspects of the City of Gainesville (“City” or “Gainesville”), from public infrastructure and development standards to long-term financial health. It will serve as Gainesville’s official roadmap for the future. Building on the foundational framework of the 1997 master plan, ***Guiding Gainesville 2040*** incorporates modern planning practices and innovative solutions to address new challenges. By evaluating past efforts and current conditions, this Plan will assist Gainesville in proactively shaping its future while preserving its heritage.

The Impetus for Guiding Gainesville 2040

As part of one of the fastest-growing regions in the United States, Gainesville is presented with a unique opportunity to determine its future. This regional growth brings new residents, economic activity, and increased vitality to the City. To proactively manage this growth and ensure it enhances quality of life, an updated vision is essential. While the 1997 plan provided a foundational framework, ***Guiding Gainesville 2040*** builds on its core principles by integrating data-driven fiscal analysis to ensure the City’s future is financially sustainable.

Guiding Gainesville 2040 integrates community input, stakeholder engagement, and expert analysis to provide a strategic framework for the City’s future. This Plan addresses key interest areas, including: fiscal resiliency, family-friendly neighborhoods and housing, public infrastructure, street network, municipal facilities, parks, public space, nature trails, and downtown revitalization, with policy recommendations and proposed projects aimed at furthering Gainesville’s goals.

Intended Audience and Document Usage

This Plan is a public document designed for use by residents, officials, and stakeholders. Each has a role to play in the Plan’s implementation and long-term success. The following list identifies these key readers and provides guidance on how they can best use the Plan.



CITY STAFF

Guides daily and long-term decisions on budgeting, capital projects, and development review to ensure departmental actions align with the City’s vision.



APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Informs the recommendations of bodies like the Planning and Zoning Commission, ensuring their advice on development and zoning is consistent with the Plan’s unified vision.



PARTNERING AGENCIES

Strengthens strategic collaborations with regional partners by establishing shared goals, which improves eligibility for grants and supports regional initiatives.



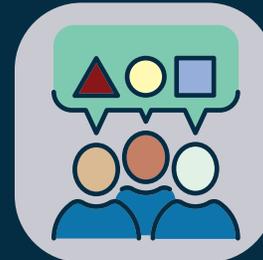
COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND RESIDENTS

Empowers residents to participate in the planning process, understand the rationale behind City decisions, and advocate for projects that reflect the community’s shared goals.



CITY COUNCIL

Acts as the primary policy guide for elected officials, providing a defensible and community-supported basis for legislative decisions.



DEVELOPMENT INTERESTS

Provides developers, property owners, and builders with a clear and predictable framework for growth, streamlining the development process and ensuring new projects contribute positively to Gainesville’s character.

Benefits of Integrated Planning Efforts

To ensure a cohesive vision for the future, Gainesville developed this Plan alongside a Downtown Master Plan, and a Parks and Trails Master Plan. This integrated approach created a unified strategy, allowing community priorities for downtown revitalization and recreational spaces to directly inform the City's broader goals for growth and development. By coordinating these planning efforts, the City identified interdisciplinary projects like adding active green space to drive downtown economic activity while **maximizing the efficient use of municipal resources.** This process eliminated redundant research, enhanced coordination between City departments, and ensured all strategic initiatives are aligned toward a single, shared vision.

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Guiding Gainesville Process and Structure



Planning Process Overview

The development of *Guiding Gainesville 2040* was a transparent and collaborative effort designed to reflect the community's collective vision. Aided by an advisory committee of City staff, business owners, and community partners, the process centered on extensive public engagement and data-driven analysis.

PHASE 1: COMMUNITY VISIONING

This phase included an online community survey, a downtown business owner survey, targeted interviews, and public workshops to gather input from residents, business owners, and departmental staff. Respondents most frequently used the words Friendly, Patriotic, Small, and Growing to describe Gainesville. Community members also helped shape the Plan's vision statement:

Gainesville will be a thriving, patriotic, family-oriented community that embraces its heritage and provides a high quality of life for all. We will achieve this through sustainable growth, a vibrant downtown, ample parks and natural spaces, and a strong commitment to education and cultural opportunities.

PHASE 2: DATA & ANALYSIS

This phase involved a deep dive into the current conditions of key topics identified by the community. The analysis included identifying Gainesville's demographic profiles and looking at local and regional trends impacting the City in areas such as housing, land use, and environmental resiliency. This process culminated in the Gainesville Development Evaluator Tool that allows City staff to assess the fiscal impact of proposed developments.

PHASE 3: THE DRAFT

The next phase involved building a draft Plan based on the existing conditions analysis, community input, and guiding principles. City staff and the Advisory Committee reviewed the draft and suggested revisions. This draft was presented on a website developed specifically for the planning process to promote transparency and participation. The City accepted feedback until the final Plan adoption.

PHASE 4: PLAN ADOPTION

In this phase, the City held a public hearing where community members provided comments on the final Plan draft. The process concluded with a City Council meeting, where officials voted to adopt the Plan, formally approving Gainesville's direction for the next 20 years.

PHASE 5: A LIVING PLAN

Adoption does not mark the end of the planning process. A comprehensive plan is a living document that must adapt to changing conditions. To ensure its long-term relevance and effectiveness, the City of Gainesville commits to a systematic annual review of this Plan with the assistance of Antero Group. This ongoing cycle of evaluation will measure progress, adapt strategies as needed, and allow Gainesville to strategically evolve alongside regional changes and community priorities.

Integrated Planning Timeline

The planning process for **Guiding Gainesville 2040**, beginning with public engagement and data collection and concluding with the adoption of the final Plan, was completed within a 14-month period. Moreover, the information collected during this process informed various elements of the Parks and Trails Master Plan and the Downtown Master Plan, facilitating a more efficient progression of these supplementary planning initiatives.

Key milestones in the 14-month process included initial project kickoff, multiple rounds of public input through surveys and workshops, a series of advisory committee meetings to analyze data and draft recommendations, and a final public hearing process leading to adoption. **Figure 1.1** illustrates this timeline, highlighting key phases and opportunities for public involvement.

Figure 1.1. Integrated Project Timeline



Key Focus Areas of the Plan

FISCAL RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The ability to achieve Gainesville’s long-term vision depends on a strong foundation of fiscal health and sustainable growth. This Plan prioritizes expenditures that align with long-term fiscal sustainability. It also promotes economic diversification by attracting new industries to broaden



employment opportunities. An analysis by the Texoma Council of Governments (“TCOG”), a regional planning commission comprised of local governments in the Texoma region, recommends diversifying local industries to mitigate economic risk, a recommendation echoed in the community survey where participants mentioned job diversity as a key factor for resident retention. Combining strategic investment with employment diversity will maintain a resilient local economy.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

The character and quality of Gainesville's neighborhoods are central to its identity as a family-friendly community. To protect and enhance these assets, this Plan analyzes Gainesville's housing composition and

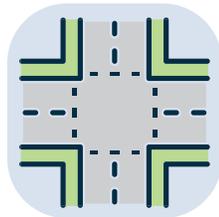


recommends a range of appropriate housing types to establish a housing inventory responsive to the community's needs. It also establishes development

standards designed to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods. Despite varying views on housing solutions, residents share a common priority: access to livable, quality housing. In response, this Plan employs strategies to foster connected neighborhoods that support residents at all stages of life.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, STREET NETWORK, AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

A modern and reliable network of public infrastructure is the backbone of a thriving community, supporting the daily activities of residents and creating a framework for future growth. This Plan prioritizes infrastructure improvements, enhances the quality of life, and strengthens community resiliency. It includes targeted recommendations for road maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and facility improvements. In the community survey conducted for this Plan, eighty-six percent of Gainesville residents identified road quality as a critical concern, a sentiment echoed by developers who also highlighted sewer systems as an area needing improvement. Feedback from this same survey on the City's downtown also frequently mentioned insufficient lighting. Targeting these key areas ensures Gainesville's infrastructure meets current needs, supports future growth, and remains resilient.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND HAZARD MITIGATION

A commitment to protecting natural resources and mitigating environmental hazards is essential for ensuring the long-term health, safety, and resilience of the community. This Plan fosters environmental resiliency through strategic mitigation and urban design.



In alignment with the Parks and Trails and Downtown Master Plans, this document addresses environmental hazards such as extreme heat, including recommendations for "cool street" strategies. Survey respondents emphasized the need for increased landscaping and shaded areas throughout the City, noting that the lack of shaded outdoor spaces was a key reason many preferred indoor recreational and entertainment options.

Guiding Gainesville 2040 incorporates the Cooke County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan ("HMAP") as a tool for evaluating current efforts and identifying opportunities for improvements. These combined planning efforts enhance Gainesville's resiliency to environmental challenges while improving comfort and livability for residents.

PARKS, PUBLIC SPACE, AND NATURE TRAILS

Well-maintained parks, trails, and public spaces are essential for a healthy, connected, and vibrant community, offering places for recreation, social gathering, and appreciation of nature. This Plan addresses the community's need for accessible, high-quality green spaces and improved connectivity. In conjunction with the Parks and Trails Master Plan, this Plan outlines recommendations to enhance walkability and recreational opportunities



for all ages and families. Community feedback consistently highlighted the need to expand sidewalks and offer diverse recreational activities while preserving

Gainesville's natural beauty. Many residents also called for improved amenities like bike racks and water fountains, and emphasized the need for better connectivity between parks, neighborhoods, and community destinations.

DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE REVITALIZATION

As the historic and cultural heart of the community, a vibrant downtown is critical to Gainesville's economic vitality and sense of place. This Plan fosters increased economic activity in the downtown corridor by creating open spaces, hosting community events, and establishing a cultural district designation to

attract tourism. It also outlines strategies to diversify new business while preserving the historic character of the area. Suggested improvements include additional restaurants, varied retail offerings, and expanded entertainment to draw visitors downtown. In alignment with the Downtown Master Plan, **Guiding Gainesville 2040** provides recommendations for programming, public art, and infrastructure additions such as benches and improved lighting.



Plan Structure and Elements

Guiding Gainesville 2040 integrates community feedback, stakeholder involvement, and best practices to deliver a framework for decision-making. The Comprehensive Plan analyzes the City's development, land use and zoning, economic vitality, fiscal resiliency, environmental and hazard mitigation, open green space, public infrastructure, transportation, and housing. Guiding Gainesville contains policy recommendations, project proposals, and a coordinated approach to implementation and collaboration.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Sets the stage by exploring Gainesville's history, the regional context, and the process used to create this Plan.

Chapter 2. The Community as a Compass

Highlights the voices of the community, detailing the engagement process and defining the roles stakeholders will play in the Plan's ongoing stewardship.

Chapter 3. Destination 2040: Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Articulates the community's shared vision, goals, and objectives that serve as the aspirational foundation for the entire Plan.

Chapter 4. Station Stop: Gainesville Today

Presents a data-rich snapshot of Gainesville, analyzing everything from demographics and land use to infrastructure and fiscal health.

Chapter 5. Guiding Gainesville 2040: Policies and Strategies

Connects the vision defined in **Chapter 3** to the analysis performed in **Chapter 4**, presenting specific policies and strategies designed to achieve the community's goals for each key focus area.

Chapter 6. Laying the Track: From Plan to Progress

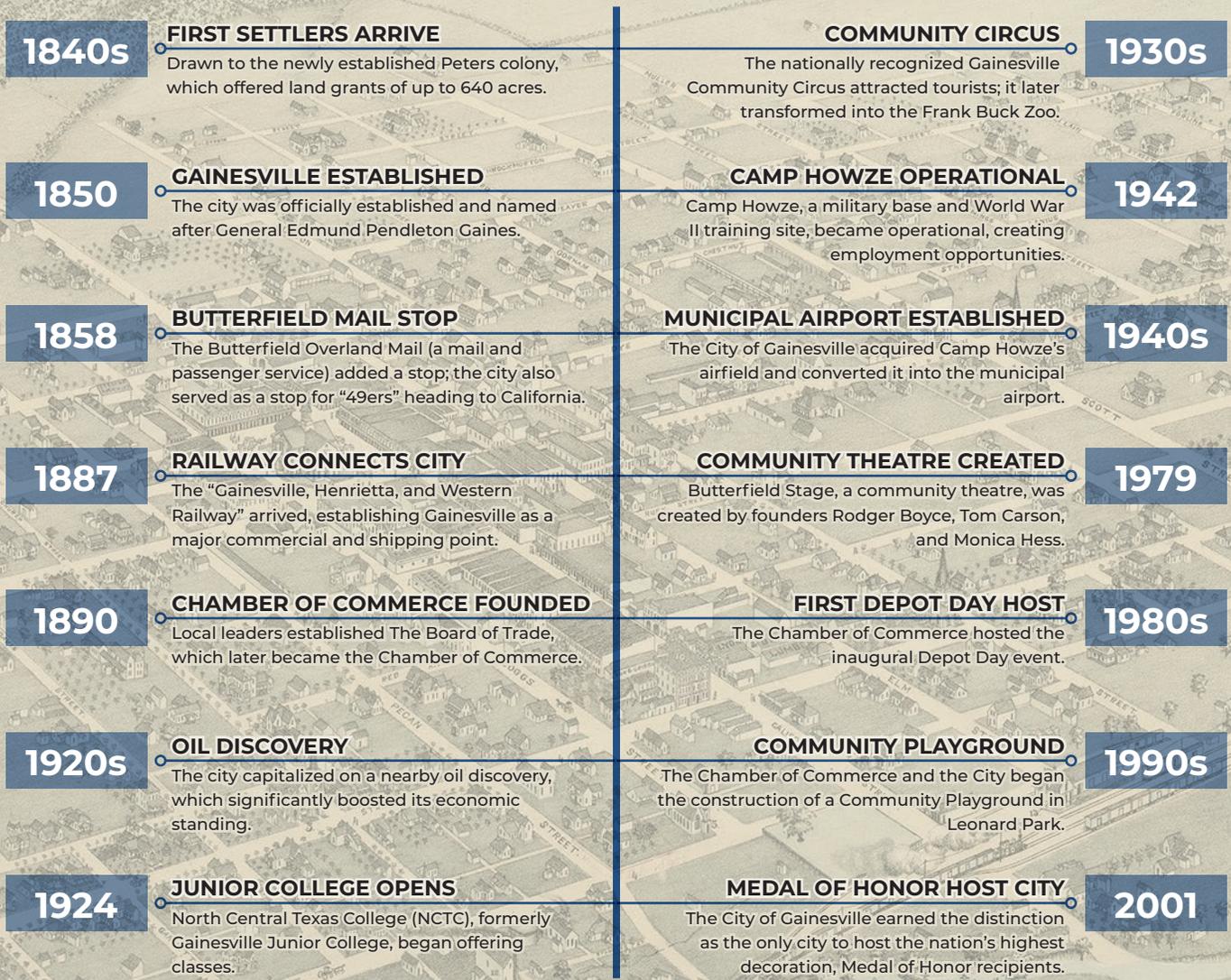
Translates vision into action with a clear and accountable roadmap that outlines responsible parties, timelines, and potential funding for each recommendation.

Together, these chapters form a cohesive strategy that moves from a shared vision to detailed analysis, recommendations, and finally, a clear roadmap to guide Gainesville's future.

Historical Gainesville

Gainesville’s story is one of commerce, community, and resilience. Rather than a simple timeline as shown in **Figure 1.2**, the City’s history is best understood through themes that have shaped its identity and continue to inform its future.

Figure 1.2. Key Historical Milestones and Development

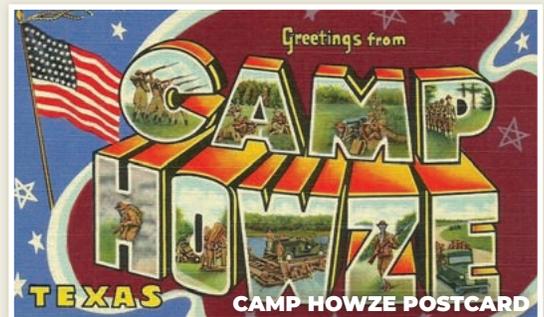
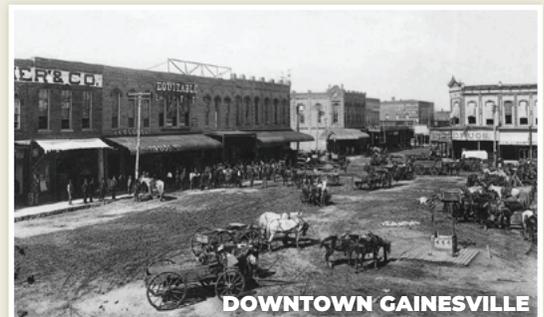
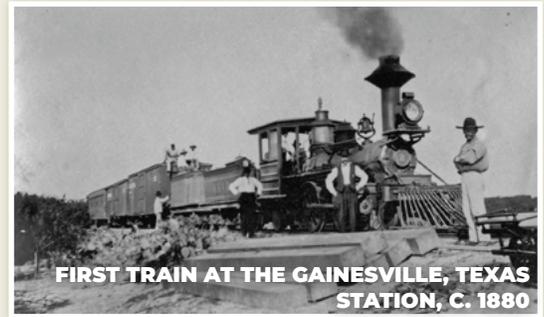


A Hub of Commerce and Transportation

From its inception, Gainesville was a center of movement and economic activity. The City's journey began in the 1840s as settlers were drawn to the promise of land in the Peters Colony. By 1850, the community was formally established and named Gainesville in honor of the recently deceased General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, a hero of the War of 1812. Its importance was bolstered in 1858 when Butterfield Overland Mail—a major mail and passenger service—established a vital stop in Gainesville and connected the community to the nation. This role expanded dramatically with the arrival of the Gainesville, Henrietta, and Western Railway in 1887 and the Gulf Coast and Santa Fe Railway in 1902, transforming the City into a critical shipping hub for regional farmers and ranchers. The discovery of nearby oil fields provided economic stability during the Great Depression while neighboring communities struggled, and the post-World War II acquisition of the Camp Howze airfield—now the Gainesville Municipal Airport—cemented the City's role in the region's transportation network. This role was further affirmed in 1999, with the addition of an Amtrak stop for the Heartland Flyer service, maintaining the City's rail connection for a new generation of travelers from Oklahoma City to Fort Worth. This legacy as a center for transportation and trade continues to define Gainesville's economic opportunities and its strategic importance within the North Texas region.

A Community of Service and Civic Pride

A deep-rooted tradition of service and civic engagement has long defined Gainesville's character. In 1890, local leaders established the Board of Trade, which later evolved into the modern Chamber of Commerce. The community's patriotic spirit was prominent during World War II with the opening of Camp Howze, a large military training



base that brought significant activity to the area. This patriotic legacy was formally recognized in 2001, when the U.S. Congress designated Gainesville as the only Medal of Honor Host City in America. Each year, the town invites and hosts Medal of Honor recipients for several days of ceremonies, parades, and community events. This commitment to community is also reflected in civic-led investments, from the 1979 founding of the Butterfield Stage Community Theater to the 1990s partnership between the City and the Chamber to build a community playground in Leonard Park. This spirit of service and civic pride remains a cornerstone of the community's identity, shaping the collaborative approach to the City's future outlined in this Plan.

Building a Foundation for Education and Culture

Alongside its economic and civic growth, Gainesville has long valued education and culture as essential to its quality of life. In 1924, Gainesville Junior College opened as an extension of the local school system and has since steadily grown into what is now North Central Texas College ("NCTC"). NCTC is the oldest continuously operating two-year college in Texas and a vital path for economic mobility. The City's cultural life thrived with the nationally recognized Gainesville Community Circus in the 1930s, a treasured institution whose legacy lives on through the Frank Buck Zoo, named for Gainesville native and renowned animal collector Frank Buck. Community traditions that celebrate local heritage, such as the Chamber of Commerce's Depot Day, further enrich the City's cultural fabric. These cultural and educational institutions are invaluable assets today, contributing to a high quality of life and fostering the family-friendly community envisioned in this Plan.

Together, these historical themes of commerce, service, and culture forged a unique identity for Gainesville—one of resilience, patriotism, and strong community bonds. This Plan is designed to honor that legacy while guiding the next chapter of the City's story.



STATE THEATER
DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE



BUTTERFIELD STAGE COMMUNITY THEATER



FRANK BUCK WITH WIFE, MURIEL



GAINESVILLE COMMUNITY CIRCUS



MEDAL OF HONOR PARADE
DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE



Planning Context

Fiscal Responsibility as a Guiding Principle

Gainesville’s fiscal health is a key driver of meaningful change. Without the necessary funding, progress on community priorities can stall. Therefore, this Plan integrates fiscal considerations into every major component, from infrastructure to downtown revitalization, ensuring the City’s vision is feasible.

This Plan is designed to ensure growth is intentional and financially sustainable. To put this principle into practice, the Gainesville Development Evaluator Tool was developed as a complement to this Plan. This custom tool allows the City to analyze the long-term fiscal productivity of proposed development projects.

This data-driven approach ensures that new growth contributes positively to the City’s financial health.

The Plan also identifies external funding opportunities to reduce the financial strain on residents and City resources, allowing projects to advance more quickly. This approach also supports a phased implementation of projects, which allows the City to move forward at a manageable pace and ensures each investment delivers maximum value. By embedding fiscal responsibility into the Plan, Gainesville remains a good steward of public resources.

Review of Past Planning Efforts and Accomplishments

FOUNDATIONAL PLANS AND STUDIES

→ **Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

The Gainesville Comprehensive Land Use Plan, adopted in 1997, envisioned the City as a historically preserved, healthy city with compatible development. The plan emphasized open green space, proper infrastructure, and improved thoroughfare plans.

→ **Capital Improvement Plan**

The Gainesville Capital Improvement Plan (“CIP”) provides a roadmap for funding current and future infrastructure needs, detailing each project’s funding, operating costs, and priority level. The CIP is updated annually to reflect changing priorities, and available funding, ensuring that the City maintains a sustainable approach to long-term capital planning.



→ **Parklet and Sidewalk Cafe Manual**

Adopted in 2016, this manual outlined the process and design standards for establishing sidewalk cafes or creating a parklet. By implementing these regulations prior to 2020, the City positioned itself to better adapt to COVID-19 social distancing measures.

→ **Master Thoroughfare and Sidewalk Plan**

The 2021 plan Identified and prioritized corridors in need of sidewalk improvements to enhance pedestrian connectivity.

→ **Master Wastewater Plan**

Last updated in 2021, this plan assessed the wastewater system and identified capital improvement projects to support future development over the next 25 years, categorized into 5-year, 10-year, and 25-year timeframes.

→ **Master Water Plan**

Similar to the Master Wastewater Plan, the 2021 plan analyzed the City's water capacity and identified improvements to meet water needs over the next 25 years, categorized into 5-year, 10-year, and 25-year timeframes.

→ **Street and Utility Maintenance Plan**

This plan the City's infrastructure conditions and identified prioritized recommendations. Adopted in 2021, the plan also included financing, design, and construction costs.

→ **Railroad Quiet Zone**

Published in 2021, this study identified City improvements needed for BNSF to establish a quiet zone from Belcher Street to Cole Street. The study also included cost estimates for recommended and alternate improvements, as well as ongoing maintenance costs.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 1997

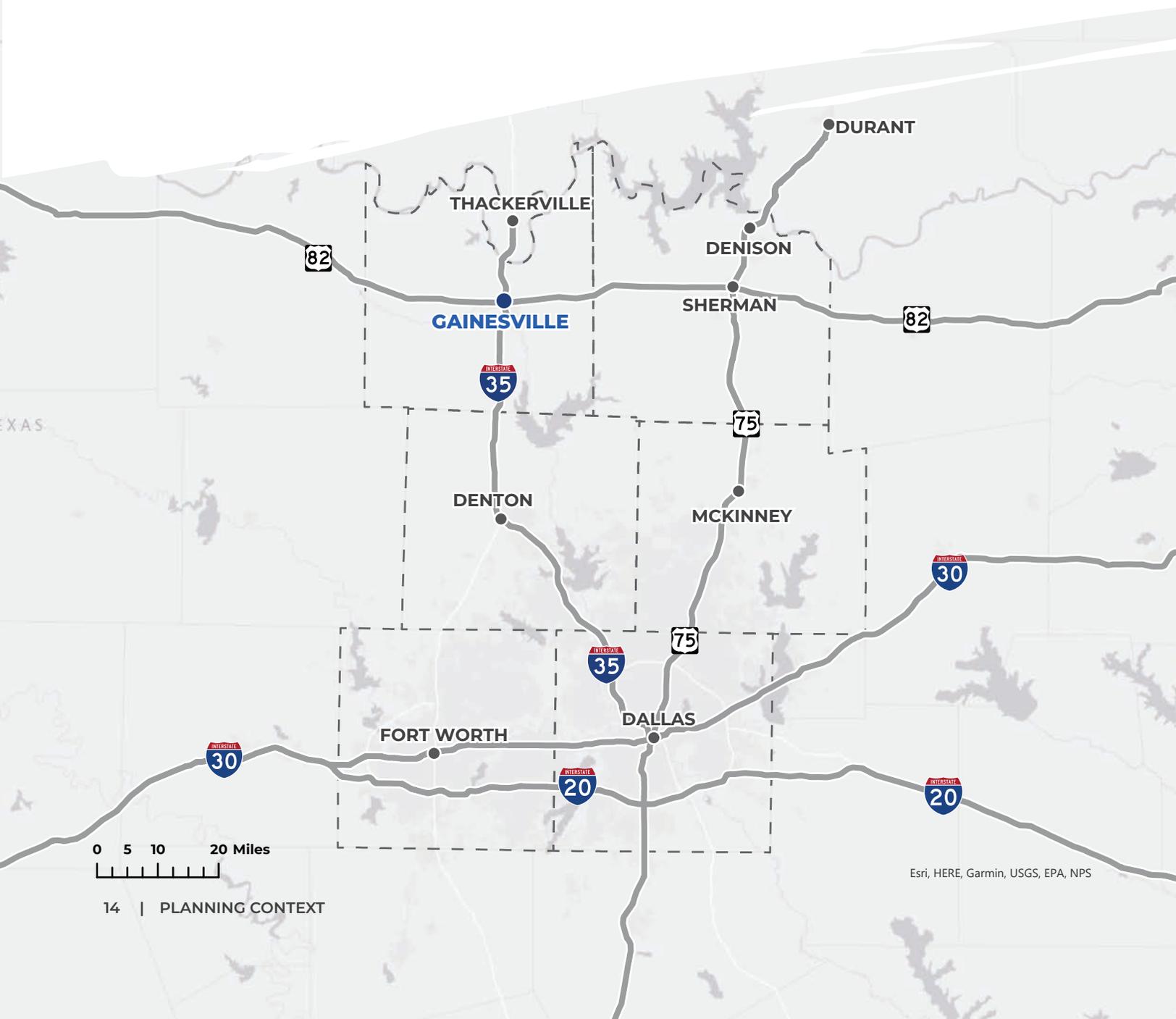
Since 1997, Gainesville has achieved several key milestones that reflect its commitment to community health and fiscal responsibility, including:

- ▶ **2001:** Became the nation's only Medal of Honor Host City.
- ▶ **2001:** Received the Texas Art Education Award for Gainesville ISD's leadership in promoting the arts.
- ▶ **2024:** Earned a Gold Level designation from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies for outstanding permit compliance.
- ▶ **2025:** Recognized as a "Transparency Trailblazer" by the Texas Comptroller for its commitment to financial transparency.

Gainesville and Regional Changes since 1997

Since 1997, Gainesville has experienced steady population growth and increasing regional significance, especially as Interstate 35 spurs new development along frontage roads. The City has made significant progress in addressing the strains of growth through capital improvement projects and the establishment of new development standards.

These improvements to public infrastructure and facilities enhance operational efficiency and the ability to serve residents. Gainesville's membership and collaboration with TCOG highlights its vital position as the intersection of urban and rural communities.

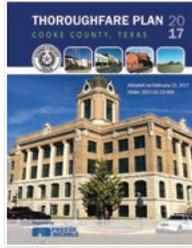


Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, EPA, NPS

Regional Planning Influences

→ **Cooke County Thoroughfare Plan (2017)**

Provides a policy guide for long-range transportation planning. It identified corridors with major improvement needs in Gainesville, providing the foundations for the City's own thoroughfare plan and informing the transportation priorities in this document.



→ **Cooke County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan (Updated 2025)**

Outlines hazards and mitigation strategies for the region. The updated plan focuses on reducing risks to life and property, guiding resilience and mitigation strategies in **Chapter 5**.



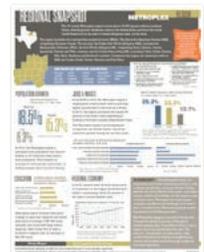
→ **Texoma Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2022)**

Identified supply, industrial diversity, and fiscal resiliency as key priorities for Gainesville and highlighted opportunities for collaboration, which are directly addressed in this Plan's economic vitality goals.



→ **Texas Comptroller (2020)**

The Comptroller's regional snapshot provides context on the area's economy and population growth, offering insight into the industries the City could attract through the targeted strategies in this Plan.



KEY REGIONAL TRENDS AND THEIR IMPACT

→ **North Texas Region Rapid Growth**

The North Texas region continues to experience rapid population growth, gaining over half a million people from 2020 to January 2024. This surge has increased demand for new housing and improved infrastructure. This Plan's recommendations position Gainesville to better attract industry relocations and capture opportunities in the tourism economy.

→ **Interstate 35 Expansion Project**

A Texas Department of Transportation ("TxDOT") project aims to widen the highway from FM 3002 to Oklahoma, which is expected to reduce traffic congestion and improve regional access. The expansion has already served as a catalyst for new development along the frontage road, addressing housing needs, creating employment opportunities, and increasing the City's visibility.

Conclusion

This introduction has established **Guiding Gainesville 2040** as a forward-looking plan rooted in the City's rich history and its dynamic regional context. By building upon past efforts and responding to the rapid changes since 1997, this document provides a clear roadmap for the future. The Plan's alignment with concurrent master plans and regional strategies ensures a cohesive and efficient approach to growth.

The next chapter will detail the community engagement process that influenced the vision and guiding principles by highlighting the diverse voices and roles that are essential to the Plan's success. ►



02 THE COMMUNITY AS A COMPASS

Community Engagement Process

The development of this Plan was guided by a core principle: ***the community is the compass***. To ensure the final Plan reflects Gainesville’s collective vision, the engagement process was designed to be transparent, inclusive, and continuous. By engaging residents at every stage from early visioning to final review, the City fostered a deep sense of community ownership.

Residents shared their perspectives through a citywide survey, 4 public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and community events

like Depot Day. Together, these efforts gave Gainesville’s residents an active role in shaping the City’s vision.

GUIDING GAINESVILLE ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

- ▶ **Community Survey**
- ▶ **Downtown Gainesville Business Survey**
- ▶ **News Releases**
- ▶ **Guiding Gainesville Flyers, Stickers, Postcards, and Coloring Sheets**
- ▶ **Guiding Gainesville Project Website**
- ▶ **Depot Day Pop-up**
October 2024
- ▶ **Social Media Content Resources**
- ▶ **Gainesville Engage Website**
- ▶ **Stakeholder Interviews**
- ▶ **Public Workshop #1**
February 3rd, 2025
- ▶ **Medal of Honor Event Pop-up**
April 2025
- ▶ **Public Workshop #2**
June 2nd, 2025
- ▶ **Public Workshop #3**
September 8, 2025
- ▶ **Public Workshop #4**
November 17, 2025





Public Involvement

Online Engagement

PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website, GuidingGainesville.org, served as the central digital hub for the planning process, offering information about the Plan’s purpose, upcoming events, and feedback opportunities in both English and Spanish. Following the Plan’s adoption, the website will be maintained for five years as a public resource for ongoing updates, including any plan addenda resulting from the annual review process.



1,652
WEBSITE
VISITORS

3,467
PAGE
VIEWS

SOCIAL MEDIA

To drive engagement and reach a broad audience, the City utilized its social media channels—including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn—to share updates about Plan events, workshops, surveys, and direct residents to the project website. Partner organizations also

assisted with promoting these opportunities. Beyond information sharing, an interactive online forum on Civil Space created a transparent venue for community members to ask questions and receive direct answers from City staff, fostering an ongoing public dialogue.

30+
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

115k
POST VIEWS

250+
POST SHARES



Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee of business leaders, nonprofit representatives, and City staff provided expert guidance throughout the planning process. Appointed in July 2024, the committee met monthly to review draft materials, provide valuable feedback, and help refine the Plan's recommendations, ensuring alignment with community and institutional priorities.

In addition to regular meetings, the committee engaged in on-the-ground analysis to

connect planning discussions with real-world observations. A walking tour of downtown Gainesville allowed members to evaluate streetscape conditions, pedestrian access, and opportunities for beautification firsthand. To gather aspirational ideas for Gainesville's Park system, the committee—joined by members of the Parks & Recreation Board—also toured notable parks and open spaces in the wider North Texas region. These tours provided valuable context that directly informed the Plan's recommendations.



Stakeholder Interviews

A series of stakeholder interviews with City departments, community stakeholders, developers, and business owners provided valuable insight into Gainesville’s current operations, and opportunities. Their feedback identified barriers to address and strengths to build on, shaping the recommendations included in this Plan.

CITY AND INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

City departments and partner organizations shared perspectives on current strengths and areas of improvement. **Key themes that emerged from these conversations included:**



Prioritizing Infrastructure
A consistent theme was the need to invest in road improvements, expand water and wastewater capacity, and replace aging systems to support growth and maintain quality of life.



Strengthening Educational Partnerships
A focus on fostering collaboration between NCTC, GISSD, and the City to enhance educational opportunities and workforce development was identified.



Enhancing Public Safety
Stakeholders highlighted the importance of addressing staffing challenges, improving traffic safety, and ensuring adequate resources for emergency preparedness and response.



Enhancing Strategic Communication
Feedback pointed to an opportunity to increase collaboration between the City, stakeholders, and the community.



Investing in Parks and Recreation
Feedback indicated a desire to upgrade park amenities, expand trail systems, and promote diverse programming for a growing community.



Focusing on Sustainable Growth
Stakeholders emphasized the importance of balancing new development with the preservation of Gainesville’s unique character and natural resources.



Supporting the Airport
The airport was noted as a key asset with opportunities for economic development through infrastructure improvements and targeted marketing and outreach.



**47% of
Businesses
have
operated
downtown
for 10+ years.**

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OWNERS

Fifty-seven business owners shared their perspectives through the Downtown Gainesville Business Survey, a full analysis of which can be found in the *Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan*. The results paint a picture of a stable and deeply rooted business community, where nearly half of businesses have operated for over 10 years and more than half of owners have a personal connection to the City.

Parking emerged as a key concern, with 40% rating customer parking availability as poor or very poor, citing a lack of space. Owners suggested reconfiguring parking layout to increase capacity and enforcing time limits. Beyond parking, business owners identified physical infrastructure needs, including street improvements, sidewalks, and lighting, and suggested adding benches, landscaping, and signage to enhance the visitor experience throughout the downtown area.

Business owners praised special events, such as the Farmers' Market, Christmas Parade, and wine strolls, which attract a large number of visitors. They also emphasized the **need for more diverse retail, dining, and entertainment options** to attract a wider customer demographic which could lead to increased foot traffic, with a suggestion

that the addition of interactive experiences, art installations, and events may encourage attendees to shop and linger.

Over half of business owners have a personal connection to Gainesville.

DEVELOPER INTERVIEWS

Developers shared feedback on Gainesville's development process, identifying opportunities for improvement and offering recommendations to make the process more efficient and effective.

Developers highlighted Gainesville's streamlined permitting and approval process as a strength. They noted that flexibility, quick timelines, and ample pre-application meetings make the City an attractive place to build.

At the same time, developers identified infrastructure—**particularly roads and wastewater capacity**—as a major barrier that affects land development decisions. They recommended **adding design guidelines and clearer zoning to set expectations upfront**, as well as clearly identifying infrastructure projects eligible for impact fee credits in the CIP.

Public Workshops

Gainesville held **4 public workshops** throughout the development of this Plan, each designed to create an interactive and welcoming environment. Activity stations allowed participants to explore specific topics in detail and share targeted feedback. In the early sessions, over 200 attendees voted on the vision statement that best reflected their aspirations, identified budget priorities, and provided input on current City conditions.

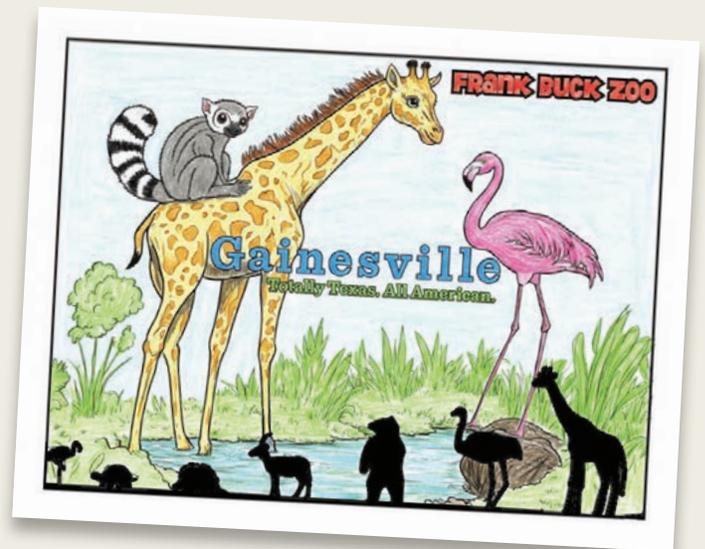
Together, this feedback gave the City a clear picture of the community's values and long-term goals.

Subsequent workshops focused on gathering feedback on the draft Plan. Attendees reviewed and discussed proposed recommendations in mini-sessions directly with staff and workshop facilitators. This continuous feedback loop balanced flexibility and structure, ensuring the public could meaningfully shape the Plan at every stage.

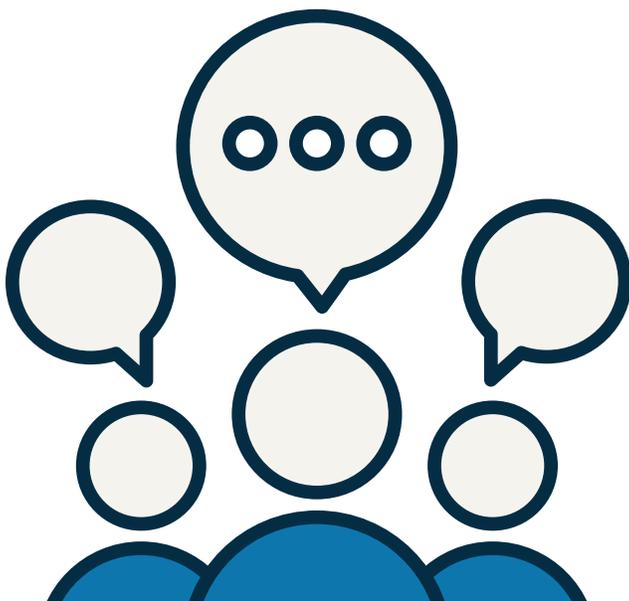
69.2% of survey respondents would like to leave a Gainesville that values resilient growth and is financially stable.



Over 200 participants attended Workshop #1, reflecting high community interest.



Custom-designed coloring sheets were developed to invite children to actively participate in workshops while parents explored the stations alongside them.



Community Input Survey

The Guiding Gainesville Community Input Survey served as a primary tool for initial public input, gathering detailed feedback on topics ranging from housing to infrastructure, parks and open spaces, fiscal responsibility, and economic development. The 58-question survey received a robust response with over 1,400 respondents between August and October 2024. Respondents represented a broad cross-section of the community, ensuring the feedback was comprehensive and diverse. A full breakdown of the respondent demographics and question-by-question results is available in **Appendix A**.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When asked to rate the future of different development types on a five-point scale (where 5 signifies a very positive impact), residents showed strong support for projects that contribute to a vibrant local economy. **Entertainment options** received the highest average rating at **4.25 out of 5**, followed by **retail stores and strip centers (3.89)**, **local restaurants and fast food (3.86)**, and **mixed-use developments (3.65)**. The results also reflect a desire to preserve Gainesville’s unique charm while promoting economic growth, emphasizing the creation of higher-paying jobs and attracting new businesses.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Overall, respondents are satisfied with their neighborhoods but want upgrades such as better street lighting, sidewalks, and traffic calming for safety. While single-family homes remain the most preferred housing type, there is openness to a variety of options — including senior housing, apartments, townhomes, and mixed-use developments. **Respondents also showed support for residential growth downtown, with 24% strongly supporting and 29% somewhat supporting apartments and lofts.** Nearly half of respondents overall support more residential options downtown, reflecting interest in walkable, mixed-use living environments.

This feedback highlights a **key community priority of balancing the preservation of traditional neighborhood character with the strategic addition of diverse housing options**, with particular support for apartments and lofts, to meet evolving needs.

Desired Development Types



Housing Typologies



PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, STREET NETWORK, AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

Satisfaction ratings for core City services highlighted a clear divide between public safety and transportation. On a five-point scale with 1 being “dissatisfied” and 5 being “satisfied,” **services like fire protection and emergency response (4.33 out of 5) and police protection and public safety (3.92) received high marks**, indicating confidence in the City’s emergency response capabilities. In contrast, **street conditions (1.87) and crosswalks and sidewalks (2.53) received the lowest ratings**, highlighting a **clear desire for significant investments in the transportation network**.

PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and trails are among Gainesville’s most valued community assets, with **26% of respondents visiting often and 38% visiting somewhat often**. Leonard Park, Hometown Heroes Trail, and Frank Buck Zoo were noted as favorite destinations.

Residents called for improved connectivity, lighting, and accessibility, particularly for those with mobility limitations, in both parks and trails. They also requested **new or enhanced amenities, including picnic areas, splash pads, public art, and expanded sports facilities**. These priorities reflect a desire for safe, accessible spaces that support recreation and cultural enrichment for all ages and abilities.

City Service Satisfaction Levels



**Street Conditions:
1.87/5**



**Sidewalks & Crosswalks:
2.53/5**



**Police Protection & Public Safety:
3.92/5**



**Fire Protection & Emergency Response:
4.33/5**





DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE REVITALIZATION

Half of respondents visit downtown

Gainesville frequently, with 19.4% visiting daily and 30.7% a few times a week, primarily for dining, shopping, and services (72%). Community members expressed strong interest in expanding entertainment options, restaurants, and coffee shops to further strengthen downtown as a destination.

Most respondents view downtown as attractive (56%) or very attractive (11%), and 85% **emphasized the importance of public art and beautification**. Suggestions included murals, street art, and additional green spaces to create a welcoming environment.

Parking and accessibility also emerged as priorities for improvement, with over one-third of respondents stating there is not enough parking downtown. Many also requested upgrades to sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle infrastructure, including protected bike lanes and additional bicycle parking, to make downtown safer and more accessible for all. These findings reflect a strong community desire to make Downtown a vibrant gathering space for residents and visitors.

72% of survey respondents would like to see more entertainment options in Downtown Gainesville.

LOOKING FORWARD

Over the next 10–15 years, the Gainesville community identified a need for increased amenities for families with children, a stronger local economy, and improved traffic flow and safety. These priorities are detailed within the Community Input Survey results. Preserving the City's unique character and sense of community is also important, alongside continued investment in parks, green spaces, and recreational facilities. Together, these priorities reflect a shared community vision for a vibrant, connected, and family-friendly Gainesville that balances growth with quality of life.

Roles in Plan Stewardship and Implementation

Stakeholder Roles

The success of **Guiding Gainesville 2040** depends on its key stakeholders, who each play a unique role in the three critical phases of the Plan: shaping its content, formally adopting it as policy, and implementing its recommendations.



CITY STAFF

City staff manage the technical and administrative aspects of the planning process, coordinating public outreach and providing

valuable insight into daily operations. During implementation, staff will serve as a liaison between the public, developers, and City Council, actively monitoring progress to ensure the execution and relevance of the Plan's strategies.



APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Boards and committees, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission, advised the planning process and ensured

strategies were both attainable and feasible. During implementation, they will apply the Plan's unified vision to guide their decisions on development proposals.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND RESIDENTS

Community members grounded the Plan in shared values, offering feedback on key issues that influenced

the Plan's growth and direction. During implementation, residents will advocate for priority recommendations that advance the community's vision.



CITY COUNCIL

City Council supported public outreach and offered insight into their communities throughout the planning process. During

implementation, they will rely on the Plan as a primary policy guide to inform legislative decisions and create policies that advance its goals.



Photo Credit:
City of Gainesville

Metrics in Plan Stewardship and Implementation

Gainesville’s staff and elected officials will continuously monitor the Plan’s progress to ensure steady implementation and maintain its relevance. As established in **Chapter 1**, this process includes a systematic annual review to track the implementation of recommendations and measure the Plan’s integration into the City’s decision-making. For the first five years, these annual reviews will be facilitated with the assistance of Antero Group to establish a consistent evaluation framework.

In addition to annual tracking, more comprehensive milestone reviews will occur at the five- and ten-year marks. These major reviews will assess the Plan’s overall effectiveness, consider significant regional changes, and determine if major updates are necessary. The success of each recommendation will be measured against specific performance metrics, which are detailed in the Implementation Matrix in **Chapter 6**.

Plan Governance Structure

The Plan’s governance structure prioritizes the community, highlighting the City’s commitment to shared decision-making. By placing residents at the forefront, it ensures their needs guide the actions of City staff, boards, committees, and elected

officials, keeping implementation responsive to local priorities. **This community-centered framework fosters collaboration, accountability, and transparency, advancing Gainesville’s vision.**

Conclusion

The Plan's engagement process employed diverse communication methods to ensure that **Guiding Gainesville 2040** accurately represents the perspectives of the community. Findings from the community input survey underscored the public's interest in preserving Gainesville's distinctive character while expanding family-oriented amenities, enhancing the local economy, and addressing infrastructure needs, as well as articulating broader visions for the City's future.

Collectively, these insights provide a strategic direction: **leverage** the City's existing strengths, **align** initiatives with community priorities, and **implement** well-coordinated improvements that balance progress with Gainesville's valued small-town identity. The following chapter translates this collective community direction into a formal vision, establishing the aspirational goals that will **guide Gainesville's path to 2040.** ►

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Photo Credit: Roberto - stock.adobe.com

03 DESTINATION 2040: VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES



The Visioning Process

The vision for this Plan was established through a comprehensive, community-driven process. Through public workshops, a citywide survey, interviews, and committee meetings, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders shared their aspirations for the City's future.

Through these conversations, several consistent themes emerged as the foundation for the community's vision:

- ▶ **Preserving Gainesville's Character**
Maintaining the small-town feel and unique identity.
- ▶ **Infrastructure & Connectivity**
Improving and upgrading current infrastructure.
- ▶ **Economic Vitality**
Creating new employment opportunities and ensuring fiscal sustainability.
- ▶ **Parks & Green Space**
Increasing amenities and access to recreational activities.

Guided by these themes, and by community descriptions of Gainesville as **Friendly, Patriotic, Small,** and **Growing**, three potential vision statements were drafted. These statements were presented back to the community for review, and a final vision was chosen by public consensus. The resulting statement serves as the foundational compass for this entire Plan.

Vision Statement

The following statement is the guiding vision for Gainesville's future:

Gainesville will be a thriving, patriotic, family-oriented community that embraces its heritage and provides a high quality of life for all. We will achieve this through sustainable growth, a vibrant downtown, ample parks and natural spaces, and a strong commitment to education and cultural opportunities.

This vision anchors the Plan's goals and recommendations. Each key phrase reflects a core community principle and priority:

- ▶ **A Thriving, Patriotic, Family-Oriented Community**
Fostering livable, high-quality neighborhoods with access to essential amenities and services.
- ▶ **Embracing Our Heritage**
Honoring Gainesville's history through cultural events, preservation, and community traditions.
- ▶ **Sustainable Growth**
Promoting fiscally responsible development that creates diverse employment opportunities to support long-term resiliency.
- ▶ **A Vibrant Downtown**
Encouraging a mix of uses while preserving historic character and enhancing walkability.
- ▶ **Ample Parks and Natural Spaces**
Expanding recreational programs and improving access to quality green space for all residents.
- ▶ **A Commitment to Education and Culture**
Cultivating lifelong learning opportunities and expanding access to the arts.



Guiding Goals

To translate the community's broad vision into a clear framework for action, this Plan establishes the following set of guiding goals. Developed through extensive public outreach, these goals represent the community's top priorities for the future.

They serve as the bridge between the aspirational vision statement and the specific policies and projects detailed in later chapters. For example, the goal of Sustainable Growth directly informs strategies for land use and

economic development, while the goal of a Vibrant Downtown steers recommendations for streetscape improvements and cultural programming.

Goals

1. FISCAL RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

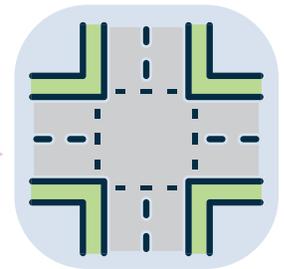
Gainesville will build a sustainable and resilient economy by investing in local talent, supporting entrepreneurship, and ensuring fiscally responsible growth. The City will:



- ▶ Ensure Fiscally Productive Growth
- ▶ Build a Resilient and Diverse Local Economy
- ▶ Foster a Thriving Small Business Ecosystem
- ▶ Develop a Homegrown Workforce

2. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, STREET NETWORK, AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

Gainesville will strengthen its infrastructure and mobility networks to promote public health, safety, and sustainable growth. The City will:



- ▶ Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water and Wastewater System for the Future
- ▶ Protect the Community From Flood Risk
- ▶ Create a Safe and Efficient Street Network
- ▶ Enhance the Character and Resilience of Key Corridors
- ▶ Create a Safe and Accessible Pedestrian Network
- ▶ Improve Safety and Railroad Crossings



3. FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Gainesville will promote development that meets the evolving needs of residents, preserves community character, and ensures housing opportunities for all life stages. The City will:



- ▶ Encourage Smart, Mixed-Use Growth in Key Corridors
- ▶ Preserve and Enhance Gainesville’s Unique Character
- ▶ Become the Most Business-Friendly City in the Region
- ▶ Update Development Regulations For Improved Predictability

5. DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE REVITALIZATION

Gainesville will strengthen downtown as the heart of the community – lively, walkable, and culturally rich destination that celebrates local heritage. The City will:

- ▶ Establish Downtown Gainesville as an official State Cultural District
- ▶ Celebrate and Share Gainesville’s Rich History
- ▶ Make Downtown the Premier Hub for Entertainment and Events

4. PARKS, PUBLIC SPACE, AND NATURAL TRAILS

Gainesville will enhance its parks, public spaces, and trail network to promote outdoor recreation, comfort, and connectivity throughout the community. The City will:



- ▶ Ensure All Parks are Safe, Well-Maintained, and High-Quality
- ▶ Provide Equitable Access to Parks and Green Space for All Neighborhoods.
- ▶ Enhance the Comfort and Usability of Public Outdoor Spaces
- ▶ Create a Connected Network of Trails and Greenways



- ▶ Create an Inviting and Walkable Downtown Experience
- ▶ Protect and Showcase Downtown’s Historic Architecture
- ▶ Create a Stress-Free Downtown Parking Experience



Objectives

The following objectives provide a more detailed description of the specific outcomes and policies needed to achieve the community's goals. While presented here by category, many objectives are interrelated. The implementation of this Plan will often involve "pairing recommendations," where objectives from different categories are integrated to advance a single goal. This approach is discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 6**.

1. FISCAL RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

- 1.1. Evaluate the long-term financial impact of every new development proposal on City services.
- 1.2. Expand local employment opportunities and strengthen job security by attracting new types of industries.
- 1.3. Improve access to resources, education, and support local entrepreneurs.
- 1.4. Create a direct pipeline from local education to local employment.

2. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, STREET NETWORK, AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

- 2.1. Increase water and wastewater system capacity and resilience to accommodate projected community growth.
- 2.2. Reduce the impact of major storm events in historically flood-prone areas throughout the city by integrating green infrastructure in strategic locations.
- 2.3. Systematically improve the condition of city streets to enhance safety, reduce vehicle damage, and improve connectivity.
- 2.4. Improve streetscape aesthetics, enhance public safety, and reduce the risk of weather-related power outages in critical areas.
- 2.5. Ensure all residents, regardless of age or mobility, can safely and easily walk to key destinations like parks, schools, and downtown.
- 2.6. Reduce the risk of vehicle and pedestrian collisions with trains at key intersections.



3. FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

- 3.1. Create opportunities for vibrant, walkable developments that combine places to live, work, and shopping.
- 3.2. Ensure new construction and redevelopment projects contribute positively to the city's historic, small-town identity.
- 3.3. Enhance the predictability and clarity of development regulations to maintain a highly efficient, business-friendly review process.

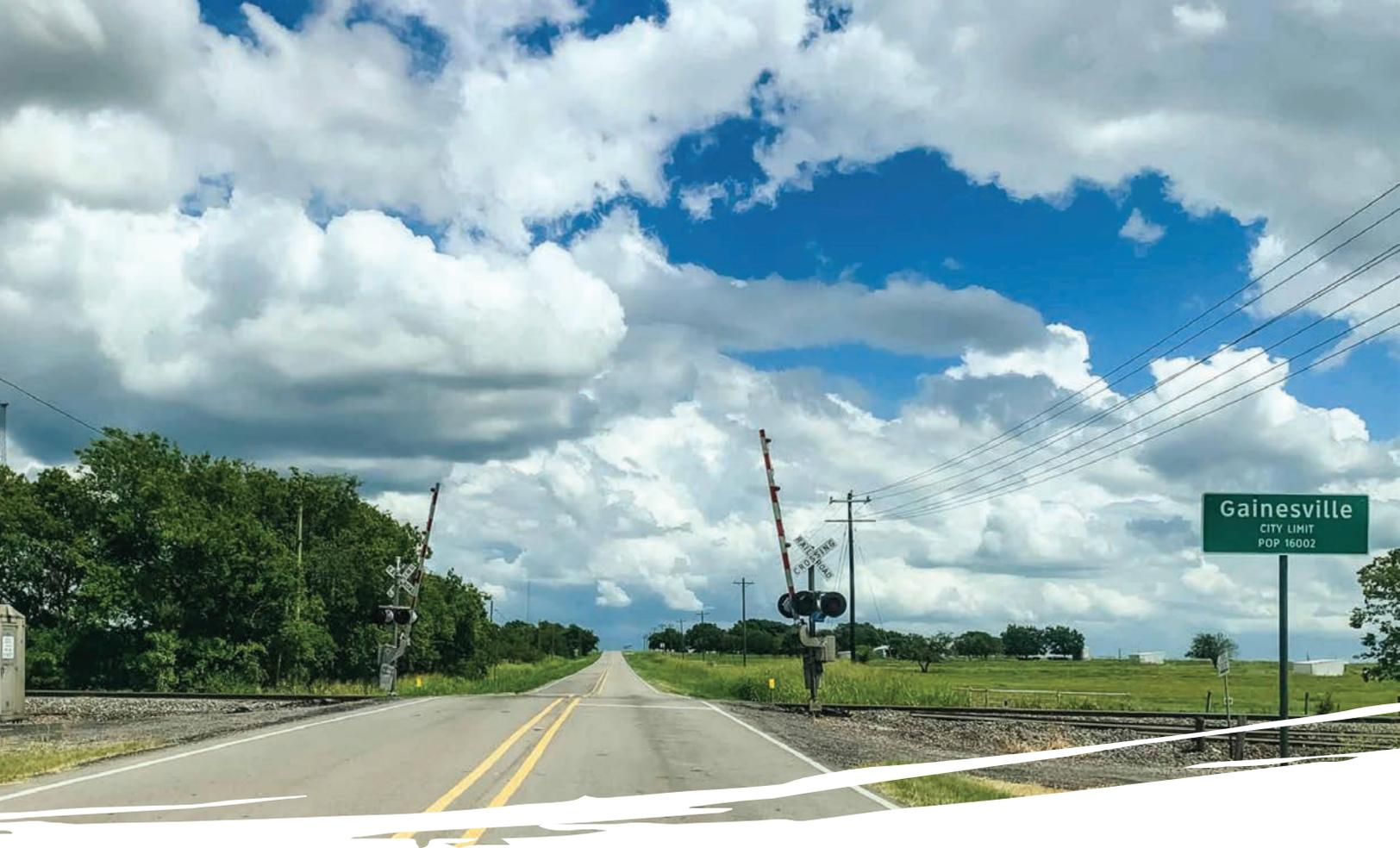
4. PARKS, PUBLIC SPACE, AND NATURE TRAILS

- 4.1. Provide continuous maintenance and replace aging equipment for all existing parks and recreation facilities.
- 4.2. Enhance the safety, accessibility, and function of regional park assets through strategic capital projects.
- 4.3. Identify underserved or growing neighborhoods and prioritize the acquisition of properties for parks and recreational programming.
- 4.4. Increase outdoor comfort levels city-wide using shade by strategically capitalizing on existing shade trees; relocate and reconfigure movable amenities to maximize the benefit provided by existing shaded areas.

- 4.5. Implement targeted improvements at underdeveloped park facilities to enhance inclusivity, accessibility, and long-term functionality for all.
- 4.6. Unify the trail user experience across the active transportation network by identifying and instituting City trail design standards.

5. DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE REVITALIZATION

- 5.1. Leverage arts, culture, and history to strengthen the local economy and create a distinct identity for downtown.
- 5.2. Create engaging and accessible ways for residents and visitors to experience the stories of historic downtown.
- 5.3. Promote Downtown Gainesville as a destination to increase foot traffic and economic activity through additional culturally engaging events and activities.
- 5.4. Enhance the safety, comfort, and beauty of downtown streets for pedestrians.
- 5.5. Maintain the visual appeal and historic integrity of downtown buildings while encouraging beautification.
- 5.6. Make it easier for residents and visitors to find and use available parking.



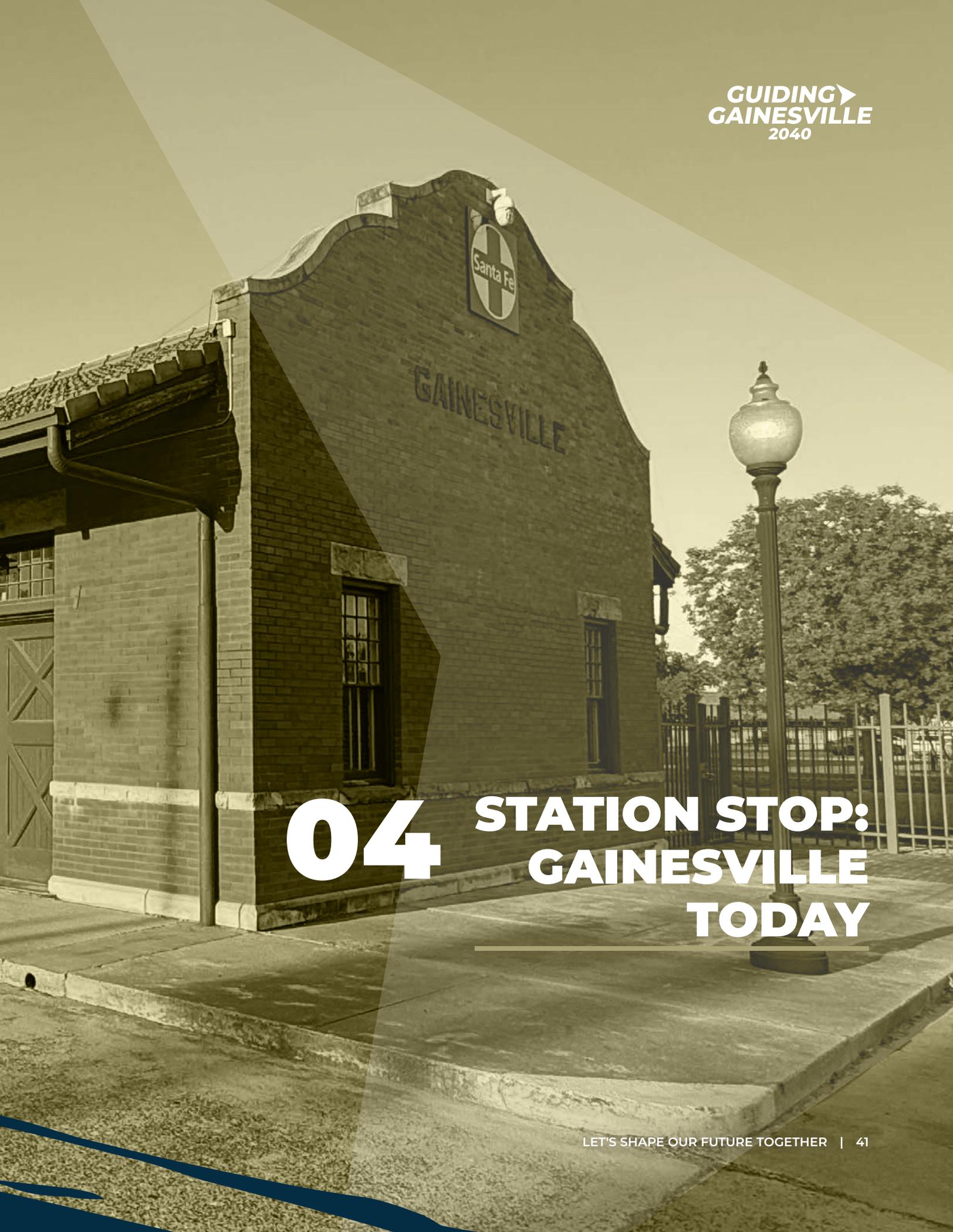
Conclusion

The vision statement and its supporting goals create a structured framework for **Guiding Gainesville 2040**. Born from extensive community input, they reflect the City's shared values and provide a clear, aspirational direction for the future and set the foundation for recommendations presented in the subsequent chapters of this Plan.

With the destination now clearly in sight, the next chapter provides the data-driven context needed to begin the journey. It explores the City's current demographics and conditions, establishing the baseline from which this Plan will measure future success. ►

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04 STATION STOP:
GAINESVILLE
TODAY

Why Demographics Matter to the Planning Process

Understanding a community’s existing conditions is foundational to effective planning. By analyzing current population, economic, and development trends, this Plan can anticipate future needs and develop targeted strategies for housing, infrastructure, and community services.

The data in this chapter provides the essential, evidence-based context to support the recommendations that follow, ensuring they

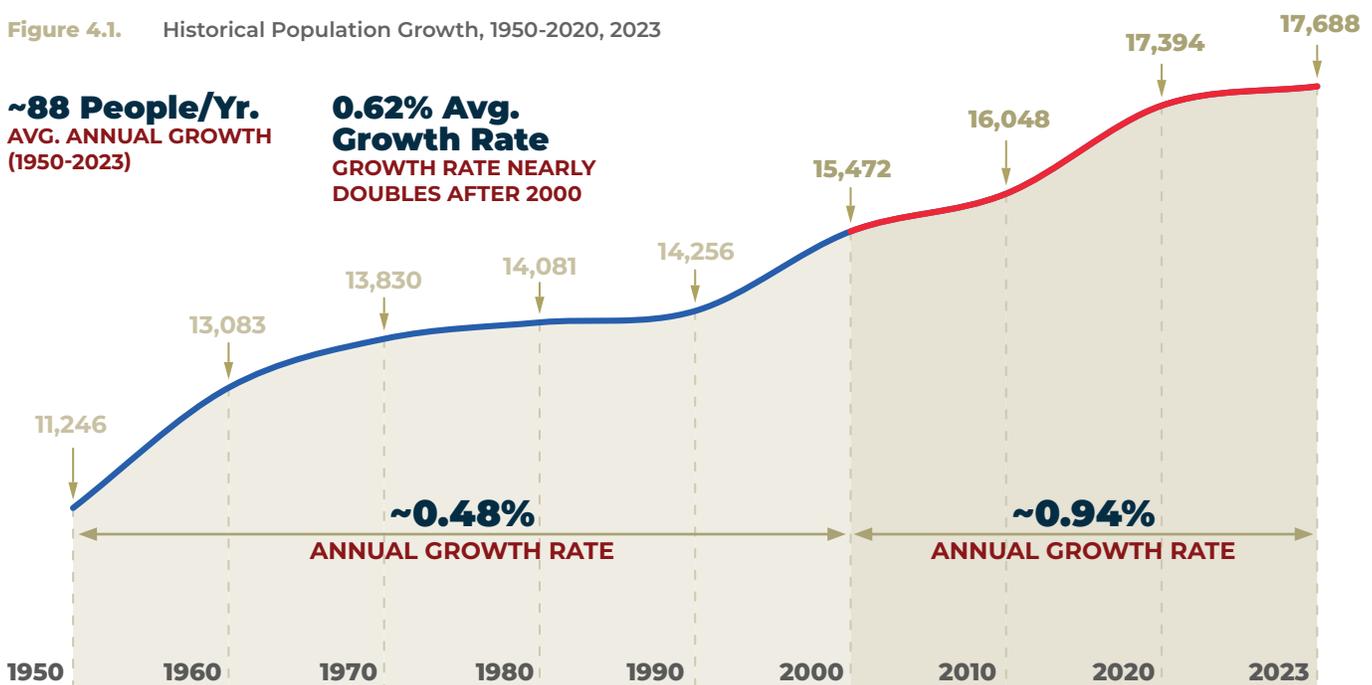
are designed to meet the specific challenges and opportunities presented by Gainesville’s growth.

Growth Trajectory

Gainesville experienced significant population growth during the post-World War II “Baby Boom” era (1946–1964). Between 1950 and 1960, the population increased from 11,246 to 13,083—

representing the City’s largest single-decade gain. Although growth rates have fluctuated since that period, Gainesville has continued to add residents steadily, as shown in **Figure 4.1**.

Figure 4.1. Historical Population Growth, 1950-2020, 2023



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 1950-2020 Decennial Census; 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Today, Gainesville is located within one of the fastest-growing regions of the United States. According to 2023 U.S. Census estimates, the City’s population is 17,688. Population projections as shown in **Figure 4.2** indicate continued growth, with conservative forecasts estimating 21,904 residents by 2040 and a high-growth scenario projecting up to 41,750 residents. The conservative scenario uses the Cohort-Component Model, which projects population change based on births, deaths, and migration. For this scenario, the model assumes no migration, meaning growth is driven solely by natural increase (births minus deaths). High-growth scenario uses historical population trends, higher net migration, and higher fertility rates, creating aggressive growth.

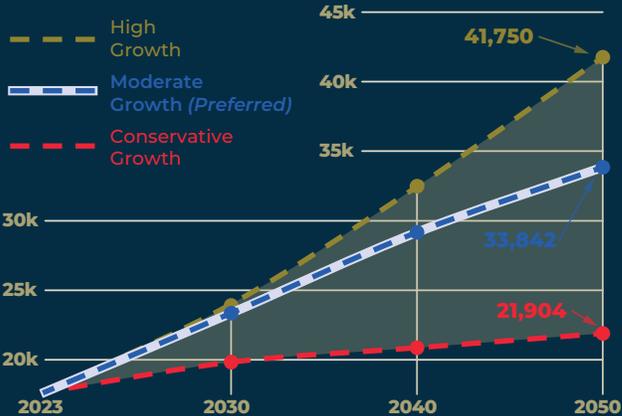
These population projections were developed using a Compound Annual Growth Rate (“CAGR”) model and the Texas Water Development Board’s regional data. A detailed description of the methodology is available in **Appendix B**.

This anticipated expansion has direct implications for the City’s housing supply, infrastructure systems, and the demand for community services.

The People of Gainesville: Community Composition

As of 2023, Gainesville’s population is nearly evenly divided by sex, with 51 percent female and 49 percent male, and reflects a diverse blend of ages and cultural backgrounds as shown in **Figure 4.3**. The City’s broad age distribution, illustrated in **Figure 4.4**, includes a substantial working-age population alongside a growing number of older adults. These demographic characteristics have vital implications for planning priorities. For example, the size of the working-age population aligns directly with survey responses emphasizing the need for expanded employment opportunities, industry recruitment, and attainable housing options.

Figure 4.2. Population Projections, 2023-2050



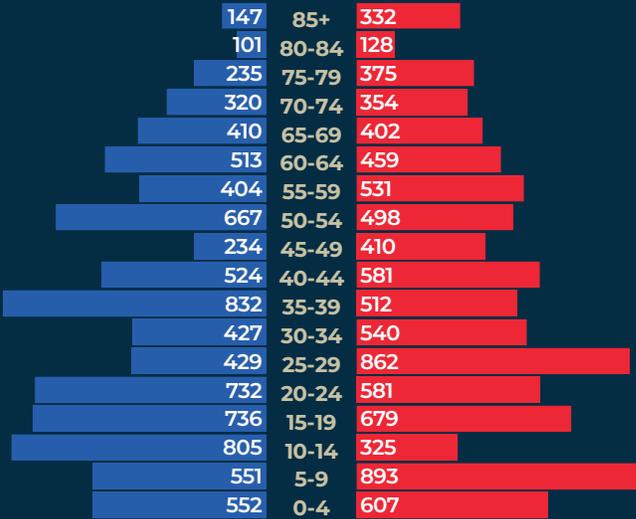
Source(s): TWDB 2021 Population Projections; Texas Vital Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.3. Race and Ethnicity

RACE & ETHNICITY	%
White	68%
Black or African American	7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1%
Asian	1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%
Some Other Race	7%
Two or More Races	15%
Hispanic Population	32%

Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.4. Age and Sex Distribution



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

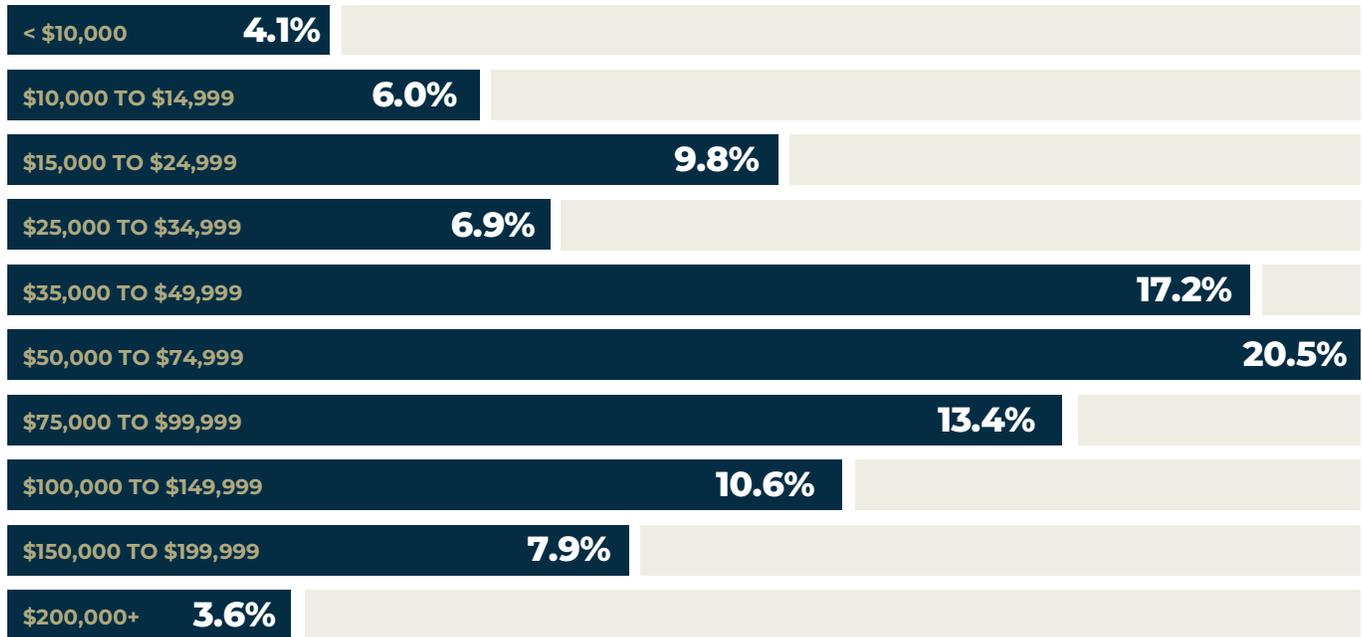
Socioeconomic Indicators

EARNINGS & EMPLOYMENT

The median household income of \$56,341 in Gainesville is below the statewide median of \$76,292. A full breakdown in household income distribution is displayed in **Figure 4.5**.

Gainesville's median household income is \$56,341.

Figure 4.5. Household Income Distribution



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.6. Location of Employment for Gainesville Workforce



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

This economic context is reflected in community feedback and commuting statistics (**Figure 4.6**), which illustrate that a major share of the local workforce is employed in other communities. This outflow of labor results in potential sales tax leakage to surrounding employment centers and a reduced daytime population, indicating a potential gap between potential local employment opportunities and the resident workforce.



STATION STOP: GAINESVILLE TODAY

Figure 4.7 Owner and Renter Composition



Housing and Neighborhoods

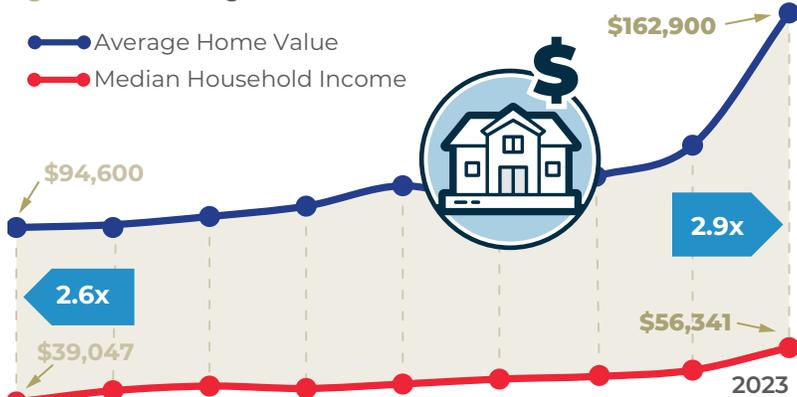
Gainesville’s residential landscape encompasses a mix of housing types that reflect the diversity of its population. The City contains traditional single-family districts, multi-family complexes, duplexes, and triplexes, as well as senior living facilities. This variety supports households across different age groups, income levels, and life stages, though analysis indicates gaps remain in the housing stock to fully meet community needs.

Household Composition & Costs

An analysis of household characteristics reveals a balance between owner-occupied and rental housing. According to ACS 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates, 57.2% of households are owner-occupied, while 42.8% are renter-occupied (Figure 4.7). This balance provides flexibility for residents but also underscores the importance of housing affordability, which may influence home ownership rates.

This public feedback is supported by quantitative data. Based on ACS 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates, the City’s price-to-income ratio is 2.9 (Figure 4.8). While traditionally a ratio under 3.0 is considered affordable, rising interest rates and maintenance costs are pushing homeownership out of reach for many median-income earners, creating a cost burden for prospective homeowners. Despite a 14.58% increase in median household income between 2022 and 2023, the escalation in housing prices and rental costs has outpaced income gains, reinforcing persistent affordability pressures.

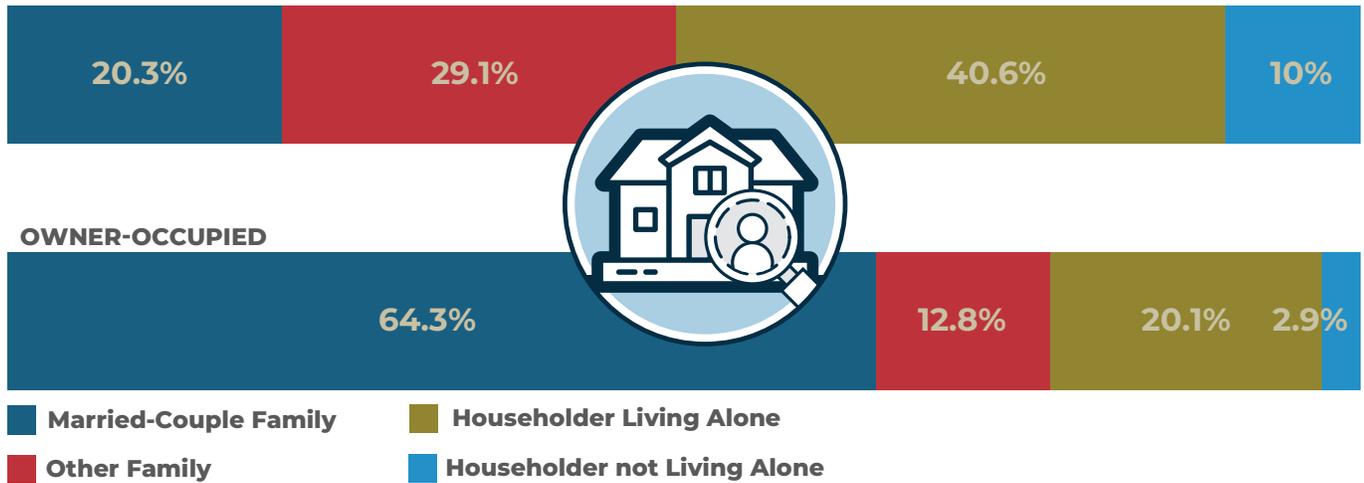
Figure 4.8. Average Home Value Versus Median Household Income



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

49.2% of households are rent-burdened.

Figure 4.9. Percent of Housing Units by Household Type
RENTER-OCCUPIED



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.9 illustrates the distribution of housing units by type. Geospatial analysis reveals a concentration of single-family homes in established neighborhoods, multi-family homes near commercial corridors, and senior living facilities in select areas.

Average Home Value: \$162,900.

Key Takeaways

The analysis indicates that while Gainesville maintains a stable housing inventory, challenges exist related to housing affordability and diversity. A price-to-income ratio suggesting a high cost burden for homeowners, combined with community feedback identifying affordability as a primary concern, are key findings. These factors, along with the need for neighborhood-level infrastructure improvements identified elsewhere in this chapter, provide a critical context for future housing and neighborhood policies.



Development Framework

A City's development framework is the combination of its physical land use patterns, historic assets, and regulatory tools. Together, these elements shape the community's character and guide its future growth.

Land Use

The pattern of land use defines Gainesville's physical form. The City's landscape includes a diverse mix of single-family residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, agricultural lands, and parks. As highway construction advances, the City has strategically encouraged new development along the frontage road to capture sales tax revenue from

travelers stopping in Gainesville. Consequently, commercial uses can be found along Interstate 35, US Highway 82, and other major arterials.

Land use patterns, shown in **Figure 4.10**, reveal a concentration of residential development within the City's inner neighborhoods while industrial activities are primarily located in the north along I-35.

Figure 4.10. Existing Land Use



EXISTING LAND USE

City Limit Boundary

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Airport

Commercial

Industrial

Institutional

Medical

Multi Family

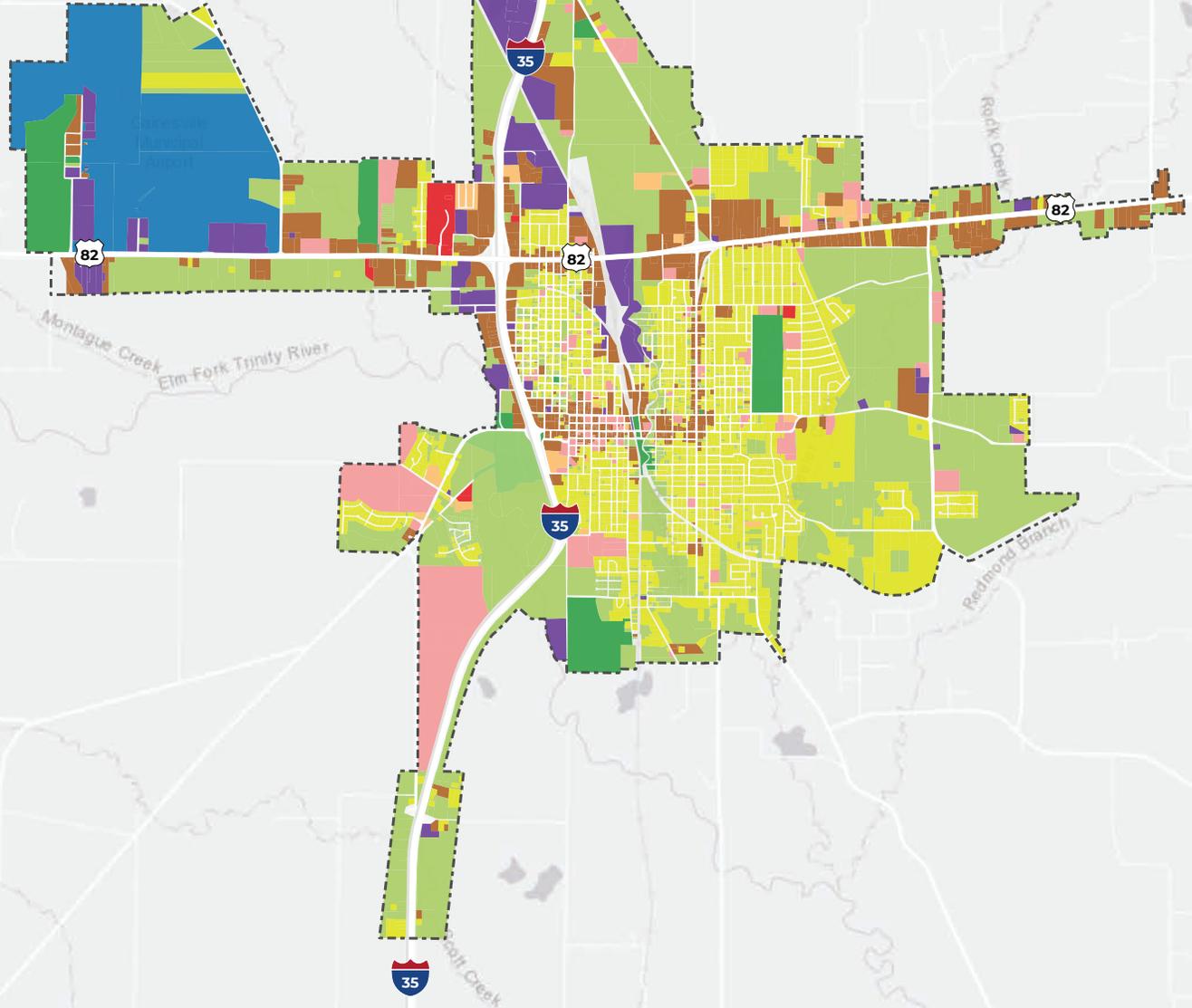
Open/Vacant Lot

Parks and Recreation

Planned Development

Single Family

Zoo



0 0.5 1 Mile

Source(s): Kimley-Horn Associates, TxDOT
Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, EPA, NPS

At the same time, a significant share of agricultural land remains within both the City's boundaries and its extraterritorial jurisdiction ("ETJ"), representing opportunities for future growth while maintaining ties to the community's rural character.

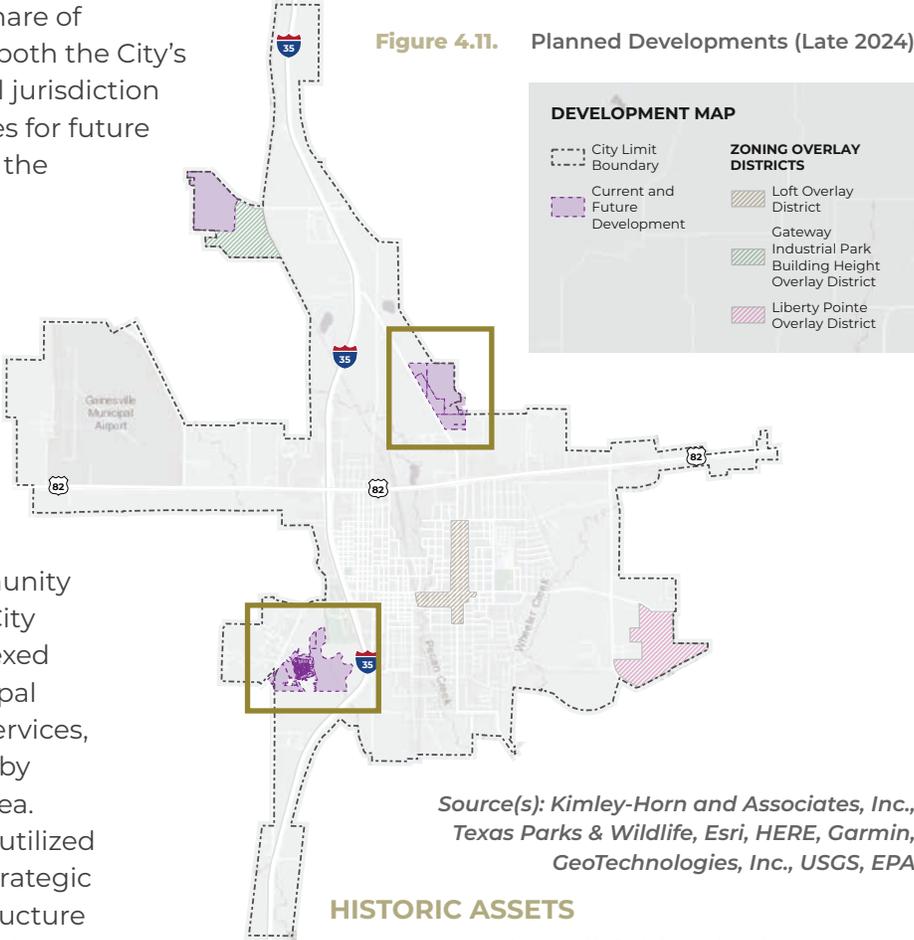
RECENT ANNEXATIONS

An annexation occurs when a City formally incorporates land or property into its corporate boundaries. The City of Gainesville's annexation process requires a petition from the property owner, a public hearing to gather community input, and final approval by the City Council. Upon approval, the annexed area becomes part of the municipal limits and is provided with City services, including water and sewer, thereby extending Gainesville's service area. In previous projects, the City has utilized development agreements and strategic incentive to facilitate this infrastructure expansion while supporting broader development objectives.

Significant annexations in 2024 included one ordinance adding approximately 40 acres and a subsequent ordinance incorporating an additional 198 acres.

In addition to expanding the City's jurisdictional boundaries, several ordinances established new development opportunities through zoning amendments. Notably, approximately 65 acres previously zoned for Commercial were redesignated as Planned Development, enabling the City to expand its housing inventory. The 40.2 acres annexed in August 2024 also rezoned from Agriculture to Planned Development as seen in **Figure 4.11**. Planned Developments allow the City to strategically prepare for future commercial needs, including grocery stores, dining options, and entertainment venues.

Figure 4.11. Planned Developments (Late 2024)



HISTORIC ASSETS

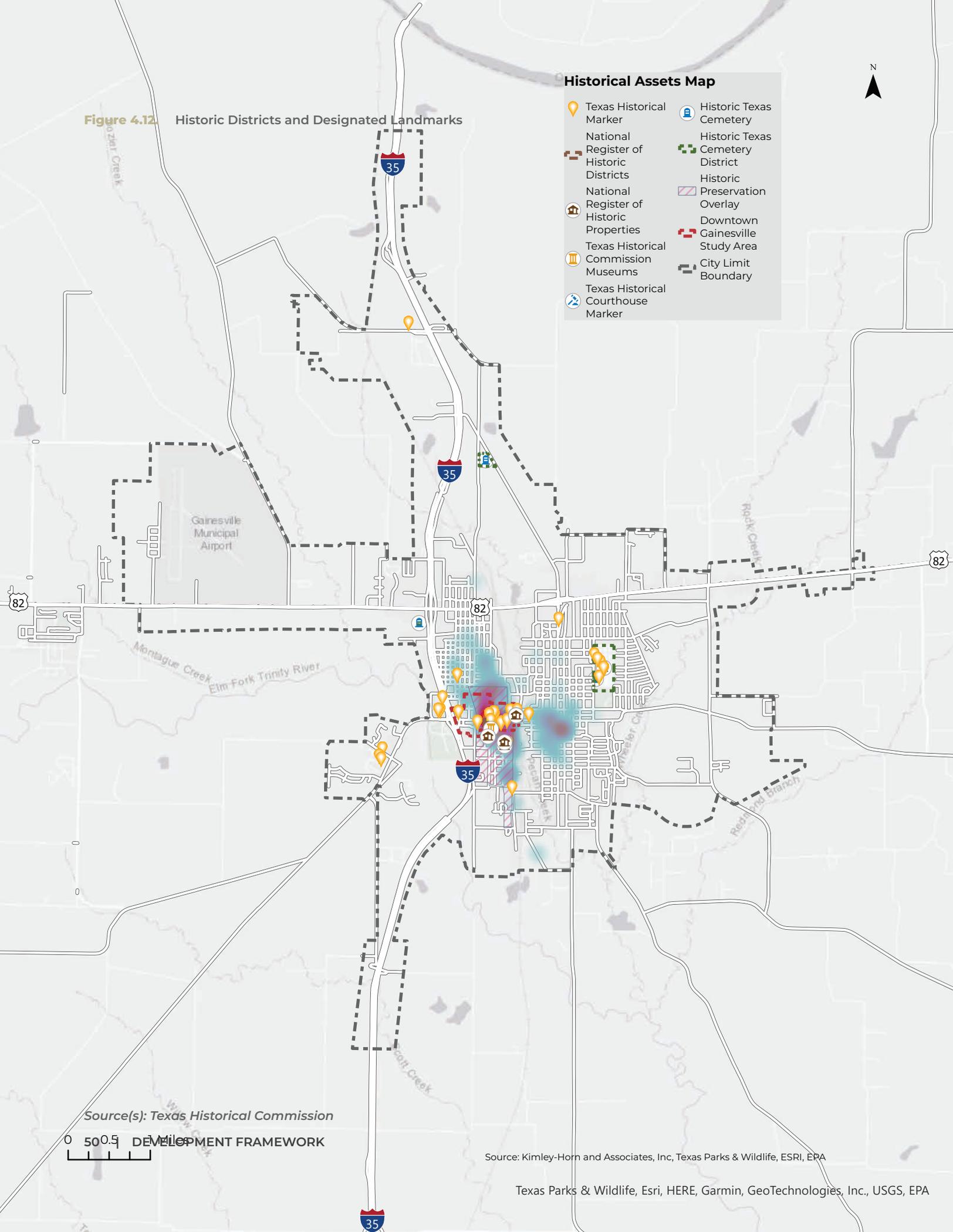
Preserving Gainesville's historic character is central to maintaining the community's identity. Landmark buildings and period architecture create a strong sense of place that connects present-day Gainesville to its past.

Figure 4.12 exhibits the national and state-recognized homes, churches, cemeteries, and landmarks, as well as a historic district found in Gainesville. **Figure 4.13** illustrates that most of the historical homes and assets are concentrated in Downtown neighborhoods. The Morton Museum, in partnership with the Cooke County Heritage Society and other local historic societies, plays a key role in preserving and interpreting this history. Through neighborhood tours, exhibitions, and events such as the Holiday Home Tour, the Museum helps residents and visitors experience Gainesville's historic fabric while promoting community pride and cultural awareness.

Figure 4.12 Historic Districts and Designated Landmarks

Historical Assets Map

-  Texas Historical Marker
-  Historic Texas Cemetery
-  National Register of Historic Districts
-  Historic Texas Cemetery District
-  National Register of Historic Properties
-  Historic Preservation Overlay
-  Texas Historical Commission Museums
-  Downtown Gainesville Study Area
-  Texas Historical Courthouse Marker
-  City Limit Boundary

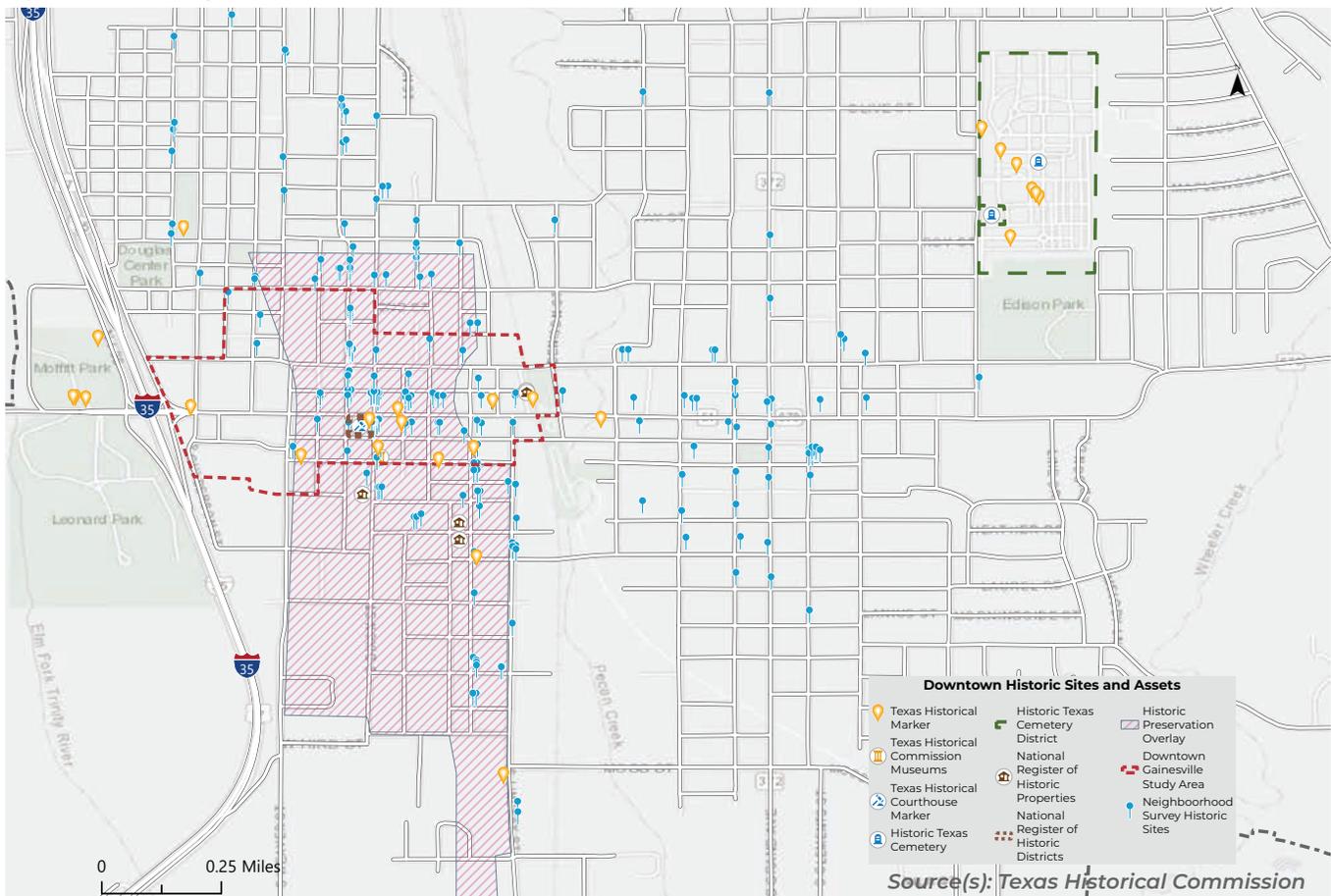


Source(s): Texas Historical Commission



Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc, Texas Parks & Wildlife, ESRI, EPA

Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

Figure 4.13. Designated Landmarks and Historic Sites in Downtown Gainesville

This Plan supports these ongoing preservation efforts through land use policies that protect historic areas from incompatible uses. These regulatory tools ensure that future growth respects and enhances the community's historic fabric, while parallel programmatic initiatives support the family-friendly events that bring these districts to life.

EMERGING LAND USE TRENDS

In Texas, the latest trends indicate a loss of agricultural land driven by population growth and the need to expand the housing stock. With land supply limited, developers and cities have increasingly promoted mixed-use developments, which provide residential, commercial, and service needs within walking distance. Similarly, Gainesville emphasizes corridor infill and mixed-use development

while expanding the availability of both multi-family and single-family housing. The City is particularly focused on implementing this approach in the downtown area, seeking to balance new growth with the preservation of community character. Concurrently, it aims to promote a more walkable and integrated urban environment.



Economic Competitiveness

Gainesville's economic condition reflects the reality of a smaller city positioned within a rapidly growing region.

The City benefits from its location along Interstate 35, a major north-south corridor that supports commerce, freight, and regional travel. This visibility provides Gainesville with opportunities to capture spending from travelers, commuters, and visitors, particularly through service-oriented businesses such as gas stations, restaurants, and retail establishments. The City also benefits from its proximity to the nearby Winstar World Casino and Resort in Thackerville, Oklahoma, which generates pass-through traffic that contributes to local sales.

Despite these advantages, Gainesville contends with challenges typical of smaller communities situated on the edge of larger metropolitan regions. A large share of the workforce commutes to employment outside the City, which reduces daytime population and contributes to sales tax leakage, as workers make purchases in other communities. These dynamics underscore the importance of strengthening Gainesville's own economic base to capture a larger share of regional spending and create employment opportunities locally.

Several community and institutional assets support Gainesville's competitiveness:

- ▶ **Gainesville Municipal Airport (KGLE):** A city-owned, two-runway facility located near US-82 and I-35. The airport accommodates a range of aircraft and positions Gainesville as an attractive location for light manufacturing, corporate aviation, and time-sensitive logistics.
- ▶ **North Central Texas College (NCTC):** As a higher education institution with a broad regional reach, NCTC provides educational opportunities, workforce training, and a talent pipeline that supports existing employers and strengthens Gainesville's ability to attract new industries.
- ▶ **Special Events and Tourism:** Gainesville's Medal of Honor events both celebrate national heroes and generate visitor activity. These events bring families and tourists into the City, creating direct sales tax revenue through dining, shopping, and lodging. The success of these events indicates that an opportunity exists to leverage cultural programming to capture the regional tourism market.
- ▶ **Business Incentives:** The City offers multiple incentives to encourage business relocation and expansion, reinforcing Gainesville's economic development competitiveness.

Economic Indicators

Cooke County’s economy generates nearly \$3 billion in annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While this level is modest compared to larger metropolitan areas in the region, it underscores the County’s steady contributions from key sectors such as educational services, health care, manufacturing, and retail trade. As the county seat and a primary employment center, Gainesville plays a significant role in driving this economic output, alongside other cities in Cooke County.

Cooke County’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is nearly \$3 billion.

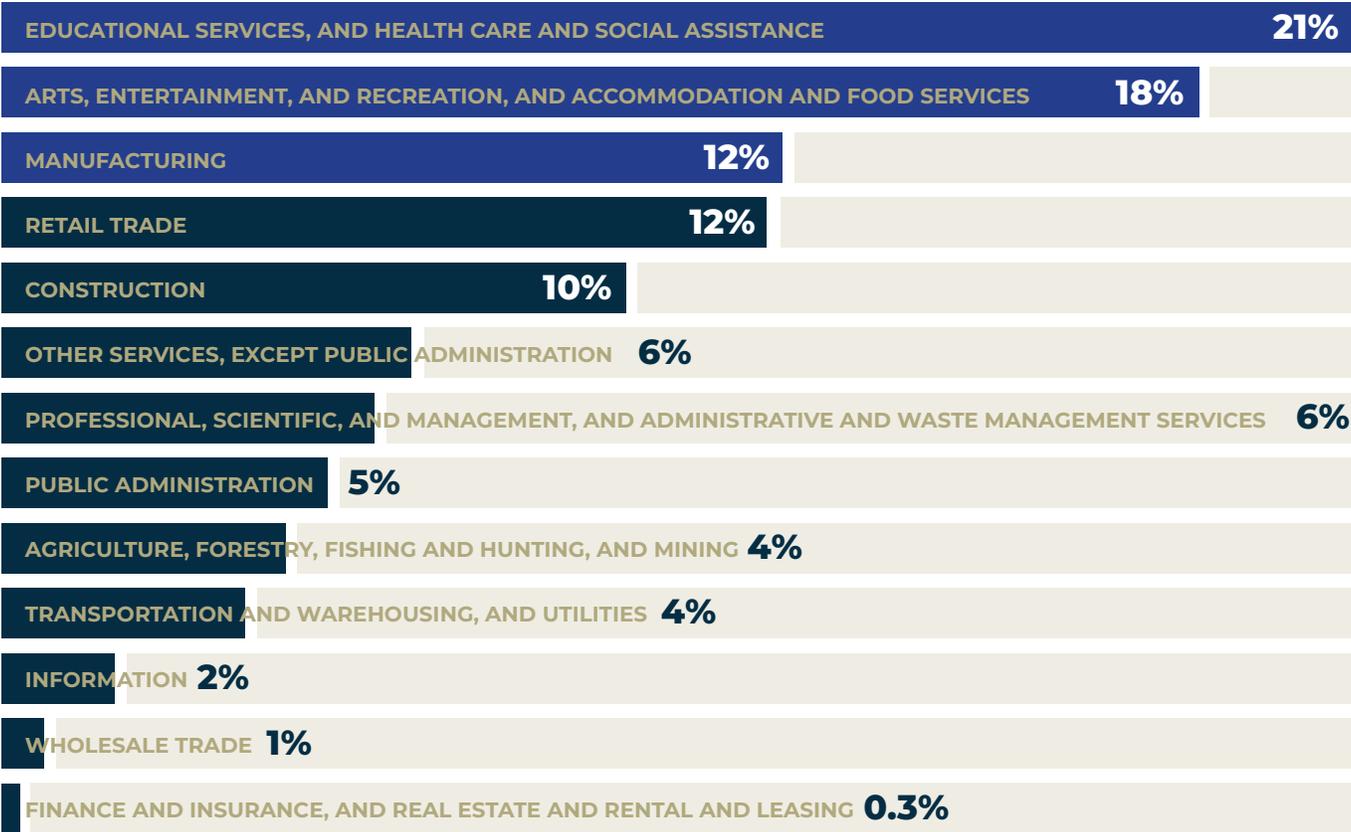
Source(s): U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis via FRED, 2023

Employment Distribution by Sector

As illustrated in **Figure 4.14**, Gainesville’s economy is concentrated in educational services, health care, and social services, followed by arts and entertainment and manufacturing. Major employers in these fields include North Central Texas College (“NCTC”),

Gainesville Independent School District (“GISD”), and local medical centers. NCTC, in particular, serves a substantial portion of the surrounding region and supports a range of positions, including instructors, administrative staff, and facility personnel.

Figure 4.14. Household Income Distribution



Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Despite this strong institutional employment base, a significant share of Gainesville residents commute outside the City for work. This pattern may indicate that local wages are comparatively low or that certain industries are underrepresented in the local economy. This concentration on a few key sectors highlights both strengths and vulnerabilities, such as risks

from sector-specific market shifts. The lack of industry diversity affects the distribution of economic activity across sectors such as retail, hospitality, and restaurants, influenced by the economic multiplier effect. Collectively, the dominance of a few industries impacts the City's tax base, economic resilience, and secondary job growth.

Small Business & Entrepreneurship

Small businesses play a critical role in Gainesville's economic vitality. They provide employment opportunities, preserve the City's cultural identity, and reinvest directly into the community. Feedback from surveys highlights both the importance of small businesses and the challenges they encounter. Residents expressed a desire for a greater variety of local businesses with extended hours. Business owners pointed to barriers such as limited

parking, inadequate amenities (e.g., street lighting), and low visibility impacting their sales. Owners also emphasized the need for stronger wayfinding, marketing, and streetscape improvements to attract customers and support business growth. These identified barriers represent challenges to the growth and stability of Gainesville's small business ecosystem.

Regional Economic Context

Gainesville is strategically positioned between two of the nation's most dynamic regional economies: the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex to the south and the Oklahoma City metropolitan area to the north. This location provides both opportunities and challenges.

On one hand, Gainesville is well-situated to attract residents and businesses seeking proximity to large markets without the costs of major urban centers. Growth in the North

Texas region, particularly in industrial, logistics, and advanced manufacturing sectors, creates opportunities for the City to leverage its airport, interstate access, and available land assets to capture new investment. On the other hand, this same proximity creates challenges, including competition for talent and retail spending, which can lead to workforce out-commuting and sales tax leakage to larger neighboring cities.

Key Takeaways

Gainesville's economy benefits from its strategic location along Interstate 35 and its role as the county seat. Key assets, including the Municipal Airport, North Central Texas College, and community events, support local employment and economic competitiveness. While education, health care, manufacturing, retail, and arts and recreation drive the economy, the analysis indicates that a lack

of industry diversification is a potential risk for long-term resilience. The challenges faced by small businesses and the high rate of out-commuting further underscore the need to strengthen the local economic base and expand tourism and cultural initiatives to reduce sales tax leakage and support sustainable growth.

Fiscal Resiliency

A vibrant local economy is the engine for a city’s fiscal health. To ensure Gainesville can sustainably fund the services and infrastructure its residents value, it is critical to understand the relationship between land use, development patterns, and the municipal budget. This section analyzes the City’s fiscal landscape to identify areas of strength and long-term challenges.

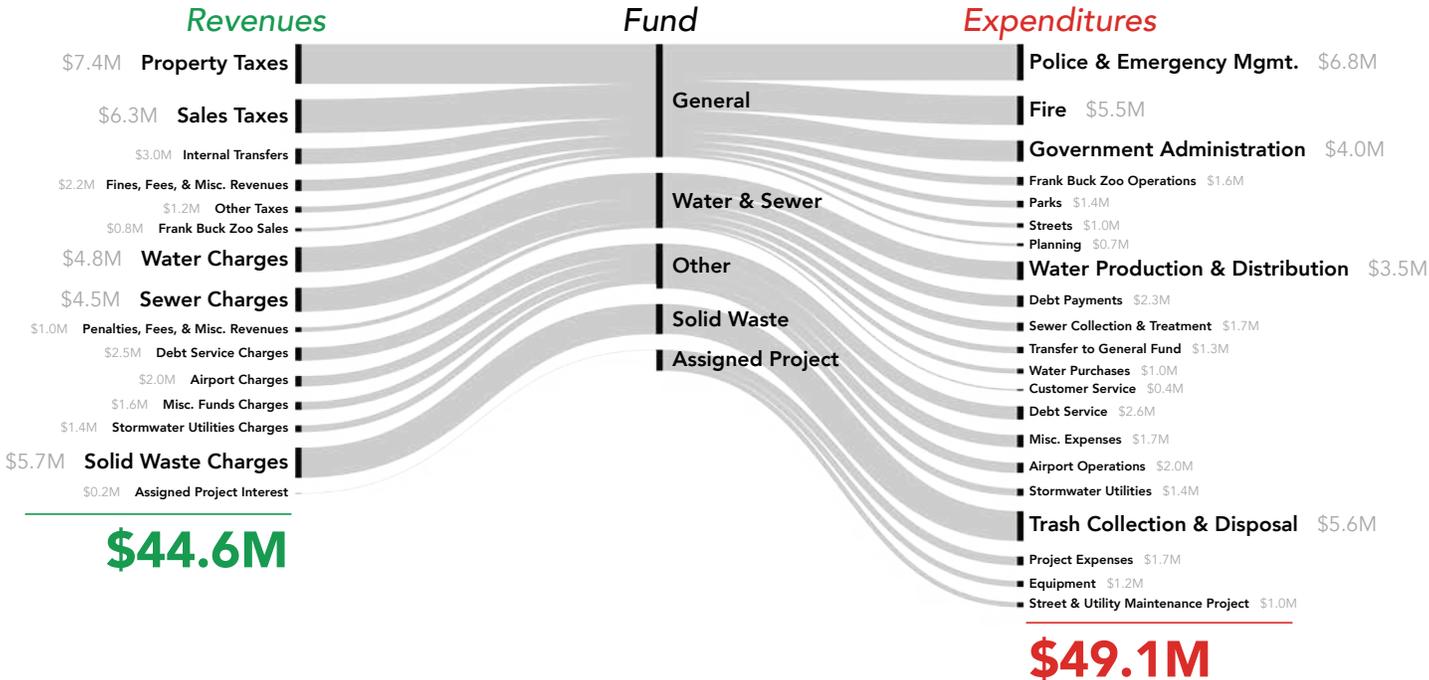
Fiscal Analysis

The fiscal analysis for this Plan, the results of which are available in **Appendix C**, applied a value-per-acre methodology, which measures the financial productivity of different land uses. This approach compares the municipal revenue generated by a particular property—including its property and sales taxes—against the public cost to service that property over its lifetime, including roads, utilities, and emergency services. This highlights the development patterns that deliver the highest return on investment for the City’s tax base, while also exposing inefficient land uses that strain municipal finances. The assessment examined

Gainesville’s full fiscal landscape—including revenue streams, expenditures, and long-term debt obligations—to evaluate the City’s overall capacity and resilience.

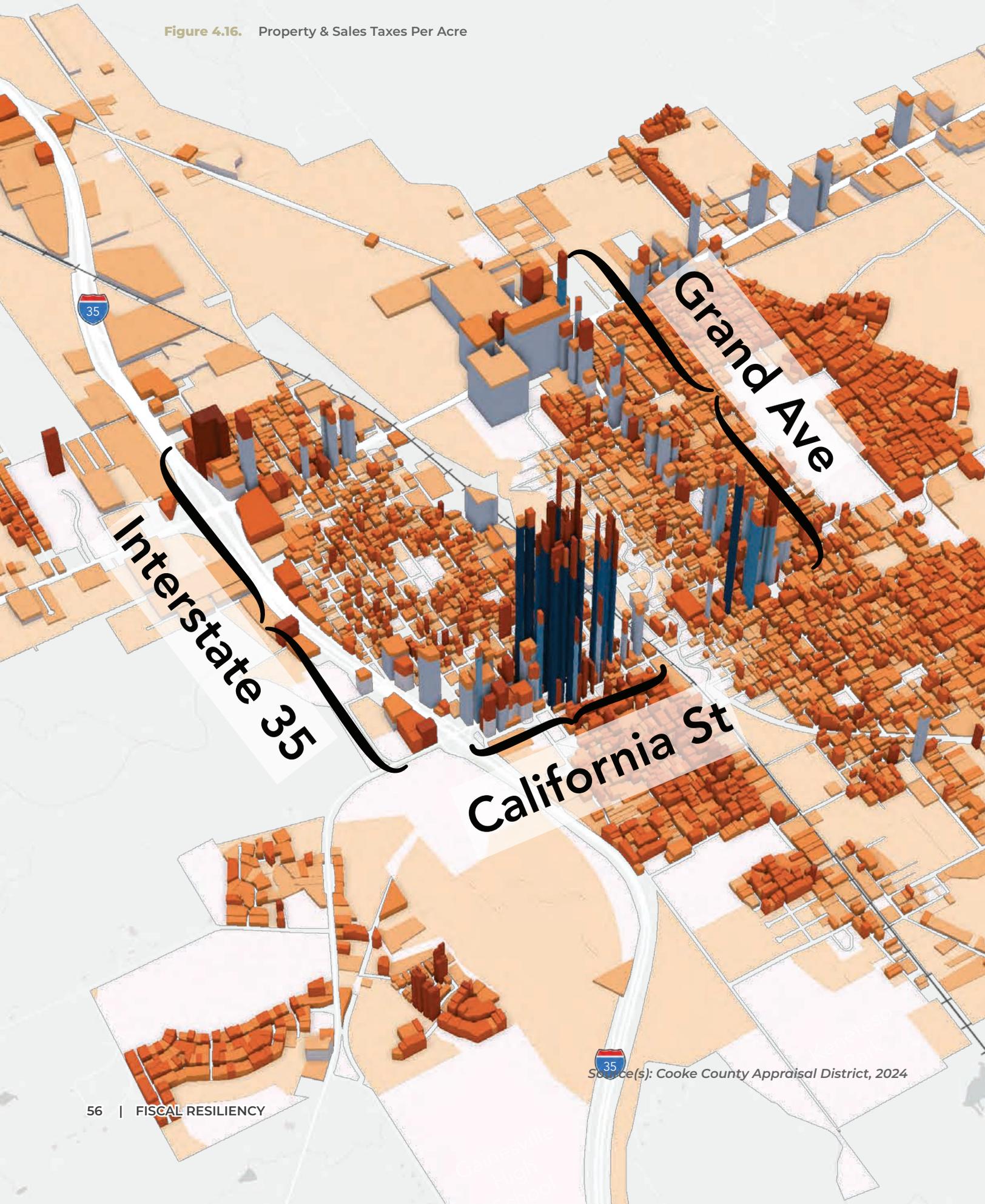
Figure 4.15 illustrates Gainesville’s revenue composition and expenditures by category in fiscal year 2024. Analysis of this data reveals critical insights into the City’s fiscal structure. The budget demonstrates a strong reliance on a limited number of primary revenue sources, with sales tax being a major contributor at \$6.3 million. Concurrently, the City faces significant, high-cost expenditures on essential services.

Figure 4.15. FY24 Operating Budget



Source(s): Gainesville, TX FY 2024 Adopted Budget, Urban3 Estimates

Figure 4.16. Property & Sales Taxes Per Acre

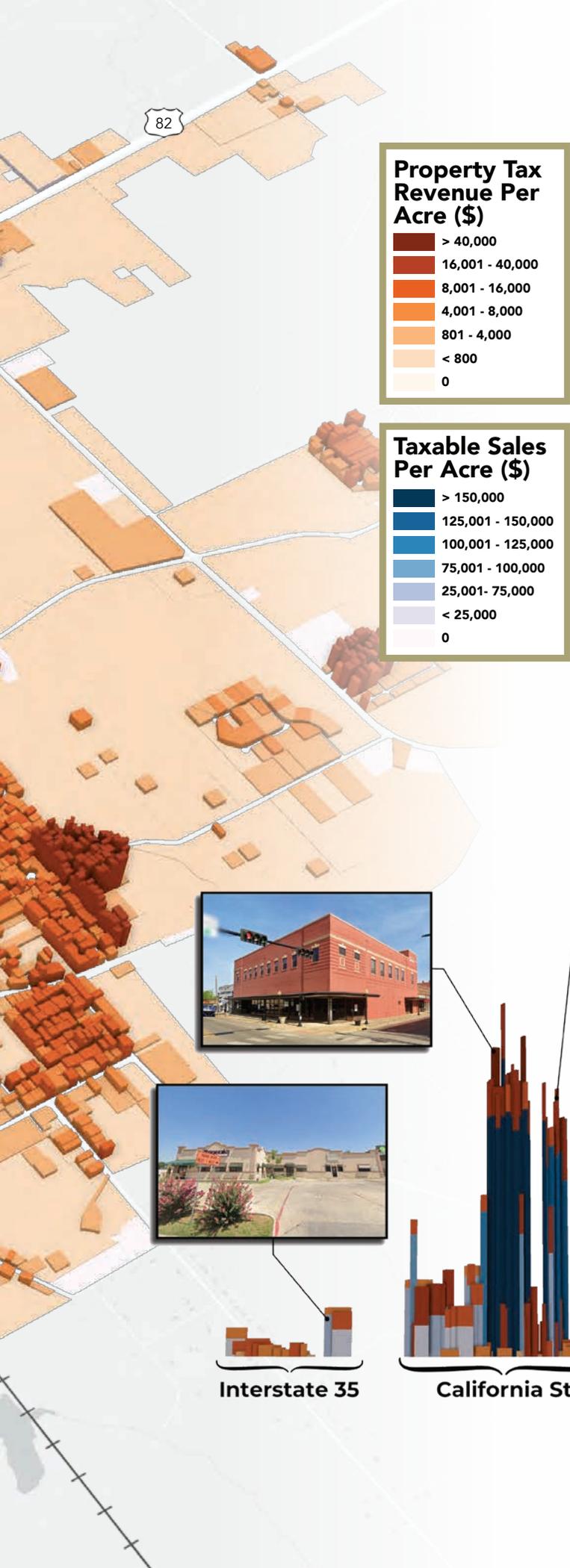


Source(s): Cooke County Appraisal District, 2024

For example, the annual cost for the Fire Department (\$5.5 million) individually consumes a substantial portion of that primary sales tax revenue. This reliance on a few key revenue streams to fund high-cost, non-discretionary services indicates a potential vulnerability to fluctuations in those specific revenue streams.

Revenue Strengths

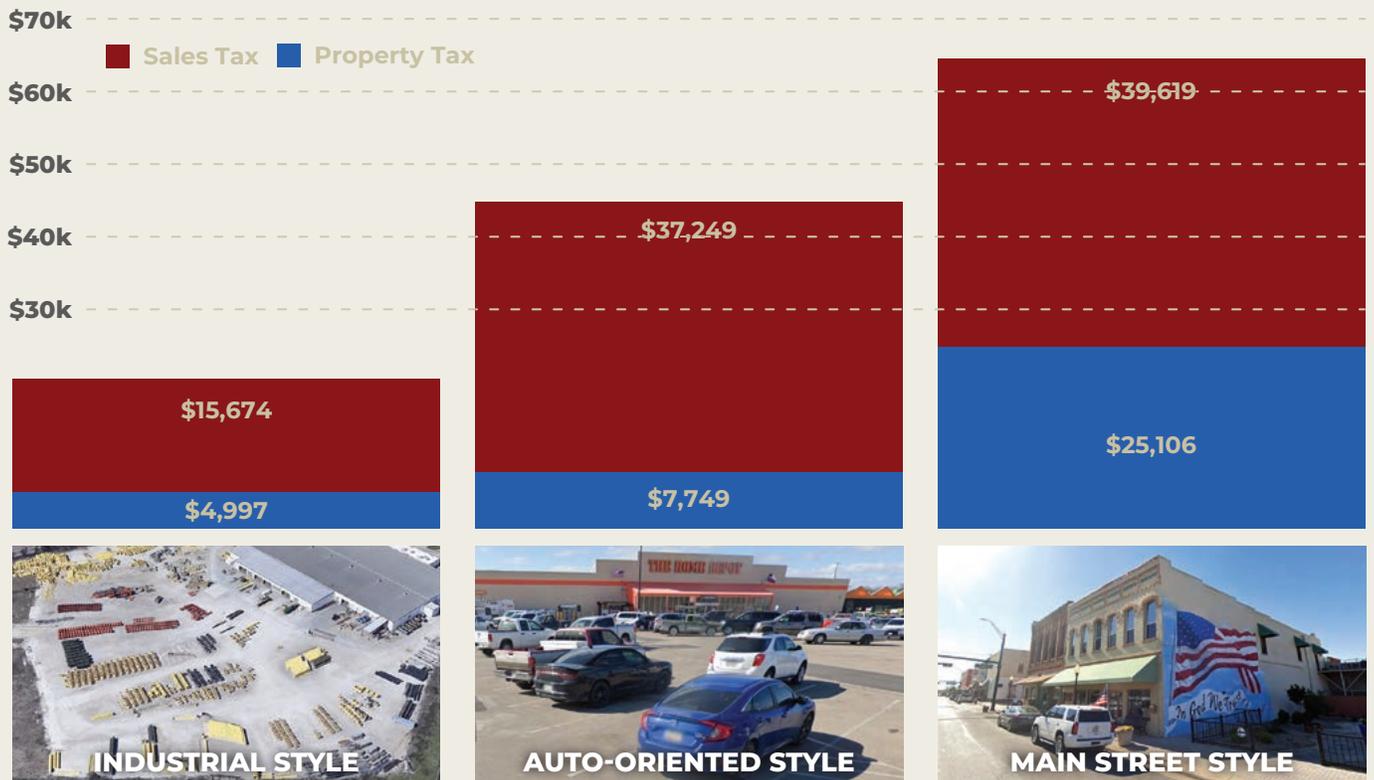
Gainesville benefits from its historic downtown and established commercial corridors, which yield high property tax values relative to their land area. These areas generate significant fiscal returns, a finding consistent with the high financial productivity of compact, mixed-use development. As illustrated in **Figure 4.16**, the analysis identified high-performing corridors along Grand Avenue and the eastern portion of California Street that generate substantial returns per acre.



The data also reveal a spatial correlation between street typology and fiscal productivity. Higher sales and property tax revenues are associated with walkable, mixed-use environments and major arterial corridors, whereas lower-performing areas tend to be located along lower-access local roads, as

shown in **Figure 4.17**. Public feedback regarding Gainesville’s downtown aligns with these findings—suggesting that improved parking access and turnover in high-performing districts could enhance commercial activity and further strengthen sales tax revenue.

Figure 4.17. Local Tax Revenue: Property & Sales Tax Per Acre



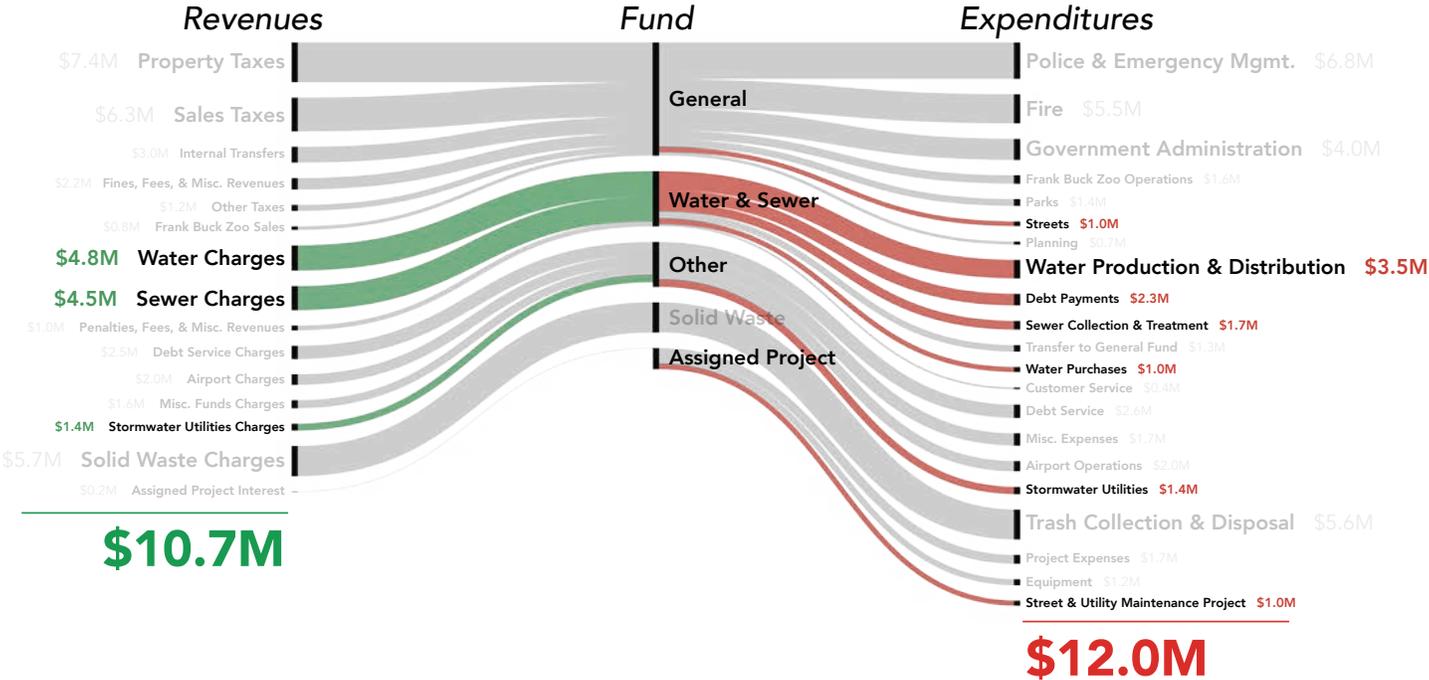
Source(s): Gainesville Sales Tax (Aug. 2024), Google Earth, Cooke CAD

Fiscal Challenges

Peripheral, auto-oriented developments, and large-lot residential areas typically contribute lower value per acre, requiring higher infrastructure costs over time. This pattern places pressure on the City’s budget, particularly for road and utility maintenance. To help offset the capital costs associated with this growth, the City recently adopted impact fees. These fees ensure that new development contributes its fair share toward the expansion of water, wastewater, and roadway systems.

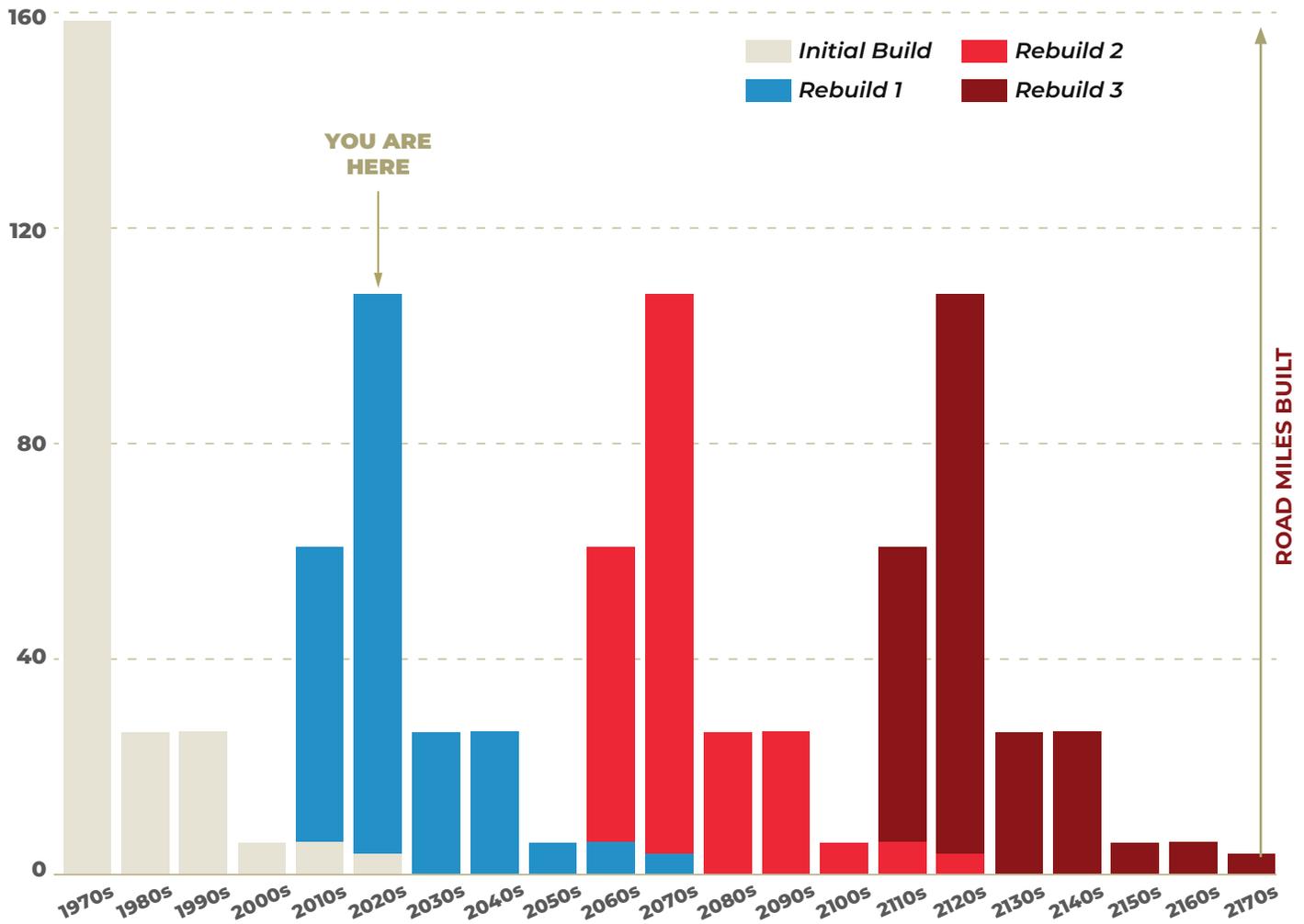
Figure 4.18 illustrates the relationship between Gainesville’s collected revenues and the cost of providing municipal services. Overall, long-term debt obligations remain manageable; however, projected infrastructure maintenance costs for the existing network are still anticipated to exceed current funding levels. As a result, the City faces a potential structural funding gap that will require either reprioritization of expenditures or the identification of new revenue sources to support long-term lifecycle costs.

Figure 4.18. Water and Sewer Revenues and Expenses



Source(s): Gainesville, TX FY 2024 Adopted Budget, Urban3 Estimates

Figure 4.19. Road Maintenance Load and Rebuild Schedule*



Source(s): Urban3 Estimates

*Conceptualized Chart

Figure 4.19 presents the City’s projected road maintenance and reconstruction schedule, which indicates a significant system-wide overhaul anticipated around 2070. This model

reflects conditions based on the existing street network. As Gainesville continues to grow, roadway mileage and maintenance loads will increase, further intensifying long-term funding needs for infrastructure upkeep.

Key Takeaways

The fiscal analysis demonstrates that Gainesville must carefully align land use, infrastructure investments, and financial strategies to remain resilient. Maximizing the productivity of land through infill development, supporting downtown revitalization, and encouraging mixed-use growth can strengthen revenues while limiting long-term service

costs. Furthermore, while the City has taken significant steps to address growth costs through the recent adoption of impact fees, addressing the structure funding gap for ongoing maintenance may require further policy adjustments or capital improvement prioritization.

Policy and Regulatory Framework

Over the years, Gainesville has adopted a series of plans, ordinances, and regulatory tools to guide development, infrastructure investment, and design standards. Together, these tools have shaped the City's built environment.

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan envisioned Gainesville as a historically preserved and healthy city reinforced by compatible development. Its core priorities emphasized expanded green space, upgraded infrastructure, and improved thoroughfare connectivity. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), updated annually, establishes a funding roadmap for current and future infrastructure needs. The CIP details each project's funding source, operating costs, and priority level, ensuring resources are directed to critical improvements.

In 2016, Gainesville adopted the Parklet and Sidewalk Café Manual, which outlined the process and design standards for creating

outdoor dining spaces and parklets. This framework enabled the City to activate underutilized areas, promote public gathering, and encourage flexible use of streetscapes without compromising walkability. More recently, the 2021 Master Thoroughfare and Sidewalk Plan identified corridors in urgent need of sidewalk improvements and road realignment. In the same year, the City adopted a Master Water Plan, Master Wastewater Plan, and the Street and Utility Maintenance Plan. Each Plan assessed existing conditions and provided recommendations categorized into 5-year, 10-year, and 25-year timeframes. **Since 2021, the City has invested \$17.7M in wastewater improvements.** A consistent theme across these documents is the identified need for significant and sustained investment in public infrastructure to serve the existing community and accommodate future growth.

Zoning

The City’s current zoning ordinance is the primary regulatory tool for implementing land use policy. It includes 12 designations, ranging from agricultural to industrial districts, as illustrated in **Figure 4.20**. The code is predominantly characterized by single-family residential districts and auto-oriented commercial corridors. While these districts have successfully protected established neighborhoods, the analysis suggest that the current rigid separation of uses limits the development of the mixed-use, walkable environments requested by the community. A modernization of these categories is necessary to support the housing diversity and vibrant spaces envisioned in this plan. **Appendix D**

provides a complete list of Gainesville’s current zoning definitions.

An analysis of the existing code and feedback from stakeholder interviews identified several key observations. Developers noted that while the current development code allows flexibility, its broad provisions can create uncertainty. They indicated that clearer and more descriptive standards could improve the predictability of the development review process. Further analysis suggests that the existing zoning classifications may present challenges for achieving community goals related to housing diversity and the preservation of historic neighborhood character.

TYPE OF ZONING	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
Agriculture	1,170	10.49%
Central Area Commercial District (CA)	57	0.51%
General Commercial District	1,761	15.80%
Industrial District	3,288	29.49%
Manufactured Home District	90	0.81%
Moderate Density Multi-Family Residential District (MF1)	183	1.64%
High Density Multi-Family Residential District (MF2)	187	1.68%
Outdoor Commercial	718	6.44%
Planned Development District	517	4.64%
Single Family District (Includes SF1 and SF2)	3,160	28.34%
Restricted Commercial District	18	1.6%
TOTAL ACREAGE: 11,149		

Figure 4.20. October 2025 Zoning Map

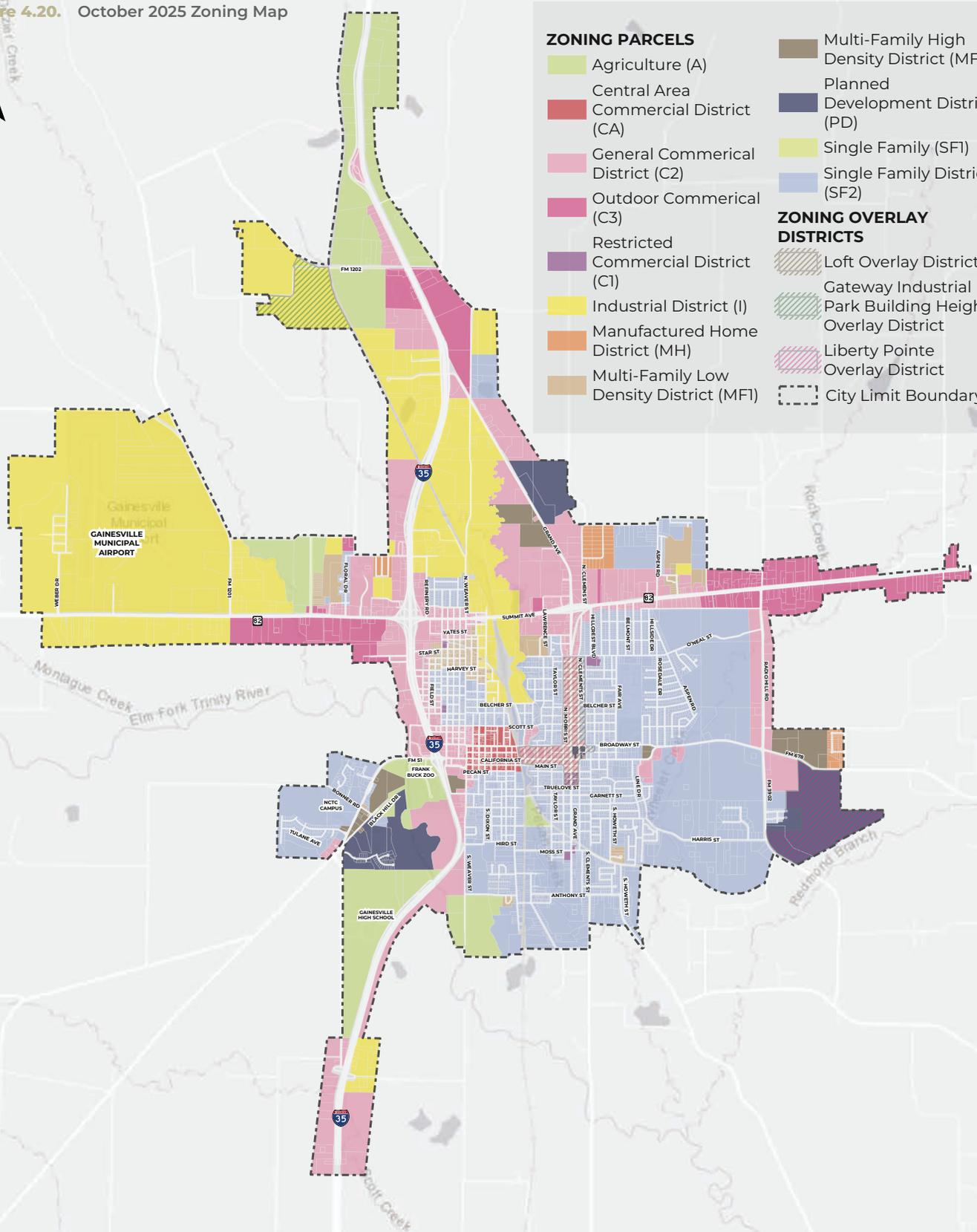


ZONING PARCELS

- Agriculture (A)
- Central Area Commercial District (CA)
- General Commercial District (C2)
- Outdoor Commercial District (C3)
- Restricted Commercial District (C1)
- Industrial District (I)
- Manufactured Home District (MH)
- Multi-Family Low Density District (MF1)
- Multi-Family High Density District (MF2)
- Planned Development District (PD)
- Single Family (SF1)
- Single Family District (SF2)

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS

- Loft Overlay District
- Gateway Industrial Park Building Height Overlay District
- Liberty Pointe Overlay District
- City Limit Boundary



Source(s): Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.



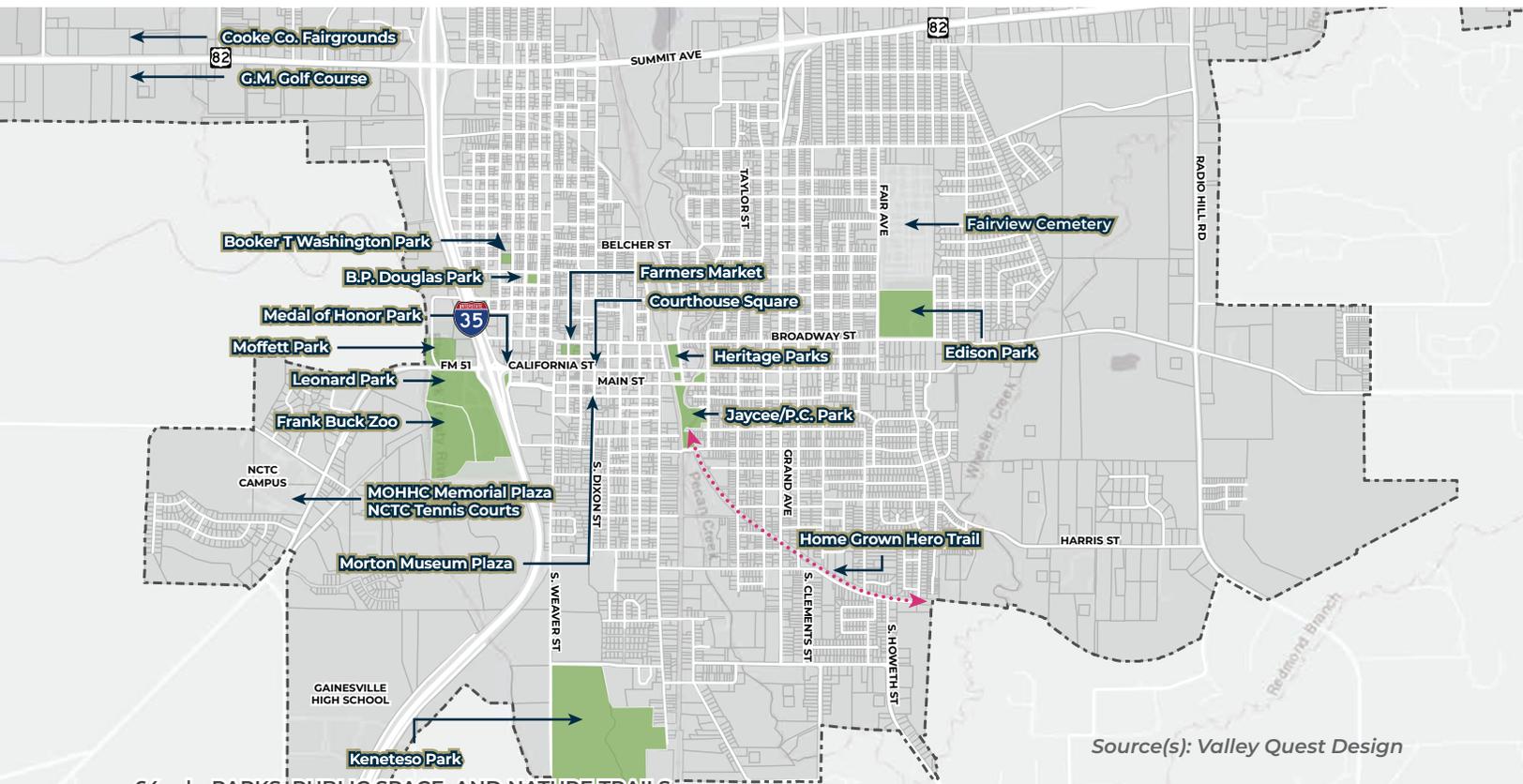
Parks, Public Space, and Nature Trails

Overview

Gainesville’s parks, public spaces, and nature trails form the backbone of the city’s recreation, community life, and ecological network. Collectively, they provide places for active recreation, passive enjoyment, and connectivity.

The system supports public health, neighborhood identity, stormwater management, and habitat continuity. However, access, amenity distribution, and physical condition vary across neighborhoods, as illustrated in **Figure 4.21**. An in-depth assessment of the entire system is included in the concurrent **Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan**.

Figure 4.21. Parks and Open Space



Park Inventory and Conditions

A detailed inventory of the park system highlights distinct strengths and opportunities to align existing facilities with evolving community needs. The City boasts element-rich regional assets like Leonard Park and the Frank Buck Zoo, as well as unique, well-maintained amenities such as Forsythe Skate Park.

Furthermore, the system plays a critical role in reinforcing Gainesville's identity as a patriotic community. Strongly branded destinations, including the Medal of Honor Host City Park and the Home Grown Hero Walking Trail, serve as vital cultural anchors. These assets do not merely provide open space; they function as living tributes that honor local heritage.

While these flagship assets are significant strengths, an analysis of neighborhood parks suggests a need for targeted reinvestment to maximize the potential of the broader system. As detailed in the full inventory found in **Appendix E**, future improvements should

focus on increasing utilization by expanding amenities such as seating, shade, and age-appropriate play equipment. Additionally, the **Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan** identifies opportunities to upgrade lighting and site design to enhance visibility and user comfort. Prioritizing these modernization efforts is critical to ensure high-quality, equitable access to recreation for all neighborhoods.

The analysis also identifies that while some parks are element-rich, others contain areas of undeveloped land. These spaces present opportunities for new programming or amenities suitable for specific age groups and varying mobility levels. Enhancements in these areas can transform underused spaces into vibrant, inclusive destinations that support physical activity, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship.

System Functions

- ▶ **Recreation and Wellness:** Playfields, playgrounds, courts, and trails offer opportunities for active use, fitness, and youth sports.
- ▶ **Community Gathering:** Plazas, picnic shelters, and event spaces provide venues for social connection and cultural programming.
- ▶ **Ecological Function:** Natural areas and greenway corridors contribute to stormwater management, floodplain protection, and habitat continuity.
- ▶ **Connectivity:** Linear trails and greenways extend mobility options, linking neighborhoods, schools, and civic destinations.
- ▶ **Cultural Relevance:** The Home Grown Hero Walking Trail integrates heritage and recreation, underscoring the cultural identity of Gainesville.

Community Perceptions

- ▶ **Value of Parks and Open Space:** Public feedback highlighted both the importance of Gainesville's parks and the desire for continued investment.
- ▶ **Downtown Business Survey:** Respondents expressed interest in beautification and activation of open spaces, noting that high-quality public spaces in the downtown core can drive economic activity.
- ▶ **Community Input Survey:** 38% of participants identified investment in parks, green spaces, and recreational facilities as one of the City's top four priorities.
- ▶ **Barriers to Use:** Residents cited lighting and safety concerns (44%), limited amenities (28%), and distance from facilities (17%) as major barriers to park and trail use.
- ▶ **Amenity Requests:** Respondents requested additional restrooms and recreational programming designed for younger children.
- ▶ **Awareness Gaps:** Despite the presence of multiple tennis and pickleball courts, residents reported limited awareness of these amenities.

Advisory Committee Insights

To gain a regional perspective on best practices, members of the Advisory Committee and the Parks & Recreation Board participated in a tour of notable parks in neighboring communities. This tour allowed them to observe a range of modern amenities, programming, and effective management practices. These observations provided valuable comparative context and aspirational ideas that informed the committee's perspective on potential opportunities for Gainesville's own park system.

Key Takeaways

The analysis indicates that while the City's park system is a vital and valued community asset, a gap exists between its current condition and the community's expectations. Survey results and physical observations, which are detailed further in the **Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan**, consistently identified opportunities to increase usage and satisfaction system-wide through targeted improvements. These include modernizing amenities, enhancing visibility and comfort, and addressing gaps in public awareness. Furthermore, the cultural significance of assets such as the Home Grown Hero Walking Trail was noted as a key component of the system's contribution to the City's identity.



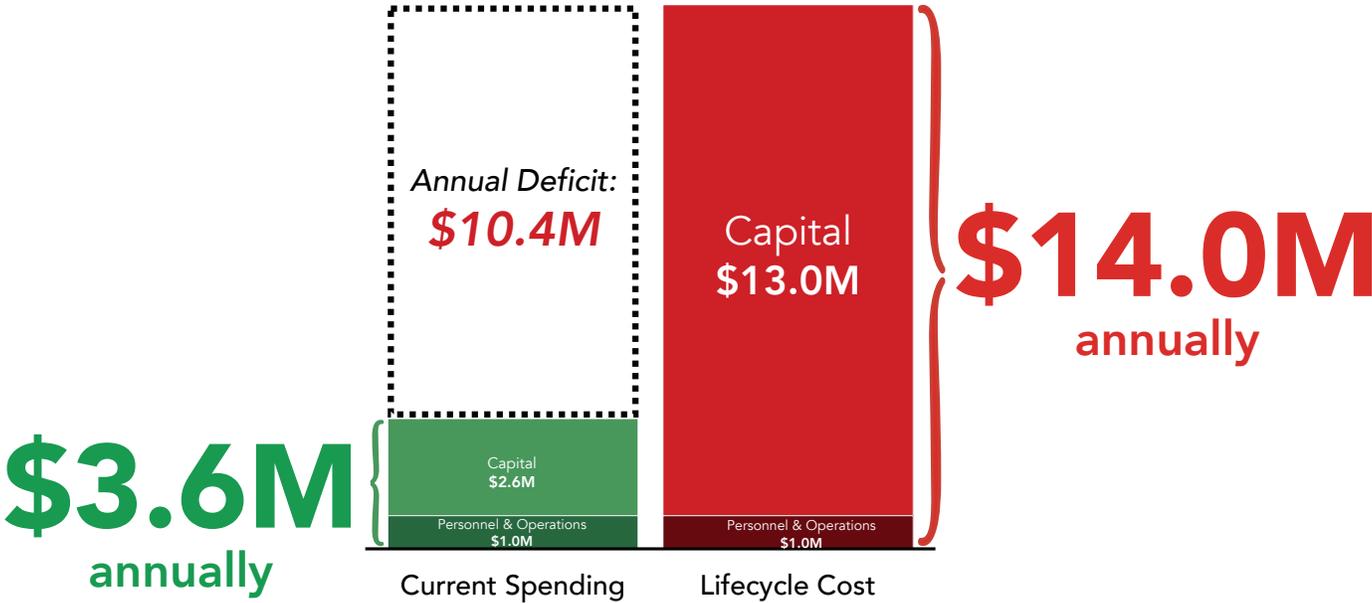
Street Network, Public Infrastructure, and Municipal Facilities

Gainesville’s infrastructure and facilities extend beyond the City’s corporate limits and into its ETJ. The total service area exceeds 19.4 square miles. These facilities and infrastructure include water, sewer, drainage, streets, and building facilities.

This expansive, low-density footprint places a significant strain on municipal resources and contributes directly to the \$10.4 million annual maintenance deficit shown in **Figure 4.22** to ensure adequate maintenance and reliable

connectivity. Sustaining such an extensive infrastructure network with the current revenue base represents a critical long-term challenge to the City’s fiscal health.

Figure 4.22. Infrastructure Spending



Source(s): Gainesville TX FY 2024 Adopted Budget, 2020 Master Thoroughfare and Sidewalk Plan, 2020 SUMP, E Garnett St. Conceptual OPCC, Urban3 Estimates

Street Network

A well-maintained, connected street network is the backbone of community mobility. Gainesville’s street classifications include local streets, minor arterials, major arterials, principal arterials, regional arterials, frontage roads, and freeways or highways. These classifications are based on the degree of access, traffic flow, and level of service.

Regional arterials and freeways carry commercial goods and people across the nation and throughout Texas, directly influencing Gainesville’s economic competitiveness. California Street, a TxDOT roadway, requires careful interagency coordination for any improvements, as changes can directly impact traffic and the movement of goods. These roads provide vital economic and mobility benefits to the City while simultaneously affecting public safety and traffic management challenges that demand careful oversight.

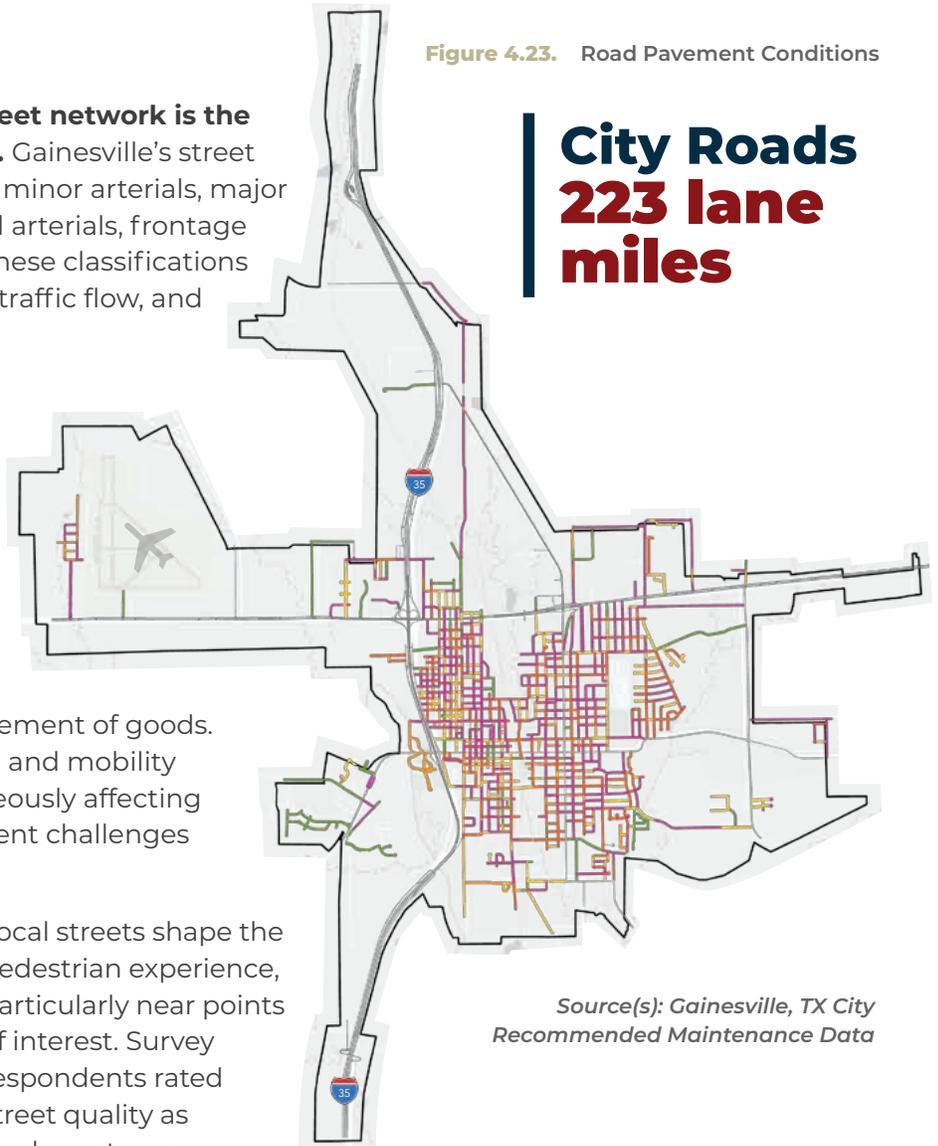
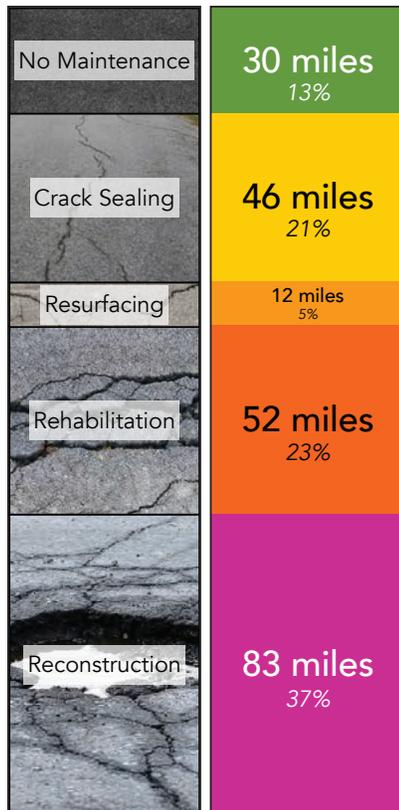


Figure 4.23. Road Pavement Conditions

**City Roads
223 lane
miles**



Local streets shape the pedestrian experience, particularly near points of interest. Survey respondents rated street quality as the lowest area

of satisfaction. Poor conditions in Downtown, near parks, and within historic districts are reported to reduce visitation and limit pedestrian activity, impacting not only leisure and exercise but also access to jobs and commerce. Analysis suggests that the current condition of streetscapes in Downtown, near parks, and within historic districts may limit pedestrian activity and visitation, impacting not only leisure and exercise but also access to jobs and commerce. A specific analysis of downtown streetscapes, sidewalks, lighting, and parking is provided in the concurrent **Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan**.

Analysis shows that over one-third of the City’s roads require reconstruction, 23% require rehabilitation, and 21% require crack sealing as demonstrated in **Figure 4.23**. These conditions represent a significant maintenance backlog that contributes to the \$10.4M annual maintenance deficit and a challenge to prevent further deterioration of the roadway system.

Source(s): Gainesville, TX City Recommended Maintenance Data

Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater

Water supply, wastewater treatment, and stormwater management directly influence Gainesville's development potential, as utility capacity affects both residential and commercial investment decisions. Insufficient water or wastewater service can raise costs for developers and restrict opportunities to expand the housing stock or attract new employers. Stormwater management further shapes development patterns, as localized flooding poses ongoing risks. The City's water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure system is summarized in **Figure 4.24**.

While the community input survey rated water service as satisfactory (3.7 out of 5), discussions with the Advisory Council, City

staff, and developers consistently identified utilities as a critical consideration for future planning. Parallel planning efforts, including the updated *Water and Wastewater Master Plan*, identify priority capital projects, such as line replacements designed to support growth, ensure adequate service delivery, and mitigate hazards.

Figure 4.24. Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Infrastructure

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE	LENGTH	COST
Sewer Pipe	122 Miles	\$26k/Mile
Stormwater Drain	15 Miles	\$96k/Mile
Water Pipe	153 Miles	\$38k/Mile

Source(s): Gainesville TX FY 2024 Adopted Budget, Urban3 Estimates

Municipal Buildings and Operational Facilities

Gainesville maintains facilities that provide services to the City and Cooke County.

Key facilities include:

- ▶ **Gainesville Municipal Airport:** Located near the intersection of U.S. Highway 82 and Interstate 35, this facility supports regional connectivity and business operations.
- ▶ **City Hall and Municipal Offices:** Houses administrative functions and provides direct services to residents.
- ▶ **Public Safety Facilities:** Police Department headquarters, multiple fire stations, and associated training/support facilities.
- ▶ **Public Works Yard and Fleet Maintenance Facility:** Supports streets, utilities, and equipment operations.
- ▶ **Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants:** Core facilities for utility service delivery and system maintenance.
- ▶ **Frank Buck Zoo:** Offers family-friendly fun and educational opportunities for the community.

▶ Parks and Recreation Facilities:

Maintenance buildings and operational centers that support the City's Park system.

- ▶ **Civic Center:** Provides space for social events, conferences, and community gatherings. The facility includes two meeting rooms and a fully equipped kitchen, supporting a range of public and private functions.

County Facilities located within Gainesville:

- ▶ **Cooke County Library:** Provides library services countywide from a central location in Downtown Gainesville.
- ▶ **Cooke County Courthouse:** Serves all of Cooke County, which encompasses ten cities; located in Downtown Gainesville.
- ▶ **Other County Facilities:** Offices such as the Cooke County Justice Center and health-related services that reinforce Gainesville's role as the county seat.

The analysis indicates that while Gainesville's infrastructure and facility network provides a strong foundation for community services, mobility, and development, significant fiscal and operational challenges exist related to deferred maintenance, limited utility capacity, and aging facilities. Public input consistently

identifies infrastructure quality as an area of low satisfaction. While most municipal and public safety facilities remain functional, their current condition suggests a need for future modernization to meet projected service demands.

Key Takeaways

The City's large service area and an existing funding deficit for maintenance creates significant fiscal challenges. Roadway conditions are a primary area of public dissatisfaction and represent a significant maintenance backlog. Utility capacity was

identified by key stakeholders as a potential constraint on future development. Finally, the role of state and county facilities and infrastructure underscores the importance of interagency coordination for managing the City's overall system.

Conclusion

Analyzing Gainesville's demographic, economic, land use, and infrastructure conditions establishes the baseline for future planning efforts. This information serves as a guide for developing policies and strategies that respond directly to community needs and priorities.

The following chapter presents detailed policies and strategies designed to address Gainesville's challenges and respond to community feedback while strengthening its assets. These policies guide growth in a manner that supports long-term sustainability. The recommendations are designed to balance economic opportunity, quality of life, and fiscal health for the purpose of ensuring that Gainesville continues to thrive for future generations.

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05 GUIDING GAINESVILLE 2040: POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Introduction

Guided by an understanding of Gainesville’s existing conditions, this chapter transforms insight into aspiration. It articulates the community’s collective vision for the future and establishes the goals and strategies needed to accomplish it.

Together, these elements provide a cohesive framework for addressing the challenges identified in the preceding analysis, turning data into direction and direction into action.

Through this vision-driven approach, Gainesville can shape growth with purpose, ensuring that every investment and initiative advances a more resilient and vibrant community.

1 Fiscal Resiliency and Sustainable Growth



This section provides the financial framework to achieve the community’s vision for sustainable growth.

The analysis in **Chapter 4** identified key fiscal challenges, including a structural funding gap for future infrastructure, a high rate of workforce out-commuting, and a strong

reliance on a few primary revenue sources. The following goals and strategies directly address these findings. They are designed to strengthen the City’s long-term financial position by promoting fiscally productive development, diversifying the local economy, and investing in a resilient, homegrown workforce.



GOAL: Ensure Fiscally Productive Growth

1.1: EVALUATE THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL IMPACT OF EVERY NEW DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL ON CITY SERVICES.

1.1.1: Implement the Gainesville Development Evaluator Tool as a standard part of the development review process.

Fiscally responsible growth ensures that new development strengthens Gainesville’s financial position rather than placing additional strain on City resources. Each new development carries financial implications for City services,

including water, sewer, stormwater, and roadway infrastructure. To maintain fiscal sustainability, the City will evaluate whether long-term revenues generated such as property and sales tax outweigh the costs of providing and maintaining these services. This proactive assessment ensures that growth supports Gainesville’s financial stability.

DEVELOPMENT EVALUATOR TOOL

To support this analysis, the City developed the Gainesville Development Evaluator Tool, a model that calculates the fiscal impact of proposed developments. The tool compares revenues against projected service and infrastructure costs. Integrating this tool into the development review process enables City staff, the Planning & Zoning Commission, and the City Council to make informed, data-driven decisions. In cases where projected costs exceed revenues, the City will use this data as a basis for negotiating developer contributions to public infrastructure or exploring other financing mechanisms to bridge the fiscal gap.

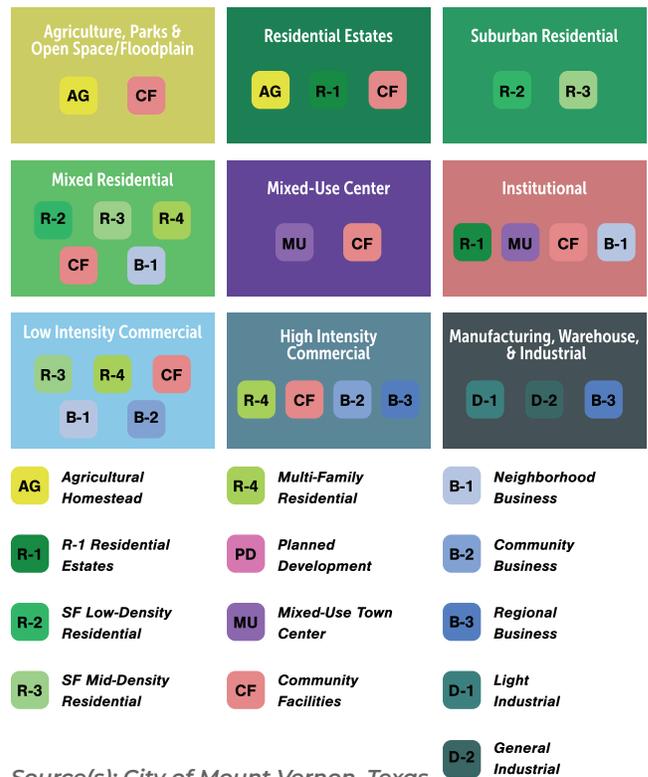
FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK

Focusing Growth Inward: To manage future pressure on infrastructure, the Plan focuses growth within existing corridors rather than continuing outward expansion. As highlighted during community engagement, road quality and maintenance remain major concerns. Concentrating on new development in targeted mixed-use nodes helps the City maximize existing infrastructure instead of further stretching limited resources.

Diversifying the Tax Base: Implementing diverse new development helps lower reliance on a single tax base. As shown in **Figure 5.1**, Communities like Mount Vernon, Texas, utilized updated land-use classifications to create flexible “in-between” categories, allowing a spectrum of development types from small-scale mixed-use to medium-density residential. This approach offers residents more choices while supporting economic development and maintaining community identity.

Future Land Use Map: The Future Land Use Map (“FLUM”) shown in **Figure 5.2** provides a high-level guide for where Gainesville’s activity hubs, neighborhoods, and employment centers should grow over time. Rather than dictating exact zoning, the map identifies general areas for future development patterns, including where mixed-use hubs, neighborhood centers, commercial corridors, and preserved open spaces are most appropriate. By doing so, the map helps reinforce Gainesville’s historic character, ensuring new development is compatible with sensitive areas while encouraging infill within corridors that can support additional activity.

Figure 5.1. Mount Vernon Land Use Classifications



Source(s): City of Mount Vernon, Texas

Future Land Use Map

Figure 5.2. Future Land Use Map

-  Gainesville City Limits
-  Gainesville ETJ
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  Floodway

-  Existing Roadway
-  Proposed Roadway
-  Major Road
-  Proposed TxDOT Relief Route Alternatives

Classifications

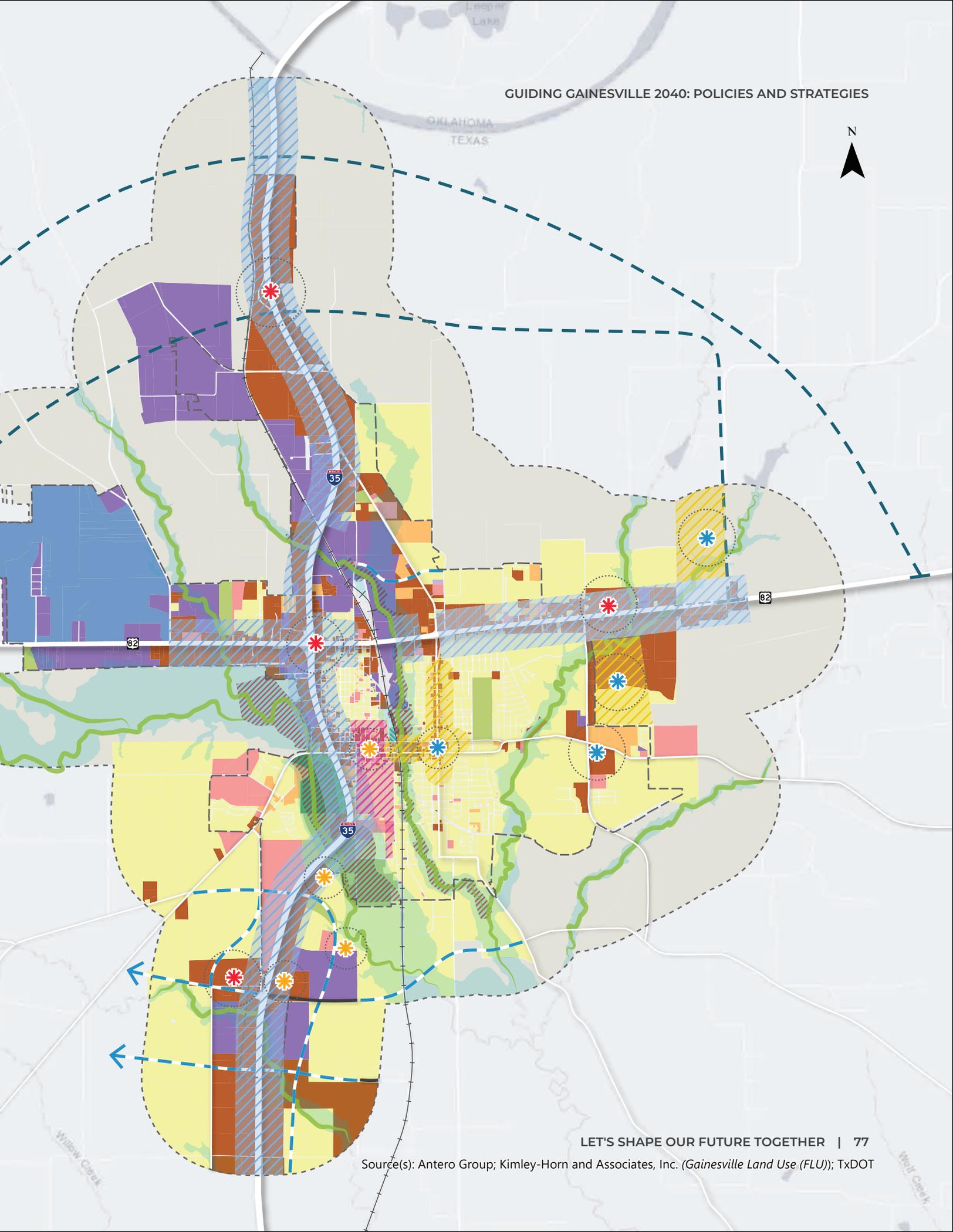
- | | |
|--|---|
|  Airport |  Parks, Trails, and Open Space |
|  Commercial |  Zoo |
|  Industrial |  Agricultural/Rural |
|  Public/Semi-Public |  Commercial Mixed-Use |
|  Multifamily |  Neighborhood Mixed-Use |
|  Single Family |  Historic Preservation |
| |  Transit-Oriented Development |
-
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Community Commercial |  Neighborhood Commercial |  Urban Residential |
|--|---|---|

A Comprehensive Plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

A Future Land Use Map is not designed to be scaled to define areas and/or acreage. Rather, it is intended to define relationships between uses.

US-82 RELIEF ROUTE ALT. 1 US-82 RELIEF ROUTE ALT. 2

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Future Land Use Classification Definitions

Airport: Land used for aviation-related commercial and industrial purposes, including air transportation and associated operations (e.g., Gainesville Municipal Airport; hangars). *Compatible with these existing districts:* **I** **PD**

Commercial: Land used for retail, dining, entertainment, and service-oriented businesses that serve the community and the surrounding region (e.g., shopping centers, gas stations). *Compatible with these existing districts:*

C1 **C2** **C3**

Industrial: Land designated for manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and other industrial operations (e.g., logistics centers, manufacturing plants, storage facilities). *Compatible with these existing districts:* **I**

Public/Semi-Public: Public land that accommodates civic, governmental, or educational uses (e.g., schools, libraries, municipal buildings, fire stations). In the event a public/semi-public use is vacated, the land use should be consistent with the adjacent dominant land use classification or an adaptive reuse compatible with the neighborhood character. *Compatible with these existing districts:* **A** **PD**

Multifamily: Higher-density residential areas designed for multiple dwelling units per structure (e.g., apartments, duplexes, townhomes). *Compatible with these existing districts:* **MF1** **MF2**

Single Family: Low-density residential areas consisting primarily of detached single-family homes on individual lots. *Compatible with these existing districts:* **SF1** **SF2**

Parks, Trails, and Open Space: Public or semi-public land reserved for recreation, conservation, or natural preservation (e.g., Leonard Park, greenways). *Compatible with these existing districts:* **A** **PD**

Zoo: Land designated for zoological facilities and supporting operations that provide educational and recreational value (e.g., Frank Buck Zoo). *Compatible with these existing districts:* **PD**

Agricultural/Rural: Land characterized by low-intensity uses, such as farming, ranching, and rural residential living. *Compatible with these existing districts:* **A** **SF1**

Commercial Mixed-Use: Land that combines commercial, office, and medium-intensity residential uses within major commercial corridors like I-35 or US 82. *Compatible with these existing districts:* **PD** **CA**

Neighborhood Mixed-Use: Smaller-scale mixed-use development serving nearby residential areas, combining housing, retail, and community services (e.g., corner stores with apartments above; community organizations with a local café; live/work townhomes). *Compatible with these existing districts:* **PD** **C1**

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Higher-density, pedestrian-oriented development centered on existing or planned transit corridors, promoting public transit use and walkability (e.g., apartment buildings near transit stops, retail plazas with bus access, urban hubs with mixed-use housing).

Compatible with these existing districts:



In Carrollton, Texas, the Silver Line links multiple cities to the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport, which has spurred significant development around its station. The Switchyard Apartments, offering studio to two-bedroom units, demonstrate how transit investment can attract new housing and amenities. Similarly, Gainesville’s existing Amtrak Heartland Flyer service brings visitors into the community and underscores the potential of rail access as an economic driver. Establishing a TOD district around the station would create a strong gateway into Downtown, support higher-value development, increase ridership, and position the area as a vibrant mixed-use destination for both residents and visitors.

Historic Preservation Overlay: Identifies historic areas for the protection, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historically significant structures and districts (e.g., restored landmark homes, museums, and heritage buildings repurposed for offices or restaurants).

MIXED-USE HUB DEFINITIONS

Creating Neighborhood, Community Commercial, and Urban Residential mixed-use hubs allow residents to access daily needs such as groceries, small retail, services, entertainment, and restaurants, closer to home. This reduces travel distances and shifts trips from obligatory to optional. *Pending the adoption of a dedicated Mixed-Use Zoning District, the Planned Development (PD) district should be the primary implementation tool for Mixed-Use FLUM classifications.*

Community Commercial: Ideal location for developing a commercial mixed-use hub.

Compatible with these existing districts:

Neighborhood Commercial: Ideal location for developing a neighborhood mixed-use hub.

Compatible with these existing districts:

Urban Residential: Higher-intensity residential areas incorporating limited retail or office uses (e.g., townhomes above locally owned shops, mixed-use corridors, courtyard apartments with ground-floor retail), ideal near Downtown Gainesville or transit corridors. *Compatible with these existing districts:*

CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

These mixed hubs fall within current or emerging corridors. With TxDOT’s proposed US 82 Reliever Route expected to reduce traffic volumes on California Street, the Plan recommends applying Commercial Mixed-Use or Neighborhood Mixed-Use classifications along specific segments of California Street to support reinvestment.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION + LAND USE INTEGRATION

A significant community concern was the potential for new development to transform Gainesville away from its heritage and historic character. Therefore, expanding the Historic Preservation Overlay ensures that Gainesville’s historic assets maintain their authenticity.

GREENERY & HAZARD MITIGATION

As the City grows, it is essential to preserve key areas as open space. Green areas, trails, buffers, and natural features protect ecological resources, support hazard mitigation, and maintain neighborhood quality of life. Ideally, these spaces remain conserved with buffers that prevent development in the floodway; in some areas, however, mitigation measures can allow development to proceed responsibly.



GOAL: Build A Resilient and Diverse Local Economy

1.2: EXPAND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHEN JOB SECURITY BY ATTRACTING NEW TYPES OF INDUSTRIES.

1.2.1: Develop and implement an economic development strategy to attract and retain businesses in target industries (e.g., advanced manufacturing, logistics, etc.).

Texas’s business-friendly climate continues to attract employers, creating new opportunities for communities across the state. While the energy sector has been a cornerstone of Texas’s economy, diversification is accelerating, particularly in semiconductor manufacturing and advanced technology. The relocation of Texas Instruments, a global semiconductor leader, to nearby Sherman underscores the state’s growing prominence in this sector. Supported by the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund, such investments strengthen the state’s innovation capacity and open pathways for regional economic growth.

Gainesville’s proximity to the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex, available land, municipal airport, and higher education access makes it an attractive location for these emerging or ancillary industries. Regional investments, such as Black Tie Air’s expansion at Granbury Airport near Fort Worth, demonstrate that companies view growing cities as viable destinations for aviation and logistics operations.

Introducing new industries will help diversify the local economy beyond its current concentration in three major employment sectors: educational services, health care, and social assistance; arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation; and manufacturing. Community input reinforces this need, with survey respondents consistently emphasized the importance of creating “high-quality local jobs” to retain younger residents and support working families.

The Gainesville Economic Development Corporation (“GEDC”) plays a vital role in advancing this vision by offering flexible incentive programs that encourage job creation and private investment. These incentives, including sales tax abatements, new market tax credits, and job creation grants, are customized to meet the needs of prospective employers while supporting Gainesville’s long-term economic goals. Retaining residents through improved local employment opportunities will generate a ripple effect, strengthening the local tax base as more individuals live, shop, and dine locally.



Source: Courtesy Photo



GOAL: Foster a Thriving Small Business Ecosystem

1.3: IMPROVE ACCESS TO RESOURCES, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS.

1.3.1: Launch a small business support program, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, which offers workshops, networking events, and guidance on navigating City processes.

Local entrepreneurs and small businesses play a critical role in sustaining Gainesville's economy. Targeted investment in small businesses, combined with entrepreneurship support programs, will strengthen Gainesville's economic ecosystem, help reduce sales tax leakage, and create an environment where local businesses can thrive alongside larger employers.

Small businesses face challenges related to limited marketing capacity, access to resources, and navigating City processes. Business owners noted that previous lack of coordinated advertising and promotion resulted in reduced participation in local events but acknowledged the marked improvement in outreach since the recent hire of a Communication and Outreach Specialist.

To strengthen small business resilience, the City will explore partnering with NCTC to provide educational sessions on business management, accounting, and digital marketing. Integrating entrepreneurship into workforce development programs at GISD and NCTC will further cultivate early awareness and skill-building, ensuring future generations are prepared to launch and sustain local enterprises.

Collaboration with the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce is equally essential. The City and Chamber will explore developing a structured support program modeled after regional initiatives like the **Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce's "Business University."** This model creates a cohort-based curriculum that equips local entrepreneurs with practical skills in marketing, operations, and fiscal management.

Additionally, the City will host a quarterly Zoning and Business Development Open House to help prospective and existing business owners understand local regulations and opportunities. These sessions will outline permitted uses and requirements relevant to specific industries or business types, rezoning or variance procedures, and available sites, and serve as a venue for entrepreneurs to connect directly with City staff to learn about incentives and receive updates on upcoming projects that may influence business operations.

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL PRESENTS

THE BUSINESS UNIVERSITY

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE THRIVING ENTREPRENEUR

"WANT TO TAKE YOUR BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL?"

SIGN UP TODAY | ONLINE
www.OakCliffChamber.org/tbu

The Business University is looking for 15 businesses to elevate to the next level. Enroll today for education that will strengthen your business. This is a 10-week business course for those operating as a for-profit business in Dallas County

OAK CLIFF CHAMBER | 400 S. ZANG BLVD. THE OAK ROOM DALLAS, TX. 75208

CLASSES TUESDAYS 6:00PM | STARTING JULY 16TH



Source: Gainesville EDC



GOAL: Develop a Homegrown Workforce

1.4: CREATE A DIRECT PIPELINE FROM LOCAL EDUCATION TO LOCAL EMPLOYMENT.

1.4.1: Establish formal partnerships with GISD, NCTC, and key local industries to develop local workforce training and career placement programs.

Creating a direct pipeline from education to local employment is essential for preparing Gainesville’s students for meaningful careers while strengthening a homegrown workforce. Early exposure to local industries through mentorships, career days, or classroom integration helps students understand the skills and training required for open positions. Site visits to local or regional companies can provide firsthand experience and broaden career awareness.

Partnerships between GISD, NCTC, and key local industries form the foundation of this pipeline, ensuring students receive academic and practical preparation. This pipeline will guide individuals as they enter the workforce, creating a positive feedback loop where workers can advance their careers and businesses benefit from a more skilled, locally trained talent pool. **Community survey responses indicate that while residents desire jobs that meet living expenses, many lack the specific training to advance.** A coordinated pipeline will provide structured pathways for skill development, placement, and career advancement, fostering economic growth and community stability.





2 Family-Friendly Neighborhoods and Housing

This section addresses the key elements of livability. Based on the housing analysis in **Chapter 4**, which identified challenges in housing affordability and a need for more diverse housing types, the following objectives and strategies provide recommendations to support infill development, improve neighborhood quality, and increase housing diversity to meet the community's evolving needs.



GOAL: Encourage Smart, Mixed-Use Growth in Key Corridors

2.1: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VIBRANT, WALKABLE DEVELOPMENTS THAT COMBINE PLACES TO LIVE, WORK, AND SHOP.

2.1.1: Establish a new mixed-use zoning district and apply to all commercial corridors, including the corridor along the I-35 Frontage Road from Highway 82 through Downtown.

The City will promote thoughtfully designed, mixed-use development along key corridors to create vibrant, walkable areas where residents can live, work, and shop. Updating the City's zoning ordinance to include a new mixed-use district in this area institutes the regulatory framework needed to support this development pattern.

The current C2 General Commercial District permits uses such as department stores and health clubs, as well as uses from C1, such as restaurants. Pairing these permitted uses

with housing, especially attainable housing, generates sustainable, healthy growth. Community input survey results indicate residents are open to mixed-use development, provided the design complements adjacent neighborhoods. Implementing clear design standards and transition requirements between residential and commercial uses will ensure these developments integrate seamlessly.

Beyond physical design, attainability emerged as a key consideration. **Community members expressed a strong desire for quality housing options for small families and young professionals, while developers emphasized the need for flexible unit sizes to align with local price points.**



Source: Toyota Music Factory

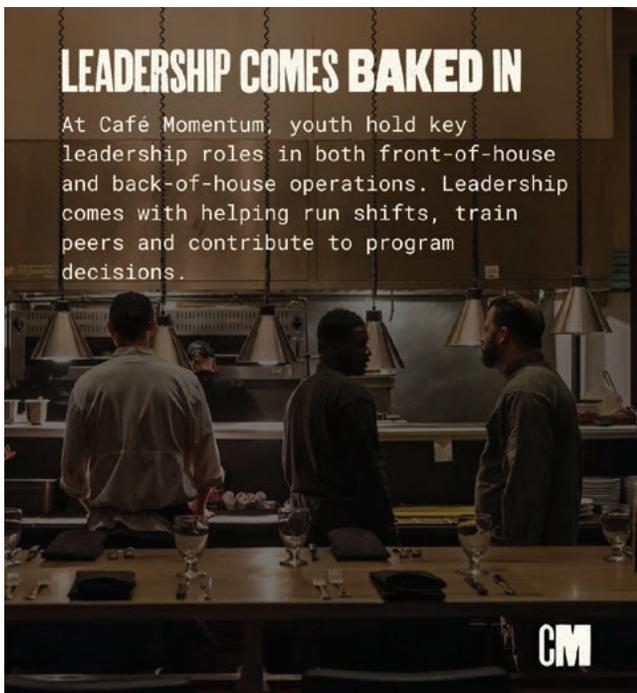
To achieve this, the Plan identifies distinct district hub types:

Neighborhood Mixed-Use are areas best suited for local-level needs, such as apartments above local restaurants or community organizations. Innovative models like **Café Momentum** in Dallas demonstrate how combining nonprofit social enterprise, workforce training, and housing assistance can create a cohesive community hub. In Gainesville, similar models could allow nonprofit organizations to operate from a centralized center, pairing service delivery with “missing middle” housing options like townhomes to support emerging professionals or small families.

Urban Residential Mixed-Use areas combine medium- to high-intensity residential development with supporting retail, office, and community uses. Gainesville’s Downtown outer corridor is a prime location for this development type, serving as an appropriate transition between the central commercial district and adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

Commercial Mixed-Use areas are similar to urban residential mixed-use and serve as a transitional area between single-family housing and multifamily developments along the Interstate 35 and US Highway 82 corridors.

A comparable example of a thriving Commercial Mixed-Use hub is the **Toyota Music Factory** in Irving. This development anchors an entertainment district with a performance pavilion, surrounded by a variety of restaurants, gathering spaces, and residential units. It demonstrates how an anchor amenity can catalyze surrounding development. As Gainesville is gaining recognition through its annual events, many of which are held outdoors, establishing a Commercial Mixed-Use hub that is potentially anchored by an indoor performance venue or outdoor amphitheater would expand the City’s capacity to host artists and performers year-round. Likewise, a country dance hall could provide residents with a dedicated gathering space. Together, these enhancements would strengthen Gainesville’s cultural offerings and support the development of a vibrant mixed-use environment.





GOAL: Preserve and Enhance Gainesville's Unique Character

2.2: ENSURE NEW CONSTRUCTION AND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE CITY'S HISTORIC, SMALL-TOWN IDENTITY.

2.2.1: Adopt a clear, user-friendly set of citywide design guidelines to support predictable, efficient, and high-quality development outcomes, and update or expand historic overlay districts to ensure the preservation of historic homes.

Gainesville's pride lies in its small, tight-knit community, a trait that continues to draw new residents. As new construction and redevelopment occur, it is essential to safeguard the City's character. Preserving neighborhood identity, protecting historic architecture, and maintaining cohesive streetscapes are central to ensuring that growth enhances Gainesville's charm.

Adopting a clear, user-friendly set of citywide design guidelines will provide developers, property owners, and City staff with consistent expectations for design quality.

These guidelines will establish predictable,

practical standards for site planning, building form, materials, and landscaping, ensuring new development is context-sensitive.

Current overlay districts, which tailor design requirements, setbacks, and land use, are an effective tool. The Historic District Overlay will be expanded to cover the historic assets in the Downtown area. Concurrently, the City will maintain an active inventory of underutilized sites and structures to identify strategic redevelopment opportunities and potential public-private partnerships. Marketing these sites to investors and developers mitigates blight and channels investment toward areas aligned with the City's land-use goals. Active collaboration among property owners, developers, and City staff will be essential to ensure that improvements conform to the adopted design framework.



GOAL: Become the Most Business-Friendly City in the Region

2.3: ENHANCE THE PREDICTABILITY AND CLARITY OF DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO MAINTAIN A HIGHLY EFFICIENT, BUSINESS-FRIENDLY REVIEW PROCESS.

2.3.1: Update and modernize the City's development regulations (e.g., zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance) to provide clear, consistent, and user-friendly standards.

Gainesville will foster a business environment that is transparent, efficient, and supportive of private investment. Conversations with local developers indicate the City is among the quickest in the region regarding the approval

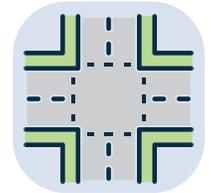
process. However, stakeholders also noted that existing regulations are often broad and require clarification.

Comprehensive development regulations not only benefit developers but also support property owners seeking to subdivide land, expand structures, or undertake renovations. By instituting clear regulations, the City will promote design consistency. This approach

is similar to **San Antonio's Neighborhood Conservation Districts**, which set quantifiable requirements such as maximum building height and lot design parameters to preserve neighborhood character without the strict architectural controls of a full historic district.¹ Well-defined standards also allow cities to efficiently manage infrastructure impacts and

reduce reliance on discretionary approvals that can delay projects or increase costs. Gainesville can adopt comparable approaches to protect its unique identity while providing a predictable framework that strengthens confidence among developers and property owners, ensuring future growth aligns with Gainesville's strategic goals.

3 Public Infrastructure, Street Network, and Municipal Facilities



A safe, reliable, and modern network of public infrastructure is the foundation for a high quality of life. In the previous chapter, infrastructure was identified as a critical community concern.

The following goals and strategies provide a comprehensive framework for reinvestment and are designed to improve the City's core services, enhance mobility, and ensure that Gainesville's infrastructure remains resilient and capable of supporting the community's vision for 2040.



GOAL: Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water and Wastewater System for the Future

3.1: INCREASE WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEM CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE TO ACCOMMODATE PROJECTED COMMUNITY.

3.1.1: Implement the priority capital projects identified in the City's Water Master Plan and Wastewater Master Plan.

The previous 2020 Water Master Plan and Wastewater Plan indicated the City could manage an annual growth rate of 0.80%. However, recent rates show accelerated regional growth. **Water and wastewater systems are vital for public health**

protection and economic stability. To ensure a sustainable future, the City must proactively address capacity needs to support local commerce—particularly retail and food establishments—and ensure overall community resilience. Recently, Texas approved a \$20 billion investment into water infrastructure aimed at addressing a rising need, for which Gainesville could receive assistance.²

¹ City of San Antonio. (n.d.). Overlays. Retrieved October 25, 2025, from <https://www.sa.gov/Directory/Departments/DSD/Constructing/Land-Development/Zoning/Overlays>.

² Office of the Texas Governor. Governor Abbott Signs Largest Generational Water Investment in Texas History in Lubbock. Retrieved October 25, 2025, from <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-signs-largest-generational-water-investment-in-texas-history-in-lubbock>.

The priorities identified in the Water Master Plan and Wastewater Master Plan remain critical. Both plans emphasize the need for capacity expansion, consistent with developer feedback regarding existing infrastructure limitations. These documents categorize Capital Improvements into 5-Year, 10-Year, and 25-Year horizons, establishing a clear roadmap for line replacement and capacity expansion. While these technical plans are maintained as distinct documents to allow for regular engineering updates, their findings serve as the foundation for this Plan’s infrastructure policy.

Implementing these phased improvements will ensure that Gainesville’s utility systems remain resilient, efficient, and capable of supporting long-term community growth. The City will periodically reassess these priorities to reflect changing development pressures and available funding. This proactive approach is consistent with regional best practices; neighboring Denison, Texas, is similarly responding to rapid growth by prioritizing infrastructure financing within their long-range planning.



GOAL: Enhance Stormwater Management Through Green Infrastructure

3.2: REDUCE THE IMPACT OF MAJOR STORM EVENTS IN HISTORICALLY FLOOD-PRONE AREAS THROUGHOUT THE CITY BY INTEGRATING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS.

3.2.1: Identify and implement stormwater recharge zones using native vegetation, permeable surfaces, and engineered solutions.

Gainesville is susceptible to flooding during major storm events, as documented in the Cooke County HMAP. To strengthen

community resilience, the City will prioritize the replacement and upgrading of critical stormwater drainage infrastructure, focusing on the most vulnerable areas first. Continued coordination with the County and regional agencies will be essential to align mitigation projects and secure available funding.



Old Town Rain Garden
Source: City of Lewisville

Beyond traditional drainage improvements, Gainesville will integrate green infrastructure as a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable approach to stormwater management.

Although initial installation costs may be higher for retrofit projects, these expenses can be mitigated by incorporating green infrastructure into scheduled capital improvements.

Engineered features such as bioswales, rain gardens, and infiltration basins can be integrated into streets, right-of-way, and open spaces.

These systems capture, slow, and infiltrate runoff—improving water quality, reducing flood risk, and minimizing reliance on costly storm sewers. The City of Lewisville successfully employed green infrastructure such as rain gardens to manage runoff while enhancing streetscape aesthetics.³ These

features reduce the visual and ecological impacts of conventional gray infrastructure and typically cause less disruption to local habitats. Meticulously designed natural stormwater elements, such as native plantings and permeable surfaces, also contribute to cooling paved areas, mitigating the urban heat island effect, and benefiting neighborhood microclimates. **In addition, these systems improve safety and comfort by reducing localized flooding and enhancing the resilience of public spaces, parks, and roadways.**

By strategically implementing green stormwater infrastructure, the City will advance a climate-resilient approach to flood management that simultaneously improves ecological function and quality of life.



GOAL: Create a Safe and Efficient Street Network

3.3: SYSTEMATICALLY IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF CITY STREETS TO ENHANCE SAFETY, REDUCE VEHICLE DAMAGE, AND IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY.

3.3.1: Develop and fund a multi-year road maintenance and reconstruction program based on the City's Street and Utility Main Program ("SUMP").

A safe and well-maintained street network is essential to community mobility and economic vitality. According to existing condition assessments, approximately 87% of Gainesville's streets require some level of maintenance. **To improve these conditions, the City will implement a multi-year road maintenance and reconstruction program** guided by the Pavement Condition Index ("PCI") and the Master Thoroughfare Plan. This

data-driven approach enables Gainesville to prioritize investments based on pavement condition, traffic volume, and safety.

The Master Thoroughfare Plan prioritizes corridors around the schools, parks, and other vital locations. A key project example is West California Street, which currently features sidewalks narrower than the modern ADA standard. Improving this segment would strengthen the pedestrian link between NCTC and Gainesville High School, enhancing access to Moffett and Leonard Park. This corridor is a critical link for active transportation and community wellness.

³ City of Lewisville. *Green Infrastructure in Lewisville*. Retrieved October 25, 2025, from <https://www.cityoflewisville.com/city-hall/city-departments/sustainability/green-infrastructure>.



GOAL: Enhance the Character and Resilience of Key Corridors

3.4: IMPROVE STREETScape AESTHETICS, ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY, AND REDUCE THE RISK OF WEATHER-RELATED POWER OUTAGES IN CRITICAL AREAS.

3.4.1: Develop a phased plan to strategically bury overhead utility lines, prioritizing historic downtown and major commercial corridors.

Overhead utility lines are susceptible to damage from natural disasters such as high winds and ice storms. The *Cooke County HMAP* noted past storm events where downed lines disrupted service and blocked rights-of-way. These incidents demonstrate how exposed infrastructure can become a vulnerability.

To address this, the City will develop a phased plan to strategically bury overhead utility lines, prioritizing Historic Downtown, key commercial corridors, and areas with repeated issues. While this initiative entails significant costs, it provides long-term fiscal benefits by reducing maintenance and minimizing weather-related damage. Underground utilities also reduce blight or eyesores improving the City's aesthetic image.

In locations where relocating utilities is not feasible, the City will explore creative alternatives to improve corridor aesthetics.

For example, the City of Boston, Massachusetts commissioned an artist to transform utility boxes into public art. Closer to home, cities like Denton and Corinth have also successfully transformed utility boxes into public art or community signage, utilizing funding received from the Texas Commission on the Arts. In the same spirit, Gainesville can transform its own utility boxes into canvases that celebrate local culture. Strategies, such as painting electric poles to blend with the landscape or using the surface-mounted utility boxes as spaces for art aligns with the City's recent initiative to brand municipal dumpsters with the City logo. These combined efforts will strengthen the visual character of the City's key corridors to ensure they remain functional yet reflective of the community's pride.





GOAL: Create a Safe and Pedestrian Network

3.5: ENSURE ALL RESIDENTS, REGARDLESS OF AGE OR MOBILITY, CAN SAFELY AND EASILY WALK TO KEY DESTINATIONS LIKE PARKS, SCHOOLS, AND DOWNTOWN.

3.5.1: Systematically identify and close all priority sidewalk gaps throughout the City, guided by the Master Thoroughfare and Sidewalk Plan and the Downtown Master Plan.

Creating a safe and accessible pedestrian network is fundamental to building a connected and inclusive Gainesville. Well-designed sidewalks and crossings enable residents of all ages and mobility levels to travel comfortably between neighborhoods and key destinations.

Guided by the Master Thoroughfare and Sidewalk Plan and the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan, the City will implement a systematic, data-driven approach to identify

and close priority sidewalk gaps. Emphasis will be placed on areas with high pedestrian activity or proximity to major community destinations. For instance, targeted improvements along Garnett Street from Dodson Street to South Grand Avenue would enhance access to the Home Grown Hero Trail, supporting both recreation and safe active transportation.

Completing a continuous, accessible sidewalk network will enhance multimodal connectivity and reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Further, these improvements will advance Gainesville’s vision of a pedestrian-oriented urban environment that promotes public health and universal accessibility.



GOAL: Improve Safety and Railroad Crossings

3.6: REDUCE THE RISK OF VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS WITH TRAINS AT KEY INTERSECTIONS.

3.6.1: Develop and implement safety improvements at each rail intersection throughout the City.

Gainesville’s active rail network, which includes Amtrak service and a BNSF railyard, brings both connectivity and safety challenges. Rail crossings, particularly between Belcher Street and Cole Street, require modernized safety infrastructure. The Association of American Railroads reports that improvements in maintenance, technology, and public education have significantly reduced grade-crossing collision rates since 2000.⁴

To continue this progress locally, the City will pursue federal and state rail safety funding programs. These grants support the design and implementation of physical and visual improvements such as automated gates, enhanced lighting, signage, and medians at high-priority intersections. Coordinated investments in crossings and multimodal infrastructure will strengthen linkages between neighborhoods while reducing conflict points between trains, vehicles, and pedestrians.

⁴ Freight Rail Pedestrian & Driver Safety: AAR. Association of American Railroads. (2025, September 4). <https://www.aar.org/issue/freight-rail-pedestrian-driver-safety>.

4 Parks, Public Space, and Nature Trails



The parks and trails system is a cornerstone of Gainesville's quality of life. The following goals, objectives, and strategies provide a high-level policy framework for the system's maintenance, improvement, and growth.

These recommendations are directly supported by the comprehensive analysis, site-specific designs, and detailed implementation plan found in the concurrently developed Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan.



GOAL: Ensure All Parks are Safe, Well-Maintained, and High-Quality

4.1: PROVIDE CONTINUOUS MAINTENANCE AND REPLACE AGING EQUIPMENT FOR ALL EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

4.1.1: Implement the site-specific recommendations for all existing parks including playground replacements, amenity upgrades, and safety improvements as prioritized in the Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan.

A well-maintained park system is essential to public safety, recreational vitality, and the preservation of community character. Priority actions include upgrading playground equipment at Pecan Creek Park and developing a comprehensive paving replacement plan for Fairview Cemetery.

Playgrounds serve as a cornerstone of community life and intergenerational recreation. According to the National Study of Neighborhood Parks, conducted by *RAND*, *City Parks Alliance*, and *The Trust for Public*

Land, the most common reason for visiting a park is “bringing children,” with play areas accounting for 25 percent of children’s park use nationwide.⁵ This finding underscores the importance of maintaining safe, engaging, and accessible play environments within Gainesville’s park system.

As Gainesville continues to grow, ensuring that all residents have access to well-maintained and high-quality recreational spaces will be vital to sustaining quality of life. Where feasible, the City should evaluate opportunities to refurbish or repurpose existing equipment that remains structurally sound. This practice supports fiscal responsibility by extending the useful life of existing amenities and redirecting resources toward higher-priority improvements.

⁵ *Active Parks, Healthy Cities: Recommendations from the National Study of Neighborhood Parks*, City Parks Alliance. (2018, November 21). <https://cityparksalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/active-parks-healthy-cities.pdf?pdf=report>.



Katy Trail

Source: The Loop, Dallas

4.1.2: Explore a partnership with GEDC to maintain and expand ownership of the former M-K-T Railway property (south of QuikTrip and Gunter St.) as open space with regular mowing and tree trimming.

Across Texas, cities have successfully elevated their park systems through strategic reinvestment. Dallas's Katy Trail repurposed a retired M-K-T rail right-of-way into a highly popular 3.5-mile urban trail, illustrating

how thoughtful reinvestment can expand recreational opportunities and strengthen community character. In Gainesville, portions of the M-K-T corridor offer similar potential. Since portions of the property are owned by the GEDC, a formal agreement would clarify responsibilities for routine tasks such as mowing and vegetation management to ensure that the area remains a safe and well-cared-for community asset.

4.2: ENHANCE THE SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND FUNCTION OF REGIONAL PARK ASSETS THROUGH STRATEGIC CAPITAL PROJECTS.

4.2.1: Address parking infrastructure and pedestrian safety needs at the Frank Buck Zoo by evaluating the zoo's primary entrance location, traffic circulation, and parking design.

4.2.2: Evaluate the practicality of relocating some or all sports fields from Leonard Park and Edison Park by establishing a regional sports complex with expanded offerings at Keneteso Park.

4.2.3: Develop a comprehensive paving replacement and maintenance plan for Fairview Cemetery, evaluating the use of permeable pavers and landscape enhancements.

The perception of safety strongly influences how often residents and visitors use Gainesville's parks. Safety extends beyond lighting; it is closely tied to accessibility and navigation. Inefficient parking layouts can heighten conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, creating navigational challenges and reducing overall comfort. A parking and circulation study for the Frank Buck Zoo will help identify clear vehicular routes and safe pedestrian paths, reducing congestion and strengthening the visitor experience.

The City will explore the feasibility of relocating specific sports fields from Leonard Park and Edison Park to an expanded regional sports complex at Keneteso Park.

A consolidated complex would accommodate multiple sports, including soccer and baseball to support year-round use. **A relevant model is the *RYSE Energy StarCenter Multisport* in Farmers Branch, which houses basketball, pickleball, and volleyball courts with concessions and transit accessibility.**

Although privately owned, Farmers Branch benefits from the complex's operations and property taxes. Other cities, like Fort Worth, Texas, are upgrading their fields to meet the needs of local and surrounding communities. According to *KERA News*, a study estimates that the “*upgrade parks would generate around \$16 million a year.*”⁶

Investments in Keneteso Park will solidify Gainesville’s role as a regional destination for tournaments, generating economic activity and attracting visitors.

Fairview Cemetery requires a coordinated long-term paving replacement and maintenance plan to enhance safety, functionality, and visitor comfort. The potential use of permeable pavers and appropriate landscape enhancements would mitigate flooding risks, improve walkability, and preserve the cemetery’s historic character, allowing the site to evolve toward a garden-cemetery model while respecting its cultural significance.

Altogether, these initiatives strengthen Gainesville’s regional park assets, improve accessibility and safety, and elevate the overall quality and resilience of the community’s recreational infrastructure.



⁶ \$82M for Baseball Fields, Athletic Upgrades Proposed for Fort Worth’s Growing Needs. *Kera News* (2025, November 13). \$82M for baseball fields, athletic upgrades proposed for Fort Worth’s growing needs | *KERA News*.



GOAL: Provide Equitable Access to Parks and Green Space for All Neighborhoods.

4.3: IDENTIFY UNDERSERVED OR GROWING NEIGHBORHOODS AND PRIORITIZE THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES FOR PARKS AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING.

4.3.1: Prioritize the acquisition and development of new parks, plazas, and open spaces in historically underserved areas as identified in the *Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan*.

4.3.2: Adopt a policy ensuring all new Community Parks include essential amenities such as a pavilion, restrooms, and drinking fountains.

4.3.3: Develop and fund a diverse programming schedule to activate underused parks and serve all age groups.

Equitable access to parks and open spaces is the bedrock to Gainesville’s vision of a healthy, connected, and inclusive community. As the City continues to grow, the parkland distribution must adapt to new residential development patterns and shifting community needs. Ensuring that every neighborhood—particularly those historically underserved—has convenient access to recreational amenities is essential for promoting health, social cohesion, and overall quality of life.

The City’s objective is to develop new parks and green spaces in alignment with areas experiencing population growth or lacking nearby recreational facilities. As part of this effort, Gainesville will identify underserved residential neighborhoods and prioritize the acquisition of properties suitable for new parks, plazas, and trail connections.

Two initial focus areas include the Lynch Avenue/Berend Street and Summa Street/Beecher Street neighborhoods, both of which currently lack accessible open space. The creation of pocket parks or small plazas in these

areas will provide much-needed opportunities for recreation, community gathering, and environmental enhancement. Future park sites will be selected through a data-driven process that considers population density, walkability, proximity to schools, and gaps identified in the City’s park access analysis. This approach ensures that investments are targeted, cost-effective, and supportive of Gainesville’s long-term growth and equity goals.

In addition to expansion, the City will adopt a policy requiring new parks to include restrooms, pavilions, and drinking fountains, adaptable to the square footage. These amenities support family-friendly activities and improve the usability of public spaces. This ensures that basic needs are met on-site, allowing families and groups to extend their visits comfortably.

Including a pavilion and creating new parks will allow locals and organizations to host diverse programming. For example, entering a partnership with the GEDC for the M-K-T railway property would enable hosting community events like “5Ks for a cause.” Similarly, new park pavilions could host back-to-school events or fitness classes for seniors, turning open spaces into hubs of social activity.





GOAL: Enhance the Comfort and Usability of Public Outdoor Spaces

4.4: INCREASE OUTDOOR COMFORT LEVELS CITY-WIDE USING SHADE BY STRATEGICALLY CAPITALIZING ON EXISTING SHADE TREES; RELOCATE AND RECONFIGURE MOVABLE AMENITIES TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFIT PROVIDED BY EXISTING SHADED AREAS.

4.4.1: Implement a comprehensive tree and shade plan by utilizing the tree-mapping software to prioritize planting, adopting a city-wide tree maintenance plan, creating a street tree rebate program, and hosting community planting events like Texas Arbor Day.

4.4.2: Strategically add new shade structures and rearrange movable amenities to maximize the use of existing shade in all City parks.

Improving outdoor comfort across Gainesville requires a coordinated, data-informed approach to shade management and amenity placement. In Gainesville's community survey, respondents identified walk and bike paths, picnic tables, and playground equipment as the top three most desired park amenities. To maximize the value of these features, the City will leverage existing shade trees by relocating movable items such as benches, tables, grills, and playground equipment to naturally shaded areas. This targeted reconfiguration addresses the immediate need for thermal comfort while recognizing that newly planted trees require time to mature to full canopy coverage.

To sustain these benefits, the City will continue replacing dead or declining shade trees and implement a comprehensive tree maintenance plan. This plan establishes clear maintenance protocols and uses a centralized tracking system to monitor the health and location of all trees on City-owned properties. **Collectively, these actions create more comfortable, inviting, and sustainable outdoor environments that advance Gainesville's goals for livability and park system resilience.**

A well-distributed and healthy shade canopy is critical for enhancing thermal comfort in public spaces and mitigating the effects of urban heat. **Gainesville will implement a planned, multi-year tree-planting program that combines strategic, data-driven management with community engagement.** By using tree-mapping software, the City can prioritize planting locations, track canopy growth, and ensure equitable shade distribution across neighborhoods.

In alignment with guidance from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department ("TPWD"), Gainesville's park planning and shade management initiatives will incorporate a resource-based approach. This framework identifies existing assets, natural features, and environmental resources that can be leveraged for open space and recreation development. Applying this approach enables the City to recognize and protect Gainesville's natural assets such as existing tree canopies, waterways, and open lands while strategically expanding shade coverage.

Annual community events such as Texas Arbor Day tree plantings will further promote public awareness, environmental stewardship, and civic pride. The City already demonstrates this commitment during Medal of Honor Week, when residents participate in planting new trees along the trail. Building on these efforts, the City will expand its community-driven approach to urban greening, helping to create a cooler, more resilient Gainesville for all residents.



GOAL: Optimize Underutilized Land and Strengthen Accessibility For All Users

4.5: IMPLEMENT TARGETED IMPROVEMENTS AT UNDERDEVELOPED PARK FACILITIES TO ENHANCE INCLUSIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND LONG-TERM FUNCTIONALITY FOR ALL.

4.5.1: Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of the entire park system to identify outstanding barriers and amend the City's ADA Transition Plan with a new, prioritized schedule of park-specific retrofits.

4.6: UNIFY THE TRAIL USER EXPERIENCE ACROSS THE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK BY IDENTIFYING AND INSTITUTING CITY TRAIL DESIGN STANDARDS.

4.6.1: Develop and adopt a city-wide Active Transportation Plan to identify and close all priority trail and sidewalk gaps with an emphasis on improvements to commercial corridors and major thoroughfares and a trail wayfinding signage and lighting plan.

4.6.2: Adopt official Trail Facilities Design Standards conforming to AASHTO guidelines that include specifications for branding, wayfinding, and amenities (e.g., bike racks, benches, repair stands).

4.6.3: Adopt a City ordinance to manage the safe use of e-bikes and e-scooters in public spaces and on trails.

Enhancing the comfort and usability of Gainesville's public outdoor spaces requires targeted investment in underdeveloped facilities to ensure inclusivity, accessibility, and long-term functionality. Retrofitting existing parks to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards will eliminate physical barriers and create equitable access for all users, regardless of age or ability.



A relevant model can be found in **San Diego's Padres Park (formerly Miracle Field)**, which utilizes upgraded rubber surfaces with new ADA-compliant materials.⁷ These materials enable smoother mobility for wheelchair users and others requiring assistive devices, as seen in **Figure 5.2**. The project's success was supported by a public-private partnership. Similarly, Gainesville will explore partnerships with local medical institutions, rehabilitation centers, or healthcare organizations to modernize facilities and incrementally enhance accessibility across its park system.

Building on these efforts, the creation of pocket parks offers a valuable opportunity to expand accessibility in areas characterized by dense development or underutilized land. Exploring the feasibility of a Downtown Pocket Park at the northeast corner of 200 South Rusk Street would activate currently vacant space, promote walkability, and introduce new opportunities for social gathering within the urban core.

⁷ City News Service. (2025, October 22). Inclusive North County baseball field to be rechristened Padres Park. Times of San Diego. <https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2025/10/22/inclusive-north-county-baseball-field-padres-park>.

Developing Comprehensive Site Plans for Edison Park and Fairview Cemetery will establish clear priorities for maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and site enhancements. These planning efforts ensure that both locations continue to serve as safe, welcoming, and sustainable community assets.

Together, these initiatives advance Gainesville's vision of a more inclusive, comfortable, and connected park system that reflects the City's commitment to accessibility, sustainability, and community well-being.

5 Downtown Gainesville Revitalization



As the historic and cultural heart of the community, a vibrant downtown is critical to Gainesville's economy and sense of place. The following goals, objectives, and strategies provide a high-level policy framework for revitalization. These recommendations are directly supported by the in-depth analysis, site-specific designs, and detailed implementation plan found in the concurrently developed *Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan*.



GOAL: Establish Downtown Gainesville as an official State Cultural District

5.1: LEVERAGE ARTS, CULTURE, AND HISTORY TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND CREATE A DISTINCT IDENTITY FOR DOWNTOWN.

5.1.1: Implement the cultural and economic strategies of the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan, including the formal pursuit of the official Cultural District designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts, and implement a district-branded wayfinding and signage program.

Gainesville will celebrate its unique arts, culture, and history while strengthening the local economy by pursuing official designation as a State Cultural District through the Texas Commission on the Arts ("TCA"). This designation recognizes areas with a concentration of cultural and historical assets, providing tools to support ongoing creative and economic development.

The designation process requires clearly defined geographic boundaries and documented cultural resources. Upon receiving the designation, the City will implement a cohesive branding and wayfinding strategy. This phase approach allows the City to leverage the prestige of the official designation to inform the design of signage and district markers.

In addition to economic and navigational benefits, the designation supports artists and creatives. Public art initiatives, including murals, installations, and performances, will highlight local history and celebrate community achievements. **These creative efforts enrich public spaces, foster social interaction, and elevate local artists as key contributors to the City's cultural identity.**

Accessibility and inclusivity are also central to this initiative. **The designation encourages improvements that make downtown enjoyable and navigable for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities, which will require targeted funding to ensure a welcoming environment.** Maintaining the Cultural District will require ongoing

collaboration between the Downtown Gainesville Alliance, City staff, and local stakeholders. By combining preservation, creative placemaking, economic development, and accessibility, the designation positions Gainesville's downtown as a vibrant, authentic, and culturally rich destination.



GOAL: Celebrate and Share Gainesville's Rich History

5.2: CREATE ENGAGING AND ACCESSIBLE WAYS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO EXPERIENCE THE STORIES OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWN.

5.2.1: Implement the heritage tourism recommendations of the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan, including the development of a comprehensive historic walking tour program in partnership with local heritage organizations.

Downtown Gainesville's rich history is one of its greatest assets. The Morton Museum, in collaboration with local historical societies, offers tours highlighting Gainesville's historic districts. Building on these efforts, the City will support expanding these offerings into a coordinated historic walking tour program that combines digital and in-person experiences.

Many peer cities in the region have implemented similar heritage-based initiatives to draw visitors and strengthen local identity. For example, the City of McKinney offers a Residential Historic Walking Tour that showcases the City's history through its architecture. In Pilot Point, the Downtown Historic Walking Tour educates visitors on the origins of local buildings. **This initiative will highlight key landmarks, architecture, and**



Source: Visit McKinney Texas CVB

stories that define Gainesville's past while activating public spaces and attracting visitors to local businesses.

Beyond promoting heritage tourism, this program provides meaningful opportunities for resident engagement and volunteerism. Long-time residents can contribute as volunteer tour guides or researchers, strengthening their connection to local history. The tours will provide a family-friendly, low-cost activity that addresses residents' desire for more accessible recreation and cultural experiences downtown.



GOAL: Make Downtown the Premier Hub for Entertainment and Events

5.3: PROMOTE DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE AS A DESTINATION TO INCREASE FOOT TRAFFIC AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY THROUGH ADDITIONAL CULTURALLY ENGAGING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES.

5.3.1: Develop and fund a collaborative Downtown Activation Program that includes: 1) A coordinated marketing strategy to promote all downtown happenings, 2) The creation of new signature festivals, and 3) Partnerships with local organizations to sponsor live entertainment.

Downtown Gainesville has the potential to become a regional destination for arts, entertainment, and community gatherings.

Gainesville's Medal of Honor Host City Program celebration exemplifies how events can honor civic and military heritage while drawing visitors and strengthening community pride. Building on this success, Gainesville will explore establishing a new signature event or festival inspired by its unique history—such as its historic connection to traveling circuses or other cultural traditions.

Cities like Denton, Ennis, and Pilot Point have successfully branded themselves through distinctive events such as **Denton's "31 Days of Halloween"** and **Ennis's Bluebonnet Trails and Festival**. These events draw visitors from all over North Texas and generate varying levels of sales tax revenue for the cities. For example, Denton's Halloween celebrations attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the downtown square in October alone, generating substantial sales tax revenue as attendees dine, shop, and make purchases within the area.⁸

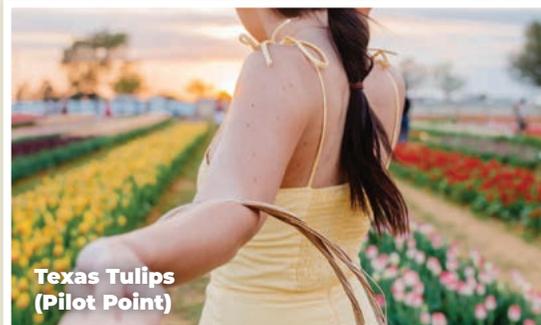
⁸ KERA News. *Second Denton Halloween scared up traffic on the Square in October; city seeks feedback for 2026*. 19, November 2025. <https://www.keranews.org/arts-culture/2025-11-19/second-denton-halloween-scared-up-traffic-on-the-square-in-october-city-seeks-feedback-for-2026>.



Day of the Dead Festival (Denton)



31 Days of Halloween (Denton)



Texas Tulips (Pilot Point)



Ennis Bluebonnet Trails & Festival

Gainesville can achieve similar recognition by leveraging social media and regional marketing to promote events that highlight its small-town charm. **Increased visitor spending directly supports local businesses and contributes to City revenues, funding future improvements and amenities.** The City has already taken positive steps by introducing a dedicated communications position to enhance public engagement and event promotion. Business owners have noted improved outreach and visibility after the Tourism and Marketing Coordinator position was filled. In partnership with local businesses, local events such as the annual Wine Stroll attract residents and visitors alike, demonstrating the demand for expanded downtown programming.

Partnerships with GISD and NCTC will further strengthen community involvement.

Students can collaborate with the City to design marketing materials or produce event content, providing firsthand experience in communications, design, and media while fostering civic pride. Local organizations, such as Gainesville Area Visual Arts, can use these events as fundraising opportunities to support the arts in the City. Coordination with Public Safety, Public Works, and Solid Waste departments is essential to ensure events are managed efficiently. Together, these strategies will help Gainesville activate its downtown year-round.



GOAL: Create an Inviting and Walkable Downtown Experience

5.4: ENHANCE THE SAFETY, COMFORT, AND BEAUTY OF DOWNTOWN STREETS FOR PEDESTRIANS.

5.4.1: Implement the comprehensive streetscape, connectivity, and placemaking recommendations of the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan and Guiding Gainesville Parks & Trails Master Plan, including: a) a system-wide streetscape improvement program focused on pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, and other amenities; b) key catalyst projects such as the Downtown Pedestrian Promenade and the Red River Woonerf to create signature pedestrian-oriented spaces; and c) improvements to key pedestrian facilities, such as the connection between Pecan Street and the Farmers Market.

Gainesville will sustain a safe, comfortable, and visually appealing Downtown environment for pedestrians. The Plan envisions a fully connected, multi-modal circulation framework that links downtown corridors with existing and planned parks, greenways, and public spaces.

The primary catalyst project is the Downtown Pedestrian Promenade, designed as a continuous pedestrian corridor along Medal of Honor Boulevard and the south side of Main Street. Implementation will require widening the sidewalk from Chestnut Street to Schopmeyer Street to achieve compliant pedestrian clear zones and improved ADA

accessibility. The corridor should utilize enhanced paving materials, raised crosswalks, and landscape buffers with street trees and planters to create a comfortable pedestrian environment.

Traffic-calming measures, including a speed reduction to 20 mph, pedestrian-scale lighting, and bicycle lane delineation, should be incorporated into multi-modal travel. Supplemental improvements include extending pedestrian-scale lighting eastward to Lindsay Street and westward to Medal of Honor Host City Park. These improvements will ensure continuous illumination and a consistent design standard.



Red River Street
Conceptual Rendering
Source: Antero Group

Additional corridor enhancements are recommended along Chestnut Street to link Main Street with the Farmers Market through sidewalk widening and raised intersection crossings. The conversion of Red River Street to a Woonerf (“*living street*”) will reallocate right-of-way to prioritize pedestrians and events, utilizing flush curbs, textured paving, and flexible-use design principles.

Pocket park opportunities, such as the proposed Gnarly Tree Park at the southeast

corner of Rusk Street and Broadway Street, can serve as strategic infill projects. This will increase the inventory of green space and provide small-scale gathering areas within the downtown fabric. Collectively, these interventions create a functionally connected, aesthetically cohesive, and universally accessible public realm network, strengthening linkages between Downtown Gainesville’s parks, cultural assets, and emerging mixed-use destinations.



GOAL: Protect and Showcase Downtown’s Historic Architecture

5.5: MAINTAIN THE VISUAL APPEAL AND HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS WHILE ENCOURAGING BEAUTIFICATION.

5.5.1: As part of the City-wide design guidelines, create specific standards for historic downtown. Additionally, launch a public art program to beautify public spaces, such as alleys, with culturally relevant murals.

Gainesville currently maintains a Heritage Preservation Overlay District to ensure that

signage, awnings, and new development respect the character of designated areas. Extending these boundaries to encompass all of downtown will further protect the integrity of the City’s historic core, ensuring that the architectural legacy that defines Gainesville is preserved for future generations.

Preserving the visual appeal and historic character of these structures is critical for both cultural heritage and economic vitality.

At the same time, thoughtful beautification efforts make public spaces more welcoming, vibrant, and reflective of Gainesville's unique identity. To support this, the City will implement a public art program to enhance streets, alleys, and plazas with culturally relevant murals and installations.

Potential public art installations can celebrate Gainesville's unique character and community values. For example, similar to the San Angelo, Texas, mural that honors a local World War I hero illustrated in **Figure 5.3**, Gainesville can honor local heroes, such as Medal of Honor recipients. Other murals could showcase the variety of animals at the Frank Buck Zoo, simultaneously educating visitors and promoting the zoo as a destination.

Figure 5.3. San Angelo Mural



Source(s): Ronald W. Erdrich, San Angelo Standard-Times

Combining historic preservation with creative placemaking, Gainesville will maintain the integrity of its downtown architecture while fostering an engaging, visually appealing environment that attracts residents, visitors, and businesses alike.



GOAL: Create a Stress-Free Downtown Parking Experience

5.6: MAKE IT EASIER FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO FIND AND USE AVAILABLE PARKING.

5.6.1: Develop and implement the Parking Management Strategy recommended in the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan, including: a) clear wayfinding signage; b) a digital map of public lots; and c) partnerships with private property owners to share parking during off-peak hours.

A primary concern expressed by the community during the planning process was the uncertainty surrounding downtown parking availability and regulations.

Implementing clear, branded wayfinding and parking signage will address this issue by helping drivers quickly identify available spaces and time limits. Consistent signage

improves turnover, while downtown-branded signs reinforce district identity and enhance the visitor experience.

Stakeholders expressed varying perspectives on parking management, with some advocating for stricter enforcement of time limits, while others preferred extended durations. A balanced approach that clearly communicates parking restrictions such as spaces reserved for employees or specific businesses will minimize confusion and potential user conflict. Providing employees with designated parking near their workplaces also contributes to stability and predictability for frequent downtown users.

To further expand parking availability, the City will explore public-private partnerships that allow shared use of private lots during off-peak or non-business hours. This strategy optimizes existing infrastructure without requiring major capital investment. Additionally, an in-depth parking study will help identify underutilized assets and demand patterns. A user-friendly

digital parking map would complement these efforts by providing updated information on available public lots. While advanced live-tracking systems require significant ongoing funding, a static but accessible digital map significantly reduces visitor uncertainty and streamlines the downtown parking experience.

Conclusion

The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in this chapter establish a comprehensive, coordinated framework to guide Gainesville's future. Rooted in the community's vision and informed by a detailed analysis of existing conditions, they provide an actionable roadmap to:

- ▶ Ensure long-term **fiscal sustainability**;
- ▶ Preserve and enhance the City's **unique historic character**;
- ▶ Invest in **reliable infrastructure and quality public spaces**; and
- ▶ Foster a **vibrant, diverse, and resilient** local economy.

These policies are interconnected, from improvements to parks and trails which support neighborhood quality, to investments in downtown revitalization and economic development which strengthen the City's fiscal health. Together, they translate the community's aspirations into a unified strategy for sustainable growth.

The next chapter, *Guiding Gainesville 2040: Policies and Strategies*, moves from outlined goals and strategies to a detailed policy framework with an action plan. This chapter encapsulates the responsible parties, predicted timelines, and funding opportunities to fulfill the **Guiding Gainesville 2040** vision.



06

LAYING THE TRACKS: FROM PLAN TO PROGRESS



Introduction

A plan is only as good as its implementation. While the previous chapter defined the polices and strategies for this Plan, this chapter provides the framework for turning those ideas into action by establishing a clear line of accountability, outlining the process for integrating the Plan into the City's operations, and providing a transparent methodology for prioritizing projects to ensure that **Guiding Gainesville 2040** functions as a practical guide for decision-making.

Accountability and Plan Ownership

While this Plan represents a collective vision shaped by the community and stakeholders, its successful implementation requires clear and dedicated ownership. Accountability is essential to ensure the Plan's goals are actively pursued and integrated into the City's daily operations. Therefore, the Plan ownership extends beyond any single department, community group, or elected body.

The City Manager is assigned ultimate responsibility for the Plan's implementation, championing its goals, and directing staff to carry out its strategies. This leadership will be supported by all stakeholders in the following roles:



CITY COUNCIL

Responsible for adopting the Plan, enacting all necessary policies and ordinances, and aligning the City's annual budget and Capital

Improvement Plan with the Plan's priorities.



CITY STAFF

All City departments are responsible for integrating the Plan's goals into their departmental work plans, identifying resource needs,

and coordinating across departments to implement strategies.



BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Planning and Zoning Commission, Parks & Recreation Board, and other advisory bodies are responsible for using this Plan

as their primary policy guide when reviewing development proposals, rezoning cases, and other relevant matters.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Residents, stakeholders, local businesses, and partner agencies like GISD, NCTC, and the Chamber of Commerce, are essential partners in

implementation, responsible for providing feedback, participating in programs, and collaborating on shared initiatives.

Plan Integration

This Plan is not intended to be a standalone document. Its success depends on its full integration into the City's governance and operational frameworks.

Fiscal Integration

Every successful plan requires a clear and sustainable funding strategy. Integrating the Plan's priorities into the City's budget and CIP ensures a fiscally responsible and coordinated implementation. This alignment will assist the City in anticipating financial needs, avoiding unexpected expenditures, and identify potential funding gaps early.

- ▶ **Annual Budgets:** The City's annual budget will incorporate initiatives that advance the Plan's strategies, creating synergy between day-to-day service delivery and long-term community objectives. These budgets provide valuable insight into resource allocation and help ensure that implementation activities do not compromise core municipal functions.
- ▶ **Capital Improvement Program:** The CIP, updated annually, serves as the primary tool for funding and prioritizing major capital investments that align with the Plan's goals such as roadway reconstruction and utility expansion while remaining responsive to emerging community needs.

Zoning and Land Use Plan Integration

Zoning, development regulations, and land use decisions are crucial to the Plan's advancement. All future rezoning, subdivision, and annexation requests will be evaluated for consistency with this Plan. Future land use decisions will be guided by the Plan's principles, ensuring that every regulatory action advances the long-term vision for a resilient, connected, and sustainable Gainesville.

Departmental Work Plans

To ensure successful implementation, departmental workplans, staffing structures, and partnerships will be fully integrated with the Plan. Each department will align its annual objectives, projects, and performance measures with the Plan's priorities, ensuring that daily operations actively advance the City's long-term vision. Flexibility in staffing and project focus will be essential, allowing departments to adapt to emerging opportunities. Maintaining adequate staffing levels, particularly within key departments responsible for implementation, is critical to sustaining progress. As the City grows, additional capacity will be required to meet expanding service demands.

Other Master Plans

This Plan serves as the overarching "umbrella" document that provides the vision and policy framework for all other City plans. It is designed to be implemented with related documents such as the Water Master Plan, Wastewater Master Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and Parks and Trails Master Plan to create a unified strategy. The Plan also coordinates with county-level plans such as the Cooke County HMAP to implement best regional practices that strengthen overall resilience and quality of life.

Prioritization

The Plan outlines a wide range of recommendations, from low-cost policy changes to major capital projects. To guide implementation, a prioritization methodology will be used to rank projects and strategies. **Each item will be evaluated against the following criteria:**

- 1. Fiscal Impact:** The relative cost of implementation, potential funding sources, and impact on long-term financial health.
- 2. Community Benefit:** The degree to which the project improves public safety, livability, and economic opportunity for the overall community well-being.
- 3. Feasibility:** The “readiness” of a project, including technical requirements, administrative capacity, and potential for “easy wins.”
- 4. Strategic Alignment:** The degree to which the project advances the Plan’s core goals and vision.
- 5. Momentum Building:** The potential for a project to spur additional investment, partnerships, or subsequent actions.

As implementation progresses, these priorities will be re-evaluated to incorporate new data, community feedback, and changing funding or development opportunities. This approach maintains adaptability while advancing the long-term vision. Early success in implementing short-term, high-visibility projects will be critical to maintaining momentum.

Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrix displays the Plan’s goals, objectives, and strategies into a user-friendly format. Each goal reflects the guiding principles and the overall vision. The objective is a prescriptive solution to fulfill the outlined goal. Each objective includes a strategy that directs the actions or approaches needed to achieve it.

The matrix contains a detailed description of the priority level, time frame, implementing department, cost, external partners needed, funding opportunities, and metric to measure success.

Priority Level

Each project or strategy is assigned an implementation priority that determines the focus and resources it requires:

- 1. Low:** Initiatives that are less urgent or primarily supportive, scheduled for later, after higher-priority projects and resource needs are addressed.
- 2. Medium:** Projects and strategies are important but may be implemented over a longer timeframe, often requiring additional coordination, funding, or planning.
- 3. High:** Represent critical projects that require immediate attention and have significant impact on advancing the City’s goals.

Time Frame

Each project or strategy is assigned an implementation timeframe to provide a clear roadmap for action and accountability:

- ▶ **Near-Term (1-3 years):** “Quick wins” and foundational projects, such as policy updates, procedural improvements, and new programming. (i.e., Achieving TCA Designation, Creating Development Regulations)
- ▶ **Mid-Term (3-5 years):** Programmatic initiatives and infrastructure projects requiring more coordination or grant funding. (i.e., Signature Festivals/Events, Education to Employment Collaboration)
- ▶ **Long-Term (5-10 years):** Large-scale, high-impact capital projects or redevelopment efforts often dependent on partnerships, major grant awards, or bond funding. (i.e., Complete Street Corridors, Green Stormwater Infrastructure)
- ▶ **Extended-Term (10-15 years):** Transformational initiatives requiring major infrastructure expansion or a comprehensive road reconstruction program that requires complex, multi-year funding and coordination. (i.e., Major Road Reconstruction)

Responsible Party

Each project or initiative has a lead City department responsible for its execution. While most projects involve collaboration, the lead department ensures the initiative progresses and oversees evaluation of its outcomes.

Cost Levels

Each project or initiative will incur a cost to the City to implement, though some may require little or no funding. For example, a policy change typically requires no additional financial resources, while capital projects may involve significant investment:

- ▶ **\$ – Low Cost:** Minor expenses typically covered within existing departmental budgets.
- ▶ **\$\$ – Moderate Cost:** Requires funding through the annual budget process, partnerships, or moderate grants.
- ▶ **\$\$\$ – High Cost:** Substantial investment, likely requiring multiple funding sources, large grants, or bond proceeds.
- ▶ **\$\$\$\$ – Very High Cost:** Major, transformational investment likely needing voter-approved bonds or multi-year federal funding.

Partners

Identifies key external partners such as nonprofit organizations, private developers, the Chamber of Commerce, GISD, NCTC, Cooke County, or regional agencies like TxDOT, who are essential for implementation.

Metrics

Each project or initiative tracks progress and measures success through metrics. Metrics identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress, which may include completion dates, quantitative data (e.g., “new miles of sidewalk built”), or qualitative feedback.

Funding Opportunities

Identifies potential funding sources beyond the City’s General Fund, such as state or federal grants, private partnerships, or bonds.

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GOAL	OBJECTIVE	NO.	STRATEGY/ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	COST	PARTNERS	METRICS	POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
1. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT										
Ensure Fiscally Productive Growth	<i>Evaluate the long-term financial impact of every new development proposal on City services.</i>	1.1.1	Implement the Gainesville Development Evaluator Tool as a standard part of the development review process.	HIGH	Near-Term	Finance Community Development Planning	N/A	Commercial and Housing Developers	Percent of proposed developments processed with a completed fiscal impact analysis report attached.	N/A
Build a Resilient and Diverse Local Economy	<i>Expand local employment opportunities and strengthen job security by attracting new types of industries.</i>	1.2.1	Develop and implement an economic development strategy to attract and retain businesses in target industries (e.g., advanced manufacturing, logistics, etc.).	HIGH	Mid-Term	Gainesville Economic Development Corporation	\$\$	Chamber of Commerce	Number of new businesses recruited or retained within the identified target sectors annually.	Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program in Texas, Texas Enterprise Fund
Foster a Thriving Small Business Ecosystem	<i>Improve access to resources, education, and support local entrepreneurs.</i>	1.3.1	Launch a small business support program, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, that offers workshops, networking events, and guidance on navigating city processes.	LOW	Near-Term	Gainesville Economic Development Corporation	\$	Chamber of Commerce NCTC Local Businesses Downtown Gainesville Alliance	Number of small businesses served annually through programs. Percent of participating businesses reporting improved capacity or growth.	N/A
Develop a Homegrown Workforce	<i>Create a direct pipeline from local education to local employment.</i>	1.4.1	Establish formal partnerships with GISD, NCTC, and key local industries to develop local workforce training and career placement programs.	MEDIUM	Mid-Term	Gainesville Economic Development Corporation	\$	GISD NCTC Local/Neighboring Industries	Number of students enrolled in programs with local industry partners annually.	N/A
2. FAMILY-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING										
Encourage Smart, Mixed-Use Growth in Key Corridors	<i>Create opportunities for vibrant, walkable developments that combine places to live, work, and shop.</i>	2.2.1	Update the City's zoning ordinance to create a new mixed-use zoning district and apply to all commercial corridors, including the corridor along the I-35 Frontage Road from Highway 82 through Downtown.	HIGH	Near-Term	Community Development Planning	\$\$	Commercial and Housing Developers	Adoption of the new Mixed-Use Zoning Ordinance text and number of acres rezoned to the new classification.	GLO RCP
Preserve and Enhance Gainesville's Unique Character	<i>Ensure new construction and redevelopment projects contribute positively to the City's historic, small-town identity.</i>	2.2.1	Adopt a clear, user-friendly set of citywide design guidelines to support predictable, efficient, and high-quality development outcomes, and update or expand historic overlay districts to ensure the preservation of historic homes.	HIGH	Near-Term	Community Development Planning	\$	Commercial and Housing Developers	Adoption of Citywide Design Guidelines and percentage of certificate of appropriateness (COA) applications approved in the expanded Historic District.	GLO RCP
Become the Most Business-Friendly City in the Region	<i>Enhance the predictability and clarity of development regulations to maintain a highly efficient, business-friendly review process.</i>	2.3.1	Update and modernize the City's development regulations (e.g., zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance) to provide clear, consistent, and user-friendly standards.	HIGH	Near-Term	Community Development Planning Public Works	\$\$	Commercial and Housing Developers	Adoption of the unified/updated zoning and subdivision ordinances.	GLO RCP

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	NO.	STRATEGY/ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	COST	PARTNERS	METRICS	POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
3. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, STREET NETWORK, AND MUNICIPAL FACILITIES										
Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water and Wastewater System for the Future	<i>Increase water and wastewater system capacity and resilience to accommodate projected community growth.</i>	3.1.1	Implement the priority capital projects identified in the City's Water Master Plan and Wastewater Master Plan.	HIGH	Long-Term	Public Works	\$\$\$\$	Commercial and Housing Developers	Percent of priority CIP projects completed or under construction annually.	TxDOT Transportation Alternative Grant, Revolving Funds for Financing Water and Wastewater Projects, Bonds
Enhance Stormwater Management Through Green Infrastructure	<i>Reduce the impact of major storm events in historically flood-prone areas throughout the city by integrating green infrastructure in strategic locations.</i>	3.2.1	Identify and implement stormwater recharge zones using native vegetation, permeable surfaces, and engineered solutions.	MEDIUM	Long-Term	Cemetery Public Works Parks and Recreation Frank Buck Zoo	\$\$\$	Commercial and Housing Developers Cooke County	Identification of eligible stormwater recharge zones? (Yes/No) Linear feet of bioswales installed or number of rain gardens implemented in public rights-of-way.	City-funded, Potential Private-Public Partnership
Create a Safe and Efficient Street Network	<i>Systematically improve the condition of city streets to enhance safety, reduce vehicle damage, and improve connectivity.</i>	3.3.1	Develop and fund a multi-year road maintenance and reconstruction program based on the City's Street and Utility Main Program (SUMP).	HIGH	Extended-Term	Public Works	\$\$\$\$	TxDOT	Annual improvement in the Citywide Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score and total lane-miles rehabilitated.	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, Bond
Enhance the Character and Resilience of Key Corridors	<i>Improve streetscape aesthetics, enhance public safety, and reduce the risk of weather-related power outages in critical areas.</i>	3.4.1	Develop a phased plan to strategically bury overhead utility lines, prioritizing historic downtown and major commercial corridors.	MEDIUM	Long-Term	Public Works	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	N/A	Linear feet of overhead utility lines converted to underground or number of utility boxes wrapped/painted with public art.	Grid Resilience Utility and Industry Grants Texas Commission on the Arts
Create a Safe and Accessible Pedestrian Network	<i>Ensure all residents, regardless of age or mobility, can safely and easily walk to key destinations like parks, schools, and downtown.</i>	3.5.1	Systematically identify and close all priority sidewalk gaps throughout the city, guided by the Master Thoroughfare and Sidewalk Plan and Downtown Master Plan.	HIGH	Long-Term	Public Works	\$\$\$	TxDOT	Linear feet of new sidewalk constructed filling priority gaps identified in the Thoroughfare Plan and Downtown Master Plan. ADA Compliance Assessment Updated? (Yes/No)	SS4A, Community Traffic Safety Grants, Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program, FHWA National Highway System, USDOT Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant, 2026 Road to Zero Community Traffic Safety Grant
Improve Safety at Rail Crossings	<i>Reduce the risk of vehicle and pedestrian collisions with trains at the key intersections.</i>	3.6.1	Develop and implement safety improvements at each rail intersection throughout the City.	HIGH	Long-Term	Public Works	\$\$\$\$	BNSF Amtrak	Number of rail intersections upgraded with enhanced safety features.	FRA's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	NO.	STRATEGY/ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	COST	PARTNERS	METRICS	POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
4. PARKS, PUBLIC SPACE, AND NATURE TRAILS										
Ensure All Parks are Safe, Well-Maintained, and High-Quality	<i>Provide continuous maintenance and replace aging equipment for all existing parks and recreation facilities.</i>	4.1.1	Implement the site-specific recommendations for all existing parks including playground replacements, amenity upgrades, and safety improvements as prioritized in the Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan.	HIGH	Mid-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$\$	N/A	Number of parks with completed lifecycle replacements annually as per the Master Plan.	Landscape Structures Playground Funding
		4.1.2	Explore a partnership with GEDC to maintain and expand ownership of the former M-K-T Railway property (south of QuikTrip and Gunter St.) as open space with regular mowing and tree trimming.	LOW	Near-Term	Parks and Recreation Gainesville Economic Development Corporation	\$	Gainesville Economic Development Corporation	Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with GEDC for maintenance and acres of corridor actively maintained. Trail expansion completed? (Yes/No)	City-Funded, FHWA Recreational Trails Program, TPW Local Parks Grant
	4.2.1	Address parking infrastructure and pedestrian safety needs at the Frank Buck Zoo by evaluating the zoo's primary entrance location, traffic circulation, and parking design.	HIGH	Near-Term	Frank Buck Zoo Public Works	\$\$	N/A	Completion of the Parking/Circulation Study and subsequent construction of recommended entrance improvements.	City-Funded, TPW Local Park Grant	
	4.2.2	Evaluate the practicality of relocating some or all sports fields from Leonard Park and Edison Park by establishing a regional sports complex with expanded offerings at Keneteso Park.	MEDIUM	Mid-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$\$	Boys Baseball of Cooke County Cooke County Soccer Association Cooke County Youth Sports, LLC Community Organizations Local Non-profits	Completion of the Feasibility Study and design documents for the regional complex.	City-Funded, Private Endowments/Investments, Community Block Grant, Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program, NFL Foundation Field Refurbishment Grant	
	4.2.3	Develop a comprehensive paving replacement and maintenance plan for Fairview Cemetery, evaluating the use of permeable pavers and landscape enhancements.	LOW	Mid-Term	Cemetery Public Works	\$\$-\$	N/A	Adoption of the Paving/Maintenance Plan and linear feet of internal roadway resurfaced/paved.	City-Funded	
	Provide Equitable Access to Parks and Green Space for All Neighborhoods.	<i>Identify underserved or growing neighborhoods and prioritize the acquisition of properties for parks and recreational programming.</i>	4.3.1	Prioritize the acquisition and development of new parks, plazas, and open spaces in historically underserved areas as identified in the Guiding Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan.	LOW	Long-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$\$\$	N/A	Acres of new parkland acquired or designated in the targeted neighborhoods.
4.3.2			Adopt a policy ensuring all new Community Parks include essential amenities such as a pavilion, restrooms, and drinking fountains.	MEDIUM	Near-Term	Parks and Recreation Community Development	\$\$	N/A	Adoption of the "Standard Park Amenity" policy and percentage of Community Parks meeting the standard.	N/A
4.3.3			Develop and fund a diverse programming schedule to activate underused parks and serve all age groups.	MEDIUM	Near-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$\$-\$	Local Non-profit Organizations, Cultural Organizations	Established programming funding? (Yes/No) Total number of City-sponsored or permitted events held in neighborhood parks annually.	MLS GO PLAY Fund, City-Funded

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	NO.	STRATEGY/ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	COST	PARTNERS	METRICS	POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
Enhance the Comfort and Usability of Public Outdoor Spaces	Increase outdoor comfort levels city-wide using shade by strategically capitalizing on existing shade trees; relocate and reconfigure movable amenities to maximize the benefit provided by existing shaded areas.	4.4.1	Implement a comprehensive tree and shade plan by utilizing the tree-mapping software to prioritize planting, adopting a city-wide tree maintenance plan, creating a street tree rebate program, and hosting community planting events like Texas Arbor Day.	MEDIUM	Long-Term	Parks and Recreation Community Development	\$\$	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Planning & Zoning Commission	Net increase in tree canopy coverage on public land (trees planted minus trees removed) and adoption of the Tree Maintenance Plan. Created Tree Rebate Plan? (Yes/No) Annual Tree-Mapping Inventory Updates? (Yes/No)	Texas A&M Community Forestry Grant
		4.4.2	Strategically add new shade structures and rearrange movable amenities to maximize the use of existing shade in all City parks.	MEDIUM	Mid-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$\$-\$\$\$	N/A	Number of new shade structures (permanent or natural) installed over existing amenities.	City-Funded
		4.5.1	Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of the entire park system to identify outstanding barriers and amend the City's ADA Transition Plan with a new, prioritized schedule of park-specific retrofits.	MEDIUM	Long-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$\$\$	Local Non-profit Organizations Private/Public Partnerships Parks & Recreation Board	Completion of the Accessibility Audit and percentage of identified high-priority barriers remediated.	TPWD Local Park Grant
Optimize Underutilized Land and Strengthen Accessibility For All Users	Unify the trail user experience across the active transportation network by identifying and instituting City trail design standards.	4.6.1	Develop and adopt a city-wide Active Transportation Plan to identify and close all priority trail and sidewalk gaps with an emphasis on improvements to commercial corridors and major thoroughfares and a trail wayfinding signage and lighting plan.	HIGH	Mid-Term	Parks and Recreation Community Development	\$\$	Planning & Zoning Commission	Adoption of the Active Transportation Plan and miles of new trails/bike lanes constructed.	Road to Zero Community Traffic Safety Grant, FHWA Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program
		4.6.2	Adopt official Trail Facilities Design Standards conforming to AASHTO guidelines that include specifications for branding, wayfinding, and amenities (e.g., bike racks, benches, repair stands).	MEDIUM	Near-Term	Parks and Recreation	\$	Planning & Zoning Commission	Adoption of the AASHTO-compliant Trail Facilities Design Standards manual.	N/A
		4.6.3	Adopt a City ordinance to manage the safe use of e-bikes and e-scooters in public spaces and on trails.	MEDIUM	Near-Term	Parks and Recreation Community Development Police	\$	Parks and Recreation Board	Adoption of the ordinance regulating e-bikes and e-scooters.	N/A

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	NO.	STRATEGY/ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	COST	PARTNERS	METRICS	POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
5. DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE REVITALIZATION										
Establish Downtown Gainesville as an official State Cultural District	<i>Leverage arts, culture, and history to strengthen the local economy and create a distinct identity for downtown.</i>	5.1.1	Implement the cultural and economic strategies of the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan, including the formal pursuit of the official Cultural District designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts, and implement a district-branded wayfinding and signage program.	HIGH	Near-Term	Communications & Outreach	\$	Downtown Gainesville Alliance, Gainesville Economic Development Corporation	Submission of the application to the Texas Commission on the Arts and the subsequent installation of district branding/signage.	Arts Respond Project, Texas Commission on the Arts Grant
Celebrate and Share Gainesville's Rich History	<i>Create engaging and accessible ways for residents and visitors to experience the stories of historic downtown.</i>	5.2.1	Implement the heritage tourism recommendations of the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan, including the development of a comprehensive historic walking tour program in partnership with local heritage organizations.	LOW	Near-Term	Communications & Outreach	\$	Local organizations GISD Volunteer organizations Historic South Gainesville	Launch of the coordinated walking tour program (digital or physical) and annual number of tour users.	N/A
Make Downtown the Premier Hub for Entertainment and Events	<i>Promote Downtown Gainesville as a destination to increase foot traffic and economic activity through additional culturally engaging events and activities.</i>	5.3.1	Develop and fund a collaborative Downtown Activation Program that includes: 1) A coordinated marketing strategy to promote all downtown happenings, 2) The creation of new signature festivals, and 3) Partnerships with local organizations to sponsor live entertainment.	LOW	Mid-Term	Communications & Outreach	\$\$	Local non-profits Butterfield Stage Businesses Media Outlets	Number of downtown events held annually and estimated total attendance.	City-funded
Create an Inviting and Walkable Downtown Experience	<i>Enhance the safety, comfort, and beauty of downtown streets for pedestrians.</i>	5.4.1	Implement the comprehensive streetscape, connectivity, and placemaking recommendations of the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan and Guiding Gainesville Parks & Trails Master Plan, including: a) a system-wide streetscape improvement program focused on pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, and other amenities; b) key catalyst projects such as the Downtown Pedestrian Promenade and the Red River Woonerf to create signature pedestrian-oriented spaces; and c) improvements to key pedestrian facilities, such as the connection between Main Street and the Farmers Market.	MEDIUM	Mid-Term	Communications & Outreach Community Development Parks and Recreation Public Works	\$\$\$- \$\$\$\$	N/A	Linear feet of streetscape improvements completed and completion of the Main Street Promenade design/construction phases.	America Walks/Active People Healthy Nations Community Change Grant, Project for Public Spaces
Protect and Showcase Downtown's Historic Architecture	<i>Maintain the visual appeal and historic integrity of downtown buildings while encouraging beautification.</i>	5.5.1	As part of the city-wide design guidelines, create specific standards for historic downtown. Additionally, launch a public art program to beautify public spaces, such as alleys, with culturally relevant murals.	MEDIUM	Near-Term	Community Development Public Works	\$	Developers Business owners & Local Artists GISD & NCTC Planning & Zoning Commission	Adoption of Historic Downtown Design Standards and number of public art installations completed.	Community Development Block Grants, Arts Respond Project, Private-Public Partnerships, GLO RCP
Create a Stress-Free Downtown Parking Experience	<i>Make it easier for residents and visitors to find and use available public parking.</i>	5.6.1	Develop and implement the Parking Management Strategy recommended in the Guiding Gainesville Downtown Master Plan including: a) clear wayfinding signage; b) a digital map of public lots; and c) partnerships with private property owners to share parking during off-peak hours.	MEDIUM	Near-Term	Public Works Parks and Recreation Communication and Outreach	\$\$	Downtown Gainesville Alliance Downtown business owners Local organizations	Installation of wayfinding signage, publication of a digital public parking map, and number of new private/public partnership parking agreements completed annually.	Community Development Block Grant

Ongoing Management

Through this structured management process, Gainesville will ensure that its **Comprehensive Plan remains a living, actionable framework**. The City will track implementation progress using the following methods:

- ▶ **Annual Progress Reports:** Each year, City staff will prepare a summary of accomplishments, implementation barriers, and project status for City Council review. A public-facing “report card” will be published to ensure transparency and maintain momentum.
- ▶ **Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Measurable metrics will track outcomes. Responsible departments will update these indicators regularly and promote accountability and cross-departmental coordination.
- ▶ **Five-Year Review:** Within five years of adoption, the City will conduct a major review of the Plan’s progress, assess its effectiveness, and recommend any necessary updates.
- ▶ **Amendments and Updates:** As conditions evolve, the Plan will be amended to ensure it continues to guide responsible and sustainable growth. This flexibility allows the City to respond to changing demographics, infrastructure needs, and community priorities.

Conclusion

The implementation framework outlined in this chapter provides structured guidance for achieving Gainesville’s strategic goals. As a dynamic, working document, the City will adjust the Plan’s strategies and performance metrics over time in response to evolving community needs and conditions. This chapter establishes a robust foundation for systematically addressing stakeholder priorities and advancing the City’s long-term vision.

The final chapter serves as a comprehensive summary of the entire Plan, synthesizing its purpose, its guiding framework, and the tools that will ensure Gainesville achieves its shared vision for the future. ►



07 CONCLUSION

A Guided Future

Guiding Gainesville 2040 provides the City’s official roadmap for the next two decades. It is a plan developed from thousands of community voices, built on data-driven analysis, and designed to provide a clear framework for decision-making. It represents a shared vision for a future that is both aspirational and achievable, balancing the preservation of Gainesville’s unique character with the demands of sustainable growth.

The planning process began with the “*community as a compass*” in **Chapter 2**, during which extensive public input was gathered to shape a new vision statement. This vision—one of a thriving, patriotic, family-oriented community that embraces its heritage and culture—became the foundation for every goal and objective that followed. The in-depth analysis of **Chapter 4** established a clear baseline, identifying the City’s unique strengths while squarely addressing its most pressing challenges, including the need for infrastructure investment, housing diversity, and long-term fiscal resiliency. From this foundation, the Plan details a clear and comprehensive set of policies and strategies in **Chapter 5** to achieve the community’s goals. It outlines a path to:

- ▶ **Ensure long-term sustainability** by diversifying the economy and promoting productive growth.
- ▶ **Preserve and enhance** the character of the City’s family-friendly neighborhoods.
- ▶ **Reinvest in public infrastructure**, creating a safe and reliable network for all users.
- ▶ **Build an accessible and connected** parks and trails system.
- ▶ **Re-establish downtown** as a vibrant, cultural, and economic heart of the community.

Crucially, these policies are directly supported by and integrated with the concurrent *Gainesville Downtown Master Plan* and *Gainesville Parks and Trails Master Plan*, creating a unified “umbrella” strategy for the City’s future.

This Plan, however, is not intended to sit on a shelf. As detailed in Chapter 6, it is a “living plan” with a clear and robust framework for implementation. Its success will be driven by accountability, by the formal integration of the Plan’s goals into the City’s annual budget and Capital Improvement Program, and by the ongoing collaboration of City staff, elected officials, and community partners. This commitment to annual monitoring and adaptation ensures the Plan will remain a relevant and effective guide as Gainesville grows.

Guiding Gainesville 2040 is more than a document: it is a commitment to honoring the City’s heritage while proactively shaping its future. By following this roadmap, Gainesville can confidently manage its growth and build a vibrant, resilient, and prosperous community for generations to come. ▶

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GUIDING **GAINESVILLE** **2040**