

HEPHZIBAH GEORGIA EST. 1870



City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028

Prepared for
The City of Hephzibah
2530 Georgia Highway 88
Hephzibah, Georgia 30815
Phone Number: (706) 592-4423

The Honorable Robert J. Buchwitz, Chairman
Members of City Commission:
Commission Member Jody Boulineau
Commission Member Clay Fulcher
Commission Member Ven McFalls
Commission Member Jordan Rhoades
City Clerk Amanda Brookins

Adopted:

The City acknowledges the input and efforts of all individuals who contributed to the creation of this Comprehensive Plan document.

Prepared by the Planning staff of the
Central Savannah River Area
Regional Commission

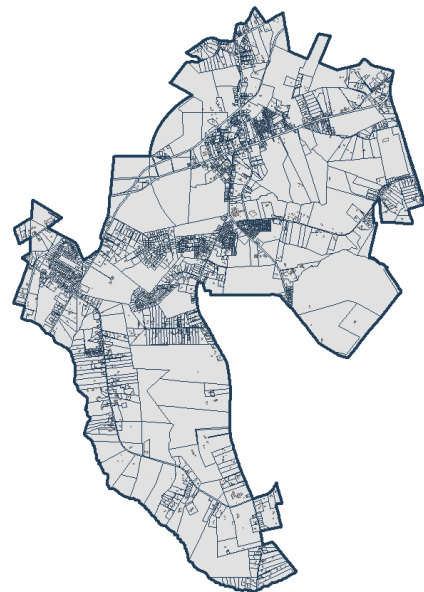


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Community Goals / Needs and Opportunities	11
Broadband Services	17
Community Facilities	21
Economic Development	27
Land Use / Character Areas	31
Natural and Cultural Resources	37
Transportation	41
Housing	45
Report of Accomplishments / Community Work Program	49
Appendix	59



Legend
 City of Hephzibah



Legend
 Parcel
 Building Outlines
 City of Hephzibah





Introduction

The City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 represents the community's long-term goals and individualized short-to-mid-term activities for the future. It is a blueprint for creating the type of community residents want to see and companies want to work with in the coming decades.

In preparing this plan, the City of Hephzibah recognizes that there are a number of assets that can be marketed to attract growth and that there also exists the opportunity to develop mechanisms that will shape future development in a manner that does not compromise the community's historic identity or rural quality of life.

The purpose of the City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan is to provide the local elected officials of the City of Hephzibah with a tool to manage and guide the future growth of the city through the year 2028. The plan also represents Hephzibah's participation in the statewide coordinated planning program created by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The plan, which meets the "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" established by the Act, is intended to provide guidelines that the City can follow when making decisions about providing future public facilities and services. Further, the plan should guide local government decision making regarding economic development, environmental protection, housing, facility provision and future land use.

Overview

Originally named Brothersville to honor three of its initial sibling settlers, Hephzibah, Georgia, is setting its sights on the future. This Comprehensive Plan provides a snapshot of the city's current position, a summary of what it has accomplished, and an agenda of its ideas for the future.

Georgia cities and communities are continuously seeking ways to strengthen their support systems, reinforce their economy, provide sensible and timely growth, promote a sense of positive change, build on local assets, pay homage to their historic and cultural resources, and, ultimately, provide a better quality of life for their citizens. The concepts of motivation, traditional values, and innovation rejuvenate the energy of the City, and this Comprehensive Plan is the rudder of Hephzibah's forward-moving vessel.

Hephzibah is seated in Richmond County and adjacent to Burke County. As any part of a whole, the city remains an integral cog in the region while facing typical challenges. This city works to support its autonomy and plays a part in backing the county as a destination. City systems support economic and educational ideals of the city, county and state, and create a sense of smalltown charm while striving to lead ever improving community and budgetary progress and be a leader in innovations based in traditional values.

The ability of a city to anticipate and accommodate changes over decades provides the ability to survive and thrive over time. Change is an inevitable event in most communities through population variances, development or stagnant development that requires attention and improvement, and through ways in which land is used to serve the residents' needs. Although many small communities face common struggles, it is invigorating and in a city's best interest to create, update, and maintain a unique plan for the future.

The Comprehensive Plan is composed to reflect the shared vision, goals, and objectives for the City of Hephzibah. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires the planning process for a Comprehensive Plan to follow a set of minimum procedures to ensure that the public has the opportunity to provide input and review the plan document as it is created.

The City of Hephzibah takes pride in its charming small-town atmosphere and strives to maintain that feel as it looks at forward steps for its citizens. The Comprehensive Plan is the official guiding document for the City and its residents. It will serve the following functions:

- Set a guide for a desired future.
- Describe ways that future can be achieved.
- Craft a coordinated long-term planning program.

All state-required comprehensive planning components and additional elective materials listed below are distributed throughout this document in different sections, as noted. The state-required and elective components are the following:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| • Community Participation | • Community Facilities | • Land Use |
| • Economic Development | • Needs and Opportunities | • Housing |
| • Natural Resources | • Alternatives and Strategies | • Transportation |

Service Delivery Strategy

The State of Georgia's "Service Delivery Strategy Act" adopted in 1997 by the Georgia General Assembly, requires that all counties and incorporated municipalities adopt a joint "Service Delivery Strategy" document. In formulating such a document, local governments examine public services, identify gaps or overlaps in the provision of those services, and develop a coordinated approach to allocating the delivery and funding of these services among the local governments and other authorities within each county. The City of Hephzibah participates in the Augusta-Richmond County "Service Delivery Strategy".

Community Snapshot

	City of Hephzibah	Richmond County
Total Population (2020 Decennial Census)	3,830	206,607
Median Age of Residents (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	42.2	35.0
Residents who are Military Veterans (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	411 (13.7% of population)	17,561 (11.6% of population)
Total Housing Units (2020 Decennial Census)	1,564	92,057
Median Household Value (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	154,200	142,100
Number of Households (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	1,478	92,108
Percentage of Homeownership (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	69.5%	51.4%
Commute Travel Time (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	29.5 minutes	21.4 minutes
Land Area (2022 ACS 5-year estimates)	19.5 square miles	324 square miles

Community Participation

This chapter of the City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan will provide the following components:

- Membership of the Steering Committee
- Planning Process (including Public Involvement)
- Goals of the Plan
- Vision Statement (Community Goals)
- Alternatives and Strategies

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was created for the Plan, comprised of members of the City Commission as stakeholders representing a cross section of the community. The purpose of this committee is to provide and to articulate the shared vision, goals, and objectives of the community.

Members of the Steering Committee for this Comprehensive Plan included the following:

- Chairman Robert Buchwitz
- Commission Member Jordan Rhoades
- Public Safety Director Chief Matthew Mercer
- Hephzibah Utilities Director John Buchwitz
- City Clerk Amanda Brookins

The Steering Committee met three times during the comprehensive plan process to participate in group exercises to define the needs and establish a direction of the city, and to create a work program of activities. Some of the key elements that the committee was asked to develop were strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that were to be prominent influences in the future planning for the city. This S.W.O.T. analysis, along with other data elements, gave needed information used to build a greater concept of the Needs and Opportunities, long term goals, and probable improvements for the City.

Meeting dates for the Steering Committee were held at City Hall on the following days:

- December 11, 2023, 5:30pm
- February 1, 2024, 2:00pm
- March 28, 2024, 2:00pm (make-up session due to conflicts with March 5 planned meeting)
- May XX, 2024, 2:00pm (final presentation)

Consistent information and suggestions from the public were necessary components for creating and completing the Comprehensive Plan. Frank and open sharing of ideas and communication among the Steering Committee members and the public at large influenced the formulation of the direction of the Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Process

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires that the comprehensive planning process follow a set of minimum requirements and specific tasks, so that the citizens of the community have the opportunity to provide input into the plan and to any revisions of the document. This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to meet the minimum requirements and procedures that became effective October 2018. The planning process occupied a six month schedule from beginning to end as outlined in Figure 1.2 – Planning Process.

Month	Meeting	Purpose and Activities
1	Public Hearing #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation of Plan • Schedule of Meetings • How to Participate • Provide Voice Input • Written Community Survey
1	Steering Committee Meeting #1 (Goals and SWOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm Goals of the Plan • “S.W.O.T.” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analyses
3	Steering Committee Meeting #2 (Report of Accomplishments and Community Work Program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Existing Conditions • Accomplishments • Alternatives/Strategies • Community Work Program
5	Steering Committee Meeting #3 (Needs and Opportunities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Needs and Opportunities Review • Draft Plan Review
5	Public Hearing #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on Plan Contents
6	Presentation to City Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments from Commission
6	Submit Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submittal of plan to The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (GA DCA) • Respond to GA DCA Comments
6	Adoption of Plan	
6	Notification of Adoption and Publicizing the Plan	

Vision Statement

At the outset of the planning process the Steering Committee formulated a vision statement of how they would describe their city at the end of the ten year planning horizon. This step was useful in reaching consensus on what the end results of the various components of the plan might be and forms a concise statement of community goals, as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The vision statement for the City of Hephzibah for this Comprehensive Plan is as follows:

Hephzibah is a robust, motivated community with small-town charm; an abundance of cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities; innovative leadership rooted in traditional values; a business climate supported by the City; and a spirit of community friendliness.

In this manner the Vision statement will become a guiding principle in reaching intermediate conclusions that, taken together, will shape the future toward making the vision a reality.

Goals of the Plan

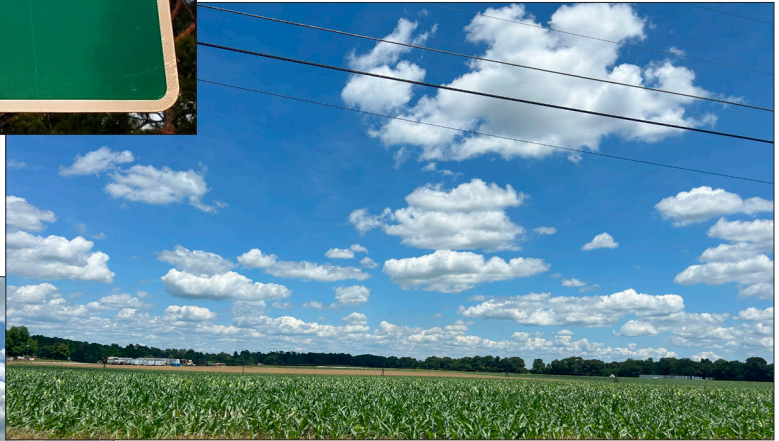
The goals of the planning process, simply stated, are to develop a new Comprehensive Plan, independent of Augusta- Richmond County, that meets the minimum standard procedures for local comprehensive planning; to complete strategy sessions that outline the vision of the City with concentration on land use and transportation elements of the Plan; and to cover the other required plan elements, as needed, to comply with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs requirements.



Needs and Opportunities

The City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan process involved the creation of a list of community needs and opportunities – important issues to address or possibilities to pursue. The creation of the list involved both general public input and the specific involvement of the stakeholder committee, including a community survey, review of previous needs and opportunities, and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT analysis informed the crafting of the needs and opportunities and provided support for long-term goals and work program activities developed further along in the process.

In contrast to the long-term focus of the Community Goals element, the Needs and Opportunities element conveys the relatively short and mid-term imperatives which will require attention from the community in the following several years.



SWOT

As a part of the planning process, the communities held two public hearings, provided information online, and conducted a survey. Based on the community survey, stakeholder conversations and available data, the CSRA RC staff compiled a list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The SWOT results represent a combination of common findings for all data sources mentioned above and were used in identifying community needs and opportunities.

Strengths

- Low-density rural community character
- No City property taxes
- No stormwater fees
- Low crime rate
- City service efficiency
- Good water supply-City has excess water capacity to support further growth
- Sense of community
- Leadership of City government
- Improved ISO rating at 4
- Multiple revenue streams
- Hephzibah Innovation Center
- Forward-thinking leaders
- Space for growth of multiple types
- Geographical location “with vision” - located in a triangle of 3 of the area’s largest employers: Savannah River Site, Fort Eisenhower, and Plant Vogtle
- Facilities to provide spaces for public gatherings and support City infrastructure: Community Center, Municipal Cemetery, Ballfield, Agricultural Center with arena, and farmer’s market
- Religious options and a faith-based community
- Zoning ordinances and strict adherence to the rules
- Longevity of businesses (such as Hephzibah Pharmacy which has been in business over 50 years)
- Leadership for the City is not paid - each person wants to be there to better the City
- Large amount of land ownership by the City: Estimated 1,300 acres owned which includes sellable timber

Weaknesses

- Lack of multi-modal transportation - Needs include bike lanes and roadway infrastructure updates
- Need for sit-down restaurants to support City, events, visitors, and current citizens
- Inadequate size of City Hall; courtroom too small
- Mentality that is less willing to accept, understand the need for change and growth
 - Must help the community to focus on the big picture for all citizens
 - Dissuade push-back on City zoning ordinances
- Road Infrastructure expansion / updates needed (Congested intersections during the a.m. and p.m. school traffic times)
- City appearance
 - Abandoned buildings
 - Ways to decide on how to condemn properties and affordability of that action
 - Wide span between the visually appealing areas and the areas that need great improvements
- Struggles with student population shifts - students moving from public school to the charter school may have culture shock issues, prior behavioral challenges, and act in ways that negatively impact the conduct and learning of the current charter student body
- Need to address and potentially remove pocket neighborhoods that are problem areas for crime, drugs, and violence

Opportunities

- Add quality-of-life activities and activity spaces:
 - Storey Mill property
 - Pedestrian trails
 - Campgrounds
 - Equestrian areas
 - Biking amenities
 - Disc golf course / active family spaces
- Alternate energy sources and use for the City
 - Currently in testing phases for several types of alternate solar energy devices
 - Agree with sustainable energy and green living efforts
- Roadway expansion - Help increase traffic flow and decrease traffic challenges around the public high school and public middle school
- Offer extended wireless service
 - Focus on the cyber community
 - Possibility of offering wi-fi in select recreational areas
- Additional ambulance service protection and more control over how the service assists customers including improved response times
- Sewer expanded in the downtown area to accommodate commercial properties and potential sit-down restaurants
- Create a Town Center or Town Square
 - Seeking creation and implementation by an outside developer
 - Utility infrastructure can support this idea
- Creating new multi-use trails
- Development of new medical facilities
- Space available for new businesses and farming
- Development of a dog park
- Use of upcoming event center

Threats

- Weather or natural disasters
- If a large employer leaves the area
- Cultural decline
 - Civil unrest
 - Lack of community spirit
- Active shooter event or community attack
- Drastic environmental changes
 - Extended drought conditions that change the water table and residents' abilities to have access to water
 - Aquifer level drop due to increased irrigation - currently levels recover quickly but a combination of extenuating circumstances or events could deplete it too much for recovery
- Wildfires where urban and suburban areas interface with agricultural land
- Distance to Emergency Medical facilities

NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Development

Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support zoning and ordinances to attract sitdown restaurants• Encourage business formation in the service sector to serve anticipated demand from Fort Eisenhower and city growth• Continue to implement enhancement projects on the city rights of way• Strive to attract new businesses to the City
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the City to surrounding citizens as a destination with amenities and cultural resources• Seek out alternate energy source (i.e. solar)• Promote the Hephzibah Agricultural Center, arena & farmer's market space• Create a plan for use of Storey Mill property

Housing

Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure proper and safe house building techniques through building code enforcement• Continue code enforcement program to ensure proper housing
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the supply of sound housing• Improve existing housing

Community Facilities

Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve/increase size of City Hall• Create a plan to remove abandoned buildings.• Continue improving website for the City, social media presence, other communication with citizens• Build new community center
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add quality of life activities and activity spaces, such as pedestrian trails, disc golf, biking areas, etc.• Create a Town Center or Town Square• Upgrade the storage and holding area for city maintenance equipment• Encourage new developments to pay for itself in terms of roads, infrastructure, and water lines

Natural & Cultural Resources

Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replace/rebuild Windsor Spring Rd. well house• Continue community outreach related to water quality and quantity
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loop the southern end of the water system along Corley Rd. from Storey Mill Rd. to Farmer's Bridge Rd.

Land Use

Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to enforce the current zoning ordinances• Continue to promote greenspace and protection of environmentally sensitive lands as open space• Continue the permitting and enforcement provisions of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance• Continue the permitting and enforcement provisions of the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage new development that conforms to the City's zoning districts

Transportation

Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roadway expansion to alleviate congestion, especially at peak a.m. and p.m. times• Provide for the safe & convenient flow of people & freight throughout the city• Repaving various roads as needed• Continue to implement enhancement projects on city rights of way
Opportunities	



Broadband Services

Access to high speed Internet (broadband) is an important part of life today. Broadband enables greater connectivity and expands possibilities for individuals and families to improve their quality of life. From students in the classroom and professionals providing telemedicine to patients with no rural hospital or clinic, to county staff streaming online training and residents using library computers, broadband touches the lives of citizens of all ages and backgrounds.

This section of the plan provides an overview of broadband and the ACE Act reviews the state of local and regional connectivity.

WHAT IS BROADBAND?

Broadband is high speed Internet. The FCC currently defines high speed Internet access as “download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps.” Mbps is megabits per second. These minimum upload and download speeds are essential to quality of service for end user customers. Broadband includes several high-speed transmission technologies, such as fiber optic, wireless, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) and coax cable. The goal in many communities may be terrestrial service, but mobile or satellite may be the only option. The City of Hephzibah is no exception in many parts of the jurisdiction.

Different technologies:

- Fiber optic cable - buried underground and transmits data over light through glass or plastic
- Coax Cable - copper-based infrastructure deployed by cable TV and telephone broadband providers; is described as durable and the dominant technology for residential broadband service. It involves wireless devices or systems providing service in fixed locations.
- DSL - copper-based and offered over traditional telephone networks. They are not as rapid as other technologies and may degrade over distance.
- Wireless is fixed where the wireless systems provide service in fixed locations. Mobile wireless consists of cellular networks that deliver service to mobile end-users. Satellite wireless utilizes geostationary satellites that provide service in low-density locations. Lastly, microwave wireless uses mid-to-high frequency signals to deliver service between line-of-sight locations.

THE ACE ACT

In 2018, the Georgia General Assembly passed “Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act” (Senate Bill 402). Provisions in the Act include:

- Requires that each local government in the state incorporate a “Broadband Services Element” into its local comprehensive plan.
- Enables local governments to take advantage of applying for financial incentives (such as grants) for broadband services, if they meet certain criteria.
- Enables the Georgia Department of Transportation to use interstate highway rights-of-way for deployment of broadband services and other emerging communications technologies.
- Enables a political subdivision that has a comprehensive plan that includes the promotion of the deployment of broadband services to the Department of Community Affairs for certification as a broadband ready community.

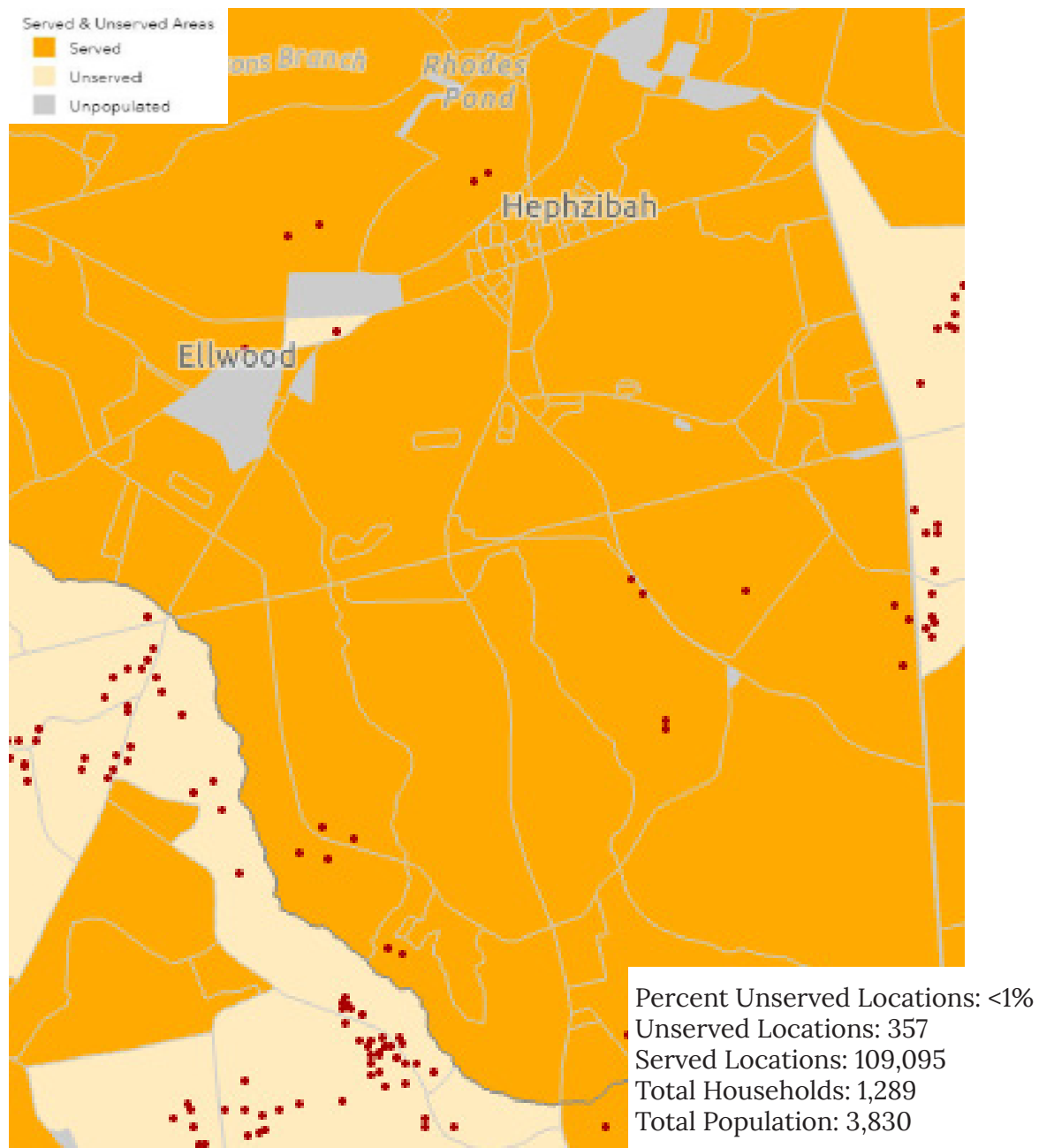
The role of state agencies:

- The OneGeorgia Authority - the OneGeorgia Authority Act will be amended to include broadband services.
- The Georgia Technology Authority - developing a state-wide broadband services deployment plan, they will work with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the OneGeorgia Authority to establish grant programs, designation programs, and other programs to promote the deployment of broadband services.
- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs - determine and publish which areas in the state are served and unserved; development and deployment of the Broadband Ready certification program. A served area means a census block that is not designated by DCA as an unserved area. An unserved area means a census block in which broadband services are not available to 20 percent or more of the locations as determined by DCA. The RC staff have assisted the local governments in by transferring locally-provided addresses and locations to DCA. A map will be provided by DCA to determine served and unserved areas of broadband service, based on service information collected for the locally-provided addresses. Current Phase mapping for Hephzibah is on the following page.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The map below displays the current phase of DCA broadband mapping and is based on the 2023 Georgia Broadband Availability Map. The City of Hephzibah statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, and where the broadband service is available to at least ONE consumer (residential and business) in a census block. Populated census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as 'Unserved'. Population and location data are from the US Census Bureau (2020 Decennial Census and 2022 ACS 5-year estimates). The only area on the map listed as unserved contains a water tower and associated utility building, which does not need broadband access.

Unserved and Served Areas by Block, City of Hephzibah



Source: 2023 Georgia Broadband Program

Explosive growth in wireless and fiber-optic communication has provided many urban areas in Georgia with excellent broadband infrastructure. In many larger cities of the state, there are multiple providers who compete by offering lower prices and faster broadband speeds. However, not all the regions of the state have benefited from fiber-optic growth. Most areas of the CSRA outside of the urbanized parts of Columbia and Augusta-Richmond counties lag in both choice and quality of service. The disparity increases as you move west across the region toward Hancock County. Most of these areas are not served by any land broadband service provider, making slower satellite Internet service the only option. One major challenge facing the rural areas in particular is download speeds (actual versus maximum advertised). Modern business and home-use needs require ever-growing download speeds, and it is not uncommon in many major urban areas for the vast majority of speeds to be between 100 mbps and 1 gigabit. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a minimum download speed for a household using 2 devices at once for functions like email, browsing, and Internet radio is 3-8 Mbps (Megabits per second). The figures below are FCC listed general guidelines for minimum download speeds.

FCC Published Minimum Download Speeds Overall

Activity	Minimum Download Speed (Mbps)
GENERAL USAGE	
General Browsing and Email	1
Streaming Online Radio	Less than 0.5
VoIP Calls	Less than 0.5
Student	5 - 25
Telecommuting	5 - 25
File Downloading	10
Social Media	1
WATCHING VIDEO	
Streaming Standard Definition Video	3 - 4
Streaming High Definition (HD) Video	5 - 8
Streaming Ultra HD 4K Video	25
VIDEO CONFERENCING	
Standard Personal Video Call (e.g., Skype)	1
HD Personal Video Call (e.g., Skype)	1.5
HD Video Teleconferencing	6
GAMING	
Game Console Connecting to the Internet	3

Source: <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/guides/broadband-speed-guide>

FCC Published Minimum Download Speeds for Households

	Light Use (Basic functions: email, browsing, basic video, VoIP, Internet radio)	Moderate Use (Basic functions plus one high-demand application: streaming HD video, multiparty video conferencing, online gaming, telecommuting)	High Use (Basic functions plus more than one high-demand application running at the same time)
1 user on 1 device	Basic	Basic	Medium
2 users or devices at a time	Basic	Medium	Medium/Advanced
3 users or devices at a time	Medium	Medium	Advanced

Source: <https://www.fcc.gov/research-reports/guides/household-broadband-guide>



Community Facilities

Facilities and services form part of the backbone of a community, providing support for improved resident quality of life. Facilities range from physical infrastructure such as roads and water, to structures and systems such as the schools and senior centers. This section provides a brief overview of facilities and services offered by the City of Hephzibah.

Community Facilities

Creating and maintaining sufficient community facilities is an important component to any Community Plan. The City of Hephzibah has put particular importance on community facilities in the past, and an assessment of the success and adequacy of Community Facilities has been made by the Steering Committee in the course of the planning process. This section covers public safety, fire, and emergency services; educational facilities; water supply and sewerage system; and recreation.

Parks and Recreation

The City of Hephzibah has developed expanded recreation facilities that attract older children and adults. A particular success is the upgrading of the Hephzibah-Carroll Recreation Center (demolished in 2023 with replacement structure under construction) and Park, which is centrally located and contains a nearly complete outdoor pavilion. This park has the potential to be an additional revenue producer for events like family reunions and offers the opportunity for adding playground equipment for younger children.

Public Safety, Fire, and Emergency Services

Public safety and emergency services are critical components to the infrastructure of the City. By keeping these systems working smoothly and prepared for a city's growth, the police, fire, and other services can better provide for the residents. The City of Hephzibah provides fire



Hephzibah Fire Department equipment at the ready

officer, led by a Police Chief. Emergency medical services are provided by Central EMS.



Hephzibah Agricultural Center

Educational Facilities

As previously noted, there is one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school with traditional structure and curricula. There is also a charter school that follows the Socratic method of classroom experience - The Georgia School for Innovation and the Classics. The public school system is recognized as family-friendly and having an encouraging and zealous attitude towards educational achievement. The high school boasts a Foreign Language Club and an award-winning Junior R.O.T.C. program, among many other academic and extracurricular opportunities for students. The Georgia School for Innovation and the Classics (GSIC) is a state charter school that offers school choice to families in Hephzibah and the surrounding areas. GSIC is currently a K-12 school with roughly 1050 students, 120 employees, and added a preschool in 2023 that has 70 students. GSIC is nestled in a rural setting and is surrounded by pine groves and pasture land. In addition to its scenic and tranquil location, GSIC offers students a superlative educational experience by implementing project based learning and Socratic methods of teaching. Through strong discipline and high expectations, GSIC offers a school culture of excellence and civility. The demographics of students in the city fall into several pieces, most of which are close to equal. Per the 2022 ACS 5-year estimates, there were 6.7% of students in education facilities or programs for those in Kindergarten or below. Elementary aged students made up 49.2% of the whole, Middle School and High Schoolers made up 30.3%, and Higher Education came in at 13.8%. Many residents will pursue college degrees, and there is the choice of Augusta Technical College and Augusta University as local state schools. They are approximately a 30-minute drive north of the Hephzibah area, taking into consideration the flow of weekday traffic and highway usage. College or graduate-level program enrollment, while lower in Hephzibah than the County, is in alignment with the State of Georgia's goals. As expected from a smaller suburban-esque area, Hephzibah has the amount of students typically found in such a small community. Both the charter school and the public school system strive on a continuing basis to serve the area well.



Hephzibah Comprehensive High School

Water Supply and Sewerage



Accessibility to a potable water supply and sewerage service is a fundamental need for communities to exist. Providing a surplus of such water allows for favorable factors toward city growth and sustainability. It can also attract new businesses and industries who will rely on these systems. The Hephzibah water system currently serves approximately 1,500 customers who utilize water from its deep well supplies and elevated storage. The city center of Hephzibah is served by a sewer system of modest capacity and geographic extent. See the maps on the next two pages for the Hephzibah sewer system with accompanying inset for a detail view and a map for the Hephzibah water system.



24



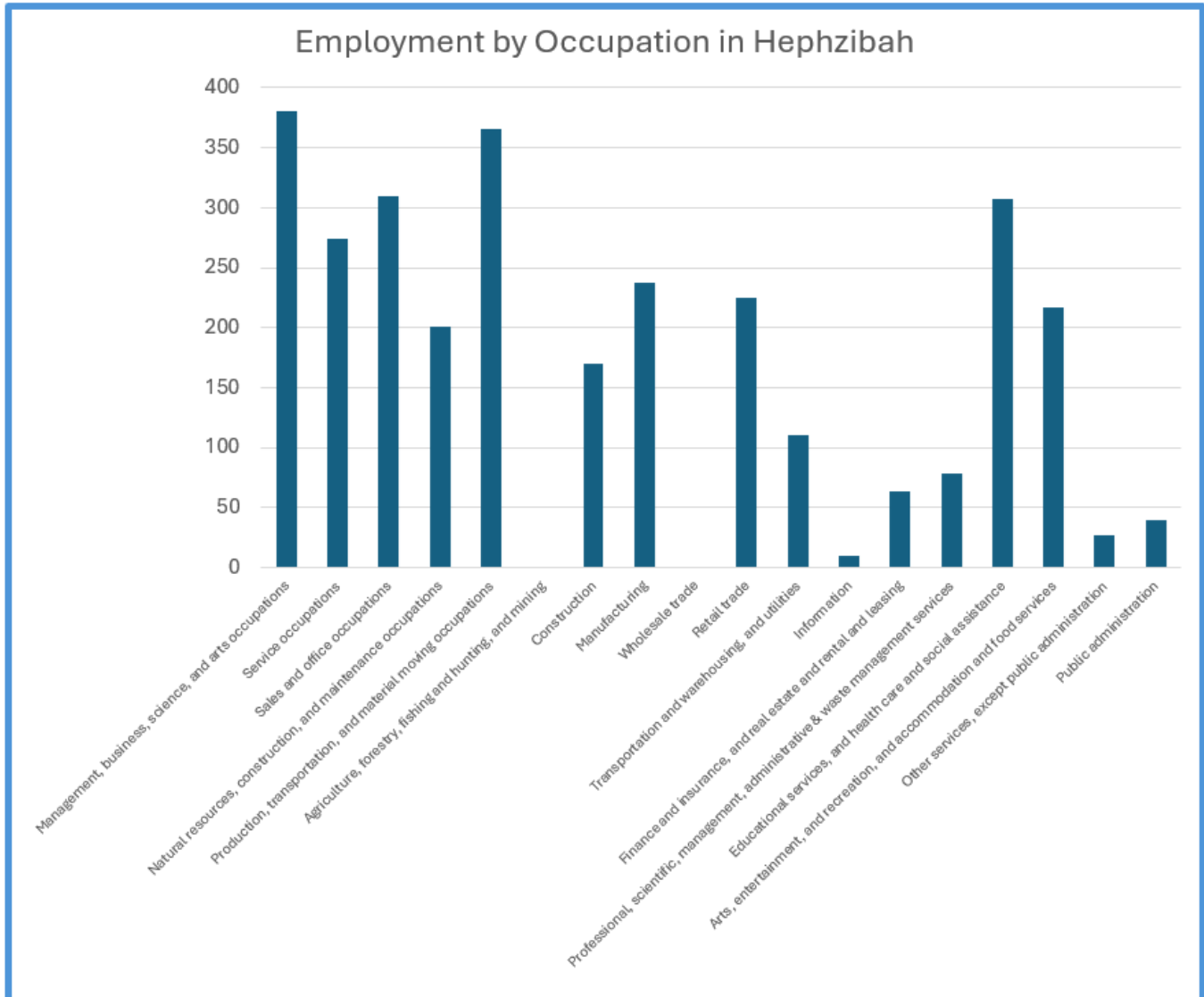


Economic Development

Hephzibah's economy is steady and is mostly agricultural and suburban in nature, with three industries and several commercial establishments that provide daily needs. Many residents work outside the City. There are several businesses within Hephzibah concentrated in the central area of the City and at the perimeters of the City, mostly along U.S. Highway 25 frontage and at the extremities of Georgia State Route 88. Local businesses like KJ's market and the Hephzibah Pharmacy carry many local needs for residents. Stores in the city limits also provide services to persons passing by and through the City for gas and other necessities. There is also a post office, police station, bank, and other businesses. In addition, some citizens have their own homebased business, such as family farms and home crafts. The basic business diversity in the City makes it necessary to consider Augusta-Richmond County's commercial establishments and resources in order to develop a true understanding on the region's economy.

Employment Status

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the ACS 5-year estimate, the percentages of employees per business type in Hephzibah are shown in the figure below:

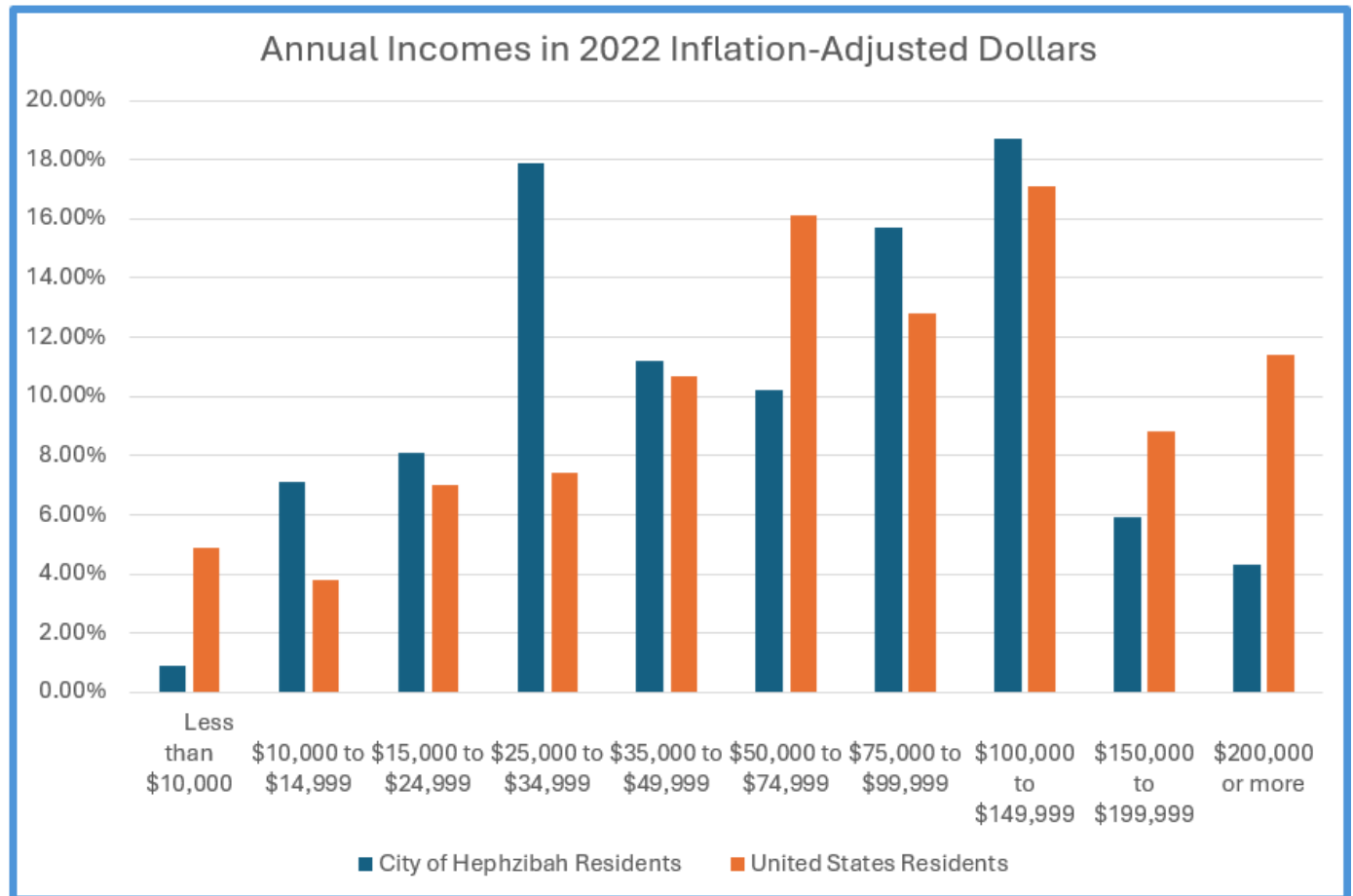


Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Annual Income

With data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the ACS 5-year estimate on the site DATAUSA, below is shown on Figure 2.2 the annual household income for Hephzibah residents in 2022 as compared to the United States as a whole.

The site noted that the median household income was \$63,836 and the data was from 1,289 households. The largest range of annual income is between \$100,000-\$149,000 per year.



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates





Character Areas

The Comprehensive Plan has developed character areas for the City of Hephzibah to serve as the general foundation for future land use decisions and to be a visual representation of community goals, as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Character Areas

These character areas have been described to account for potential changes in land use and to highlight those areas that are preferred locations for future growth. The Character Area Map is shown on the next page. Each of the character areas shown on the map is described in further detail in the following pages. In interpreting how best to use the Character Area Map and the supporting narratives, the reader should be cognizant of the following principles:

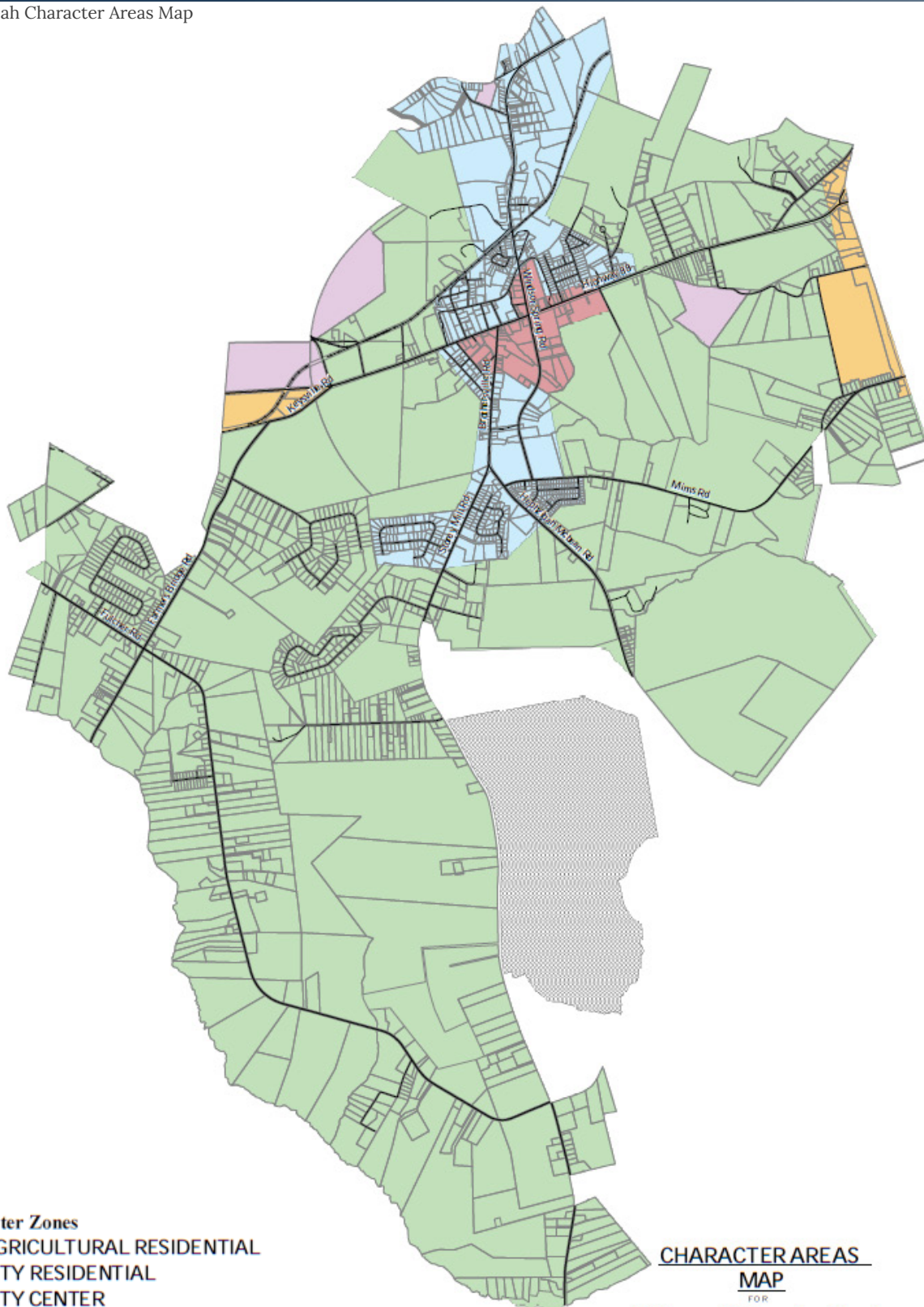
Character Area Boundaries Unlike a parcel-specific future land use map, character area boundaries are conceptual and may cross parcel lines. The character area boundaries in this document represent “approximate” character area locations. This flexibility allows the governing body charged with implementing the plan to make decisions based on changing conditions, while reducing the need to continually amend the comprehensive plan. As a result, it is possible to assume that small parcels located directly adjacent to one or more character areas may be permitted by the local government to develop according to the parameters of the adjacent area rather than the area in which it is located. Such an action should be taken sparingly and the decision should only be made if the local government decides that it is consistent with the recommendations provided in other sections of the Comprehensive Plan or other local policy document. For the most part, however, tracts should develop according to the parameters established in the specific character area in which it is located. The Character Area Map may be amended in the future, if the City intends to promote a development pattern in an area that is contrary to the adopted map.

Character Area Narratives The narratives which correspond to the Character Area maps should be viewed as general policy statements – as statements of intent. They should inform future development decisions and perhaps form the basis for more detailed topic-specific studies in the future.

The City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan incorporates a Character Area Map as a principal means to guide the long-term land use goals and policies of the City. The six character areas that have been developed by the City are as follows:

- Agricultural Residential
- City Residential
- City Center
- Peripheral Corridor Development
- Industrial
- Extraterritorial Land





- Character Zones**
- AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL
 - CITY RESIDENTIAL
 - CITY CENTER
 - PERIPHERAL CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT
 - INDUSTRIAL
 - EXTRATERRITORIAL LAND

**CHARACTER AREAS
MAP
FOR
City of Hephzibah**

1" = 1000'
SCALE IN FEET

The City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan incorporates a Character Area Map as a principal means to guide the long-term land use goals and policies of the City. The six character areas that have been developed by the City are as follows:

Agricultural Residential

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

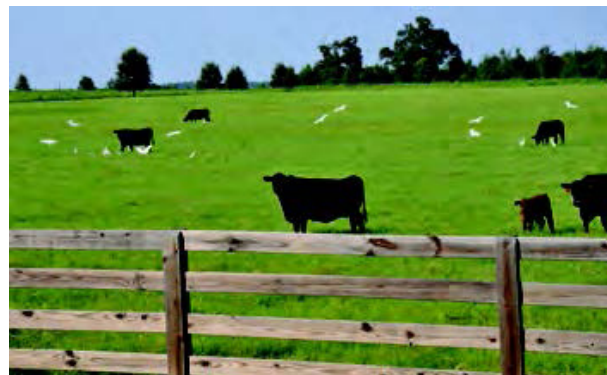
The Agricultural Residential Character Area comprises the majority of incorporated Hephzibah. It is largely defined by agricultural and forestry uses with low density residential uses scattered throughout. The emphasis of this character area will be to preserve the pastoral nature of existing open space and encourage the productive use of natural regenerative resources (e.g., crops, pasture, silver culture). Residential development should occur at low densities – either on existing parcels or on large lots that preserve open space. Commercial enterprises should be largely limited to agrarian and recreational enterprises in order to leverage the economic value of open space retention.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Agricultural Reserve (AR), Estate Residential (ER), Residential (R-43 and R-37)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Policy adoption limiting major development for the protection of rural contexts. Enforcement of limited Residential Development.



Pastures for Livestock

City Residential

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The City Residential Character Area is the region of Hephzibah with the potential for the medium-density residential development to occur. This area is located primarily toward the center of the City and has the added possibility for recreational amenities and minor service establishments within it.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Residential (R-43, R-37, R-30 and GR)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Limit location of new residential development to areas where appropriate.



City Neighborhood

City Center

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The City Center Character Area is the traditional heart of the center of the City of Hephzibah. It contains several historic buildings that front the streets, including storefront, commercial and institutional buildings, and nearby historic homes, all within a walkable setting. This area has the capability to become a more attractive downtown venue of complementary commercial establishments that can give a renewed vitality and historic feeling to this part of the City of Hephzibah. The City Center includes some small lots and storefronts that predate the zoning ordinances and whose character can be maintained by “grandfathering,” special exceptions, and conditional uses.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Residential (R-43, R-37, R-30, GR) and Commercial (OI, LC, LUC)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Create incentives for businesses to locate to this area. Construct infrastructure improvements to enhance the attractiveness of the area. Consider developing a town square. Encouraging the protection of historic properties.



Peripheral Corridor Development

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Peripheral Corridor Development Character Area may contain a mix of commercial developments at the outskirts of the city, primarily along and near the intersection of U.S. Highway 25 and Georgia State Route 88. This area is ripe for further commercial development that would provide services both aiming at the traveling public market and supporting the daily needs of local citizens. Additionally, the private development may provide support services for the special event venues planned by the City on its owned property along Highway 25.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Limited and General Commercial (LC, LI, GC, LUC)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Policy adoption limiting major commercial development to these areas.

Provide additional infrastructure as needed to facilitate increased development.



Business with Room for Development

Industrial

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Industrial Character Area covers the regions of the city where industrial activities exist and those places where there is potential for new industrial development to occur. The areas are located primarily on lands that have direct access to major arterial roadways or where properties are potentially served by railroad transportation via the existing Norfolk Southern tracks.



Industry in the City

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Light and General Industrial (LI, GI)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Encourage industry to locate within appropriate areas. Limit industry to those appropriate areas. Construct infrastructure improvements, as needed. Require buffering of the perimeter of industrial areas adjoining residential land uses.

Extraterritorial Land

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The City of Hephzibah owns a tract of open land on the south-east side of Storey Mill Road, which it purchased mainly for the purpose of providing an area for land application of treated wastewater. The property is approximately 1,000 acres and lies outside of the city limits of Hephzibah and within the jurisdiction of Augusta-Richmond County under whose zoning ordinance the property is zoned for Agriculture (A). While this property is not within the corporate limits, the Hephzibah City Commission has designated the possible uses of the property as land application area, open space, passive recreation, and other similar pastoral uses.



Storey Mill Tract Aerial map showing Extraterritorial Land. Courtesy of Georgia Forestry Commission.



Natural and Cultural Resources

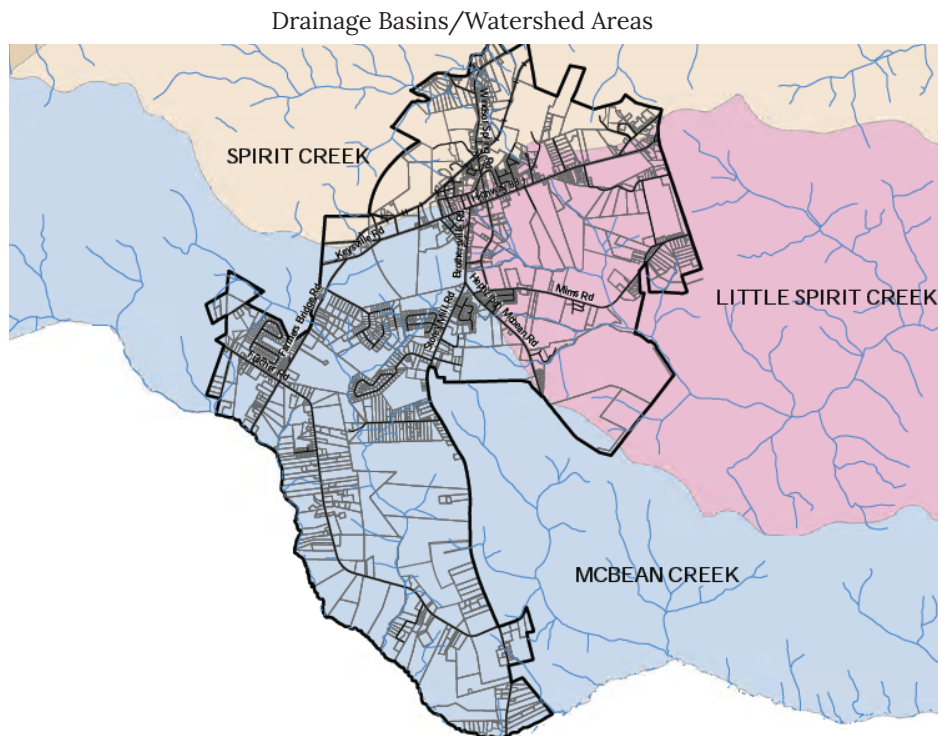
The natural and cultural resources provide the city with a wealth of potential attractions and economic opportunities based on innovation, historic relevance, and regional beauty. The importance of these areas to the citizens of the city should not be understated as they contribute to the vitality and sustainability of the community. A deep-running foundation of historic presence and conservation are a source of pride for the inhabitants in the area. Hephzibah can move forward to be a retreat from the larger, more cramped city happenings that take place throughout larger areas of Richmond County. Agricultural land, open land for future use, scenic roadways, historic buildings, and potentially a charming, renewed city center provide many resources for the city to build upon.

Water Resources

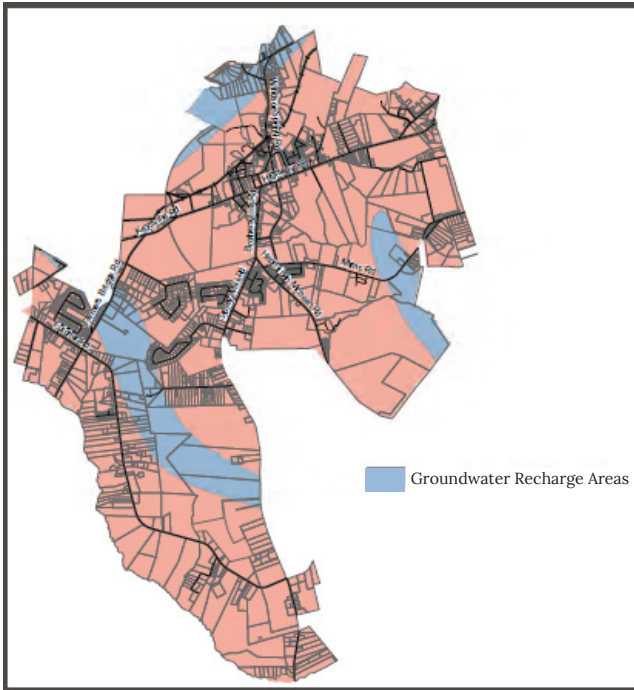
The City of Hephzibah is located at the geophysical Fall Line of Georgia. It possesses a variety of natural and cultural resources, from the farms and large green areas to the historic village center that are vital to the community and serve a variety of purposes. These accents contribute to the attractiveness and suitability of the city and have the potential to attract newcomers interested in the pastoral natural beauty of the area. Watersheds (shown in the map below) and groundwater recharge areas (shown on the next page) are important components for public water supply and groundwater replenishment. Because of its gently rolling topography, there are several flowing streams within the City of Hephzibah that flow in different directions. Parts of the city are designated as groundwater recharge areas where water passes through the ground to replenish underground water sources. These areas are continually protected so that the contamination of this water supply is avoided. These geologic circumstances combine to provide the City of Hephzibah an abundant supply of groundwater to supply its potable water system through deep wells.

Wetlands: Wetlands are defined as lands that are saturated, either seasonally or permanently, creating an ecosystem that contains characteristic vegetation adapted to growing in the unique hydric soil conditions. Wetlands serve as a particular habitat for fish and wildlife and homes for unique plant and animal species that have become adapted to these special conditions. Land uses in wetland areas should be limited to low or no impact usages which includes harvesting lumber and timber, and wildlife and fishery management. Wetland areas are under the jurisdiction of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and alteration of them is allowed only upon the obtaining a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District. There are several isolated wetland areas and corridors of wetlands along streams within the City of Hephzibah as depicted on the next page.

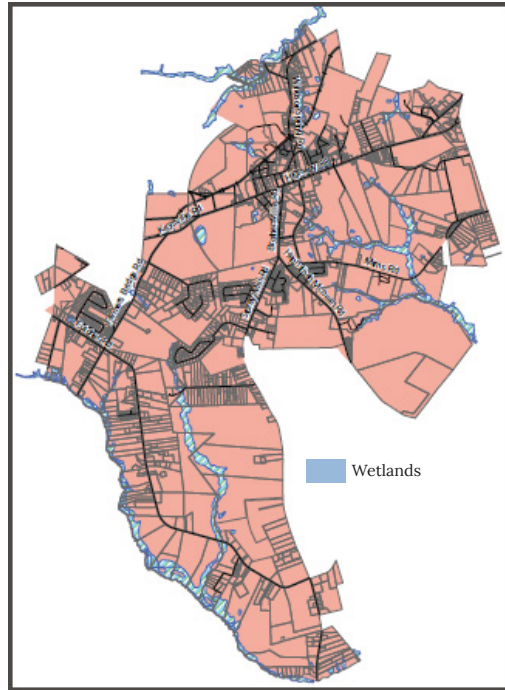
Flood Plains: There are three designated 100 year flood plans within the city limits of Hephzibah in relation to the streams and drainage basins previously noted. The bottom map on the next page shows the Flood Zones.



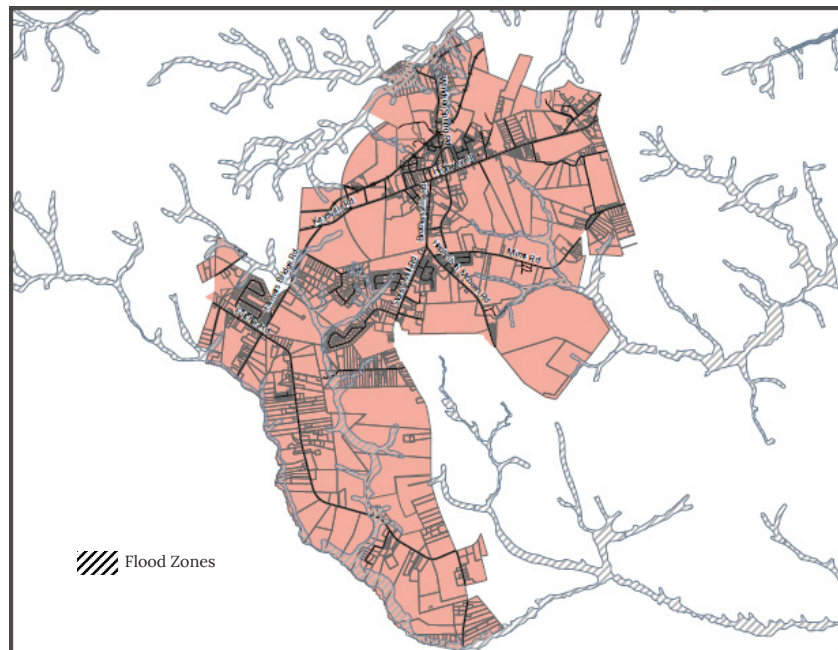
Groundwater Recharge Areas



Wetlands



Flood Zones



Historic Resources

The City of Hephzibah is home to a number of historic buildings and sites, although none of them is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of these buildings form a group of commercial buildings in the city center which have the potential for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. This area could potentially become a historic city center.

National Register of Historic Properties



Hephzibah Methodist Church

Hephzibah Methodist Church was erected in 1856. The Brothersville Methodist Church was organized in March 1852 in the community of Brothersville to serve the fifteen families living there. The building completed in 1853 and dedicated in 1854 by Bishop George Pierce. In 1890 the church was moved a short distance to the village of Hephzibah. Later the name was changed to the Hephzibah Methodist Church. Many outstanding citizens have gone on from its ranks to other communities. Among them are Rev. Milton Anthony Clark, who was a missionary for thirty years to the Indians in Oklahoma, and Rev. W.H. Clark. Another property of historic significance in the City of Hephzibah is the Historic First Ebenezer Baptist Church. Noted as being built in 1812, this church reached historical status in 2002 and placed a

historical marker in 2003. Its roots run deep into Georgian history, and the congregation promotes a mission which supports families, collaboration, positive relationships, and hands-on involvement. In fact, its leadership in the Ebenezer Association (formed in 1847) was integral in forming the Ministry Baptist Convention of Georgia which was the first African-American convention.



First Ebenezer Baptist Church

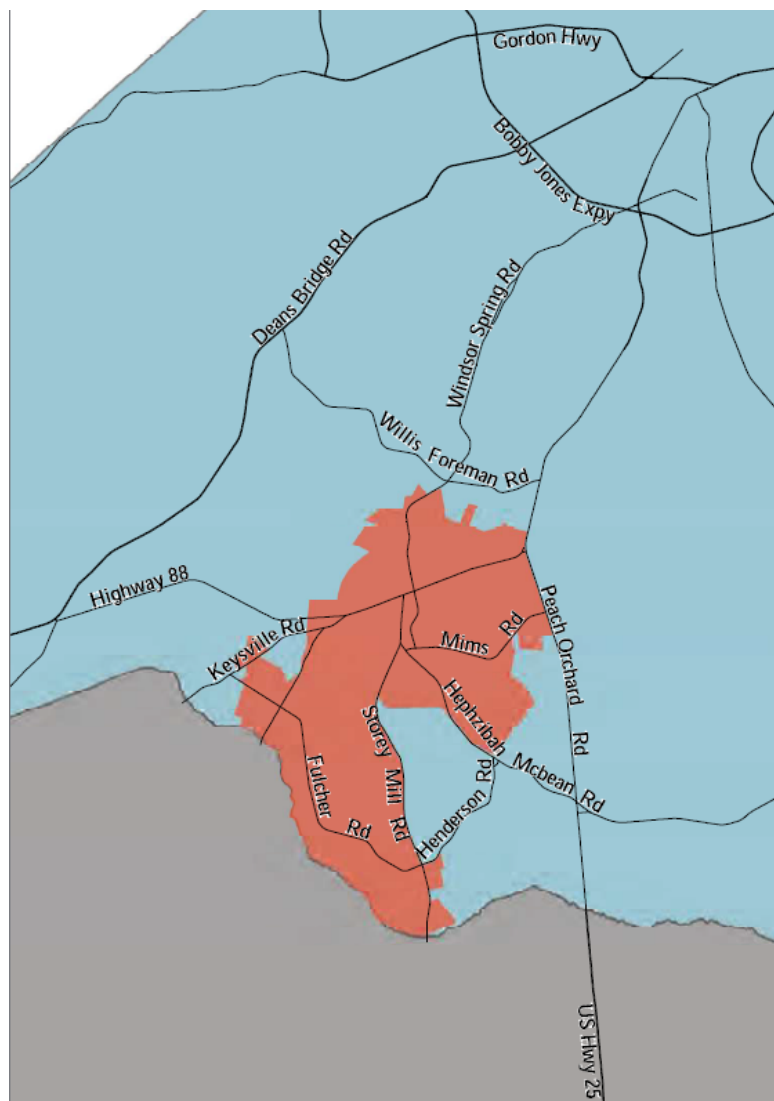


Transportation

Transportation is considered by the Steering Committee of the Hephzibah comprehensive plan as a major focus for the future. While the city contains a good road network, citizens experience delays and congestion at intersections and at particular times of day, especially near the city center and the four secondary schools. Transportation options are currently limited to personal vehicles for the majority of the City's residents, as there is no public bus service, no bicycle routes nor designated bicycle lanes, and very few sidewalks located within the city limits. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, households in Hephzibah averaged approximately two cars each and as much as 90% of the population drove alone in single cars for their primary mode of travel as opposed to carpooling. The opportunity exists to complete and improve roadway connections, especially to employment areas to the north, and to continue to implement enhancement projects at intersections to provide a safe and convenient flow of traffic.

Road Networks

Hephzibah contains several significant arterial roadways such as U.S. Highway 1 and Georgia State Route 88, which are north-south and east-west arteries respectively (see Map below). Another north-south route, Windsor Spring Road, has recently been widened by Richmond County and the State of Georgia and will provide a second major route for those traveling north into the center of Augusta-Richmond County. South of the intersection of Windsor Spring Road and Georgia State Route 88 in the center of Hephzibah, the road extends south to an intersection with Mims Road between the campuses of Hephzibah High School and Hephzibah Middle School. This is the site of major congestion at times of day when the schools are taking in and letting out students. Most of the other roads in the City may be considered as local or residential streets and serve mostly residential or rural traffic. Major routes include Storey Mill Road, Hephzibah-McBean Road, Brothersville Road, Mims Road, Farmers Bridge Road, and Keysville Road. These roads are mostly two lanes in width with ditch sections on each side. They connect the city of Hephzibah to major roadways that transport residents to all parts of Richmond County and Burke County beyond the city limits.



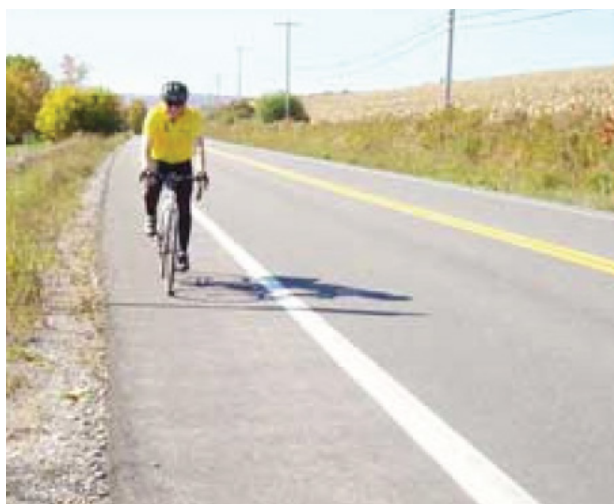
Future Connections and Traffic Improvements

While Hephzibah's suburban nature is exemplified in large measure by the farm-to-market type roads described earlier, there are several areas where improvements might be effective. With respect to traffic improvements at interceptions and through routes, the Steering Committee has recommended that the Community Work Plan include studies of means of lessening the effects of congestions in key intersections within the city. In particular, the Steering Committee recommends that Windsor Spring Road be extended south from the high school and middle school campuses to connect to Hephzibah-McBean Road and ultimately to U.S. Highway 25 (Peach Orchard Road) southeast of the city limits. This roadway project would entail either construction through an existing residential neighborhood or construction on a new route altogether. In either event, Windsor Spring Road would become a true through route that would roughly parallel Peach Orchard Road and provide an alternate northsouth arterial route into and out of Augusta-Richmond County. It would extend from Interstate Highway 520 at State Route 25 on the north through Hephzibah to join U.S. Highway 25 again to the south, for a total of approximately 13.5 miles altogether.

The Steering Committee also advised that the Transportation Element Work Program include studies of potential improvements to alleviate congestion at key intersections to be identified later.

Alternative Modes

Most individuals own personal vehicles for daily transportation for several reasons, including the rural nature of the city, the lack of fixed-route transit, and the lack of bicycle and pedestrian sidewalk routes. Beyond automobile trips, some individuals walk, use a bicycle in vehicular areas, take taxi or Uber trips, or simply revert to being single occupancy drivers. Future roadway improvements should be multi-modal and include paved sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, and be more connected to parks and walking trails. In time, it may be possible that, as the Augusta Transit service area grows, paratransit may be more readily available to residents without automobiles as well.





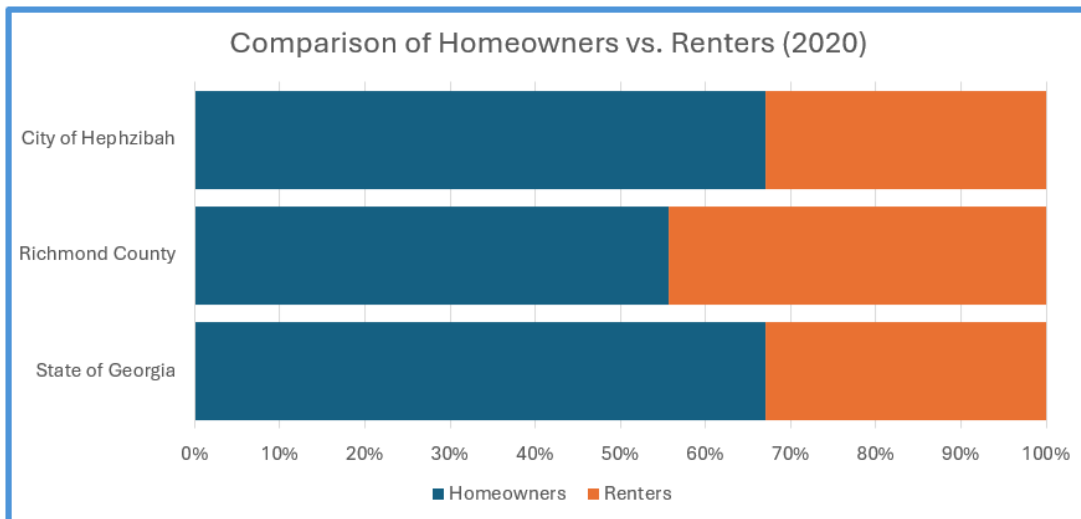


Housing

Residential properties are the second major land use in Hephzibah. The ability for a community to ensure existing and potential residents have adequate housing is a general goal. However, beyond this goal is the desire to provide a variety of housing choices which enhances the lives of residents. Housing affordability is based on income, the existing real estate market, housing trends (as to vacancies and housing types available), the general economy, and low income subsidies. Nevertheless, the housing within the City is mostly single family.

Housing Mix

Home ownership may be affected by rent-to-own options, but primarily there is a specific divide between home owners and renters. Shown in the figure below, the City of Hephzibah has 65.9% of homeowners and 34.1% of renters as of 2022 data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the ACS 5-year plan data. In comparison to Richmond County, which has a homeowners to renters split of 55.7% to 44.3%, and the State of Georgia (which has a homeowners to renters split of 69.5% to 34.1%), it can be seen that homeownership in Hephzibah is above average .

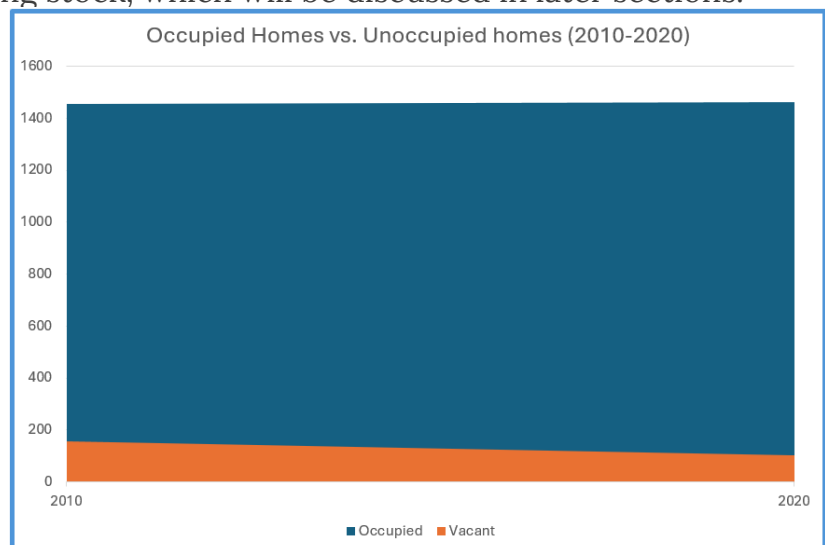


Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Occupancy

Housing occupancy in juxtaposition to vacant homes is a prime element to review and focus attention for future improvements. Diversity in housing types may play a role in vacancies as could the age of housing stock, which will be discussed in later sections.

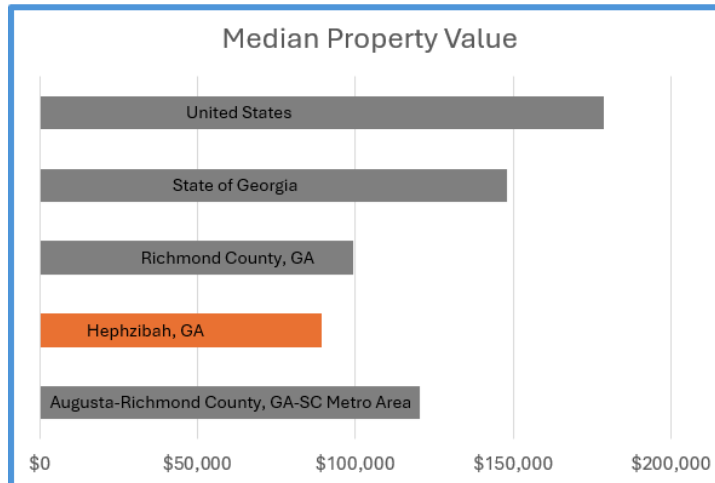
The figure to the right shows that in 2020 out of the total 1,564 homes in Hephzibah, 1,461 are occupied while only 103 remain vacant. There is also a decreasing trend on the number of residences available for either rent or ownership.



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Value

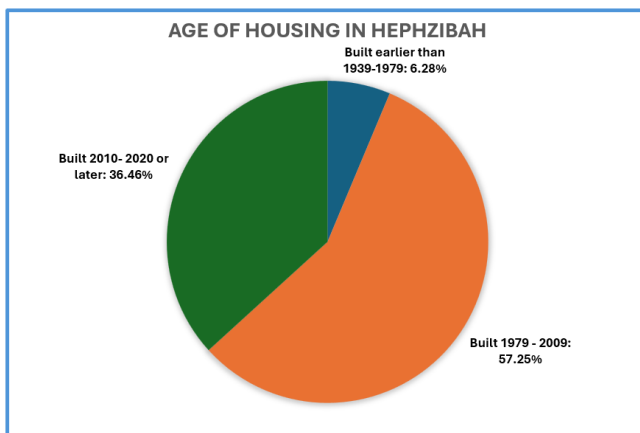
The value of housing and cost of rent provides an indicator regarding the potential cost of housing for residents and future citizens. According to U.S. Census data, (shown in Figure 2.5) property value in Hephzibah (\$89,300) is slightly lower than Richmond County's (\$99,300) which is in turn slightly lower than the median value of the Augusta-Richmond County metro area (\$120,200).



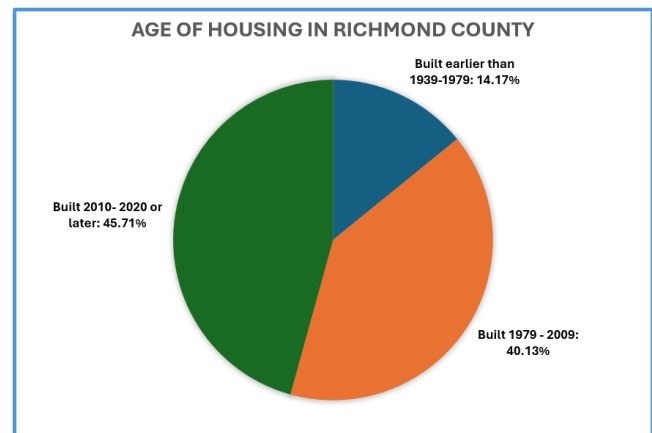
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Age of Housing Stock

Housing constructed in specific time periods are shown on the figures below. The percentage of homes built after the year 2010 is a good bit higher in the county versus the city, and the number of homes built prior to 1969 is far less in the city versus the county.



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates





Report of Accomplishments



Community Work Program

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Activities from the 2018 City of hephzibah Community Work Program (CWP) are assigned the following identifiers to acknowledge the status of each activity as:

- Completed: the listed activity has been concluded
- Ongoing: the listed activity has started and is continuing
- Postponed: the listed activity has not been started or halted for some reason
- Not Accomplished: the listed activity has not moved forward and will not be a part of the 2023 Community Work Program.

The Report of Accomplishments is structured to adhere to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' minimum standards for local comprehensive planning. Items regarded as policies are not included in the 2023 community work program and have been incorporated into the "Community Goals" section of the plan, reworded, or included in another policy.

2023 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

The Community Work Program is the key implementation tool for addressing the needs and opportunities identified during this planning process. The Community Work Program is also structured to adhere to the DCA minimum standards. Consistent with state rules, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan's Community Work Program includes the following information:

- Description of each activity
- Timeframe for initiating and completing the activity
- Responsible party for implementing the activity (includes the RC for technical assistance or grant writing portion of an activity)
- Estimated Cost (if any) of implementing the activity
- Funding Source(s), if applicable

The following pages are organized by community, where each jurisdiction's report of accomplishments is followed by the community work program. Within the CWP, the acronym TBD stands for to be determined.

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS: CITY OF HEPHZIBAH

Economic Development

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Complete the Hephzibah Innovation Center building for growth of the Georgia School for Innovation and the Classics (GSIC), which leases this building.	X				Building is completed and is the current home of GISIC.
Strive to attract new businesses to the City.		X			Dilapidated buildings have been updated, new businesses have been established and remain in operation, storefronts have become available for new businesses.
Create a Town Center or Town Square.		X			Currently in planning stages with architects.
Offer 5G wireless service at no cost to the community.	X				Service available throughout the city, installed by wireless service providers.
Offer free wi-fi in key locations.				X	No longer needed, priorities changed based on technology advancements (cell phone and coverage areas).
Promote the City to surrounding citizens as a destination with amenities and cultural events.		X			Promotion of events at the Hephzibah Agricultural Center through Facebook, website, and mailers.
Create a plan for the use of the Storey Mill property.		X			Exploring option for RV Park on the Storey Mill property.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Replace or rebuild the Windsor Spring Road wellhouse.	X				
Continue community outreach related to water quality and quantity.		X			Consumer report collected yearly with follow up actions conducted as necessary.
Loop the southern end of the water system along Corley Road from Storey Mill Road to Farmers Bridge Road.			X		Priority for this activity has lowered, will be pursued in the future.
Continue to enforce existing ordinances related to stormwater, wetlands, and flood plains.		X			Ongoing maintenance.

Community Facilities

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Improve or increase the size of City Hall.				X	New City Hall will be part of Town Square/Center
Develop a website for the City, social media presence, and create other effective communication means with the citizens.	X				
Dispose of solid waste adequately while maximizing the county landfills.	X				
Construct and activate a second fire station on Fulcher Road to serve the south end of the City.	X				
Construct a new pavilion on Windsor Spring Road - Hephzibah-Carroll Community Center.	X				

Community Facilities

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Replace the Murphy Street water treatment building.	X				
Relocate playground equipment to the Hephzibah-Carroll Community Center pavilion area.	X				
Add and upgrade street lights, as needed, to serve new areas.		X			Ongoing, regular maintenance.
Upgrade the storage and holding area for City maintenance equipment.	X				
Add quality-of-life activities and activity spaces, such as pedestrian trails, disc golf, biking areas, etc.		X			Acquired land for dog park, currently in planning phase.

Transportation

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Complete the extension of Windsor Spring Road (Phase V).	X				
Complete the Henderson and Fulcher intersection roundabout.	X				
Repave the entryway road and loop area of the Oakridge Subdivision.	X				
Continue to implement enhancement projects to provide for the safe and convenient flow of traffic.		X			Ongoing maintenance.
Investigate feasibility of roadway improvements to alleviate congestion.	X				Plan developed to extend key road to alleviate congestion as needed.

Transportation

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Extend Windsor Spring Road to Hephzibah McBean Road.				X	Priorities changed, no longer needed.
Repave various roads, as needed.		X			Maintenance repaving as needed.
Add alternative mobility opportunities (multi-use paths).		X			

Housing

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Ensure proper and safe house building techniques through building code enforcement.		X			Ongoing through building code enforcement.
Create a plan for requiring renovation of abandoned buildings or their removal.		X			Ongoing effort.
Encourage development of new housing that conforms to the City's zoning districts.		X			Enforcing zoning standards for new builds and developer inquiries.

Land Use

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Encourage new development that conforms to desired Character Areas.		X			
Continue to enforce current zoning ordinances.		X			
Continue to promote greenspace and the protection of environmentally-sensitive lands as open space.		X			In planning phase.
Continue the permitting and enforcement provisions of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance.		X			
Consider information in Land Use Studies of the area.	X				
Continue the permitting and enforcement provisions of the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.		X			Achieved through regular maintenance and enforcement of this ordinance.

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM: CITY OF HEPHZIBAH

Economic Development

Activity	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			
Strive to attract new businesses to the City	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission, Citizens	N/A	City funds
Create a Town Center or Town Square			X	X	X	City Commission	\$300,000	City funds, SPLOST
Promote the City to area citizens as a destination with amenities and cultural events.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds
Exploring option for RV Park on the Storey Mill property.			X			City Commission	\$25,000	SPLOST

Natural and Cultural Resources

Activity	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			
Continue community outreach related to water quality and quantity.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds
Loop the southern end of the water system along Corley Road from Storey Mill Road to Farmers Bridge Road.					X	City Commission	\$1,000,000	SPLOST
Continue to enforce existing ordinances related to stormwater, wetlands, and flood plains.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds

Community Facilities

Activity	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			
Add and upgrade street lights, as needed, to serve new areas.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	\$100,000	City funds, SPLOST
Add quality-of-life activities and activity spaces, such as pedestrian trails, disc golf, biking areas, etc.			X			City Commission	\$150,000	SPLOST
Improve or increase the size of City Hall.			X	X		City Commission	\$250,000	City funds, SPLOST
Plan and construct medical facility for the community.		X	X			City Commission	\$1,500,000	City funds
Update original fire station.			X	X		City Commission	\$2,500,000	City funds, SPLOST

Transportation

Activity	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			
Continue to implement enhancement projects to provide for the safe and convenient flow of traffic.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	N/A	City funds
Repave various roads, as needed.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	\$400,000	City funds, LMIG,
Add alternative mobility opportunities (multi-use paths).				X		City Commission	\$200,000	City funds, SPLOST

Housing

Activity	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			
Ensure proper and safe house building techniques through building code	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	\$25,000	City funds
Create a plan for requiring renovation of abandoned buildings or their removal.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	\$5,000	City funds
Encourage development of new housing that conforms to the City's zoning districts.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	N/A	City funds

Land Use

Activity	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			
Encourage new development that conforms to desired Character Areas.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds
Continue enforcing current zoning ordinances.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds
Continue to promote greenspace and the protection of environmentally-sensitive lands as open space.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds
Continue the permitting and enforcement provisions of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds
Continue the permitting and enforcement provisions of the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.	X	X	X	X	X	City Commission	Staff time	City funds

Appendix



The stakeholder committee met several times over the course of the plan creation process and actively participated in facilitated discussions and group exercises to define community needs, review plan components and create community work program activities.

CSRA RC staff assisted the City of Hephzibah with making plan information more accessible online. This included important plan links on the RC website, posts on the RC Facebook page, and a QR code for a Survey Monkey survey.

This section includes public notices, sign in sheets, and survey input.

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting #1
February 1st, 2024, 2:00 pm | Hephzibah City Hall, 2530 Georgia 88



NAME	EMAIL	Affiliation (Title, City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Charles Dixon	cdixon@CSRARC.GA.GOV	CSRA Regional Commission
Jordan Rhoades	jordanrhoades@gmail.com	City Comm
Matthew C. Mercer	hephfireF1@gmail.com	Hephzibah F&D PD
Amanda Brookins	cityofhephzibah@bellsouth.net	City Clerk
Robert Buckwitz	RBuckwitz@icloud.com	Chairman City Comm
John Buckwitz	jbuckwitz92@gmail.com	Hephzibah PWD

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting #2
March 5th, 2024, 2:00 pm | Hephzibah City Hall, 2530 Georgia 88



NAME	EMAIL	Affiliation (Title, City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Amanda Brookins	cityofhephzibah@bellsouth.net	City Clerk
Matthew C. Mercer	hephfireF1@gmail.com	Dir of Public Safety
Charles Dixon	cdixon@CSRARC.GA.GOV	CSRA RC

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting #3
March 28th, 2024, 2:00 pm | Hephzibah City Hall, 2530 Georgia 88



NAME	EMAIL	Affiliation (Title, City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Charles Dixon	cdixon@csrarcc.ga.gov	CSRA RC
Matthew C. Mercer	hephfiref1@gmail.com	Hephzibah PD/FD
Jordan Rhodes	jordanrhodes@gmail.com	City Com
Amanda Brooks	cityofhephzibah@bellsouth.net	City Clerk
Robert H. Buchwitz	RHBuchwitz@icloud.com	City Commissioner
John Buchwitz	jbuchwitz92@gmail.com	Hephzibah PWD

**Placeholder for final public hearing announcement
and sign in sheet.**

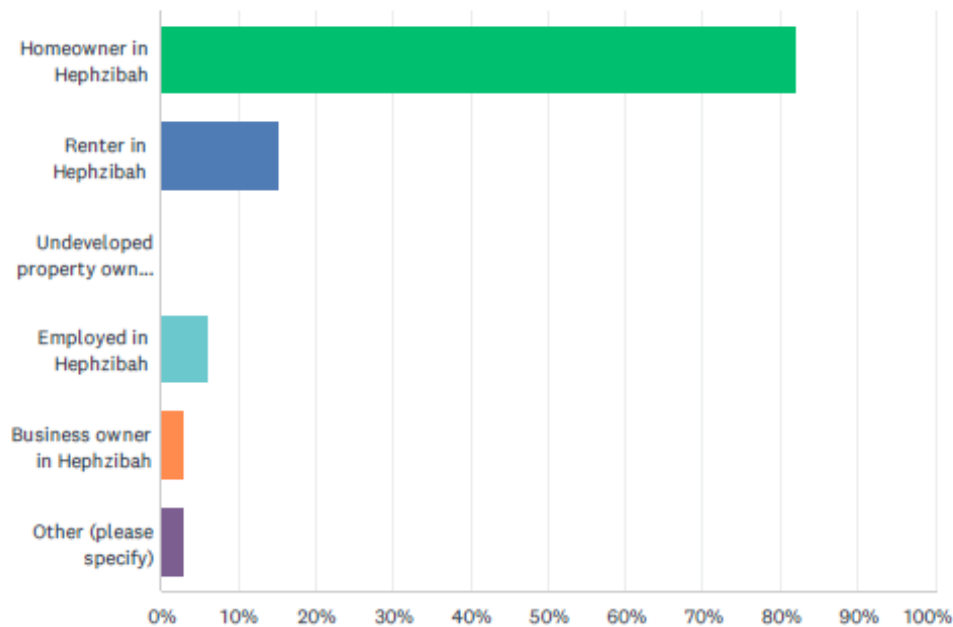
**Placeholder for screenshots of public hearing notices
and final survey results.**

Community Survey

The following are summary response charts of select questions from the community survey. Open-ended questions are not included herein, but those questions covered areas such as SWOT and Needs and Opportunities. The local government officials have retained copies of open-ended responses, including redevelopment ideas and general comments for future use.

Q1 Which of the following categories currently describes you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



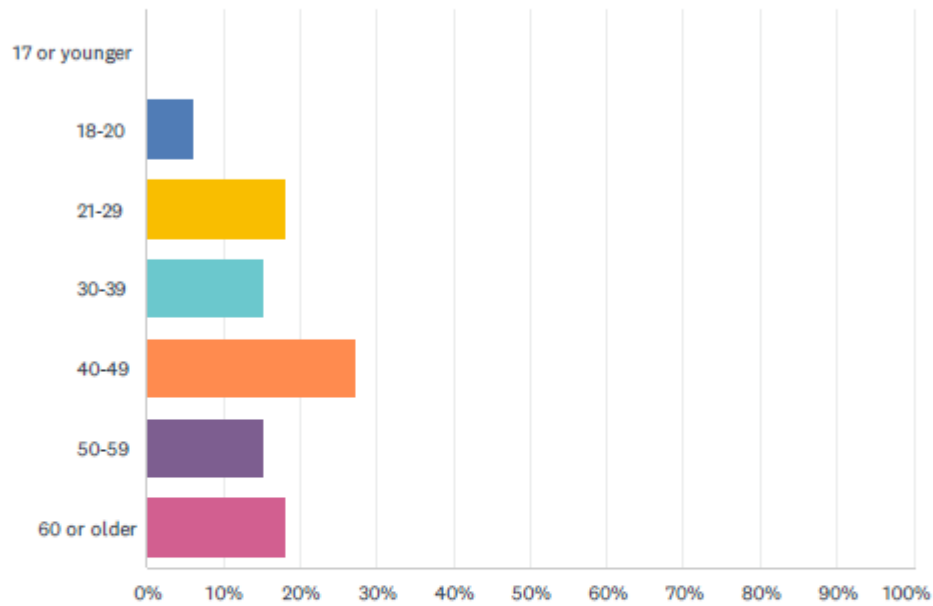
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Homeowner in Hephzibah		81.82%	27
Renter in Hephzibah		15.15%	5
Undeveloped property owner in Hephzibah		0.00%	0
Employed in Hephzibah		6.06%	2
Business owner in Hephzibah		3.03%	1
Other (please specify)		3.03%	1
Total Respondents: 33			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Retired	5/14/2024 9:48 AM

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q2 What is your age?

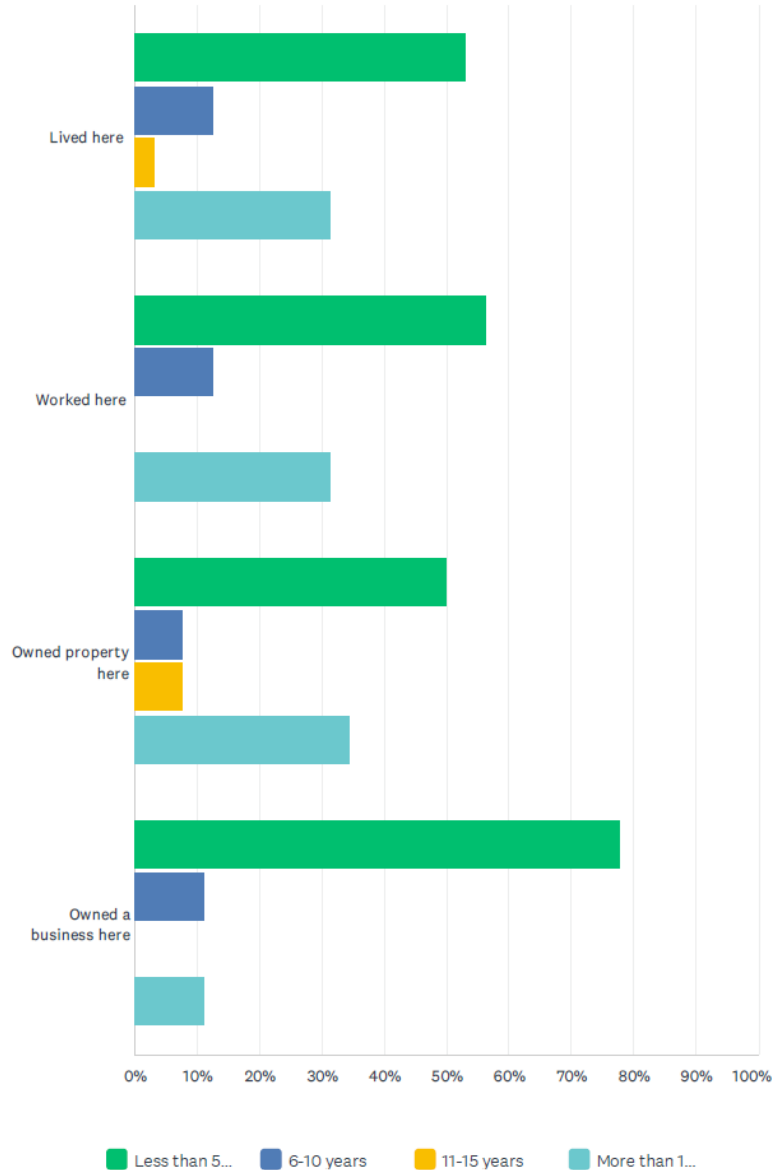
Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 or younger	0.00%	0
18-20	6.06%	2
21-29	18.18%	6
30-39	15.15%	5
40-49	27.27%	9
50-59	15.15%	5
60 or older	18.18%	6
TOTAL		33

Q3 How long have you lived, worked, or owned property in our community?

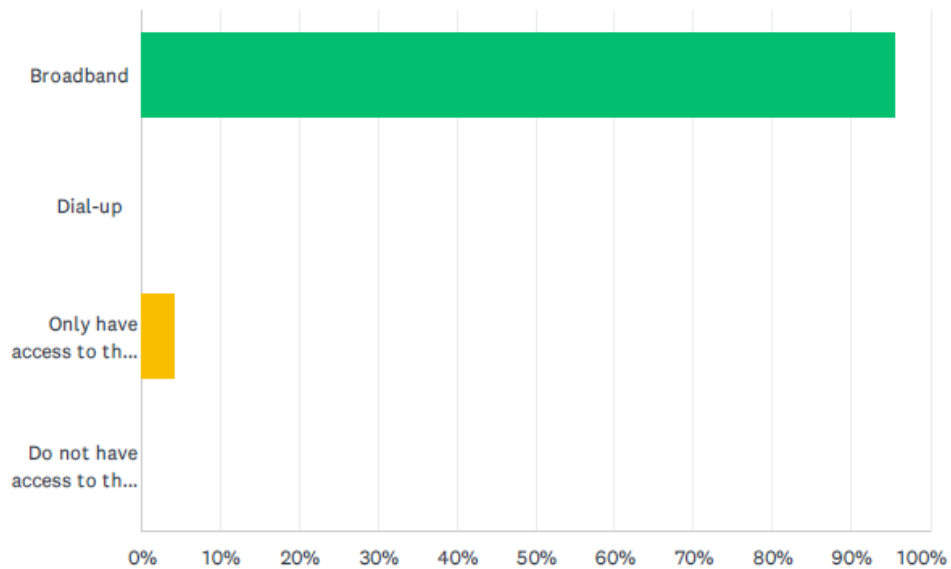
Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	MORE THAN 15 YEARS	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Lived here	53.13% 17	12.50% 4	3.13% 1	31.25% 10	32
Worked here	56.25% 9	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	31.25% 5	16
Owned property here	50.00% 13	7.69% 2	7.69% 2	34.62% 9	26
Owned a business here	77.78% 7	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	9

Q8 What type of internet access do you have at home?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9

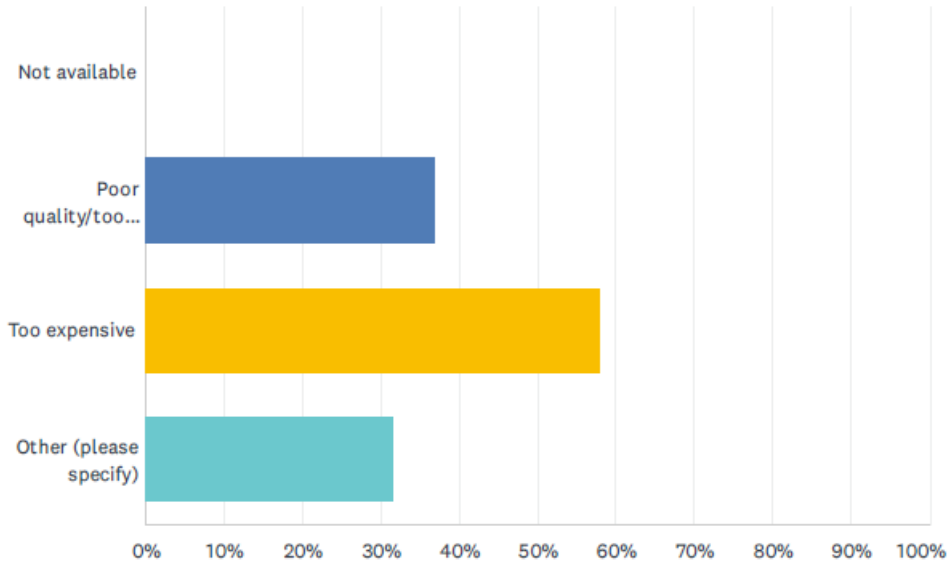


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Broadband	95.83%	23
Dial-up	0.00%	0
Only have access to the internet on my cell phone	4.17%	1
Do not have access to the internet	0.00%	0
TOTAL		24

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q9 What issues do you have with internet at home? Check all that apply.

Answered: 19 Skipped: 14



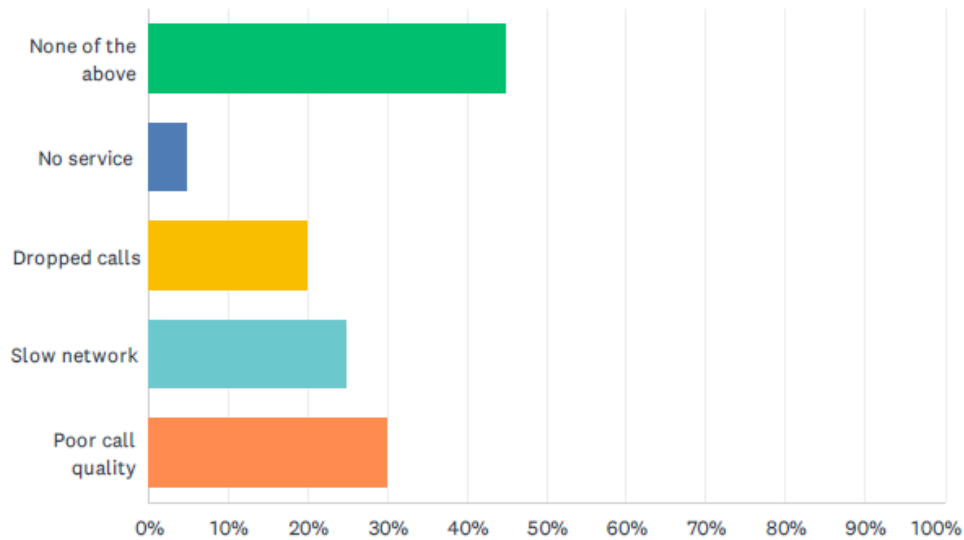
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not available	0.00%	0
Poor quality/too slow	36.84%	7
Too expensive	57.89%	11
Other (please specify)	31.58%	6
Total Respondents: 19		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Need more choices.	4/8/2024 10:25 PM
2	It's adequate	4/5/2024 12:15 PM
3	Constantly going out	4/4/2024 6:27 AM
4	None	3/22/2024 8:52 PM
5	Lack of Fiber	3/17/2024 10:55 PM
6	Many outages	1/23/2024 1:37 PM

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q10 What issues do you have with cell phone service at home? Check all that apply.

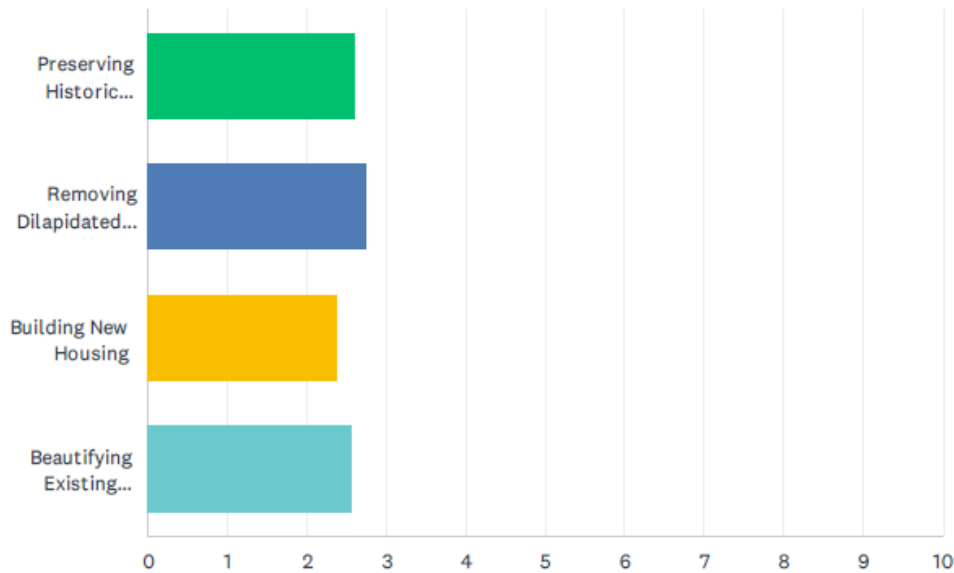
Answered: 20 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	45.00%	9
No service	5.00%	1
Dropped calls	20.00%	4
Slow network	25.00%	5
Poor call quality	30.00%	6
Total Respondents: 20		

Q11 Please rank the following housing topics based on their importance to you from 1 to 4 (with 1 being most important). Each answer option does require a number rank, and each number can only be used once.

Answered: 20 Skipped: 13

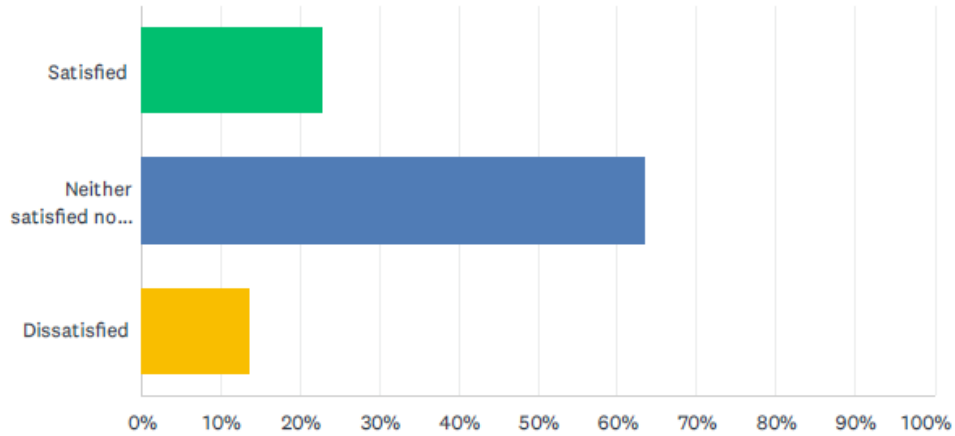


	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Preserving Historic Character	27.78% 5	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	27.78% 5	18	2.61
Removing Dilapidated Buildings	17.65% 3	47.06% 8	29.41% 5	5.88% 1	17	2.76
Building New Housing	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	38.89% 7	18	2.39
Beautifying Existing Neighborhoods	30.00% 6	15.00% 3	35.00% 7	20.00% 4	20	2.55

City of Hephzibah Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q12 How satisfied are you with the variety of housing in our community?

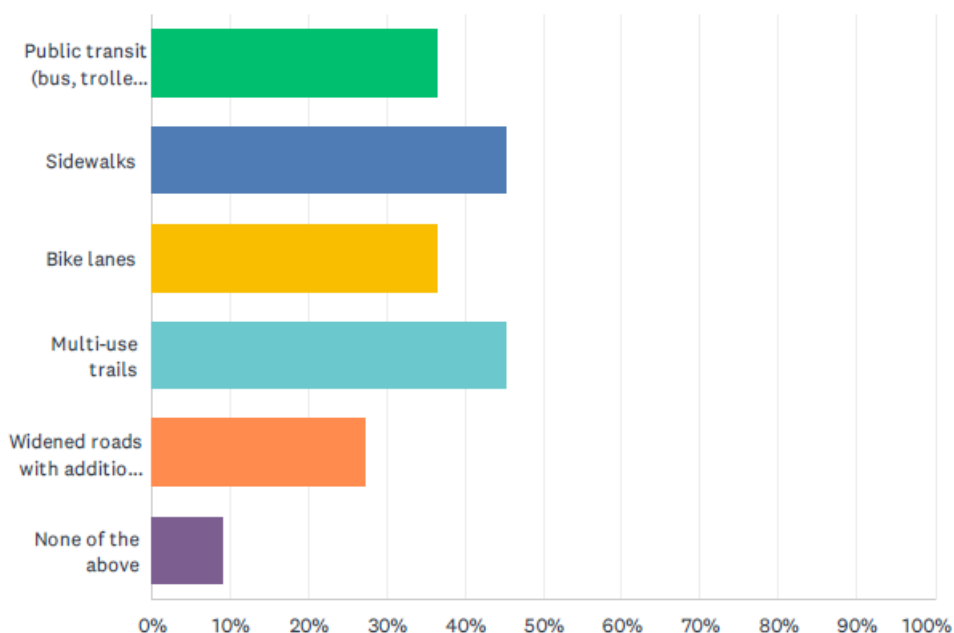
Answered: 22 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Satisfied	22.73%	5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	63.64%	14
Dissatisfied	13.64%	3
TOTAL		22

Q13 Which transportation improvements would you like to see more of in our community? Check all that apply.

Answered: 22 Skipped: 11

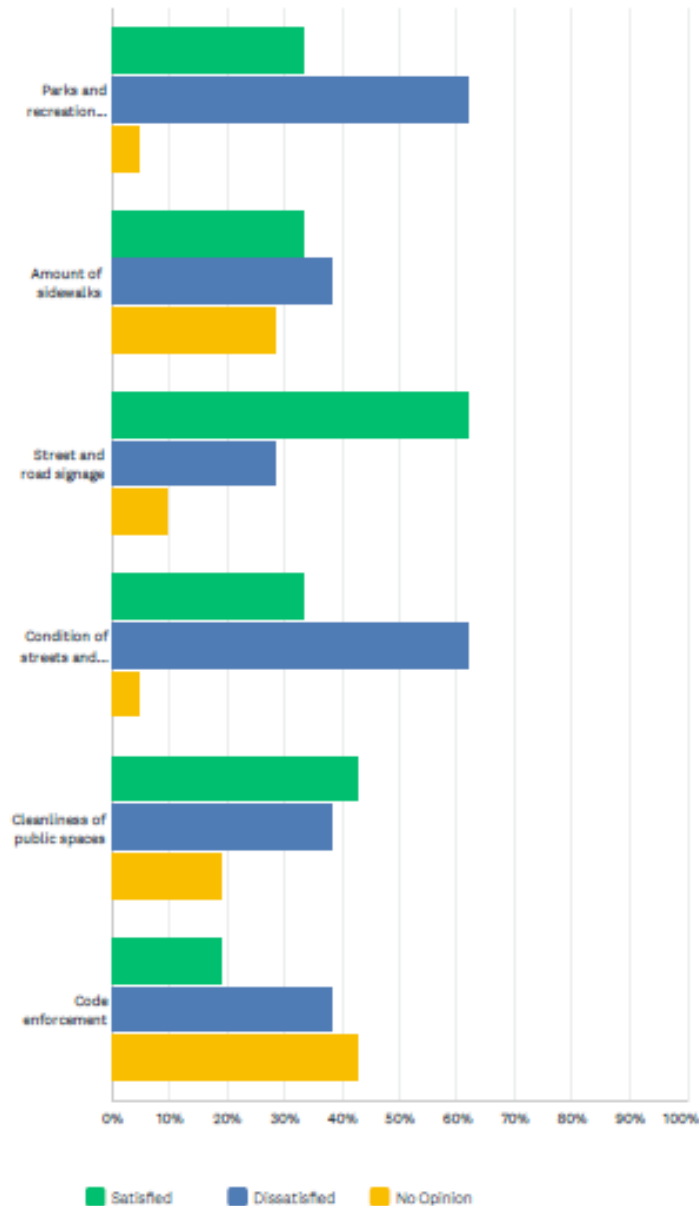


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Public transit (bus, trolley, etc)	36.36%	8
Sidewalks	45.45%	10
Bike lanes	36.36%	8
Multi-use trails	45.45%	10
Widened roads with additional lanes	27.27%	6
None of the above	9.09%	2
Total Respondents: 22		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Come too the 21st Century	5/14/2024 9:57 AM
2	Repave existing roads.	4/8/2024 10:32 PM
3	Fix unlovely ones they are dangerous	3/24/2024 7:09 AM
4	Fix the roads	3/22/2024 11:22 AM
5	Roundabouts/concrete road dividers	2/1/2024 2:06 PM

Q14 Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following public services or facilities.

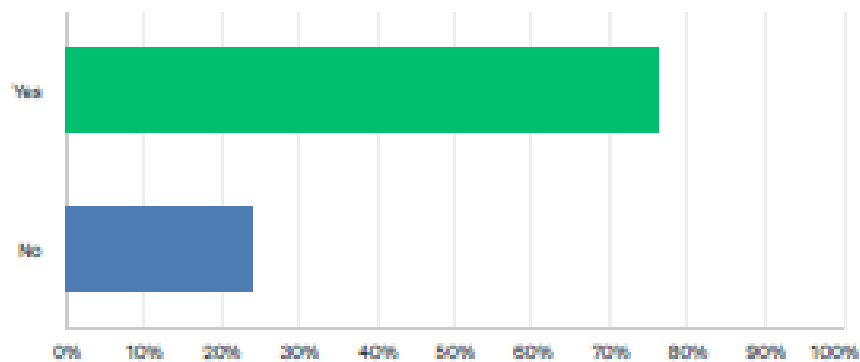
Answered: 21 Skipped: 12



	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Parks and recreation facilities	33.33% 7	61.90% 13	4.76% 1	21
Amount of sidewalks	33.33% 7	38.10% 8	28.57% 6	21
Street and road signage	61.90% 13	28.57% 6	9.52% 2	21
Condition of streets and sidewalks	33.33% 7	61.90% 13	4.76% 1	21
Cleanliness of public spaces	42.86% 9	38.10% 8	19.05% 4	21
Code enforcement	19.05% 4	38.10% 8	42.86% 9	21

Q16 Do you use public facilities such as parks, trails, and ball fields?

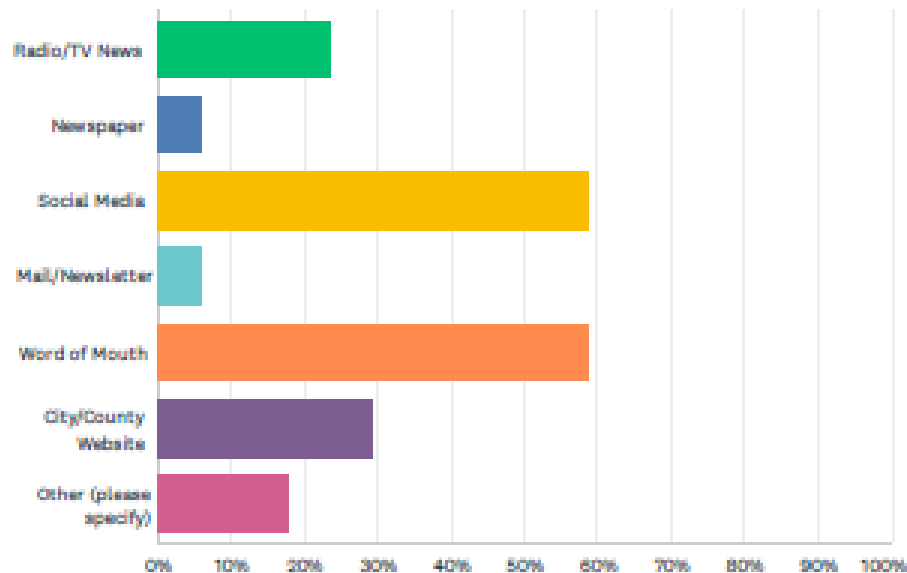
Answered: 21 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.19%	16
No	23.81%	5
TOTAL		21

Q20 How do you typically find out about what's happening in our community? Check all that apply.

Answered: 17 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Radio/TV News		23.53%	4
Newspaper		5.88%	1
Social Media		58.82%	10
Mail/Newsletter		5.88%	1
Word of Mouth		58.82%	10
City/County Website		29.41%	5
Other (please specify)		17.65%	3
Total Respondents: 17			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Word of mouth	4/15/2024 1:09 PM
2	Very little by social media	3/22/2024 9:15 PM
3	I dont. I barely hear what is happening outside of the hephzibah ag center, or church.	3/9/2024 11:55 AM