

# Revitalizing Warrenton

## 2020 Urban Redevelopment Plan for Warrenton, Georgia









# Revitalizing Warrenton: 2020 Urban Redevelopment Plan

## Prepared For

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## Adopted

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Warrenton recognize the efforts and input of multiple individuals that occurred in order to produce the city's action plan design to abate significant conditions of blight and provide a guide for positive future development in Warrenton. This guiding document provides for urban revitalization in targeted redevelopment areas and represents agreement among city leaders and members of the community for how best to proceed in improving infrastructure, nuisance property abatement, and residential redevelopment within the geographically designated area. A unified vision and a shared commitment of purpose has been created for Warrenton.

Those private citizens who comprise the urban redevelopment plan advisory committee are deserving of particular recognition for dedicating their time to attend meetings, review interim documents, and contribute their insight and expertise into the development of the urban redevelopment plan.





Warrenton, the seat of Warren County, is located in east central Georgia on the southern edge of the state's Piedmont region. Covering an area just over 2 square miles, it is situated at the intersection of U.S. Highway 278 and Georgia Highways 16 and 80. By car, Warrenton is approximately 3 ½ hours drive from Atlanta, 2 hours drive from Macon, and 1 hour drive from Augusta.

While created by the State legislature in 1793, a courthouse was not built until 1809, and the town itself not incorporated until 1810. It became the City of Warrenton in 1908. The county and town were both named for General Joseph Warren, a Massachusetts physician and patriot who was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill during the Revolutionary War (1775-83).

When the original Georgia Railroad was built through Warren County in the 1830s, it bypassed Warrenton by a mile. A mule-car rail line that transported passengers to catch the mainline was built from Warrenton to the town of Camak, thus earning Warrenton the nickname "Muletown." At the beginning of the Civil War (1861-65), construction began on an extension of the railroad from Camak through Warrenton to Milledgeville and Macon. The line was completed to Milledgeville in 1868 and to Macon in 1871.



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Development patterns have changed with increasing speed – with regional and national economies attracting and concentrating jobs and people into urbanized areas. Rural communities left behind by the demographic shifts that have followed this prosperity become silhouettes of their former selves. Warrenton is no exception. How can those empty buildings be filled again, and vibrancy and activity return to the streets? How can the ruins of abandoned homes be removed on a shrinking tax base, and new investment attracted in its place? What will it take to return jobs to this rural population center?

*Revitalizing Warrenton: 2020 Urban Redevelopment Plan for Warrenton, Georgia*, is a venture of the City of Warrenton with support from the East Georgia Housing Authority. Preparation of this document has been the responsibility of the Planning Department of the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission.

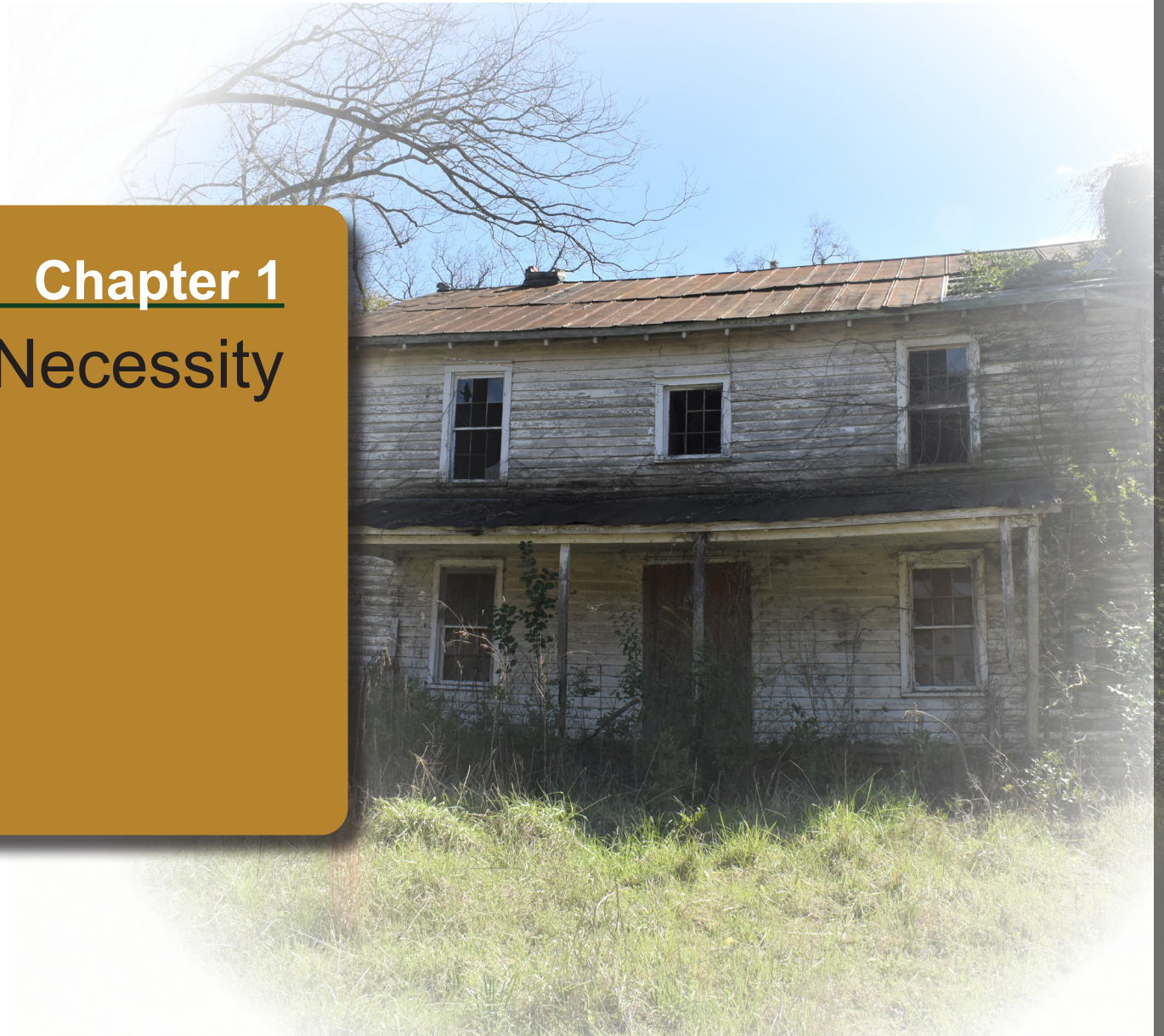
The urban redevelopment planning process involved a dedicated group of stakeholders who understood the existing conditions in the city and acknowledged that the blight and deterioration were detrimental to resident quality of life and attracting investment.

Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. 36-61-1 et. seq.) has been recognized and embraced by the community to provide guidance for improving conditions.



# Chapter 1

## Findings of Necessity



## Establishing a Finding of Necessity

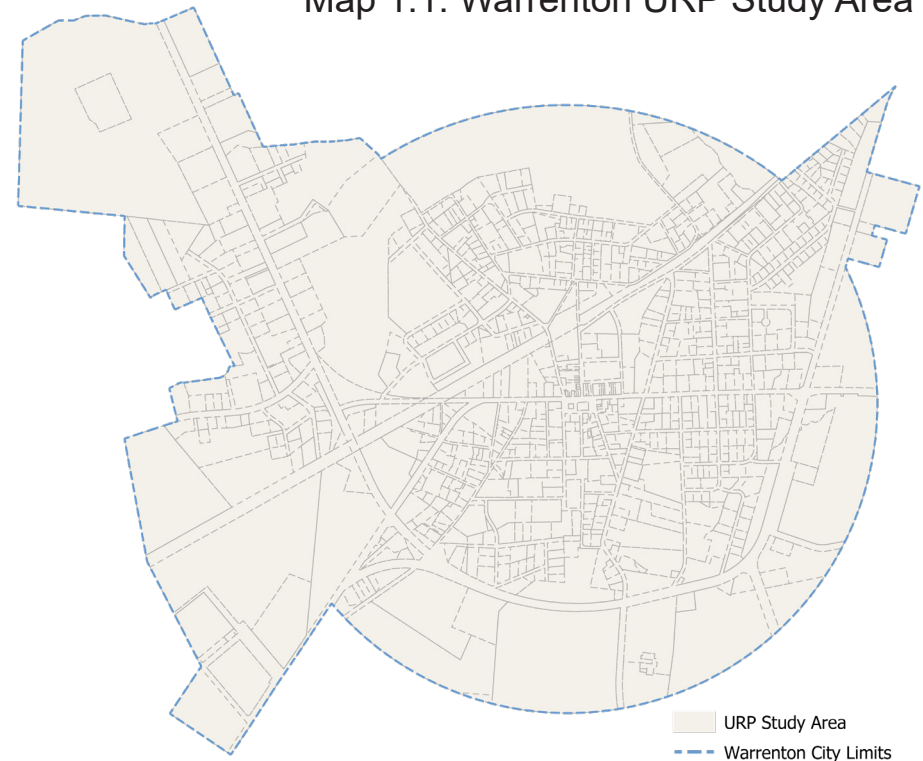
The City of Warrenton has come to the conclusion that pockets of blight exist throughout the city, and this blight has a negative effect on residents and potential development/investment. Blight can be defined as the presence of vacant, dilapidated commercial buildings, abandoned industrial sites, deteriorated residential structures, properties littered with garbage, overgrown lots, etc. This chapter is a compilation of the information needed to confirm the conditions of blight within the study area and serves as the basis for the finding of necessity resolution authorizing the preparation of an urban redevelopment plan. The city will utilize this opportunity to evaluate its most foundational systems with a comprehensive view toward improving safety, quality of life for its citizens and investment. Some target areas have been identified owing primarily to the overwhelming presence of substandard structures and property. Others are included due to a desire to reshape dormant commercial and industrial facilities for greater competitiveness in contemporary economic conditions. A comprehensive redevelopment strategy requires, however, that target areas be viewed in context of their interaction with the city as a whole. Such a view will enable the redevelopment agency to effectively approach desired thematic outcomes like economic vibrancy, inclusive housing, and walkability.

## Study Area Boundaries

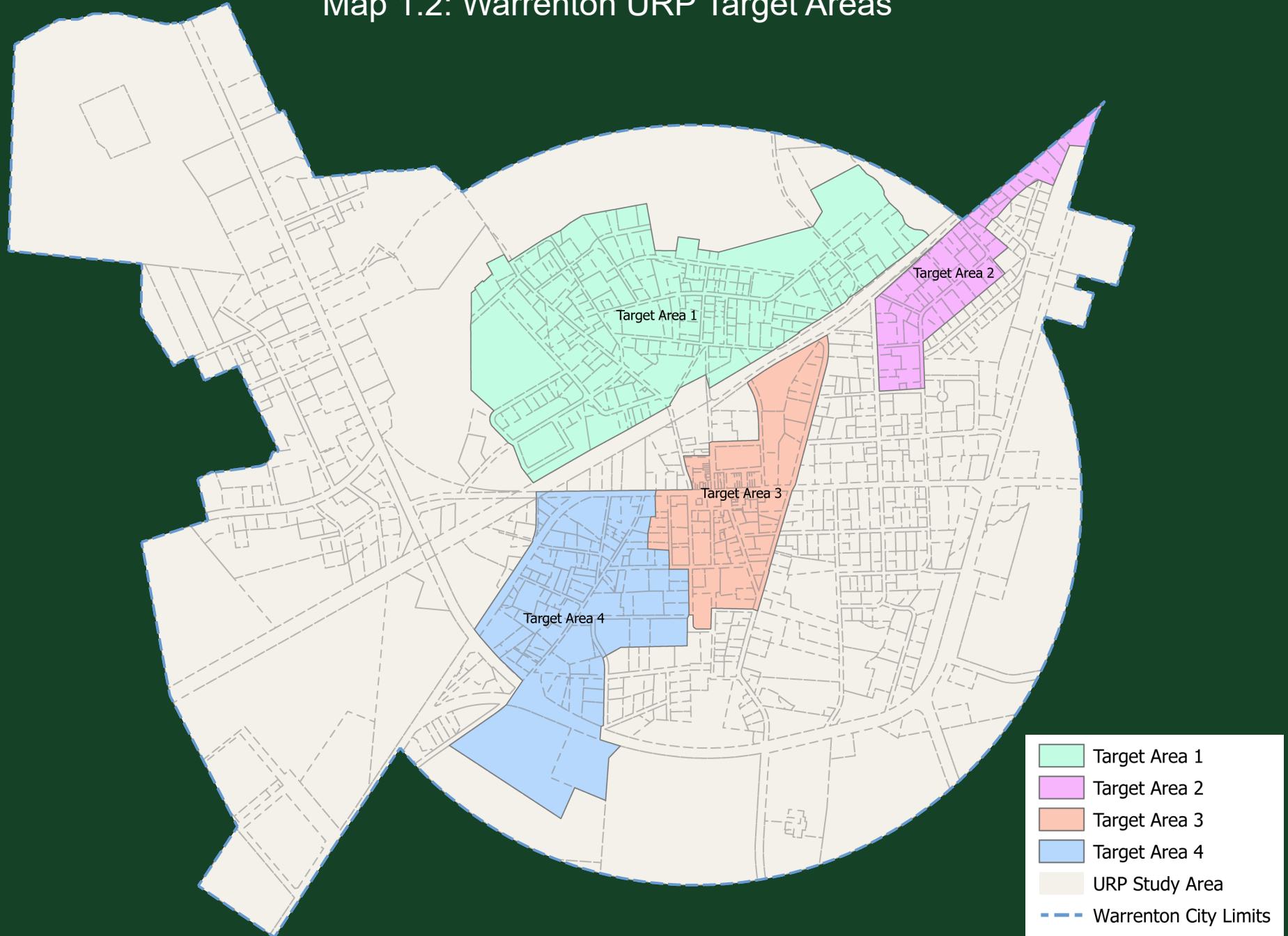
After conversations with stakeholders and the advisory committee, reviewing data and doing a visual survey of blight in the city, the entire city was chosen as the URP area. The final study area boundary was finalized by the advisory committee in January 2020.

As displayed on the next page, four (4) target areas were later defined within the redevelopment area (Map 1.2). These target areas were defined in consultation with city leaders and stakeholders. Target Area 1 is a majority residential area located north of the railroad track. Target Area 2 is a majority residential area in north east Warrenton, bounded to the north by Railroad Street. Target Area 3 is a majority commercial area and includes much of downtown Warrenton and the current Hometown Warrenton district. Target Area 4 is a majority residential area in southwest Warrenton and borders Target Area 3; bounded by Main and Macon, it includes an area that could be considered a gateway.

Map 1.1: Warrenton URP Study Area



# Map 1.2: Warrenton URP Target Areas





## Initiation of the Planning Process

The city leaders of Warrenton are committed to creating a thriving community and improving the lives of residents of all backgrounds and ages throughout the city, with particular attention to residents experiencing poverty. The Warrenton URP is the initiation of the city's revitalization efforts. The redevelopment plan targets areas within the community to focus the revitalization activity. The following redevelopment topics of interest were identified:

- Housing – Developing low-to-moderate/mixed income housing; rehabilitation and reconstruction of dilapidated housing units
- Nuisance Properties – Working towards the abatement of properties that contribute to blight and detract from neighborhoods
- Infrastructure – Improving infrastructure including storm-water facilities, water and sewer systems, and streetscape updates
- Economic Development/Job Creation – Providing economic strategies or incentives for attracting businesses, revitalization of unsightly properties, and reuse of existing buildings

## Indicators of Blight

The Georgia Redevelopment Act requires that measurable conditions of deterioration must be shown through data and observation. Information demonstrating a majority of properties within the Warrenton URP study area exhibit blight, deterioration, and slum conditions is presented through data collected by staff of the regional commission and city employees. Staff compiled a comprehensive list of potential indicators and studied the information available in each topic area. The culmination of reviewed data contained in this chapter is sufficient to establish a finding of necessity for the preparation of a redevelopment plan for the City of Warrenton.

Figure 1.1: Indicators of Blight

Indicator	Source	Notes
<i>Household Indicators</i>		
Poverty	U.S. Census Bureau / CSRA-RC	20 % or Greater Block Group
Household Income	U.S. Census Bureau / CSRA-RC	Relative to Surrounding Counties
Transportation	U.S. Census Bureau / CSRA-RC	Motor Vehicle Availability / Transportation to Work
<i>General Property Indicators</i>		
Occupancy Status	U.S. Census Bureau / CSRA-RC	
Housing Affordability	U.S. Census Bureau	
Type of Housing	City of Warrenton	
Building Activity	City of Warrenton	Permit Data
<i>Neighborhood Indicators</i>		
Parcel/Street Alignment	CSRA-RC	Visual Inventory / Aerial Photography
Infrastructure	City of Warrenton/CSRA-RC	Streets / Stormwater / Water / Sewer
General Conditions and Visual Blight	City of Warrenton/CSRA-RC	Driving and Walking Documentation

## Household Indicators of Blight

Like many rural communities in the CSRA, Warrenton has experienced a general decline in population over the last several decades. Warrenton's rate of decline in population increased after the Great Recession began and has continued to increase since then. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Warrenton's greatest loss in population occurred between 2010 and 2018.

**Figure 1.3: Poverty Rate by Census Block Group**

<i>Census Block Group</i>	<i>2018 Poverty Rate</i>
9704-1	38.024357%
9704-2	40.619469%
9704-3	21.967655%

(DCA) Opportunity Zone program, which allows for tax incentives and abatements as incentives within areas that exhibit high poverty. By contrast, the Revitalization Area Strategy criteria requires 20% or greater poverty. The City of Warrenton has three census block groups. A block group is a census designated geographical unit for which data is gathered and displayed. Based on 2018 ACS data, each of Warrenton's block groups had 20% or greater poverty.

## Household Income

Household income is defined by the Census Bureau as: "The sum of the income of all people 15 years and older living in the household. A household includes related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, is also counted as a household." The two major categories of households are "family" and "non-family", and households do not include group quarters.

For this URP process, the median household income from the 2010 Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey were used as a metric. In 2010, the median household income in Warrenton was \$27,371. This has fallen substantially in the past decade to \$15,781 in 2018. This represents a 42% drop in median household income. By contrast, Warren County as a whole, experienced a slight increase from \$31,043 in 2010 to \$32,860 in 2018.

**Figure 1.2: Population Change in the City of Warrenton**

	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2018</i>
Total Population	2,172	2,056	2,013	1,937	1,717
Population Change (%) Between Benchmark Years		-5.34%	-2.09%	-3.78%	-11.36%

## Poverty

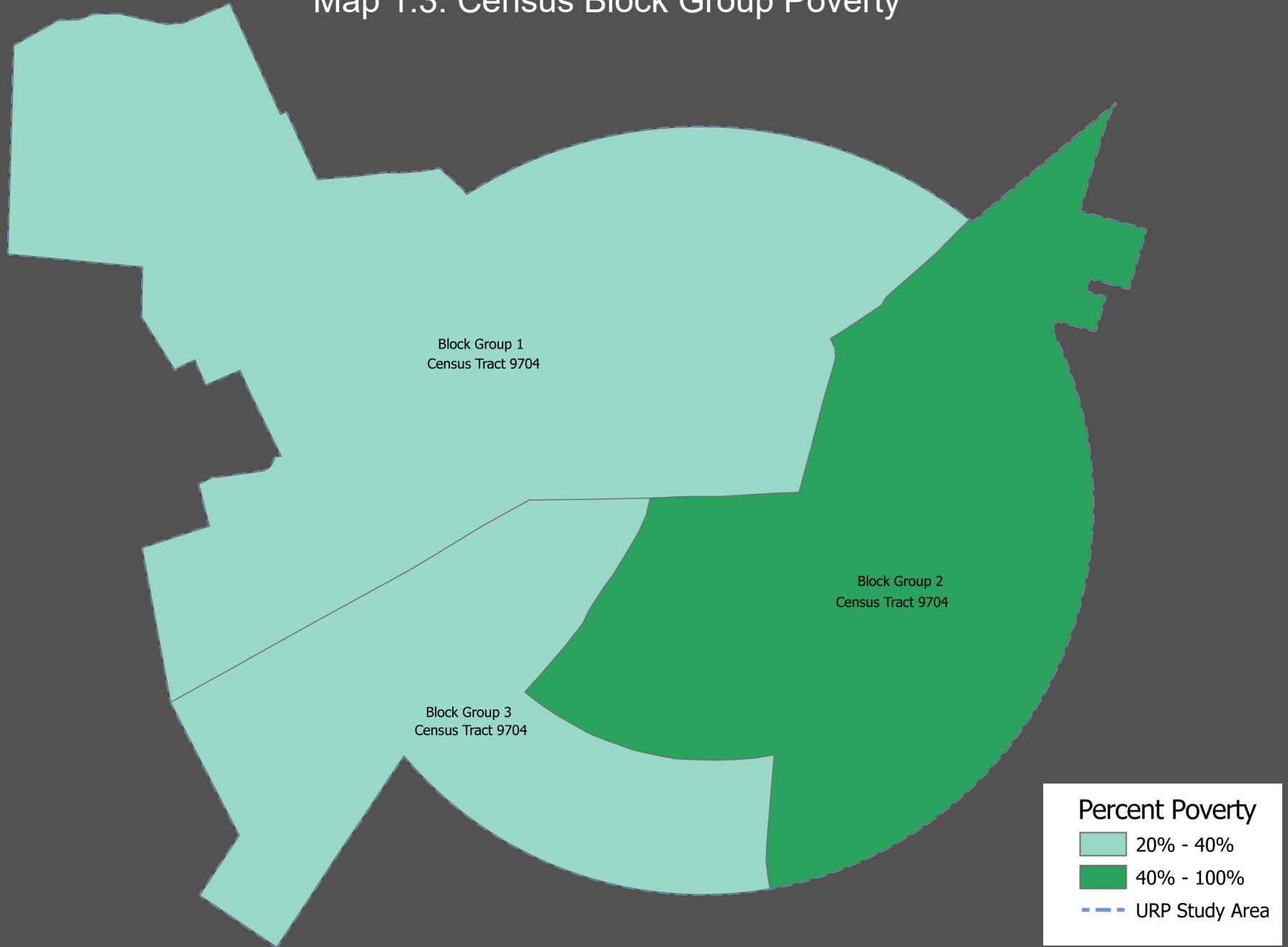
This section depicts U.S. Census Bureau block group data and income survey information collected from Community Development block grant applications between 2003 and 2017. These two data sets provide the best assessment of poverty within the city.

Poverty metrics are utilized in several state and federal programs. For example, the poverty threshold is used by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

**Figure 1.4: Median Household Income**

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>2010 Median Household Income</i>	<i>2018 ACS Median Household Income</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
Warrenton	\$27,371	\$15,781	-42.30%
Warren County	\$31,043	\$32,860	5.90%
Burke County	\$33,155	\$38,707	16.70%
Bulloch County	\$34,327	\$39,305	14.50%
Screven County	\$32,155	\$36,556	13.70%
Emanuel County	\$30,205	\$33,089	9.50%
Georgia	\$49,347	\$52,977	7.40%

# Map 1.3: Census Block Group Poverty





A household earning 80% of or less of the political jurisdiction's median household income is classified as low income by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Households at or below this threshold are eligible for low-to-moderate income housing. The median household income illustrated in this section shows that a significant number of households in the City of Warrenton do not have the household wealth to make significant improvements to properties.

For over 15 years, staff from the City of Warrenton, the CSRA RC, and Allen Smith consulting have conducted income surveys for target areas throughout the city over intervals of 1-3 years. The results of these surveys were utilized in

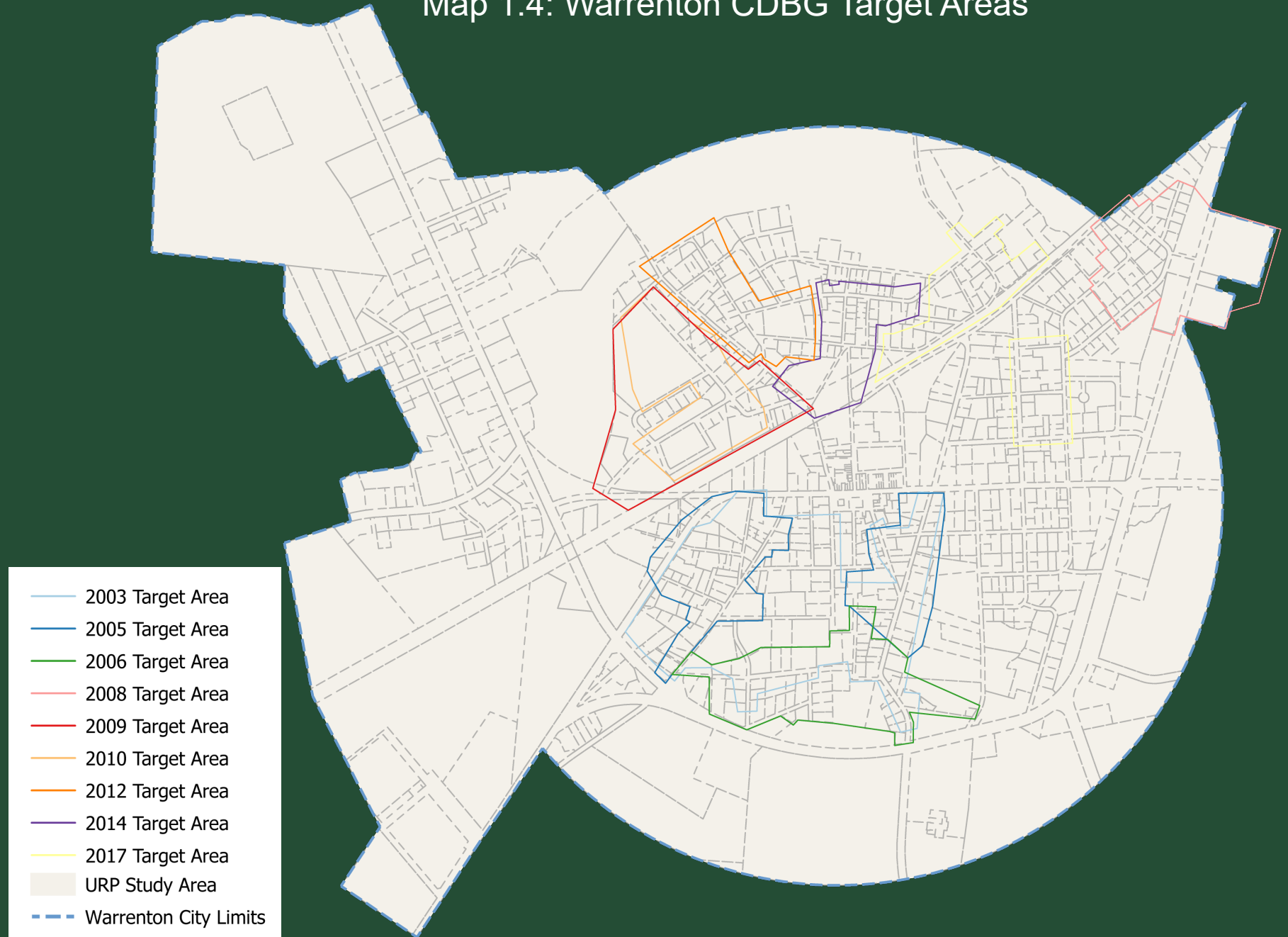
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. The CDBG application manual defines Low and Moderate Income (LMI) households as those families or households whose total gross family income is less than 80% of an area's median family income. Overall, the data from the CDBG surveys provides a clearer picture of economic hardship throughout the City of Warrenton. In each of the 10 target areas surveyed, over 70% of the population was LMI, including 5 areas having over 90% LMI. This is a clear indication of economic need for the city and its residents.

**Figure 1.5: CDBG Survey Data 2003 - 2017**

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>2003 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	263	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	196	74.52%
Population Above LMI	67	25.48%
White Population	112	42.59%
Minority Population	151	57.41%
<b>2004 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	141	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	124	87.94%
Population Above LMI	17	12.06%
White Population	30	0.21%
Minority Population	111	99.79%
<b>2005 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	138	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	128	92.75%
Population Above LMI	10	7.25%
White Population	19	0.14%
Minority Population	119	99.86%
<b>2006 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	113	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	82	72.57%
Population Above LMI	31	27.43%
White Population	73	64.60%
Minority Population	40	35.40%
<b>2008 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	318	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	305	95.91%

Population Above LMI	13	4.09%
White Population	317	99.69%
Minority Population	1	0.31%
<b>2009 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	147	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	142	96.60%
Population Above LMI	5	3.40%
White Population	0	0.00%
Minority Population	147	100.00%
<b>2010 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	148	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	140	94.59%
Population Above LMI	8	5.41%
White Population	0	0.00%
Minority Population	148	100.00%
<b>2012 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	116	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	104	96.66%
Population Above LMI	12	10.34%
White Population	0	0.00%
Minority Population	116	100.00%
<b>2014 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	50	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	41	82.00%
Population Above LMI	9	18.00%
White Population	0	0.00%
Minority Population	50	100.00%
<b>2017 CDBG Income Survey</b>		
Total Population	123	100.00%
Population Low to Moderate Income	100	81.30%
Population Above LMI	23	18.70%
White Population	17	13.82%
Minority Population	106	86.18%

Map 1.4: Warrenton CDBG Target Areas



## Transportation

The use of, or access to, a motor vehicle does not inherently indicate a lack of personal wealth as residents may choose not to have a motor vehicle if residing in area containing access to public transportation, compact land development in which work and home are in close proximity, and a network of safe pedestrian facilities exist. The City of Warrenton, similar to a majority of Georgia rural communities, does not have an adequate public transportation system, making it essential for residents to have access to a personal motor vehicle for activities of daily living. Of the 834 households for which data was collected, 34.8% had no vehicle available. Following that, 29.4% had access to only one (1) vehicle.

The City of Warrenton has the most sidewalks of the incorporated places in Warren County. However, these sidewalks do not cover the need for such facilities. Large sections of sidewalk are in and near downtown, providing necessary pedestrian connectivity in those areas. Overall neighborhood links to sidewalks is a problem, and the condition of such sidewalks varies throughout the city.

## General Property Indicators of Blight

### Occupancy Status

The ability to increase homeownership is directly correlated to income and available housing. Housing experts say a healthy housing market will have a 3% vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing and a 5% vacancy rate for rental housing. An overall vacancy rate of 7 to 8% is considered a healthy housing market. Warrenton's total vacancy rate is 12.2%, with a vacancy rate of 2.4% for owner-occupied housing and 9.8% for rental housing. Only 75% of overall units in Warrenton are occupied; of those that are occupied, they are not all in the same physical condition.

### Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is measured by the proportion of household income required for rent or home purchase. Federal and State guidelines place the threshold of affordability at less than or equal to 30% of income for housing costs (rent and utilities). Based on this formula and the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, approximately 28% of renters and 75% of homeowners pay more than 30% of their income for housing cost. Some housing is available through property managed by the East Georgia Housing Authority in several areas of the city, but more workforce/affordable housing is needed.

**Figure 1.6: Vehicles Available by Household for Warrenton**

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No Vehicle Available	290	34.80%
1 Vehicle Available	245	29.40%
2 Vehicles Available	149	17.90%
3 or more Vehicles Available	150	18.00%

**Figure 1.7: Housing Units by Tenure in the URP Study Area & City of Warrenton (ACS 2011-2015 Estimates)**

	<i>Number of Units</i>	<i>Percent (%) of Units</i>
Occupied	737	75.2%
Vacant	243	24.8%
Owner-Occupied	357	48.4%
Renter-Occupied	380	51.6%
Owner Vacancy Rate	N/A	2.4%
Renter Vacancy Rate	N/A	9.8%



## Type of Housing and Condition

The City of Warrenton is currently participating in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH). The members of the Warrenton GICH committee conducted a in-depth exterior housing condition windshield survey to determine the extent of housing deterioration within the City and to assess overall neighborhood conditions. They utilized that assessment to complete a Housing Action Plan (HAP) in conjunction with the CSRA-RC. The HAP provided a solid foundation for the city, community organizations and the private sector to address current and future housing needs. Based on the data collected for the 2018 HAP there are 823 housing units in the city. Warrenton is similar to other communities in the region, in that the majority of its housing stock is single-family detached (54.6%). Manufactured homes and 3-9 unit multi-family comprise most of the remaining housing stock.

Figure 1.8: Type of Housing Units in 2018		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
<i>Total</i>	823	100.0%
Single Unit	449	54.6%
Duplex	12	0.15%
Triplex	3	0.003%
3 - 9 Housing Units	192	23.3%
Mobile Home	167	20.1%

The survey used to examine the exterior condition of the housing in Warrenton was created by the University of Georgia and created classifications from Standard to Dilapidated. The survey found that there are several clusters of deteriorated housing and others needing some level of repair across the city. If the areas in need of even minor repairs are not addressed, the houses over time will deteriorate, resulting in the creation of more blight. The survey did not examine interior condition, which could reveal additional condition issues.

## Building Activity

Building activity in the City of Warrenton is stagnant. There have been only two residential building permits in the last several years. Between 2017 and 2020, only 21 new business licenses were issued across the entire city. As businesses return to downtown in the future, parking should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it's meeting the visitor and employee demands for space.

Throughout the historic downtown core, there are several vacant properties, some of which require repairs in order to be inhabited. Existing businesses do not have consistent open hours, and no restaurants are open after lunch. Within the downtown core there are 46 total buildings, 16 of which are vacant, resulting in a 35% vacancy rate. One newer project is a small business incubator located in one of the buildings downtown; this format can be duplicated in other buildings. A major challenge to business development is insufficient high-speed internet. The current speeds are not good enough to support what is needed now or in the future. Like many other rural communities, broadband is a top priority for commercial development, community vitality and resident quality of life. Within the zip code for the City of Warrenton, there are only five (5) residential internet providers; of these, internet is provided via satellite, fixed wireless, and DSL. For all but two (2) of these providers, the fastest speed is 18 Mbps.

## Neighborhood Indicators of Blight

### Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes roads, sidewalks, broadband, water, sewer, and stormwater facilities. A lack of adequate infrastructure can hamper new development within the city. The existence of dirt roads isn't a problem, but many neighborhood roads lack sidewalks, curb and gutter. Others are made narrower



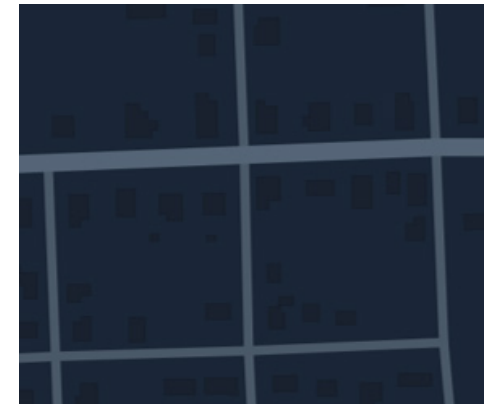
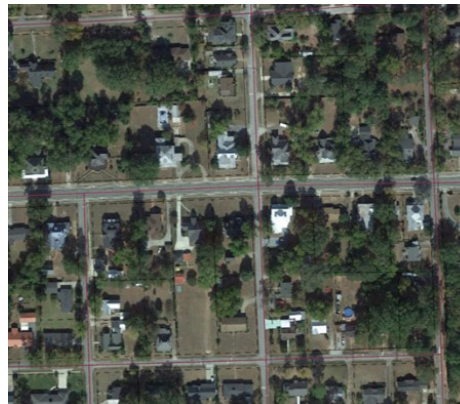
by overgrowth into the roadway. Streets frequented by pedestrians that don't have sidewalks can create unnecessary risk. Sidewalk installation and improvement in the downtown will also increase walkability.

Over the last 20 years, the City of Warrenton has pursued a number of measures to improve the condition of its infrastructure. These measures include USDA loans, CDBG applications, an EIP, and establishing mutually beneficial partnerships toward progress. Since 1996, the city has utilized over \$21 million on projects throughout the city including upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, sewer line rehabilitation, and water system improvements. Despite city effort, flooding remains a problem throughout the city and stormwater improvements are needed along certain streets and within resident yards. As flooding in ditches and yards increases, residential structures are threatened. Streets with issues include Shoals, Hopgood, Main, Beall Springs, Pine, Hill, Warren, and others.



### Parcel/Street Alignment

Georgia's urban redevelopment law allows land acquisition for structural demolition and clearance, as well as aggregation and reconfiguration. This underscores the fact that the layout of a city - its streets and blocks - is essentially its guiding framework. Vibrant cities typically have a gridded or otherwise patterned network of streets. The regularity of the grid promotes consistency and uniformity in land uses. If appropriately scaled and designed with safety in mind, gridded streets also enable walkability. The form of a city's streets, blocks, and lots shape the overall character of development that will follow.





**Figure 1.9: Survey of Block Sizes**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Area (sf)</i>	<i>Area (ac)</i>	<i>Side Length Range</i>
Block 1	172,647	3.96	407 - 423
Block 2	163,857	3.76	396 - 406
Block 3	168,854	3.88	407 - 417
Block 4	166,552	3.82	395 - 419
Block 5	160,663	3.69	64 - 439
Block 6	183,148	4.20	395 - 528
Block 7	156,496	3.59	377 - 416
Block 8	292,165	6.71	391 - 812
Block 9	251,862	5.78	412 - 680
Block 10	178,779	4.10	212 - 652
<i>Average</i>	<i>189,502</i>	<i>4.35</i>	



The eastern portion of Warrenton's street network exhibits somewhat of a grid-like pattern. As a result, this part of town contains what are likely its most idyllic sections. The area is invariably composed of site-built residential use, homes have relatively consistent setbacks from streets, and homes are of complimentary sizes and styles.

**Figure 1.10: Survey of Parcel Sizes**

<i>Block</i>	<i>Average Parcel Size (sf)</i>	<i>Average Parcel Size (ac)</i>	<i># of Parcels</i>
Block 1	20,594	0.47	8
Block 2	15,672	0.36	10
Block 3	16,749	0.38	9
Block 4	16,027	0.37	7
Block 5	18,259	0.42	10
Block 6	16,474	0.38	10
Block 7	35,904	0.82	8
Block 8	37,664	0.86	6
Block 9	17,990	0.41	14
Block 10	24,444	0.56	12
<i>Average</i>	<i>21,978</i>	<i>0.50</i>	

A reliable grid is not present across much of the southwestern portion of the city or north of the railroad track, however. Accordingly, these areas were more likely to have irregularity in structure types and placement upon lots, as well as irregularities in land uses present. Vast differentiation in parcel sizes permitted siting of very dissimilar structure types, even for the same use, and arrangement of those structures in an incongruous manner from one parcel to the next. The resulting neighborhood character feels random and chaotic.

Two brief surveys of well-formed blocks within the city reveal what may be a desired pattern to guide the design of areas targeted for redevelopment. The first survey of 10 blocks in east Warrenton indicated an average block size of approximately 189,502 sf, or 4.5 acres. Further, a second survey showed an average individual parcel size of 21,978 sf, or 0.5 acres. Blocks examined demonstrated a variety of mostly rhomboid shapes, tending to have four sides of unequal length and angles that were not consistently and exact 90 degrees. Despite lack of geometric perfection, though, these blocks effectively shaped (constrained) the public and private realms in a manner that produced a desirable neighborhood aesthetic.

## General Conditions and Visual Blight

Visual surveys conducted by CSRA staff and city employees reaffirm the existence of a number of properties within the redevelopment area that lack a basic standard of maintenance and investment. The most prominent issues that have been observed within the redevelopment area include a lack of yard maintenance, the accumulation of collected items on the property (including cans, tires, discarded furniture and appliances, etc.) that can be clearly seen from the roadway, and dilapidated, abandoned structures.

Throughout the historic downtown core, there are several vacant properties, some of which require repairs to even be habitable. Also, existing businesses do not have consistent open hours, and no restaurants are open after lunch. To aid development, Hometown Warrenton has offered facade grants and is attempting several beautification projects to make the downtown area more attractive.

The potential reasons for such conditions are varied. Lower income residents may lack the financial resources to make needed repairs to homes or invest in maintenance. Renters may not feel obligated to improve or maintain the area surrounding their housing unit, and the landlord may be absentee. Retail owners of vacant buildings may also be absentee and unwilling to sell for a price that enables the new owner to invest significantly in improving the property. Additionally, without code enforcement, it's much harder for the city to hold anyone accountable.

The visual blight that is created by the aforementioned factors impairs the community's ability to promote itself and proudly present itself as an attractive community to investors. The health and safety of residents on adjacent properties can also be affected by these conditions.



## Findings of Necessity Report

The following summarization of data stakeholder interviews, and visual surveys confirms that URP study area (redevelopment area) conditions warrant the preparation and approval of an urban redevelopment plan. The emphasis of this plan is focused on the slum and blight which is prevalent in this area. The assessment of negative conditions provided in this section serves as the basis for the preparation of Warrenton's "Findings of Necessity" resolution as required by the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law. Preliminary recommendations contained within this section also serve as the basis for the land use plan and implementation program part of the Warrenton Urban Redevelopment Plan.

### Negative Conditions

There are several conditions prevalent throughout the URP study area that meet the definition of "pockets of blight" articulated within the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law. The most prevalent negative conditions are summarized in the following list, but should not be inferred to represent all factors that cumulatively account for the designation.

#### Prevalence of 'Pockets of Blight'

The data collected for this plan clearly confirms high poverty rates and low incomes for residents in the URP study area. The City of Warrenton has suffered the loss of several of its largest employers over the course of several economic cycles. The lack of employment opportunities paying a living wage instead of minimum wage inhibits residents in the URP study area. The city has attempted to lure new manufacturers and other large employers back, however, the nature of the economy has changed, and competition for large employers has become steep, with most choosing to relocate in the prosperous suburbs of more urban locations.

#### Deteriorating Housing Stock

Visual surveys by staff have confirmed there is a high percentage of deteriorated housing within the target areas. Abatement of sub-standard structures can be a complicated task when the structure is occupied. The redevelopment area has a concentration of deteriorated housing structures in the identified target areas. The city is pursuing several funding streams to rehabilitate and renovate deteriorated housing throughout these areas.

#### Substandard Infrastructure

Generally, the absence of a reliable, modern street network underlies the city's infrastructure issues. Aside from their substandard widths, streets in Warrenton are lacking in curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. There are several sites within the redevelopment area which contain stormwater drainage systems that are currently being overwhelmed. Finally, while virtually all roads are paved, some streets within identified pockets of blight are made even more narrow by overgrowth of trees and shrubs, creating further impediments to access.

#### Lack of Commercial Investment

Warrenton's Main Street remains a collection of historic structures (some vacant, some occupied) and limited bike-ped facilities. Throughout the city are vacant and dilapidated commercial structures. Some of these structures, along with available land at reasonable prices, represent opportunities for new establishments. Others, like those downtown, could serve as additional housing with upstairs apartments. The city also lacks significant gateway and way-finding signage to draw people to, and lead them through, the city center.



## Preliminary Recommendations

The preliminary recommendation presented in this subsection have been prepared following the evaluation of indicators of blight referenced in prior subsections. These recommendations are presented in no particular order and do not represent the final goals, objectives, or strategies of this URP. A full overview of the goals, objectives, and strategies of this URP is listed in the implementation program contained in Chapter 4.

### Access to Affordable and Mixed Income Housing

A chief priority for the City of Warrenton should be creating true mixed-income neighborhoods that include a mix of housing units for lower income residents and market-rate units. This effort should be coupled with one to rehabilitate dilapidated housing and reconstruct uninhabitable housing. This will provide safe and new housing units for residents increase neighborhood vitality within the redevelopment area. New housing types should be considered in order to increase housing options; the current housing inventory is dominated by older single-family detached units. The lack of newer market-rate units and housing options can limit potential homebuyers.

### Abatement of Nuisance Properties

A critical component of the redevelopment and revitalization effort will be abating and controlling nuisances city-wide. This is currently a significant challenge for the city. It should begin with hiring a code enforcement officer or seeking partnership to share an officer with Warren County. The code itself should also be reviewed for updates that will improve and expedite abatement efforts. When addressing the “maintaining of a nuisance” on occupied properties, A measure of assertiveness is also encouraged. Investment in staff training, continuing education and certification is also important.

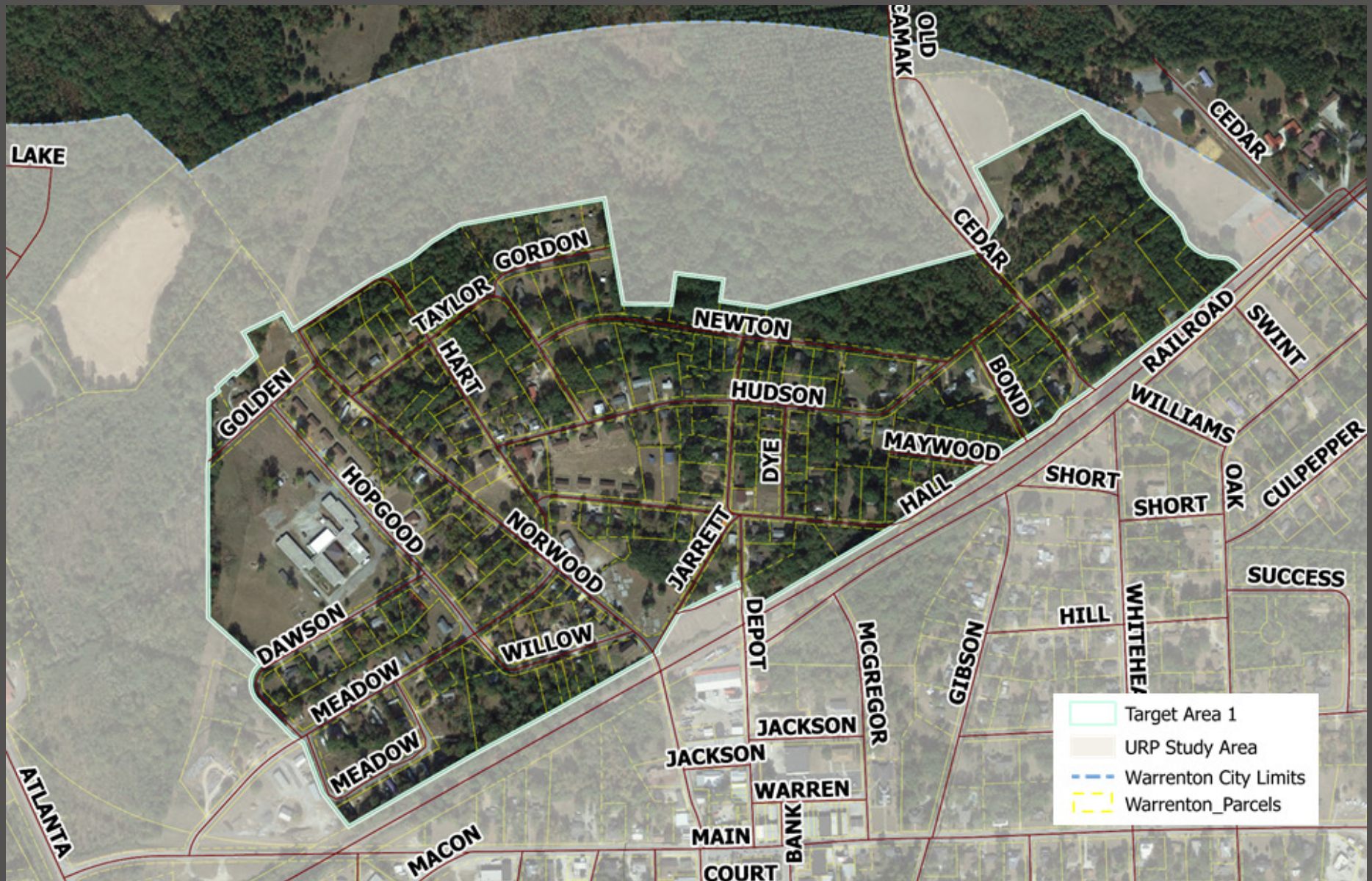
### Infrastructure Improvements

Investment in necessary and beneficial infrastructure such as stormwater facilities are important for resident safety and quality of life. Stormwater is a major physical infrastructure type identified as a problem throughout the redevelopment area. Investment in alternative types of storm-water management (ex. bio-swales) and the re-engineering of stormwater drainage can relieve flooding issues and provide potential activity centers such as walking areas surrounding retention ponds. Pedestrian facilities are also in need of being placed in a majority of areas within the redevelopment area. Digital infrastructure improvements should include broadband targeting. Providing access to this high-speed internet will help facilitate much needed growth in the commercial and residential sectors.

### Commercial Investments, Particularly in Downtown Warrenton

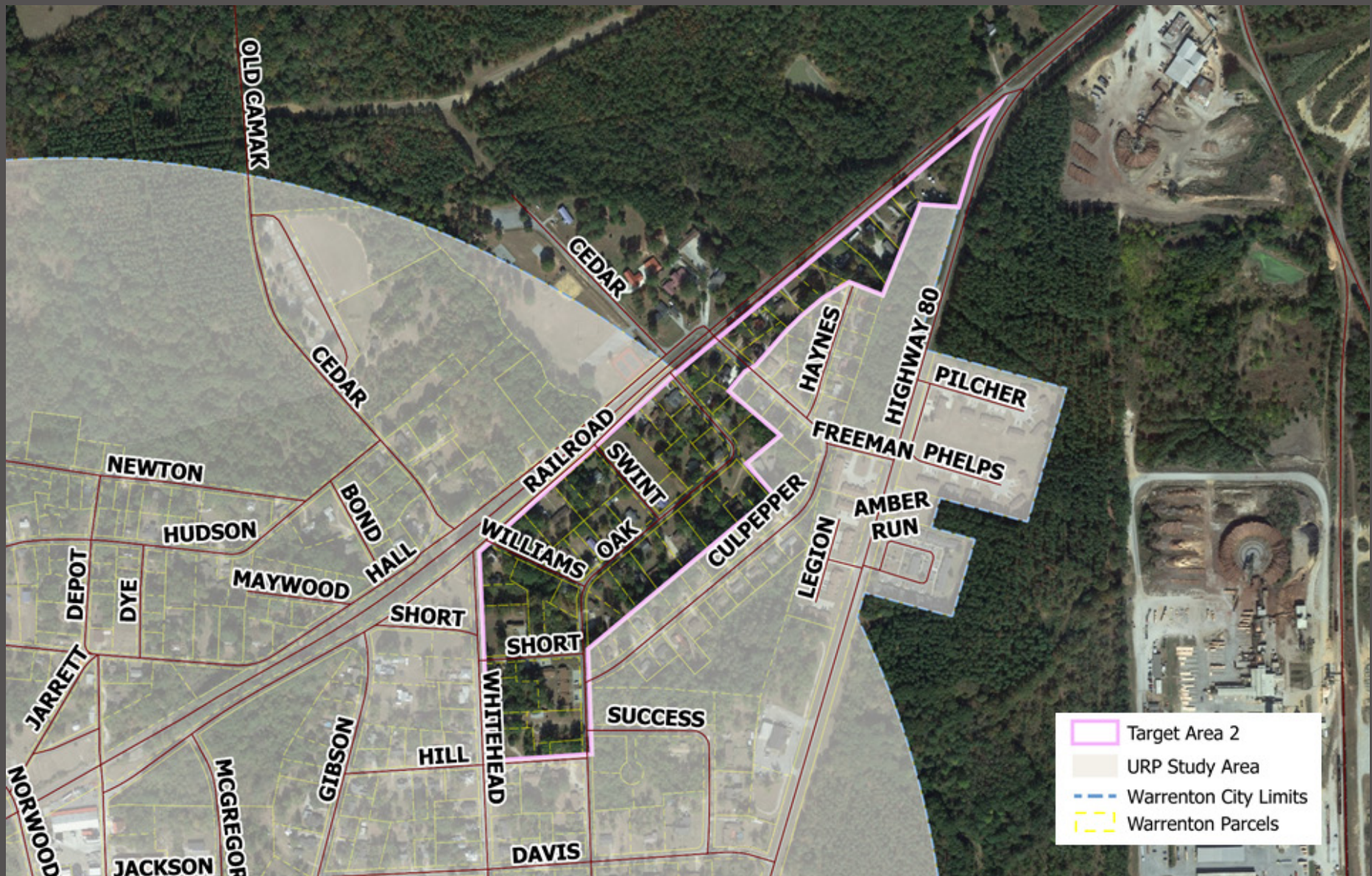
Warrenton has slow business growth, limited operating hours downtown, and several vacant, dilapidated commercial structures. A mix of measured incentives (e.g. tax credits, tax incentives, and fee abatements) in designated areas may be necessary to attract business to center city. Funding for the rehabilitation and reuse of commercial buildings that are currently in a substandard state is also necessary.

Map 1.5: Target Area 1



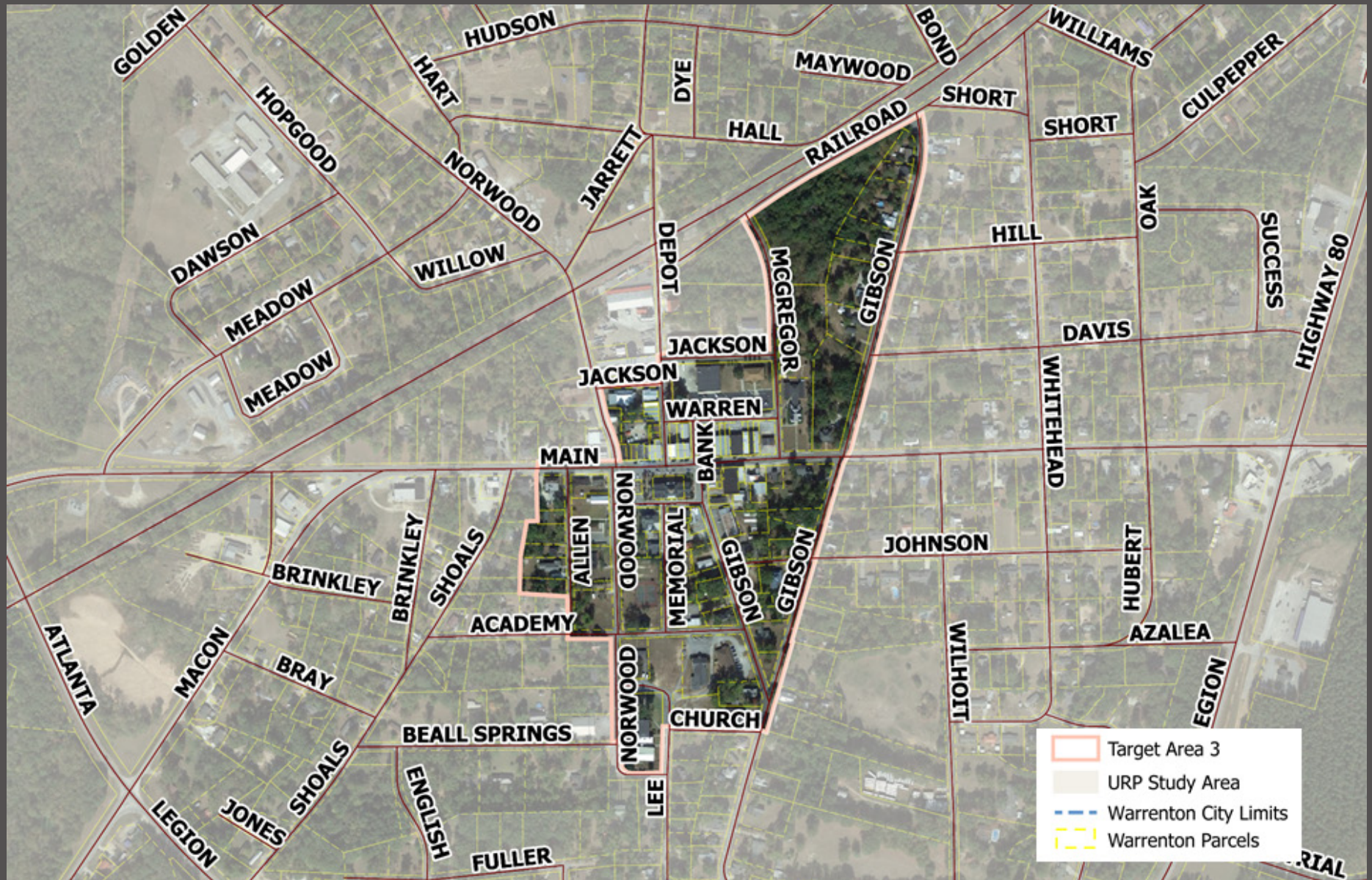


Map 1.6: Target Area 2



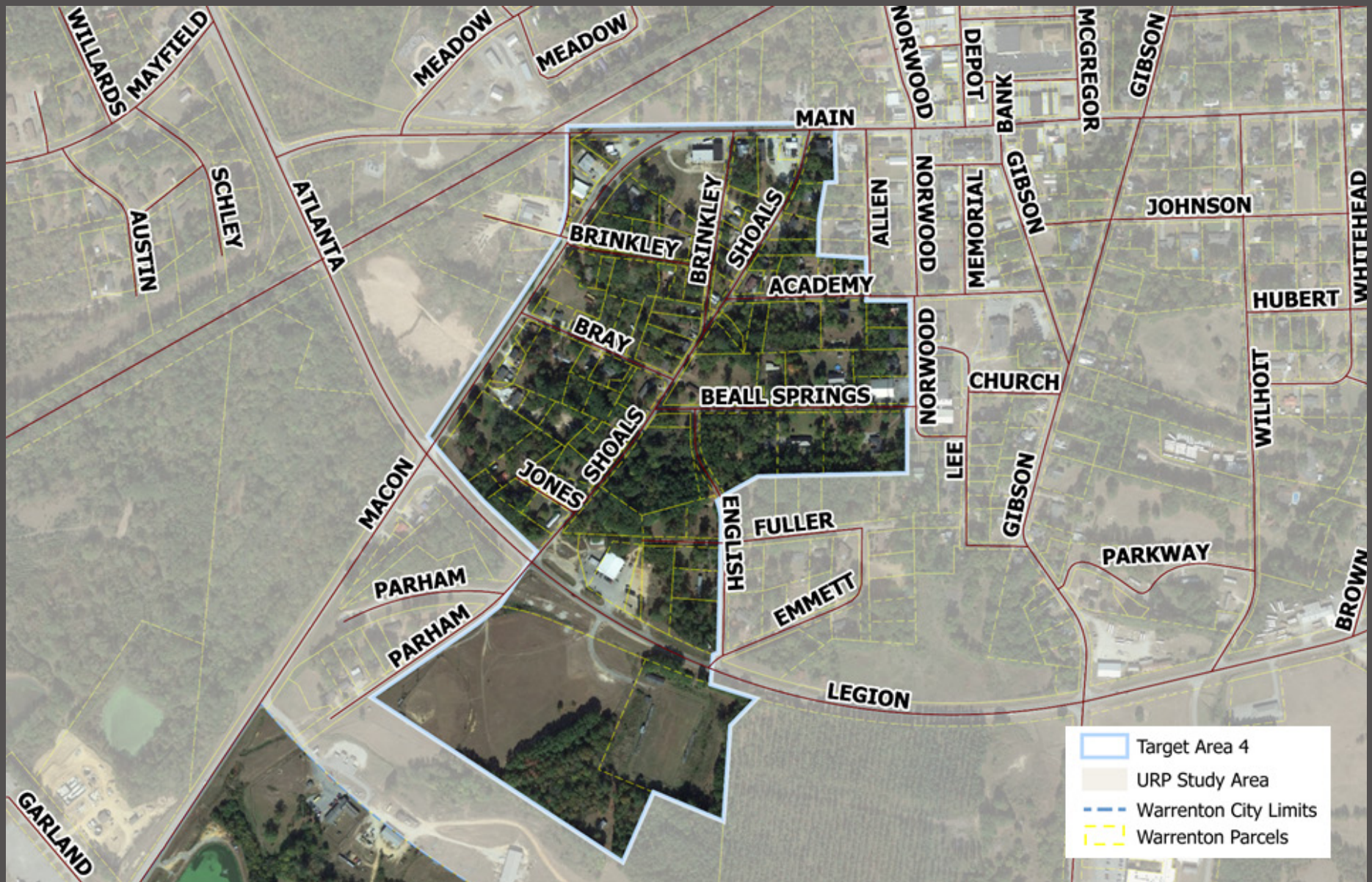


Map 1.7: Target Area 3

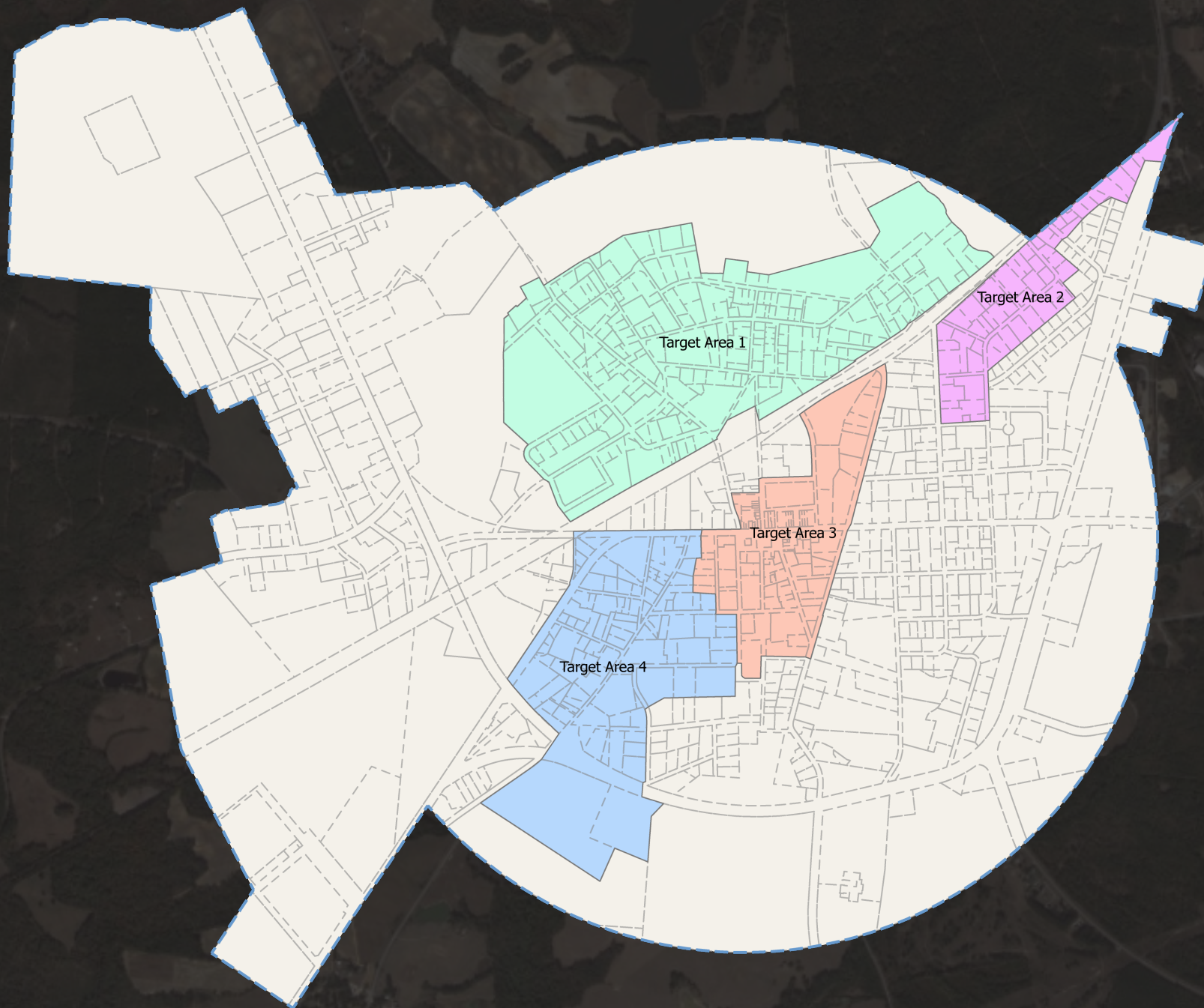




Map 1.8: Target Area 4



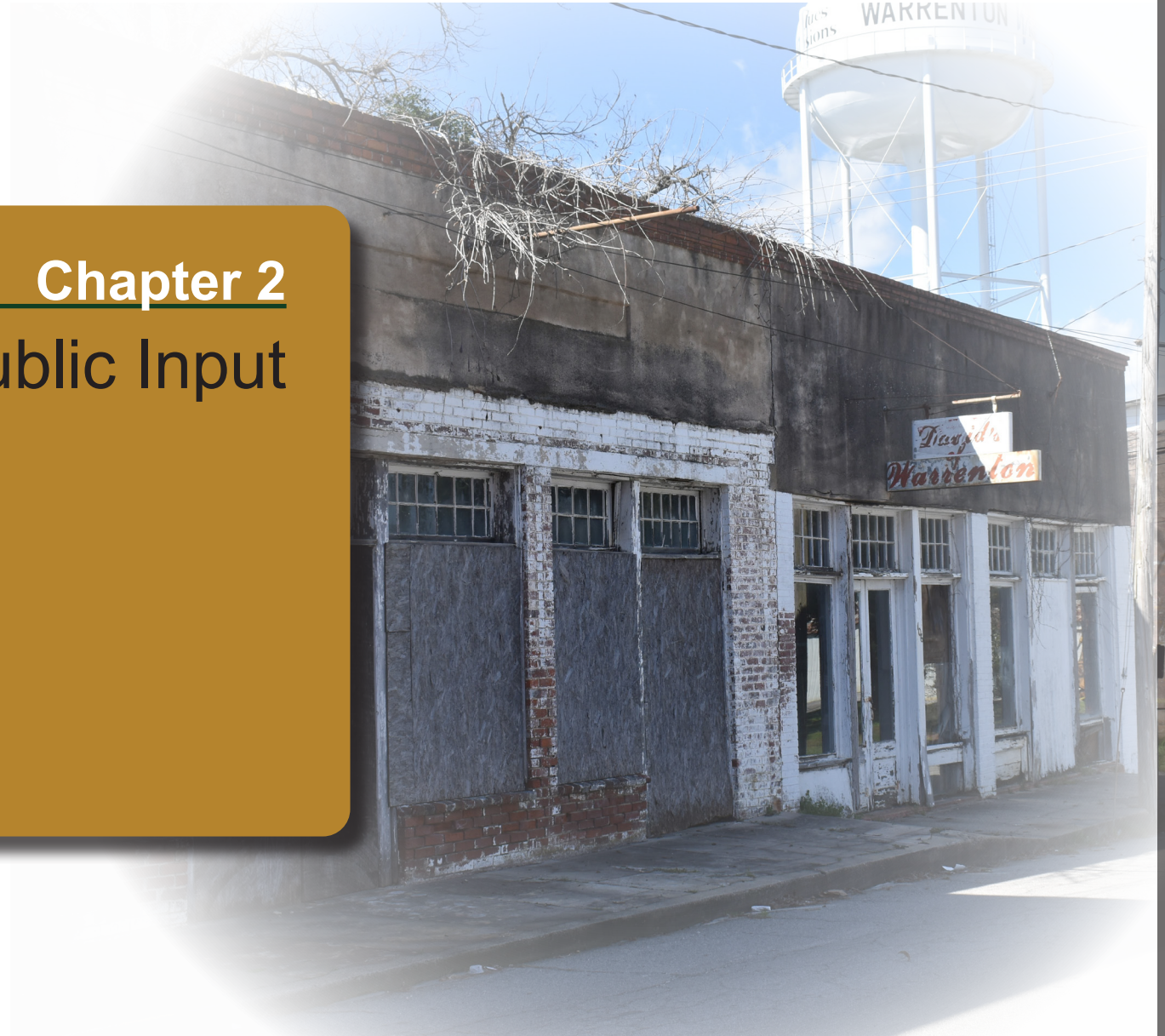






## Chapter 2

# Public Input



## Public Input Process

Public input and participation is an essential component of any community planning effort. It is impossible to determine whether a local government's planning efforts are addressing the concerns of its residents or enjoy widespread support without public outreach. The City of Warrenton worked with staff of the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission in conducting its public participation process.

### City Council

The Warrenton City Council was provided the opportunity to provide input on the process and updated by staff. The Mayor and City Administrator were informed of meetings, and one or both of them was present at each of the advisory committee meetings. City Council was also provided opportunity for direct input and individual members attended some advisory meetings.

### Advisory Committee

The major vehicle for public input during the planning process was through the participation of an advisory committee. The advisory committee was comprised of city officials both elected and appointed, local leaders, and members of the community at large. Consistent with the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law, the advisory committee represented a broad cross-section of interest groups from the community. In addition to attending meetings, all advisory committee members were encouraged to promote public awareness of the ongoing planning process online and in-person. The advisory committee met on the following dates:

- November 25, 2020
- January 24, 2020
- February 27, 2020
- March 9, 2020

### General Public

Implementation of the urban redevelopment plan has the potential to affect property owners and residents within the urban redevelopment area. The implementation program is largely void of recommendations that could cause displacement of households within the redevelopment area.

City leaders promoted public awareness of the redevelopment planning process in the following ways:

- Website: Staff created a standalone webpage to display information during the redevelopment plan process.
- Social and Print Media: Information was shared on several social media accounts, including those from Hometown Warrenton and the CSRA Area Agency on Aging. Staff also created flyers for physical distribution that committee members shared.
- Community Workshop and other opportunities: A drop-in open house was held at the Warrenton Cultural Center, and RC staff also set up a table at Warrenton's staff appreciation luncheon to share information and receive input.
- Public Hearing: The Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law requires that a public hearing be held prior to the adoption of an urban redevelopment plan. A public hearing was held on March 30, 2020.





## WHAT'S A URP?

### An Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP)

*Addressing Blight, Deterioration, and Disinvestment*

#### URPs Can Address:

- Obsolete Facilities
- Deteriorated/Vacant Downtown Properties
- Incompatible Siting or Nuisance
- Areas Requiring Special Attention



#### Warrenton's Current URP Areas of Interest:

##### - Housing

developing low-to-mid/mixed income units; rehab/reconstruction of dilapidated units

##### - Nuisance Properties

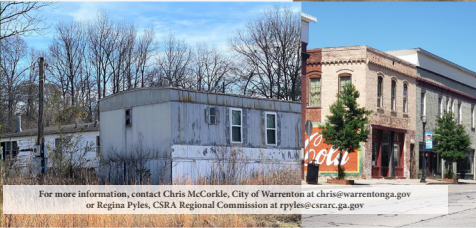
abating properties that contribute to blight and detract from neighborhoods

##### - Infrastructure

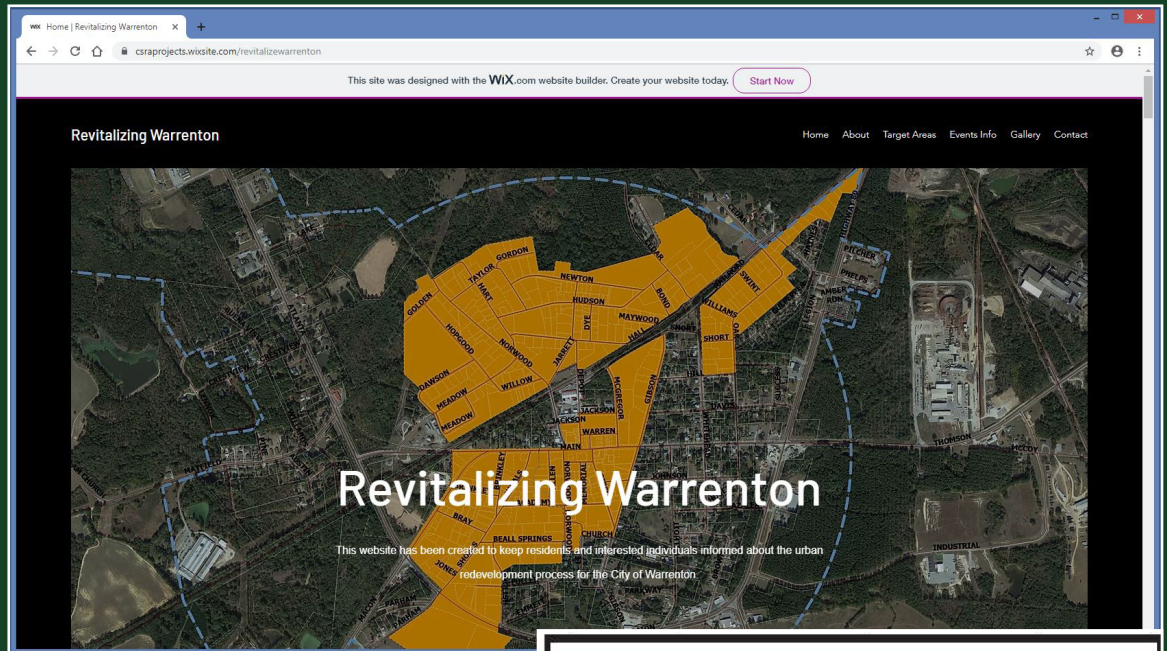
improving stormwater facilities, water and sewer systems, and streetscape

##### - Economic Development/Job Creation

providing economic strategies or incentives for attracting businesses, revitalization of unsightly properties, and reuse of existing buildings



For more information, contact Chris McCorkle, City of Warrenton at [chris@warrentonga.gov](mailto:chris@warrentonga.gov) or Regina Pyles, CSRA Regional Commission at [rpyles@csrac.org](mailto:rpyles@csrac.org)



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

### Warrenton Urban Redevelopment Plan

In accordance with the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. § 36-61-1 et. seq.), the City of Warrenton will hold a public hearing prior to a called meeting of the Mayor and City Council on Monday, March 30, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the City Hall, 29 Edward D. Ricketson Jr. St., Warrenton, Georgia. The purpose of the public hearing is to solicit community input on the proposed Warrenton Urban Redevelopment Plan. The redevelopment plan is being prepared in order to achieve the following goals:

- Develop attractive affordable and mixed-income housing opportunities.
- Initiate and support nuisance abatement activities.
- Provide infrastructure that generates neighborhood re-investment.
- Enable community commercial investment.

The urban redevelopment planning area includes the entire city and is roughly bounded by the city boundary. The boundaries of the planning area are variable and may be viewed by the public by visiting <https://csrac.ga.gov/>. Citizens can also access copies of the plan in advance of the public hearing by visiting <https://csrac.ga.gov/> or by contacting the CSRA Regional Commission at the information below.

Contact: Regina Pyles at 706-210-2000



Hometown Warrenton, Inc.  
February 19 - 6

Let your voice be heard! The City of Warrenton will host a community design workshop on Saturday, February 29, 2020 at the Warrenton Cultural Center (located at 226 S. Gibson Street) from 10am to 2pm. This drop-in workshop will support ongoing Urban Redevelopment and Revitalization Strategy Area efforts. Information will be provided on existing conditions and redevelopment objectives. There will be ample opportunity for citizen input on chosen target areas and future plans. Staff from the CSRA Regional Commission, Hometown Warrenton and the City of Warrenton will be onsite to answer questions and review concepts throughout the day.

#### JOIN US FOR A

### Community Design Workshop

Saturday, February 29th / 10am - 2pm

#### Warrenton Cultural Center

Drop in to discuss downtown improvements, city-wide needs, redevelopment target areas, and housing revitalization efforts.



Refreshments will be provided.  
See you there!





## CSRA Area Agency on Aging

March 9 at 10:07 AM · 🌐

Attention Warrenton residents, don't forget that you can view information on the Urban Redevelopment Plan here:

<https://csraprojects.wixsite.com/revitalizewarrenton>



So where is Warrenton?

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Discussion

Members

Events

Videos

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Recommendations

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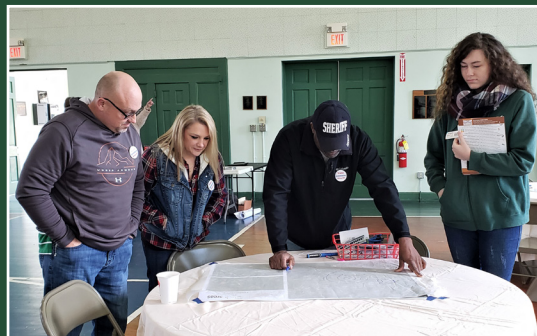
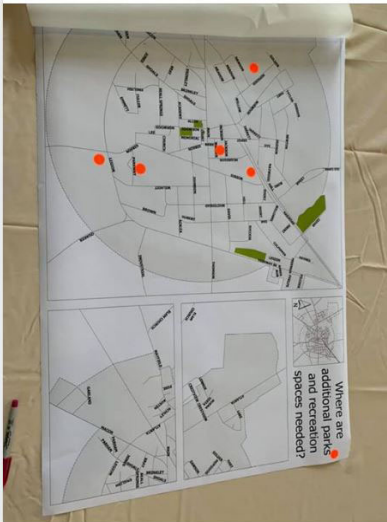
Join this group to post and co



Angela Wilkerson shared a post

February 29

Come join us in town today!



## COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Let your voice be heard! The City of Warrenton will host a Community Design Workshop on Saturday, February 29, 2020 at the Warrenton Cultural Center (located at 226 S. Gibson Street) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This drop-in workshop will support ongoing Urban Redevelopment and Revitalization Strategy Area efforts. Information will be provided on existing conditions and redevelopment objectives. There will be ample opportunity for citizen input on chosen target areas and future plans. Staff from the CSRA Regional Commission, Hometown Warrenton, and the City of Warrenton will be onsite to answer questions and review concepts throughout the day.

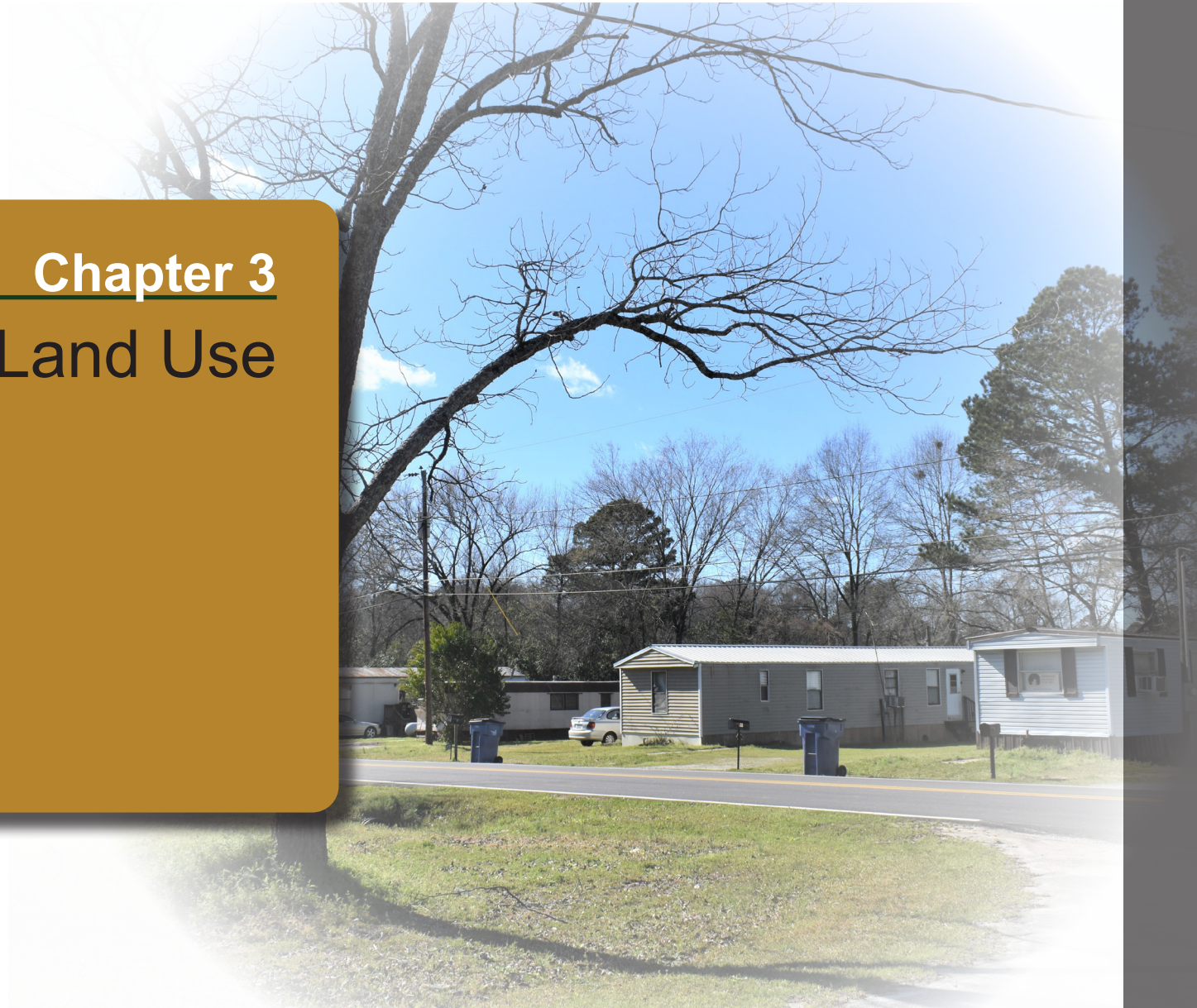


Equal Housing Opportunity



## Chapter 3

# Land Use



## Introduction to Land Use

The City of Warrenton is the county seat and urban core of Warren County. The area features a Main Street with a 'downtown' covering approximately 0.037 square miles ( $\approx$  23.5 acres), surrounded by neighborhoods of low-density residences. The town is physically divided nearly into northern and southern sections by a railroad track which traverses it from east to west. Aside from small service and retail establishments along Main Street, commercial and industrial uses are located around the periphery of town along higher-volume thoroughfares. Residential uses dominate the target areas with the exception of churches, and, less often, local service establishments such as day care centers and funeral homes, which can be found scattered throughout.

## Conditions, Codes, and Contracts

An analysis of three general parameters: conditions, contract, and codes is the basis for the calibration of the community's URP land use and design objectives. Understanding the "conditions" and needs of the redevelopment plan area is conducted through the "findings of necessity" for the URP. The existing conditions must be considered in conjunction with the goals and objectives listed within Warrenton's adopted land use and development plans - which comprise a "contract" with city residents. The cumulative knowledge has then been compared to the existing land use and development "codes" for a determination to be made regarding regulatory adjustments that are needed to facilitate effective implementation of the URP land use objectives summarized at the conclusion of this section.

## Existing Land Uses

Based on parcel data obtained from the Warren County Tax Assessor, the City of Warrenton contains approximately 2.25 square miles of land area, or 1,444.09 acres (ac). Approximately 27% of this land contains residential uses, accounting for 386.3 acres. Commercial uses occupy approximately 11% of land area, and public/institutional uses such as schools, churches, cemeteries and parks account for a combined 16%. Currently, greater than 45% of the land area within the city's jurisdiction (the study area) is vacant or undeveloped.

The City's most prevalent land use, residential, consists of three varieties: single-family site-built homes, manufactured/mobile homes, and multi-family residences. Much like surrounding counties, single-family dwellings, whether site-built or manufactured, make up the majority of local housing units. It is estimated that in the City of Warrenton, 79% of homes are single-family site-built residences. These homes account for 306.7 acres, with an average parcel size of 24,973 square feet (0.57 ac).

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Land Uses

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Residential	636	386.3	27%
Commercial	113	154.8	11%
Institutional	16	31.7	2%
Public	38	208.3	14%
Vacant	158	456.5	32%
Unclassified	22	206.4	14%
<i>Total</i>	<i>983</i>	<i>1,444</i>	<i>100%</i>



## Map 3.1 Existing Land Use

This map represents a review of the current use of land, not the land's zoning classification. Note that a site designated for a manufactured home may have another, traditionally built home on site.

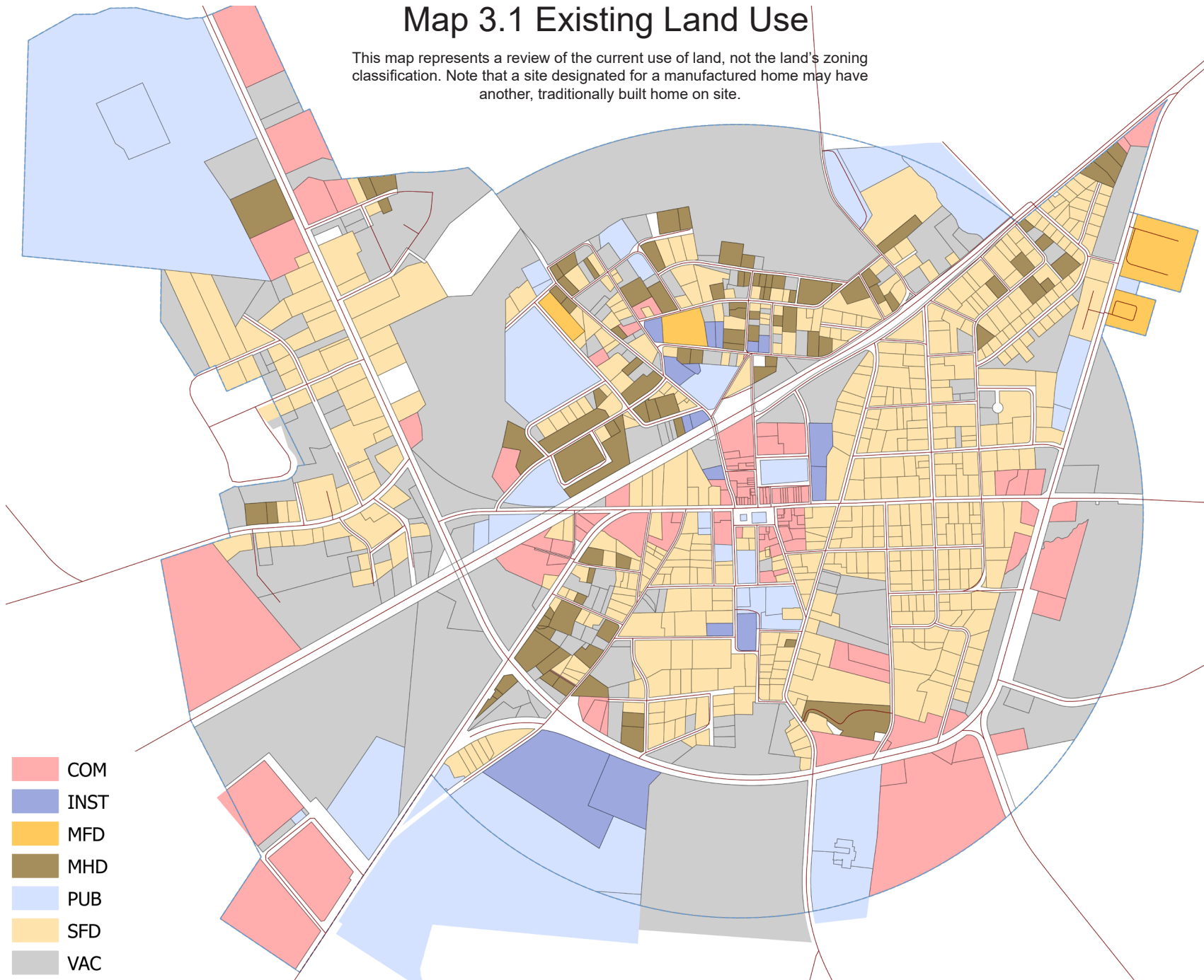




Figure 3.2: Distribution of Residential Land Uses

	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Single family	535	306.7	79%
Multi-family	4	15.8	4%
Manufactured Homes*	97	63.8	17%
Total	636	386.3	100%

\*nb: The calculation of land utilized for manufactured homes contains properties that may have two principal use dwellings on one parcel – one dwelling unit being a site-built home, and the other being a manufactured home. If a parcel contains a manufactured home, the parcel is considered to be for manufactured home use for these calculations.

The smallest single-family home parcel is estimated at 1,208 square feet (sf), while the largest is approximately 7.3 acres. Alternatively, manufactured homes occupy 17% of residential land, or approximately 63.8 acres. The average parcel size on which a manufactured home is situated is 28,647 sf, or 0.66 acres. Manufactured home lots range in size from 4,842 sf (0.11 ac) to 4.5 acres. Multi-family homes comprise the smallest residential category, occupying just 4% of residential land.





## Historic Preservation

Within Warrenton there are two structures and a district that are included in the National Register of Historic Places. One NR listed property, the Roberts MacGregor House, has been demolished, but has not been delisted. The Warren County Courthouse was NR listed in the statewide thematic nomination of county courthouses; however, the 2000 additions to the courthouse caused it to become a non-contributing resource. The Warren County Historical Society began a citywide NR nomination several years ago for all eligible historic properties within the city limits. A number of high style buildings are found, particularly along Main Street within the historic district. The northern part of Warrenton is mostly lower vernacular housing. In 1978, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources surveyed and recorded 80 buildings built between 1825 and 1940 in Warrenton as a part of a larger county-wide survey.

As previously noted, the commercial district in Warrenton is listed in the NRHP. However, there are numerous buildings within the district such as the Knox Theatre that need to be restored. In addition, there are facades in need of rehabilitation to blend in with the architectural theme of the downtown district. The Warrenton Gymnasium has been converted to a cultural/recreational center and is used for community events and the children's theater. Another resource of local importance is the Warrenton United Methodist Church located in downtown Warrenton. City officials and Hometown Warrenton should work together to activate a historic preservation commission and adopt an ordinance.



# **Zoning Ordinance & Subdivision Regulations**

## **Zoning Ordinance**

The current City of Warrenton Zoning Ordinance was originally adopted in 1992. It distinguishes between 4 principal land uses - residential, professional, commercial, and industrial - in 8 zoning districts. Residential uses are segmented into 3 categories based on the number of units: single-family, duplex, and multi-family, while mobile home parks constitute a separate residential zoning district. Commercial uses are classified as either 'general' or 'highway-oriented.' Professional and industrial uses are not differentiated by intensity.

The current zoning scheme does not strictly segregate uses, but allows mixture based on presumed similarity in intensity. This type of system is typically referred to as 'pyramid zoning,' because districts build in intensity, with higher districts commonly incorporating uses permitted in lower districts. At the 'top' of the zoning pyramid is the most intense use district, industrial, which permits commercial, professional and certain residential uses.

The current zoning ordinance is ideal for an urban environment, where concerns of urban form should take slight precedence over use. Accordingly, though, uses must be re-formatted to fit within the context where they are situated. When followed closely, development under this type of ordinance is contextually sensitive, with subsequent users required to screen, buffer, and often, to abstain from certain activities in the interest of maintaining a desirable neighborhood character for pre-existing users. Such a framework allows for ease of integration of a variety of uses in the same location over generations of continual urban redevelopment. Alternatively, spatially segregated, single-use sites often sit idle for years before a suitable user is found to update and resume use of the site and its facilities.

## **Subdivision Regulations**

While the zoning ordinance establishes minimum parcel sizes, setbacks, and buffering requirements, the City currently lacks subdivision regulations. Subdivision regulations contain prescriptions for street widths, block structure, curbing, installation of critical infrastructure, and allocation of space for varying modes of transportation via recorded easements. Subdivision regulations, while potentially demanding to administer for small municipalities, are a critical regulatory tool to shaping the character of local development. In the absence of such standards, development tends toward inefficiency in land consumption and inconsistency in the character and quality of development across neighborhoods.

# **Building and Nuisance Code**

## **Building Code**

Georgia's Uniform Codes Act (OCGA 8-2-20), mandates that all construction meet the standards outlined in the State's adopted minimum construction codes whether the standards are enforced locally or not. Warrenton currently does not employ a permitting staff. The City does issue certifications of zoning compliance, however, which substantiate that a structure is rightfully situated upon a lot, meeting requisite zoning setbacks.



## Nuisance Code

In 1992 the City adopted the 'Clean Community Ordinance,' which serves as its primary legal tool against nuisance from debris and noxious emissions. The ordinance essentially targets the accumulation of trash and other waste by owners or users of property, establishing an agency and system for the timely collection and disposal of such material. Though the ordinance gives functional authority for enforcement to a 'Superintendent of the Sanitation Department,' it also provides for broad enforcement by the office of the Mayor, Police Department, Roads Department, Building Official, or other authority necessary to effectively address any type of nuisance that may arise. Currently, Warrenton does not employ designated code enforcement officers.

## Guiding Principles for Land Uses

The Warren County Comprehensive Plan 2019-2029 identifies the City of Warrenton as part of the 'Community Node' character area. As the urban core of the county, this character area is envisioned to accommodate increased commercial and medium-to-high density residential use. Recommended implementation measures include: identification of areas where existing infrastructure is underutilized, incentivizing commercial development in targeted areas, and development of a plan to market the area to would-be members of the local business community.

The Urban Redevelopment Plan, however, is a more focused document, with the URP process filling the need for closer evaluation of current conditions than those provided within the comprehensive plan. The review of existing land uses and of the current regulatory framework provided in this section represent an evaluation of measurable and observable elements that can be utilized and improved to achieve the objectives of this document. These observations and objectives substantially inform the URP guiding principles for land use and implementation program that follow.

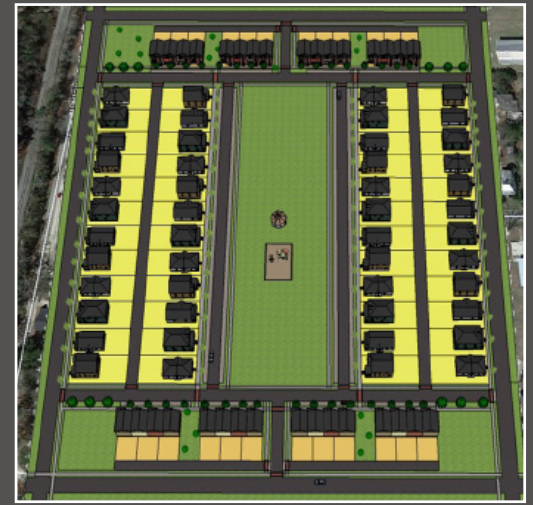
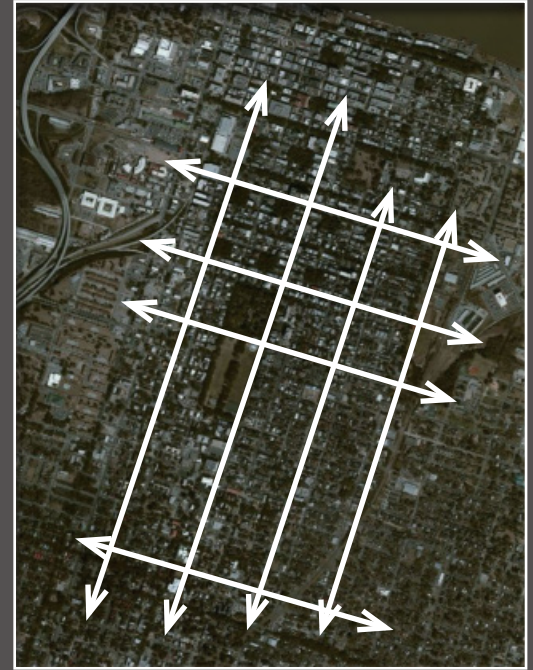
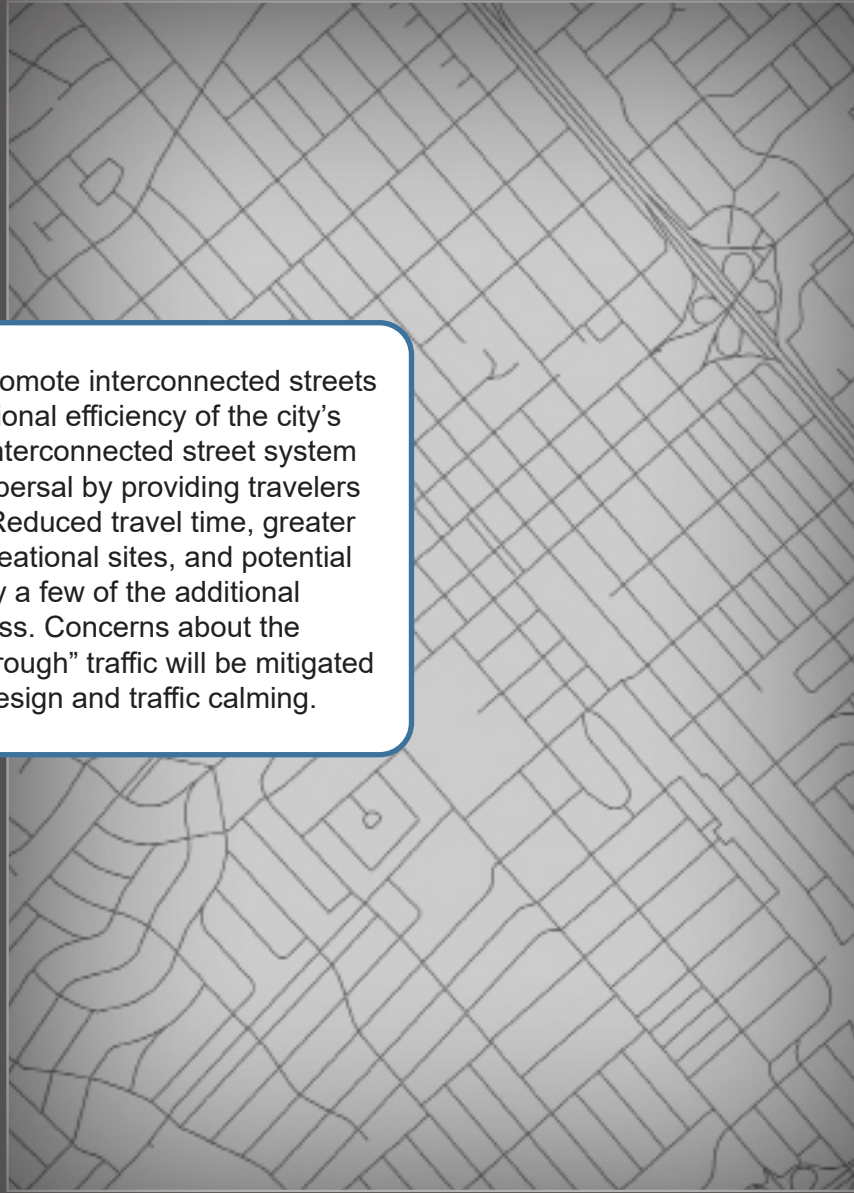
Guiding principles are land use policy statements that are addendums to the City of Warrenton's Comprehensive Plan. Adherence to these policies is necessary to successfully implement URP land use objectives. These guiding principles do not conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. They serve as supplements for, not replacements of, the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Appointed and elected officials should consider these principles when making decisions related to proposed zoning, subdivision, site planning, or other land development activity proposed for property within the redevelopment plan area.

### Principles for the Warrenton URP:

- Maintain a gridded network of interconnected streets.
- Maintain a block size that will support and promote the existing historic, small-town character of Warrenton.
- Increase the number of parks and greenspaces.
- Encourage creation of diverse housing types and densities within an environment of defined community character.
- Promote non-motorized transportation alternatives.

## Maintain a gridded network of interconnected streets.

The City of Warrenton will promote interconnected streets in order to improve the functional efficiency of the city's thoroughfare network. The interconnected street system facilitates effective traffic dispersal by providing travelers with multiple route options. Reduced travel time, greater access to retail centers, recreational sites, and potential employment centers are only a few of the additional benefits of interconnectedness. Concerns about the speed and volume of "cut-through" traffic will be mitigated by context-sensitive street design and traffic calming.

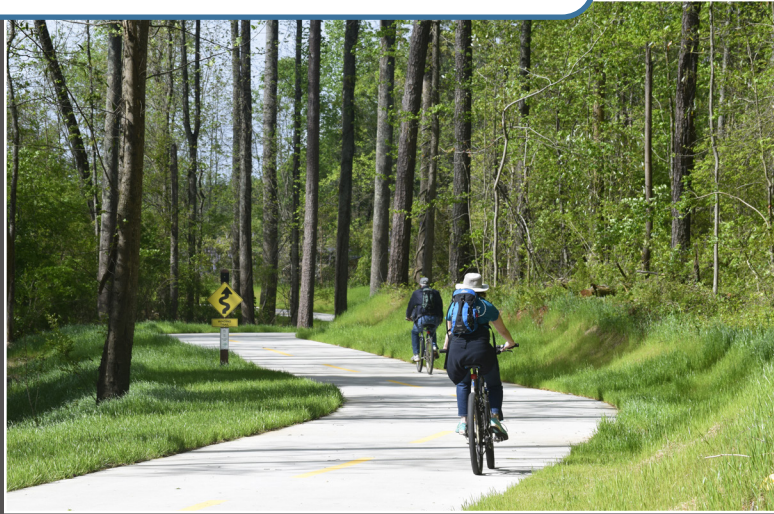




## Increase the number of parks and greenspaces.



The City of Warrenton will invest in the creation of public parks in multiple areas within the city to provide residents access to recreational areas. The creation of a city center park and public greenspaces is an amenity that improves the quality of life of residents and can provide an attraction for the community.





Encourage creation of diverse housing types and densities  
within an environment of defined community character.



The City of Warrenton will permit various housing types and densities within the urban redevelopment area. Adjustments to standard lot dimensions and current housing types established by the city's current code may be considered where they are offset by improvements to building design, provisions of accessible park or greenspace, the development of multifunctional neighborhood streets, and other similar considerations.

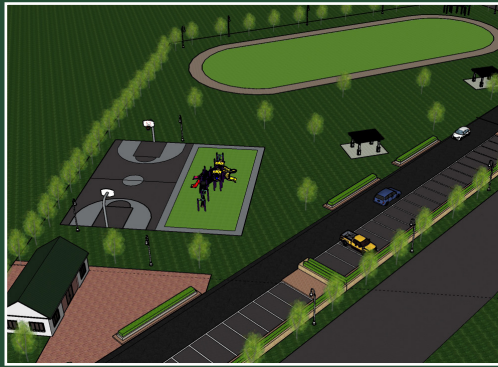




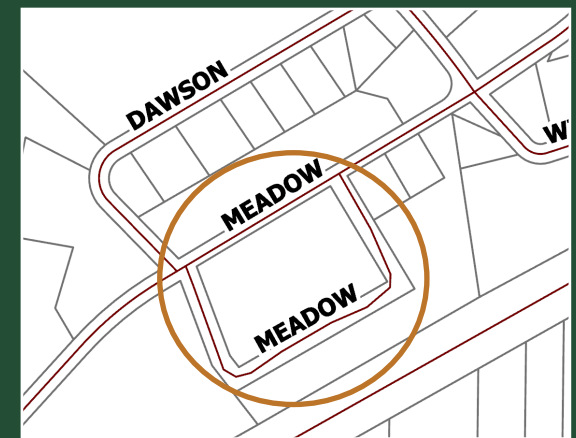
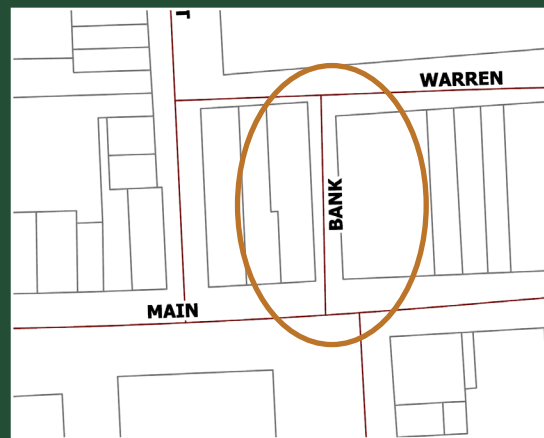
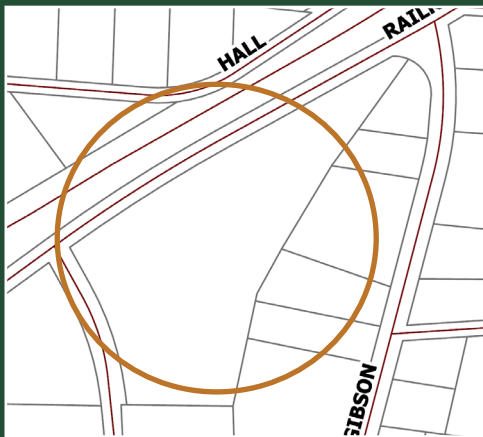
## Promote non-motorized transportation alternatives.

The City of Warrenton will promote non-motorized transportation within the URP by providing residents with on-street and off-street pedestrian and bicycle network improvements including: sidewalks, walkways, and multi-use trails. The provision of these network improvements is an acknowledgment that URP and city residents are not reliant on motor vehicles and that such infrastructure improvements expand employment and retail options and provides for healthier lifestyles through physical activity.





## Concept Plans



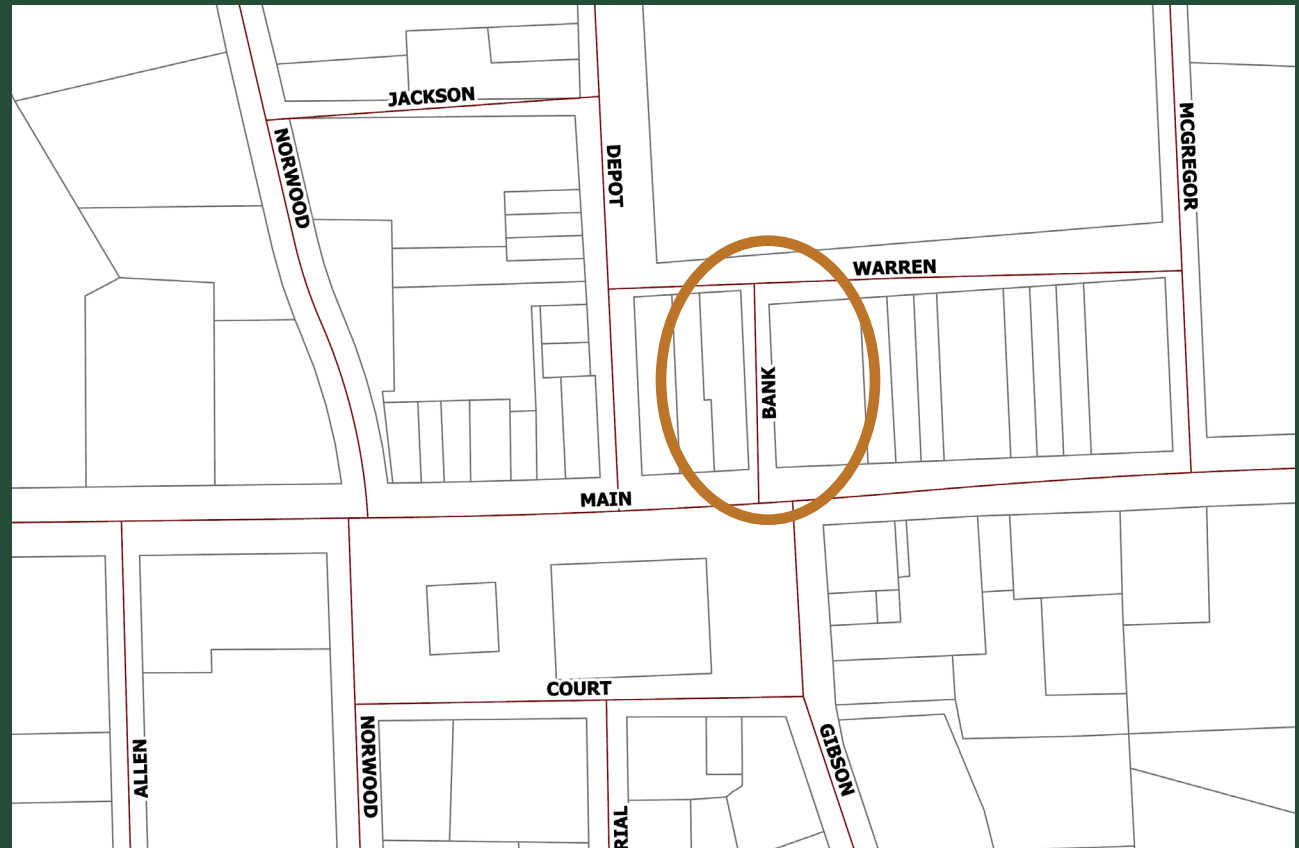


## Bank Street Outdoor Dining

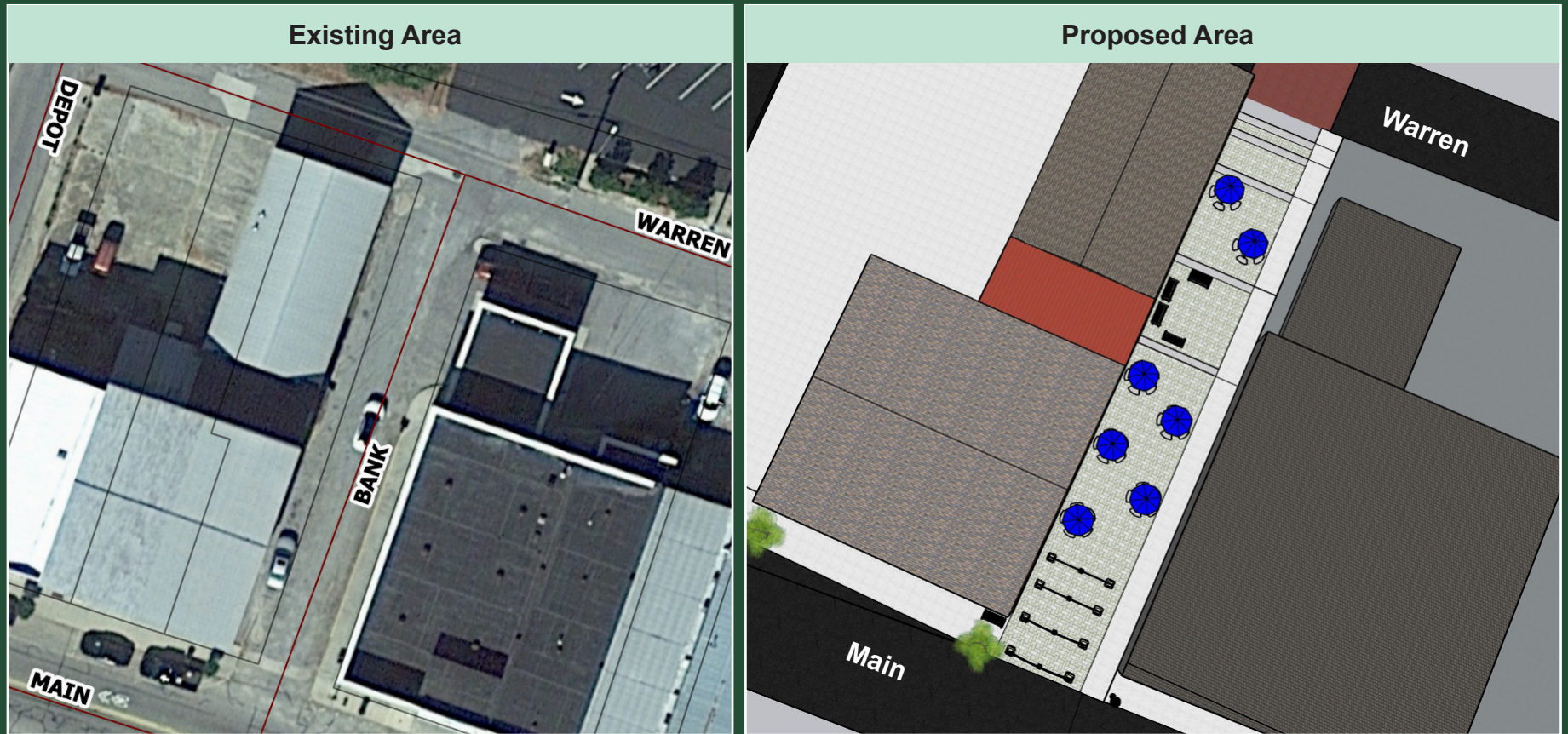
Bank Street is located in the heart of downtown Warrenton, between Warren and Main streets, north of the County Courthouse and next door to the old bank. It's other neighbor is an active local restaurant. Bank Street provides another direct connection to the Warren County Community Services Building. Conversations with stakeholders and a visual survey of downtown revealed that additional seating and outdoor dining opportunities downtown are desired. A concept plan was created to show how Bank Street could be closed to traffic and turned into an outdoor dining area. If Bank Street were closed to vehicle traffic, residents can still reach Warren Street by Depot and McGregor streets. No buildings will be removed in this plan.

This concept plan provides just one option for the redevelopment of Bank Street. Closing this street to vehicle traffic would do several things:

- add seating for the restaurant next door and others downtown
- provide additional outdoor gathering space for residents
- serve as a visual demonstration of city investment in downtown
- provide an enhanced pedestrian connection between Main and Warren Streets leading to the community services building
- remove a road from city maintenance rolls



## Bank Street Outdoor Dining



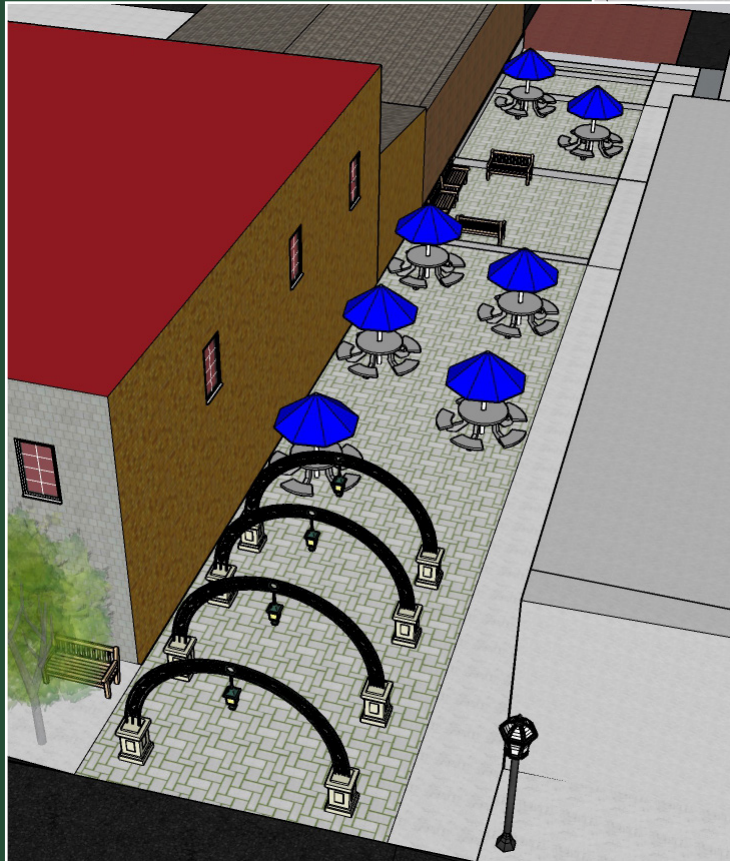
Based on the idea that people are attracted to areas of vitality, it is important to have places where residents and visitors can visually be seen and attract others to the area. Outdoor areas where residents and visitors can dine provide an opportunity for visual indicators to travelers of daily activity within the City of Warrenton; this may encourage travelers (or other residents) to stop and enjoy.



## Bank Street Outdoor Dining

This concept plan represents no current proposed plan. It is designed to present a potential image based on existing conditions.

Currently, Bank Street slopes down from Main Street toward Warren Street, so it doesn't appear immediately usable as an outdoor dining space. However, this can be resolved through terracing.



This multi-level approach creates several landings of different sizes as one moves through the site towards the bottom. This terraced arrangement opens up the site to a variety of seating arrangements. A stamped asphalt crosswalk creates the final pedestrian link to the parking area at the community services building.

The concept site plan maintains the current pedestrian facilities present onsite (existing sidewalk next to the old bank building). Continuing to improve upon the existing pedestrian facilities should increase the opportunity for residents to safely participate in physical activity.



## Bank Street Outdoor Dining

A Bank Street redevelopment provides a place where customers of the existing eating establishments can sit outside and enjoy their meals, as well as the traveling public and employees of nearby business/government buildings.

The development of this area as a pedestrian zone can also serve as a catalyst for further development of the other greenspaces surrounding the community services building on Warren Street.

Additionally, this new space creates an opportunity to update and utilize the facades of the neighboring buildings. As the work of Hometown Warrenton and its promotion of outdoor art increases, a new installation can be placed here.



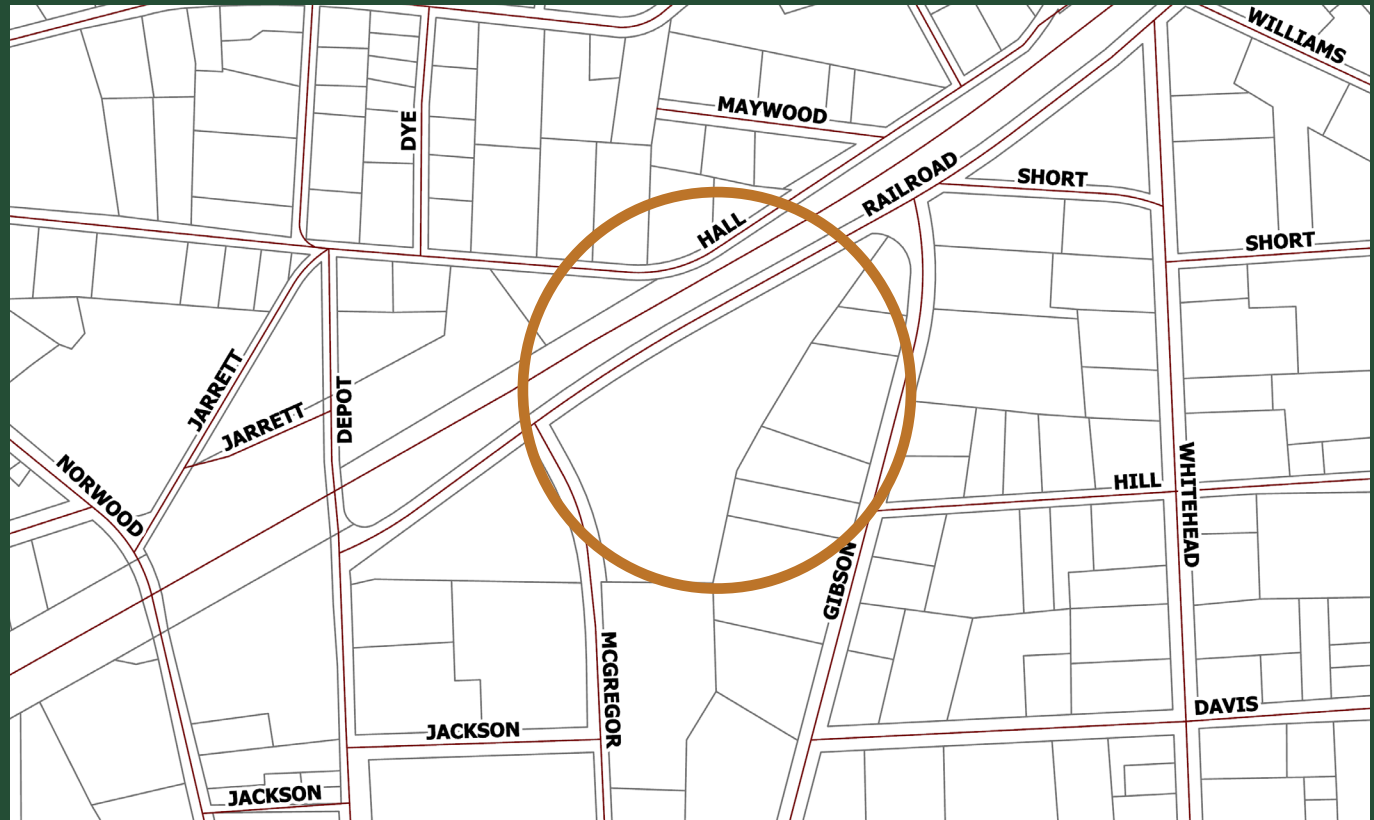


## Railroad Street Park

Railroad Street in Warrenton serves as part of the northeast entrance to the city from Highway 80. It lies north of the historic downtown area and terminates at Depot Street. During the community design workshop, community members notated several locations where a new park or recreation space was needed, and the property located between Gibson and McGregor streets. Bounded by the railroad to the north, the property is one large parcel and is currently owned by CSX Transportation, Inc. This area is predominantly residential to the east and north and commercial to the west. There are also several vacant parcels nearby.

This concept plan provides just one option for the redevelopment of this area and doesn't represent any current proposed plan. Covering several acres, the parcel is large enough to accommodate several park/recreation amenities and parking.

A neighborhood park will provide residents in this area and the city access to a substantial open space. A greenspace can provide a safe place for children to play without endangering their lives and increase property values for the area.



## Railroad Street Park

Existing Area



Proposed Area



The expansion of the city park and recreation system should be fully considered in order to increase resident access to these spaces in neighborhoods across the city and increase opportunity for physical activity. This location provides a park space within walking distance to residential areas. Sufficient parking will also enable residents with vehicles to visit the area.



## Railroad Street Park



## Meadow Circle Housing

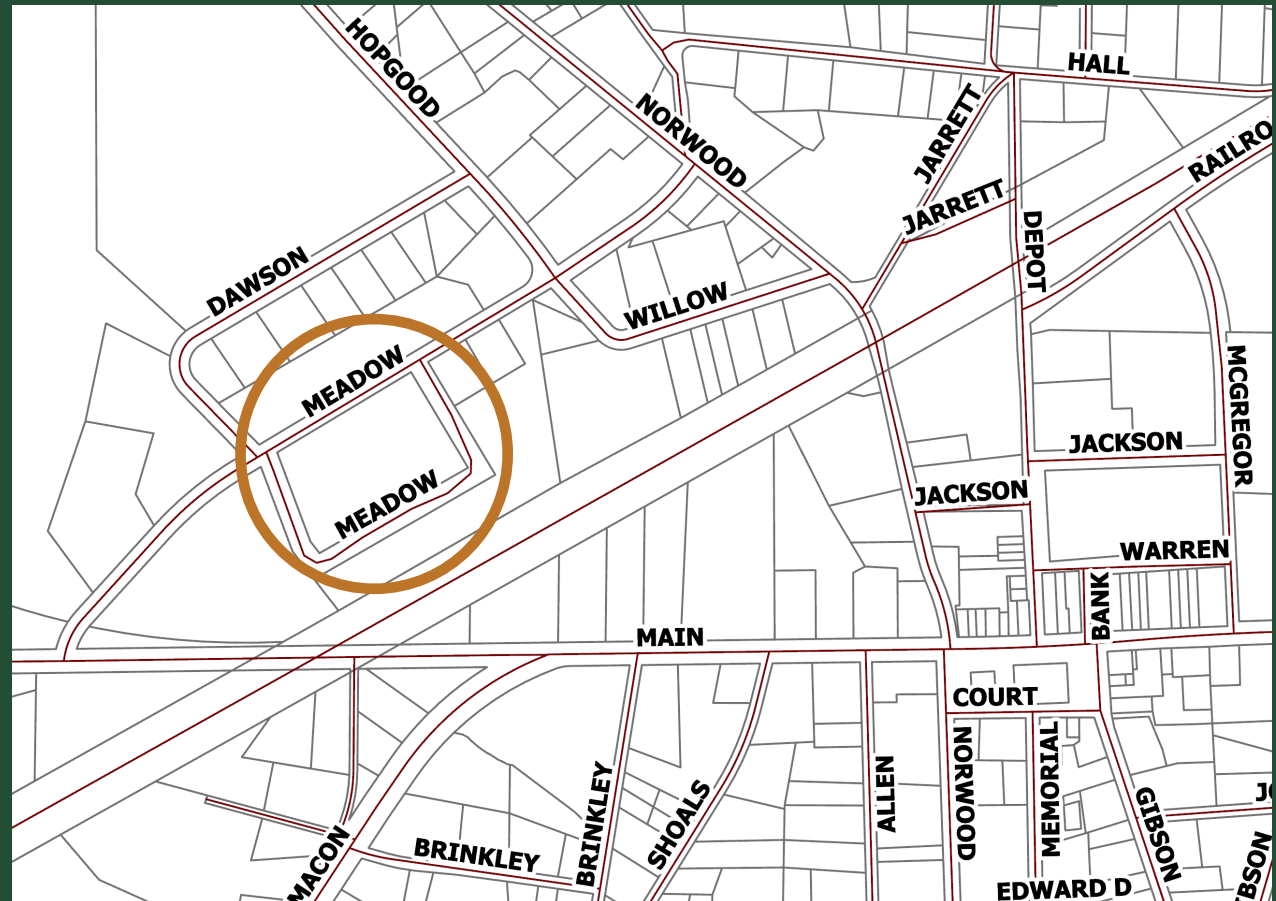
The Meadow Circle area is located north of the railroad tracks (Target Area 1), just minutes from Main Street. Meadow Circle and the surrounding area are dominated by residential land use, primarily manufactured homes and single-family units. The Meadow Circle property is one large parcel (5.41 acres) with several “lots” on which approximately 12 mobile homes sit in a variety of configurations. For the purposes of this concept plan, the Meadow Circle block is displayed.

However, these same principles could be applied on the other side of Meadow Road, where it intersects with Dawson Street, to create a cohesive style along that section of the Meadow Road corridor.

This concept plan provides only one option for redevelopment and does not reflect any current proposed plan for the area. Changes that could be achieved in this area by redeveloping this block include:

- increased density
- standardizing parcel size through subdivision
- creating home ownership opportunity
- additional street connectivity
- introducing new housing types
- additional community/park space
- inclusion of pedestrian facilities

Standardization of lot sizes allows an increase in residential units within the same area and provides shared amenities.



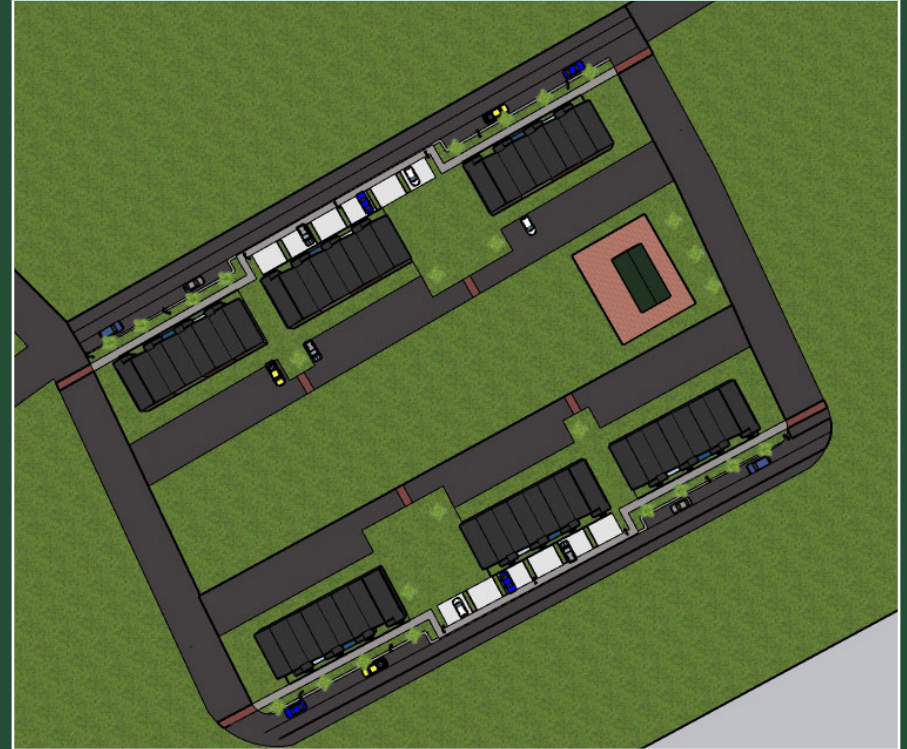


## Meadow Circle Housing

Existing Area



Proposed Area



This area should be considered for the application of a mixed-income housing scheme which includes a mixture of market-rate housing mixed with housing offered at a more affordable price. This approach would provide options to potential residents (such as retail workers, teachers and public service workers) that may otherwise struggle with housing affordability. Units designated as affordable should be built to the same standards as market-rate residential units. Developers may be more inclined to provide affordable units if the development is allowed to increase density.



## Meadow Circle Housing



Increasing residential density can be beneficial to both the community and potential developer as both have the opportunity to increase the tax base and revenue. The city has the potential to add to its tax base, and the developer can potentially sell more lots. Design requirements would ensure that any increased density will not detract from area aesthetics.

Changing the type and density of housing in Meadow Circle can compliment and diversify the residential makeup of the larger area beyond Meadow Road.

The concept site plan also contains pedestrian facilities and highlights elements like crosswalks that alert drivers to walking residents.

This Providing pedestrian facilities should increase the opportunity for residents to safely participate in physical activity.



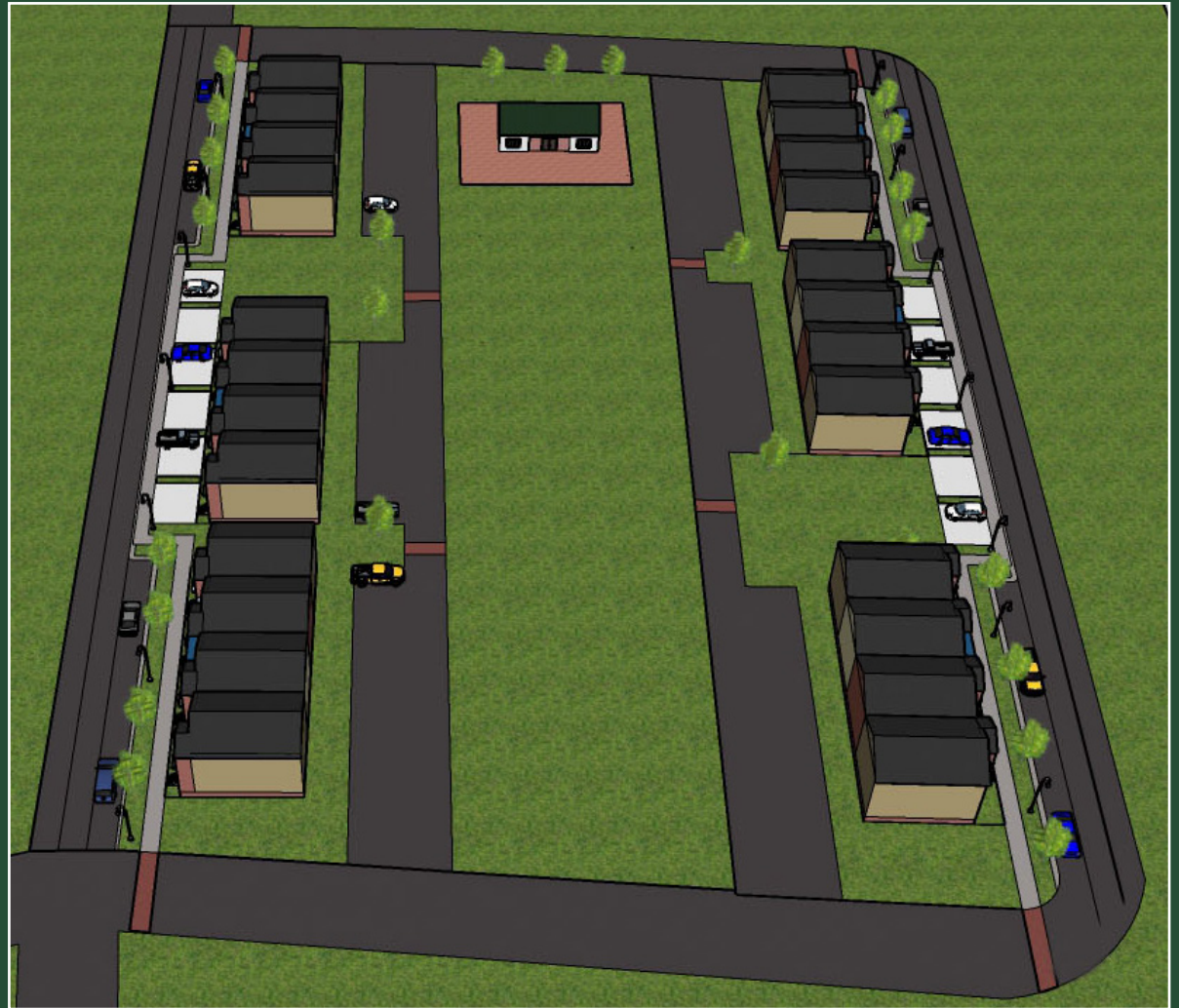


## Meadow Circle Housing

A proposed public greenspace as a center piece for this conceptual site plan provides multiple benefits for both the neighborhood and the city. This area creates a safe place for physical activity for both adults and children. It can also serve as gathering place for community activities and provides an attractive amenity that potential residents look for when choosing a neighborhood in which to reside.

An interconnected street system is another necessary design element that should be incorporated into any proposed residential development. This provides convenient movement throughout neighborhoods and allows residents to better enjoy the area in which they live.

The conceptual site plan proposed for this area provides greater vehicular access to and within the proposed development. Rear parking is suggested to allow both residential unit access and additional parking for visitors to the community greenspace.









## **Chapter 4**

# Implementation Program



## Final Goals and Objectives

- **Develop attractive, affordable and mixed-income housing opportunities.**
- **Initiate and support nuisance abatement activities.**
- **Provide infrastructure that generates neighborhood re-investment.**
- **Enable community commercial investment.**

### **Goal 1 - Develop attractive, affordable and mixed-income housing opportunities.**

#### **OBJECTIVE: INITIATE THE REHABILITATION / RECONSTRUCTION OF DILAPIDATED HOUSING UNITS**

Issue: The existing conditions within the redevelopment area do little to attract private housing investment through rehabilitation or new construction.

##### Findings:

- There are a number of low-income homeowners in the redevelopment area that live in housing units which require a limited amount of repair to their homes in order to meet minimum building code standards for health and safety.
- Deferred maintenance on single-family occupied homes that exhibit minor deterioration may be a result of a lack of resources or lack of knowledge regarding available financial resources.
- Few new building permits have been issued for detached single-family residential units in the last several years.
- Warrenton is committed to focusing redevelopment efforts in some of its most economically deprived areas.
- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs administers Community Housing Investment Program which can be used by local governments for a housing / rehabilitation loan program. These funds must be used for repairs necessary on a home to meet minimum building codes.
- The City of Warrenton has been recognized as a GICH community and completed a housing action plan in 2018.

##### Recommendations:

- Prior to submitting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application, budget an appropriate amount of city funds to begin necessary improvements
- Submit a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs concurrently with Community HOME Investment Program and Community Development Block Grant submittal.
- Initiate an application for DCA's Plan First program in order to be eligible to apply for CDBG annually.
- Work with local lending institutions to assist in home equity lending paperwork that is generated as part of a rehabilitation loan program implementation. Secure commitments for publicly supported or traditional GAP financing for participants whose overall cost may exceed estimated cost of repairs.



## Goal 1 - Develop attractive, affordable and mixed-income housing opportunities.

### OBJECTIVE: CREATE MIXED INCOME HOUSING WITHIN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Issue: There is a concentration of poverty and low-income housing and lack of housing options in the redevelopment area.

#### Findings:

- There is a substantial number of mobile homes located within the redevelopment area providing housing for low-income residents.
- There are several EGA Housing Authority properties located within the redevelopment study area, some in need of repair or unable to expand to meet future community needs.
- The predominant housing type is single-family detached.
- The Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law (Sec. 36-61-10) allows for local governments to work directly with private developers for residential (and other) uses rather require a transfer through a development authority.
- A special zoning district may need to be placed over several areas within the redevelopment area in order to allow for creative development to occur within the area.

#### Recommendations:

- Focus on creating a mixture of market-rate and affordable housing in the redevelopment area.
- Initiate community driven design standards for residential development within certain areas of the redevelopment area.
- Allow the development process to guide development according to governing principals presented in Chapter 3.
- Include in conceptual site plans an estimate of cost of infrastructure improvement.
- Attract a developer willing to work with the community to identify elements desired by the community and place them within the planned development.
- Create a "Planned Unit Development" zoning district or special overlay district to provide developers the opportunity to present unique development designs in certain areas.
- Target multi-story buildings within the redevelopment area for second-floor residential.
- Work with historic preservation specialist to provide insight in modifying downtown buildings to provide residential units in two-story buildings
- Allow and establish standards for accessory dwelling units in all residential zoning districts.

## Goal 1 - Develop attractive, affordable and mixed-income housing opportunities.

### OBJECTIVE: ATTRACT PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Issue: Existing conditions in the redevelopment area do little to attract private housing investment either through rehabilitation or new construction.

#### Findings:

- A visual survey of housing within the redevelopment area has identified a number of deteriorated and dilapidated homes.
- A number of low-income homeowners and residents reside within the redevelopment area.
- Appropriate infrastructure in the redevelopment area is not adequate to provide basic services (e.g. stormwater drainage).
- There exists a lack of street interconnectivity and pedestrian facilities.
- Neighborhoods lack defining character.

#### Recommendations:

- Submit a neighborhood Revitalization Strategy to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs concurrently with an application for the Community HOME Investment Program and CDBG application.
- Initiate tax and fee abatements to attract private developers to the area or to encourage homeowners to clean up properties.
- Engage residents in the creation of a concept plan, design guidelines or a draft ordinance to incorporate ideas from resident meetings.

## Goal 2 - Initiate and support nuisance abatement activities.

### OBJECTIVE: ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Issue: Warrenton has a zoning ordinance and permit process that isn't currently adhered to by residents or enforced by the city.

#### Findings:

- Many properties are out of compliance with the Clean Community Ordinance.
- There are no city staff assigned to code enforcement.
- No structure of fines and fees exists to hold property owners accountable for maintenance/upkeep.
- The current zoning doesn't fully address the slate of residential development opportunities or mixed-use development.
- Manufactured homes lack cohesive design elements such as cladding, skirting, and landings.

#### Recommendations:

- Dedicate funds for a part time code enforcement position that becomes full time and a part-time administrative assistant.
- Work with the CSRA RC to review/update current zoning ordinance.
- Establish baseline subdivision regulations.
- Update applications and application process for zoning actions.
- Create a fee structure for code violations and applications.
- Consider regulations to keep adjoining lots relatively proportional in size for the same use. Adjoining single-family lots in a block should maintain similar sizes; discourage lot combinations for the purpose of building homes significantly larger than those nearby.
- Consider establishing or partnering with a land bank authority.



### **Goal 3 - Provide infrastructure that generates neighborhood re-investment.**

#### **OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA**

Issue: Several roadways in the redevelopment area lack adequate stormwater drainage and adequate non-motorized transportation facilities.

##### Findings:

- Improper stormwater drainage exists throughout the city.
- Streets with flooding issues include Hopgood, Warren, Hill, Shoals, Beall Springs, Main, and Hall.
- The City of Warrenton has actively worked to address infrastructure issues through the use of Community Development Block Grant.
- Redevelopment by private developers may be hampered by a lack of adequate infrastructure as the cost associated with new or improved infrastructure increases the cost associated with development. This may reduce profit margins to the point where private financing may not be feasible.
- Downtown is not fully connected to neighboring residential by sidewalk and/or bike path. Streets such as Norwood and Allen would benefit from sidewalks.

##### Recommendations:

- Provide sidewalks in areas heavily trafficked by pedestrians.
- Continue applying for Community Development Block Grants in order to address infrastructure needs during future funding cycles.
- Prior to submitting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application, budget an appropriate amount of city funds to begin necessary improvements
- Initiate an application for DCA's Plan First program in order to be eligible to apply for CDBG annually.
- Adopt alternative street standards for alternative stormwater facilities (including bio-swales) to help eliminate stormwater issues.
- Submit a Neighborhood Revitalization Area Strategy to the Georgia DCA concurrently with Community HOME Investment

### **Goal 3 - Provide infrastructure that generates neighborhood re-investment.**

#### **OBJECTIVE: CREATE A GATEWAY THAT ATTRACTS VISITORS TO DOWNTOWN WARRENTON**

Issue: Downtown is not immediately noticeable from the main roadways on which most visitors use to pass through/by the city.

##### Findings:

- At least one major intersection has no attraction to draw people into downtown.
- No significant monument signage is present at city or downtown entry points.

##### Recommendations:

- Updated monument signage reflecting the character of the historic community
- Reconstruct a major intersection with Main St. to include a city seal within the intersection to provide a noticeable landmark for visitors to enter the city
- Place a large-scale piece of art at the other major Main St. intersection to provide a noticeable landmark for visitors to enter the city.

## Goal 4 - Enable community commercial investment.

### OBJECTIVE: IDENTIFY METHODS FOR REINVIGORATING DOWNTOWN WARRENTON

Issue: Many storefronts are vacant, dilapidated or have limited operating hours; capacity exists for additional uses beyond commercial in the area.

#### Findings:

- A visual survey conducted by staff has observed a number of closed storefronts.
- The city has invested in downtown with façade grants.
- Residents have a desire for additional outdoor space for dining and recreation.
- The Knox theater needs additional renovations to be viable.
- City-wide retail and dining are not meeting demand.
- Several buildings downtown could support residential units.
- Downtown lacks adequate way-finding signage.
- Affordable highspeed internet would benefit both commercial and residential users.

#### Recommendations:

- Determine the appropriateness of and initiate fee abatements in a designated geographic area along Main Street in order to encourage new business in the area.
- Consider the creation of an Enterprise Zone within a defined area to provide tax abatements for potential occupants.
- Install street furniture and street trees where appropriate.
- Apply for DCA Rural Zone designation.
- Consider developing a public art campaign downtown, including sculptures/freestanding art and murals.
- Pursue additional funds for Knox Theater renovations.
- Consider closing off Bank Street (between Main and Warren) to street traffic to create a pedestrian area and terraced outdoor dining space.
- Review properties in the downtown area for siting a new community park/rec/outdoor entertaining space.
- Pursue additional broadband deployment.
- Create an incentive package for recruiting downtown businesses and developers of loft/upper floor apartments.



## Implementation Parameters

### Designation of an Implementation Agency

The City of Warrenton is designated as the implementing agency of the Warrenton Urban Redevelopment Plan. All power and oversight of the redevelopment plan shall be vested in the city. The city can partner or contract with other entities to provide products, services, or programs in support of the redevelopment plan implementation. By partnering or contracting with another entity for the purpose of implementing portions of the redevelopment plan, the City of Warrenton does not cede any of its authority as a municipality.

### Partnering Agencies

In order to effectively implement the URP, the City of Warrenton must partner with other agencies. City staff are a crucial piece to seeing the plan to fruition. Changes and additions to the zoning ordinance and code compliance will require direct staff oversight and participation.

There are several local, regional, state, and federal agencies that will be good partners in implementation. The East GA Housing Authority can help identify housing in need of redevelopment and opportunities to improve public housing. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Municipal Association can serve as valuable advisors to the City of Warrenton. The Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission (CSRA-RC) can assist with obtaining CDBG funding, Plan First Community designation, Rural Zone designation, and Community Housing Improvement Program funding. The CSRA-RC also has the resources to prepare code amendments and new zoning/subdivision regulations. The CSRA Economic Opportunity Authority offers home weatherization assistance to low-income households, a matched savings program for first-time home-buyers in Warren County, home-buyer education courses, credit counseling, and home maintenance training. Lastly, USDA Rural Development provides income-based loans, loan guarantees, and grants to residents seeking to purchase, build, and/or repair homes.

### Neighborhood Revitalization Area Strategy

Maximum access to CDBGs and CHIP funds is essential to the implementation of the URP. In the first year of the implementation schedule, the City of Warrenton should prepare to submit a neighborhood Revitalization Area Strategy (RAS) to Georgia DCA for Target Area 4 (aka Shoals Street). A DCA-approved RAS increases the chances of a receiving CDBG or CHIP funds. It also allows the city to apply for CDBG funds for three consecutive years – regardless of whether funding was awarded the previous year. Following a successful RAS submittal for Target Area 4, an RAS should be submitted for Target Area 1 (aka Hudson Street). All RASs should be reevaluated after initial approval.

### Nuisance Property Abatement

One critical piece to addressing nuisance issues is deploying a code enforcement process to deploy an enforcement officer to engage with local residents and absentee property owners on an on-going basis. This effort will ensure continual attention on eliminating dilapidated structures beyond repair and reducing nuisances. The city can begin its efforts by engaging the Warren County planning/zoning staff for part-time assistance. The city and county have also expressed interest in consolidating their respective codes into one code and sharing staff. This could lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in enforcement efforts. Over time, the City of Warrenton must continue to support the efforts of the code enforcement officer through adjustments to the city ordinance and enforcement policies when the code enforcement officer finds deficiencies or when changes to the ordinance can alleviate barriers for the code enforcement officer to initiate action. Continued support of code enforcement activities will lead to a cleaner, more aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.

## **Infrastructure Priorities**

The City of Warrenton has a number of infrastructure priorities that should be addressed over the next several years, including, but not limited to stormwater and pedestrian facilities. Stormwater drainage is an issue that needs to be addressed as residents of this neighborhood are adversely affected by rain events causing difficulties on their property and in public right-of-way. Shoals and Beall Springs streets have significant flooding issues that should be addressed as a high priority. Downtown sidewalks on streets directly connected to neighborhoods should be made a priority. Additionally, efforts to establish increased broadband speeds at competitive prices for residential and commercial customers should be prioritized, as this will improve resident quality of life and help business recruitment.

## **Resident Relocation**

Options for relocation include the following:

Relocation to a Family Property: This option must include subsidization of the host household including funding for increased cost of food and utilities.

Relocation to a Managed Property: May include subsidized units operated by the local housing authority or privately-owned rental units within the community or hotel space if the relocation is temporary.

Relocation to a New Unit: Depending on the project schedule, a displaced household should be presented with the option to move into a finished new vacant and affordable unit constructed in an earlier phase of the project.

Relocation activities conducted within the City of Warrenton shall conform to the Uniform Act Administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Limited residential relocation may be funded through a portion of Community Development Block Grants, Community Housing Improvement Program, and U.S. Housing and Urban Development funds designated to the specific activity that is causing the relocation.

## **Design Standards**

Design standards can address many of the elements necessary for a long-lasting, attractive residential development. Elements that should be included are, but not limited to, building features, site planning, and street-scape design. Standards for design are important in creating attractive neighborhoods that result in buildings, structures, and amenities that maintain their value over time. Building and street design standards should be adopted and in place prior to any residential development occurring. Design standards should also follow policies listed in the “Governing Principals” section of Chapter 3 (Land Use). Design Standards adoption may take place as follows:

- The City should create subdivision regulations that represent the desired vision of residential development in the city. This may happen separate from the county regulations. Creation and adoption of these regulations should occur within years 3-5 of the implementation schedule.
- Design standards can be developed in conjunction with subdivision regulations as a separate document that is incorporated into both the subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance.



Long-term preferred building design standards may be applied to specific areas of the city through overlay zoning districts and alternative street standards may be adopted by Warrenton as part of, or amendments to, the subdivision regulations.

Design and street standards should be completed by the end of the five year time-frame of the implementation schedule. City staff should require development applicants to apply elements of the governing principals in Chapter 3 during the preparation of proposed site plans. The Urban Redevelopment Law gives cities the ability to implement standards in the urban redevelopment plan without the adoption of these standards in the ordinance. This allows the city to begin using these standards once adopted to ensure consistency of development.

## **Redevelopment Tools**

This section summarizes some development tools that can be used to stimulate economic activity and support new residential development within targeted areas of the redevelopment area. The list is not all-inclusive.

### **Fee Abatements**

The City of Warrenton may opt to waive a variety of development-related fees to encourage investment activity in the redevelopment area. Fees the city may waive include, but are not limited to: zoning and subdivision application fees, building permit and inspection fees, business license fees, water and sewer tap fees, etc. The city is not obligated to tie the waiver of these fees to an Enterprise Zone, which may be limited in geographic area and whose tax exemption provisions extinguish over time. Unless tied to an Enterprise Zone with differing boundaries, a potential fee abatement package should only be applied to areas where the focus is to attract businesses. It is recommended that fee abatements be considered in the downtown and surrounding areas.

Warrenton is advised to offer fee abatement packages only to those property development interests that commit to or are compelled to adhere to the design vision and pending regulations presented in this document. It is strongly advised that the City of Warrenton waive fees in a consistent manner and only after a resolution that establishes the parameters of the fee abatement package is adopted. The scope of the offered incentives should not be on a case-by-case basis. It is recommended that any fee abatement package offered by the city be subject to annual review and renewal by the mayor and city council. Fee abatements should be allowed to phase out or immediately end once development activity becomes substantial in the targeted area.

### **Housing and Infrastructure**

The City of Warrenton currently uses Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) - which may be utilized for land acquisition, clearance, and infrastructure improvements and the Community Housing Improvement Program grants - which are geared to low-to-mid income households funds for housing rehabilitation and home buyer down payment assistance. These programs have benefited multiple residents within the redevelopment area. The city should continue to utilize these programs to help more residents in the future. It should also consider marketing programs funded through USDA that homeowners can take advantage of directly. Additionally, the use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funds may enable larger mixed income developments to be created; partnering with a developer with experience in LIHTC may be beneficial in this area.

## **Tax Incentives**

The City of Warrenton is already included in a federal Opportunity Zone covering a portion of Warren County. The city can consider establishing an Enterprise Zone once a suitable business has been identified and ready to locate within a city-defined geographic area. The Enterprise Zone provides businesses with tax exemptions and the Opportunity Zone can provide job tax credits. It is important to note that the establishment of these economic incentive zones need not occur unless an employer of substantial size considers locating within a certain area. Implementing these zones otherwise may financially harm the City of Warrenton.

Another opportunity is applying for a Rural Zone designation through the Department of Community Affairs. Up to ten (10) zones will be designated each year. Tax credits can be layered on top of each other for the following: job creation activities, investment in downtown properties, and renovation of properties to make them usable.

## **Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST)**

The TSPLOST was enacted in 2012 in the CSRA as a whole region. CSRA was one of only three (3) regions in the state to pass the tax. The TSPLOST is a 10-year one percent sales tax to fund regional and local transportation improvements. Over the last 8 years, over \$400 million has been collected region-wide. Seventy-five percent of the regional TIA funds is used on the project list approved by the voters. The remaining twenty-five percent is divided among all jurisdictions in the region as discretionary funds. "In accordance to Code 48-8-242(10), discretionary funds can be used on any new or existing transportation projects, such as airports, roads, bridges, mass transit, ports, terminals, bike lanes, pedestrian facilities, etc., including operations and maintenance thereof. Discretionary funds may also be used as a local match for state and/or federal funding." A portion of Warrenton's discretionary funds should be used to support projects within the redevelopment target areas. These funds could be used for roadway beautification, transportation alternatives, or roadway improvement within the redevelopment area.

## **Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program**

The Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program (LMIG) provides funds for multiple projects related to roadways including, sidewalks along roadways, intersection improvements, and preliminary engineering. If acquired, these funds may be used for roadway improvements and some pedestrian facilities. Because Warrenton is in a TIA region, its LMIG match requirement is reduced from 30% to 10%.

## **Redevelopment Fund Program**

The Redevelopment Fund Program is a Georgia Department of Community Affairs administered program which provides local governments access to flexible financial assistance to help implement projects which cannot be undertaken by usual public sector grant and loan programs. This program does not use the same standards as CDBGs in order to determine funding for a project and thus is able to fund smaller scale projects that (similar to CDBGs) have the objective of eliminating "slums and blight."

## **Main Street Program**

Warrenton participates in the Georgia Main Street Program as a Classic Main Street (Hometown Warrenton). According to the program, "All Classic Main Street Programs are designated by the state of Georgia and nationally accredited by the National Main Street Center annually.



As part of the annual accreditation process all Classic Main Street communities are required to meet the 10 standards for accreditation. These standards place an emphasis on historic preservation education as well as economic development lending itself to an active and vibrant downtown.”

The Main Street program provides downtown development assistance in order to improve the quality of life for downtowns. Georgia Main Street provides technical assistance, manager/board training, and regional networking sessions which assist local governments in building a stronger local economy.

Warrenton should strive to become a part of Georgia Exceptional Main Streets (GEMS). Special technical services and discounted training are offered to these communities.

## **Alternative Redevelopment Tools**

The implementation parameters identified in the previous sections of Chapter 4 do not represent a comprehensive list of tools that can be used by Warrenton for redevelopment purposes. There are other methods the city may opt to utilize in order to generate new investment in blighted and under-utilized portions of the community. This section of the redevelopment plan provides a concise summary of programs which were considered in preparation of the plan, but were ultimately determined not to represent the best methods for achieving the city’s redevelopment goals at this time. Should the city determine at a later date that some of the programs listed in this section may in fact be useful in exercising the redevelopment plan’s implementation program, amendment of the redevelopment plan should not be necessary (unless otherwise stated).

### **Tax Allocation District**

This URP advocates the use of tax exemptions/credit tools rather than tax financing. The city also does not yet have a private development partner that would make the use of a tax allocation district feasible at this time.

### **Business Improvement District**

City Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are special districts where the property owners agree to be taxed at a higher rate in comparison to the rest of the community. This added revenue is used to provide services within the district that may be missing. Similar to TAD’s, lethargic business activity in downtown may make the support of a BID unfeasible. The value of revenue generation must also be examined by the city in more detail. For the short-term, tax and fee abatements are a better incentive strategy for Target Area 3.

### **Employment Incentive Program**

The Georgia DCA administered Employment Incentive Program can be used in conjunction with private financing to implement economic development projects. In order to be funded, EIP projects must directly result in the employment of low and moderate-income persons. Infrastructure projects may use EIP funds.

## Public Awareness

Although not listed in the implementation schedule, it is advisable for Warrenton to conduct public awareness activities in order for the linkage between tasks, and status of redevelopment plan implementation, remains part of the public consciousness.

The City of Warrenton's public awareness campaign regarding URP implementation should address any combination of the following issues:

- Produce information of upcoming events/activities.
- Educate the public on planned activities
- Provide an overview of ongoing efforts of the city and partnering agencies
- Address rumors related to plan objectives
- Reduce public disillusionment if immediate tangible results are not observed

Conducting public awareness campaign should be a key responsibility of the City and partners assisting with the implementation of the URP and may include the following components:

- Press releases/news articles
- Newsletters
- Periodic open houses
- One-on-one discussions with property owners
- Presentations to civic groups

Public awareness recommendations in this section should be viewed as guidelines. Lack of an awareness campaign may limit public support for possible projects directly tied to the urban redevelopment plan.



# Implementation

## Adoption

This redevelopment plan must be adopted by the City of Warrenton and is only applicable to the areas defined herein as the boundaries.

## Five Year Implementation Program

The Warrenton URP includes a five-year implementation program. The Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law does not specify a time-frame within which the implementation of an urban redevelopment plan must occur, but local environments tend to change dramatically over the course of five (5) years. Depending on positive or negative changes within the redevelopment area, or changes to the composition of the local government a redevelopment plan may have been largely implemented or simply disregarded. Continued effectiveness of an urban redevelopment plan dictates the document undergo a comprehensive review, and an appropriate degree of modification periodically. It is not inferred that the expiration of the five- year implementation program invalidates the plan, although continued effectiveness of the plan beyond this time-frame may be questioned unless Warrenton takes formal action to discontinue the plan or takes steps to either reauthorize or update it.

## Amendments

Substantial modification of, or amendment to, an urban redevelopment plan prepared in accordance with the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law must adhere to the provisions of O.C.G.A. 36-61-7(e). Such requirements obligate the local governing authority to hold a public hearing and approve an amended resolution of redevelopment plan adoption. A prime example of “substantial” modification may be the reallocation of redevelopment powers to another entity, but such term is not clearly defined and the Urban Redevelopment Law provides for few applicable examples. City of Warrenton is advised to exercise caution in how it processes amendments to the URP, and defer to the requirements of Georgia Code in most instances.

Should city officials determine the redevelopment plan has been an effective tool which warrants continued use in the community - as the URP five-year implementation programs is nearing its conclusion - a full review, update and amendment process is recommended. Amendments should also be considered if significant changes to the URP goals, objectives and strategies, implementation parameters and schedule, are desired before the conclusion of the initial 5-year implementation schedule.

## Implementation Schedule

The implementation schedule for URP can be found on the following pages. The schedule is a general guide and adherence to all the recommended implementation steps, or sequence of steps, is not absolute. Adjustments to plan implementation will occur to meet changing conditions in the community. It is not assumed that all adjustments to the method of plan implementation will result in a modification to this schedule of any other component of the URP document.

## YEAR ONE IMPLEMENTATION STEPS APRIL 2020 - MARCH 2021

Task	Implementing Agency	Funding	Applicable Area	Implementation Period
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Initiate The Rehabilitation / Reconstruction Of Dilapidated Housing Units</b>				
Submit a Neighborhood Revitalization Area Strategy (RAS) to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs concurrently with Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) and Community Development Block Grant submittal.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 4	April 2020
Initiate CHIP grant applications.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	TBD
Research the feasibility of establishing a land bank authority or partnering with an existing authority.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2020 - March 2021
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Create Mixed Income Housing Within The Redevelopment Area</b>				
Work with a developer to site a potential Low-Income Housing Tax Credit property and apply.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 4	April - Dec 2020
Target multi-story buildings within the redevelopment area for second-floor residential and begin working with building owners and developers.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	April 2020 - March 2021
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Attract Private Residential Development To The Redevelopment Area</b>				
Decide on which fees can be abated to attract private developers to the area.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	May 2020
Create a list of sites available for residential infill development	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	July 2020
<b>Goal 2 - Initiate And Support Nuisance Abatement Activities</b>				
<b>Objective: Establish And Maintain A Code Enforcement Program</b>				
Create a nuisance property list.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2020 - March 2021



Dedicate funds for and hire a part time code enforcement position.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2020 - March 2021
Dedicate funds for and hire a part-time administrative assistant to update planning records.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2020 - March 2021
Work with the RC and Warren County to update current zoning ordinance.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Multi-year
Create a fee structure for current list of code violations.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Dec 2020 - March 2021
<b>Goal 3 - Provide Infrastructure That Generates Neighborhood Re-Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Provide Adequate Infrastructure In The Urban Redevelopment Area</b>				
Create a prioritized list for sidewalk extensions, installation, and improvements.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	May - Oct 2020
<b>Goal 3 - Provide Infrastructure That Generates Neighborhood Re-Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Create A Gateway That Attracts Visitors To Downtown Warrenton</b>				
Review locations of current gateway signage in the city and cost of upgrades.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Dec 2020
Designate areas for installing new monument/gateway signage.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Dec 2020
<b>Goal 4 - Enable Community Commercial Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Identify and Implement Methods For Reinvigorating Downtown Warrenton</b>				
Determine the appropriateness of fee abatements in a designated geographic area along Main Street (in order to encourage new business in the area) and begin utilizing them.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time	Target Area 3	April 2020 - March 2021
Install street furniture and street trees where appropriate.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	May - Oct 2020
Research successful Main Street/City-wide public art campaigns.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	May - Oct 2020
Pursue additional funds for Knox Theater renovations.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year
Meet with broadband providers and apply for funds to improve broadband connectivity.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Multi-year
Work with Hometown Warrenton to determine cost of, and designate funds for, way-finding signage.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year

## YEAR TWO IMPLEMENTATION STEPS APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022

Task	Implementing Agency	Funding	Applicable Area	Implementation Period
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Initiate The Rehabilitation / Reconstruction Of Dilapidated Housing Units</b>				
Form a land bank authority or begin cooperative relationship with an existing authority to administer a program for Warrenton.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	April-Dec 2021
Initiate CHIP grant applications.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	Jan 2020
Demolish dangerous structures and assign property liens.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Accept public ownership of abandoned and dangerous building lots offered in lieu of liens collections & fees.	City of Warrenton / Land Bank	Staff Time / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Create Mixed Income Housing Within The Redevelopment Area</b>				
Continue working with a developer on a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit property.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 4	April 2021 - March 2022
Create a "Planned Unit Development" zoning district to provide developers the opportunity to present unique development designs.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2021 - March 2022
Allow and establish standards for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential zoning districts.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2021 - March 2022
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Attract Private Residential Development To The Redevelopment Area</b>				
Initiate tax and fee abatements to attract private developers to the area.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time	Redevelopment Area	TBD
Meet with property owners of the Freeman building to discuss potential future uses.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time	Target Area 1	TBD
<b>Goal 2 - Initiate And Support Nuisance Abatement Activities</b>				
<b>Objective: Establish And Maintain A Code Enforcement Program</b>				
Update nuisance property list.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Continue code enforcement efforts with staffed positions.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing



Work with the RC and Warren County to update current zoning ordinance.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Multi-year
Update applications and application process for zoning actions.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2021 - March 2022
<b>Goal 3 - Provide Infrastructure That Generates Neighborhood Re-Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Provide Adequate Infrastructure In The Urban Redevelopment Area</b>				
Apply for funding to install sidewalks in needed areas.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Continue applying for Community Development Block Grants in order to address infrastructure needs.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2021
<b>Goal 3 - Provide Infrastructure That Generates Neighborhood Re-Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Create A Gateway That Attracts Visitors To Downtown Warrenton</b>				
Update or install gateway signage.	City of Warrenton	Local Funds / Grant Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2021 - March 2022
Designate intersections for upgrades.	City of Warrenton	Local Funds / Grant Funds	Redevelopment Area	April 2021 - March 2022
<b>Goal 4 - Enable Community Commercial Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Identify and Implement Methods For Reinvigorating Downtown Warrenton</b>				
Pursue funding for Knox Theater renovations.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Ongoing
Apply for Rural Zone designation.	City of Warrenton / Dev. Authority	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	TBD
Create murals in 4 crosswalks downtown.	City of Warrenton / Hometown Warr.	Local Funds / Grant Funds	Target Area 3	Sept. 2021 - March 2022
Determine the feasibility of acquiring property to create a new community park/recreation area.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Ongoing
Work with Hometown Warrenton to designate funds for and install way-finding signage.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Areas 3 & 4	Multi-year
Create an incentive package for recruiting downtown businesses and developers of loft/upper floor apartments.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year
Activate the Historic Preservation Commission and adopt HP ordinance (if needed).	City / Hometown Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year
Determine the feasibility of converting Bank Street to pedestrian only access and outdoor dining area.	City / Hometown Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds / Grant Funds	Target Area 3	April 2021 - March 2022

## YEARS THREE - FIVE IMPLEMENTATION STEPS APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2025

Task	Implementing Agency	Funding	Applicable Area	Implementation Period
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Initiate The Rehabilitation / Reconstruction Of Dilapidated Housing Units</b>				
Submit a Neighborhood Revitalization Area Strategy to the Georgia DCA, as well as applications for the CHIP and CDBG.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Local Funds	Target Areas 1 & 2	TBD
Demolish dangerous structures and assign property liens.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Accept public ownership of abandoned and dangerous building lots offered in lieu of liens collections & fees.	City of Warrenton / Land Bank	Staff Time / Legal Fees	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Create Mixed Income Housing Within The Redevelopment Area</b>				
Apply building standards to acquired properties.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time	Redevelopment Area	April 2021 - March 2022
Prepare an application for the Georgia DCA Plan First Community designation.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Redevelopment Area	April -Dec 2022
<b>Goal 1 - Develop Attractive, Affordable And Mixed-Income Housing Opportunities</b>				
<b>Objective: Attract Private Residential Development To The Redevelopment Area</b>				
Engage residents in the creation of a concept plan for designated areas.	City of Warrenton	Local Funds	Target Areas 1 & 2	TBD
<b>Goal 2 - Initiate And Support Nuisance Abatement Activities</b>				
<b>Objective: Establish And Maintain A Code Enforcement Program</b>				
Continue code enforcement efforts with staffed positions.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Update nuisance property list.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Establish baseline subdivision regulations and design standards.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	TBD



<b>Goal 3 - Provide Infrastructure That Generates Neighborhood Re-Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Provide Adequate Infrastructure In The Urban Redevelopment Area</b>				
Prepare a Redevelopment Fund program application for Infrastructure projects.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	March 2023
Continue applying for Community Development Block Grants in order to address infrastructure needs during future funding cycles.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Calendar Year
Adopt alternative street standards to allow for alternative storm-water facilities (including bio-swales) to help eliminate storm-water issues.	City of Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	City of Warrenton	2024
<b>Goal 3 - Provide Infrastructure That Generates Neighborhood Re-Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Create A Gateway That Attracts Visitors To Downtown Warrenton</b>				
Construct intersection improvements / upgrades.	City of Warrenton / GDOT	Local / State / Grant Funds	Redevelopment Area	TBD
<b>Goal 4 - Enable Community Commercial Investment</b>				
<b>Objective: Identify and Implement Methods For Reinvigorating Downtown Warrenton</b>				
Acquire property to construct a new park/recreation space.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds / Grant Funds	Target Area 3	Ongoing
Work with Hometown Warrenton to designate funds for and install way-finding signage.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds / Grant Funds	Target Areas 3 & 4	Multi-year
Create an incentive package for recruiting downtown businesses and developers of loft/upper floor apartments.	City of Warrenton	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year
Activate the Historic Preservation Commission and adopt HP ordinance (if needed).	City / Hometown Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year
Utilize the Rural Zone designation to recruit new businesses and redevelop downtown properties.	City / Hometown Warrenton / Dev. Authority	Staff Time / Local Funds	Redevelopment Area	Ongoing
Develop design standards/guidelines.	City / Hometown Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds / Grant Funds	Redevelopment Area	Multi-year
If determined feasible, convert Bank Street to pedestrian only access and outdoor dining area.	City / Hometown Warrenton / CSRA-RC	Staff Time / Local Funds / Grant Funds	Target Area 3	Multi-year