



# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

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# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

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# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan



## Introduction

In 1993, the City of Berkeley Lake adopted the City of Berkeley Lake 1993-2013 Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The Comprehensive Plan contained six elements; Population, Economic Development, Natural and Historic Resources, Community Facilities, Housing and Land Use, as well as a Goals and Implementation Strategy section and a Five-Year Work Program. Since the adoption of this plan, Berkeley Lake has made significant strides in implementing the Five-Year Work Program and has adopted a number of ordinances and planning studies as part of the implementation effort. These implementation efforts have served to initiate and recommend a number of development and redevelopment measures, including pedestrian improvements and commercial property development.

Following the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Berkeley Lake has chosen to amend and update the plan in order to build upon previous planning efforts and to meet the required update schedule as mandated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. This update will give the City of Berkeley Lake direction for future growth and ensure the community maintains the existing quality of life and continues to develop in a sustainable manner. This plan update will focus on identification of distinct character areas of the City requiring special attention and present the goals and strategies formulated by the residents of Berkeley Lake and governing representatives. This approach has been specified as the preferred method for a comprehensive plan update by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, adopted in May 2005.



## Plan Process Background

The City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan consists of three (3) separate components: a Community Assessment, a Community Participation Program and the Community Agenda. The third component, the Community Agenda, is the focus of this document and is composed of a number of elements defining the Community Vision, including the Future Development Map and List of Issues & Opportunities, as well as the Implementation Schedule. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has provided the framework for this planning process,

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Section 110-12-1-03 of the State code (DCA Local Planning Requirements), in order to involve all segments of the community in developing a vision for the community, generate local pride and enthusiasm, engage the interest of citizens in implementing the plan and provide a guide to everyday decision-making for use by local community leaders. The purpose of this joint effort was to encourage greater coordination between the plans of individual jurisdictions, encourage greater compatibility between comprehensive plans and avoid potential conflicts.

The Community Assessment component of the City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan was completed as part of an extensive joint community assessment effort involving Gwinnett County and a number of participating municipalities, including Berkeley Lake. The documents comprising this effort, the Joint County-Cities Community Assessment Summary Report and the Technical Addendum, provide:

- Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities,
- Analysis of Existing Development Patterns,
- Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objective and State Environmental Requirements,
- Supporting Analysis of Data and Information.

The Community Participation Program has been developed independently for the City of Berkeley Lake in order to customize the public input approach best suited for the City. This Program fulfills the following requirements:

- Identification of Stakeholders
- Identification of Participation Techniques
- Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

Stakeholders were identified through an assessment of organizations and individuals involved in local civic affairs, church activities, the development community, property owners, and interested persons. Stakeholders were used for input into the planning process and partially comprised the Steering Committee, providing oversight and assistance to the Planning Process. Participation Techniques were identified as those most likely to engage the public and provide a voice for community concerns and included the following:

- Steering Committee Meetings
- Website Postings
- A Vision Goals and Objectives Meeting
- Public Hearings

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

These techniques and meetings were used throughout the planning process to ensure public participation was effective and fully reflected within the Community Agenda.

This document, the Community Agenda, includes a number of elements designed to assist the City of Berkeley Lake with future decision making and guiding Berkeley Lake towards a livable, sustainable and healthy community maintaining and improving the quality of life enjoyed by local residents. This document protects the health, welfare and safety of local residents by setting a direction for protecting local assets and enhancing existing assets. Specifically, this component presents the Community Vision and derives a Future Development Map as well as the Future Land Use Plan while defining areas of special character within the community and outlining Community Issues and Opportunities. Finally, this component presents the Implementation Program containing the list of steps and efforts the community plans to achieve and organizes those steps within a Short Term Work Program and a set of Policies.



## Community Vision

The Community Vision consists of the community's Future Development Map, Defining Narratives and Issues & Opportunities. The Future Development Map and Land Use Plan were derived through delineation of Character Areas in the Gwinnett County Unified Plan as well as through public workshop and examination of existing regulations, previous reports and plans, existing land use and zoning. Issues & Opportunities were derived from the Preliminary List included in the Unified Development Plan and the public participation efforts included in this comprehensive planning process.



## Future Development Map

The Future Development Map (*Future Development Map figure*) illustrates the direction and composition of the physical representation of the Vision Statement for the City of Berkeley Lake. The Future Development Map has been developed through extensive public input, identification of areas having unique characteristics and all applicable planning efforts, ordinances and studies. The City has undertaken a number of planning efforts, ordinance amendments and studies to ensure development and redevelopment allow Berkeley Lake to continue to be a sustainable and livable city in the near and long term future. The Future Development Map has been created

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through public input, staff and local official guidance as well as through a careful assessment of various Character Areas of the City. The assessment of various Character Areas was undertaken in an effort to better define the individual characteristics of each distinct area of the City and to evaluate those planning efforts which are focused on the continued development and redevelopment of Berkeley Lake.

The Gwinnett County Unified Plan includes the Community Assessment portion of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Local Planning Requirements. A number of Areas of Special Attention and Character Areas were identified as part of this process and provide characterization for some of the areas of character important to the City. Berkeley Lake has also identified a number of important Character Areas through planning efforts, ordinance amendments and studies which characterize various areas of the City and provide guidance as well as ordinance regulations designed to improve the quality of development/redevelopment those areas receive.

The Future Development Map for the Comprehensive Plan shows a number of Character Areas, which represent those areas identified in the Gwinnett County Unified Plan as well as those areas identified through the public participation process of this plan and those areas designated by previous planning efforts, studies and effective ordinances. These areas include:

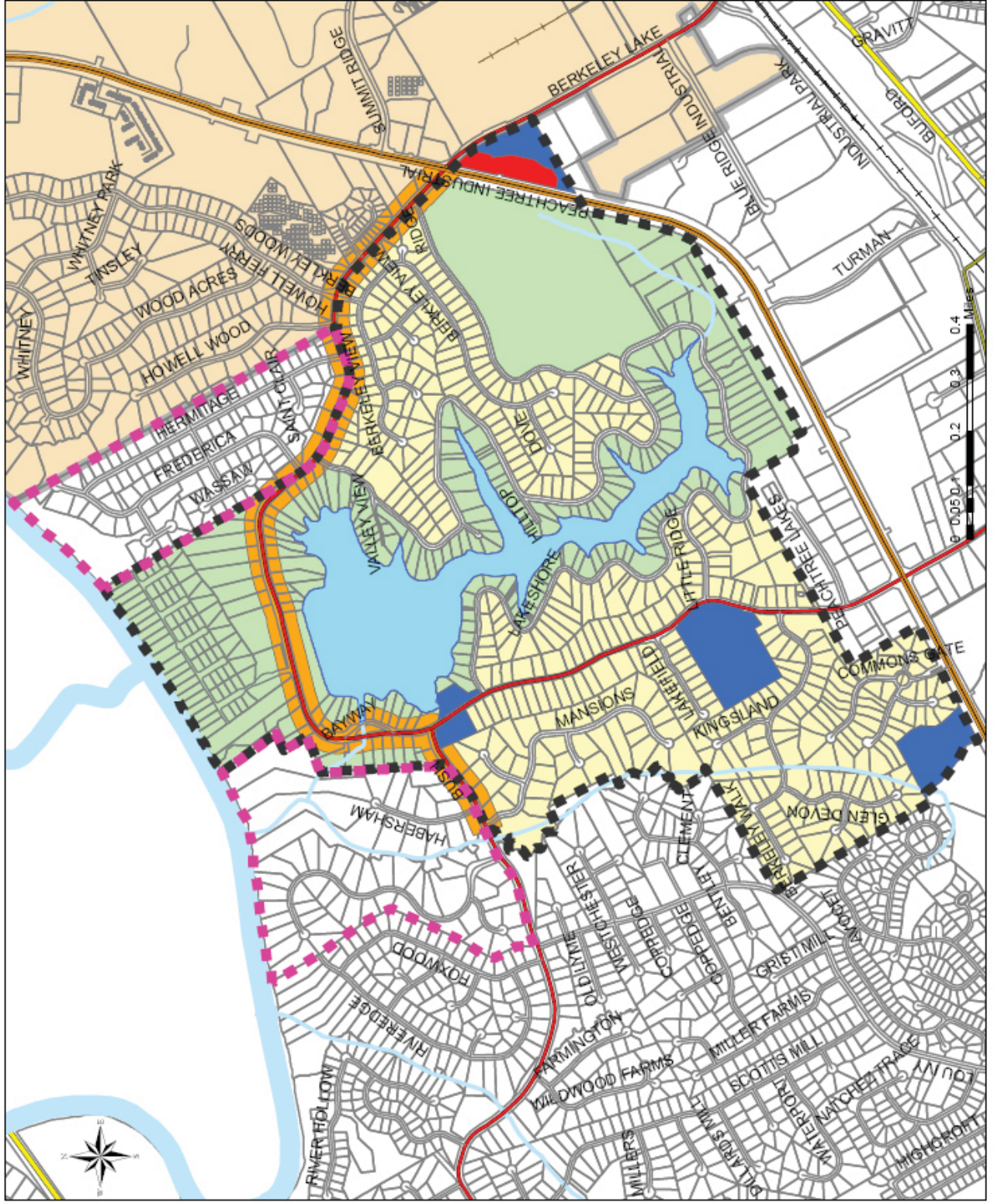
- High Traffic Area
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Commercial Area
- Office Institutional Area
- Potential Annexation Area
- Stable Residential Areas

Additional Areas of Special Attention and Character Areas identified in the Gwinnett County Unified plan for Berkeley Lake have been incorporated into the Future Development Map where relevant. In a few instances, areas have changed or are no longer applicable. The Census Blocks with Archeological Site Area of Special Attention is not relevant to the future growth of Berkeley Lake as this area has already been platted for a new residential subdivision and received approval, including mitigation of archeological impact. The Emerging Residential Character Area identified in the Gwinnett Plan is no longer relevant as this area has already been platted for a residential subdivision and new regulations would not be applicable. The undeveloped Character Area is currently being developed.

# Future Development Map City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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## Legend

- City Limits
- City of Duluth

## Streets

- Local Roads
- Interstate
- Minor Arterial
- Major Arterial
- Major Collector
- Primary Arterial
- High Traffic Area

- Stable Residential Areas
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Potential Annexation Areas
- Commercial Area
- Office/Institutional Areas

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Defining Narratives

### High Traffic Areas

#### Area Defined

North Berkeley Lake Rd. from Peachtree Industrial Blvd. to Bush Rd. and Bush Rd. from South Berkeley Lake Rd. to Mansions Parkway has been identified as a High Traffic Area in the Gwinnett County Unified Plan and has been included in this plan as a Character Area. North Berkeley Lake Rd. is a two-lane road without sidewalks, curb or gutter. The road is drained through open swale and is heavily wooded. This road was studied as part of a “City-wide Speed & Safety Study” conducted by Street Smarts in early 2007, at significant cost to the City. The study showed daily traffic counts in 2006 ranged from 4,975 to 5,688 trips, depending upon the particular segment. As a two lane road generally has a capacity of 10,000 trips per day, depending upon curb cuts, visibility and other factors, the road does not appear to be at or near capacity. However, the road has a posted speed limit of 35 mph and this speed limit is regularly exceeded. The Street Smarts study showed speeds of 35 mph to 50 mph were regularly achieved on this road, creating a safety versus a traffic issue along this arterial. The lack of traffic is also a contributor to the excess speeds achieved on this road.

This corridor is used by local residents as well as by non-local residents to access locations throughout Gwinnett County and the surrounding area. Non-local residents are less likely to pay attention to local rules and regulations and simply see this road as part of their daily commute. The lack of curb cuts, on-street parking or pedestrian activity gives the roadway an appearance of a parkway and encourages higher speeds, especially north of Bush Rd. The roadway changes character near Peachtree Industrial Blvd. More curb cuts, differing uses and a signalized intersection helps to slow traffic. In general, however, the road is given completely to the automobile with no provisions for pedestrian or bicycle activity. The residential character of the area precludes on-street parking or enough activity or interest to necessitate on-street parking or encourage traffic to slow down.

The Gwinnett Co. Interim Transportation Plan shows Berkeley Lake experiencing both increased congestion and commuter delay by 2015. Additional traffic can be expected as growth continues in the area and road widening projects allow for greater traffic volumes. The Interim Transportation Plan shows Pleasant Hill Rd. through Duluth is to be widened by two (2) additional lanes. North Berkeley Lake Rd. has been widened by (1) additional lane, south of



# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Peachtree Industrial Blvd. This increase in traffic will slow traffic somewhat, although additional measures would most likely still be needed to mitigate speeding during non-peak hours.

## Implementation

The Street Smarts report made a number of recommendations regarding possible traffic calming measures that could be used to reduce speeds (*Possible Transportation Improvements figure*). These measures include traffic circles, median islands, and converging chevrons. Traffic circles are suggested for three intersections; Berkeley Lake at Hermitage, Berkeley Lake at Lakeshore Drive, and Bush Rd. at Mansions Parkway. Median Islands are recommended for two areas between Hermitage and Lakeshore Drive. Converging Chevrons are recommended at North Berkeley Lake and River District Drive.

The addition of three (3) traffic circles along North Berkeley Lake Rd. would serve as a traffic calming measure and would contribute to the attractive qualities of the community. The traffic circles can be large or small. A larger and more elaborate one could likely be thirty five feet (35') and still be acceptable. A smaller one could be as small as ten feet (10'); however, smaller traffic circles can cause accidents as they can be difficult to see. At higher speeds a larger circle would be safer. Smaller circles are generally utilized in neighborhood streets with speed limits of 15 mph. The circles could also be simple or complex. Should this corridor emerge as a pedestrian corridor, crosswalks would be needed to supplement the traffic circles and would add complexity to the design. The circles could also be landscaped and utilize a variety of surface textures and plantings, with the circle at Mansions Parkway containing a welcome to Berkeley Lake/city limits sign. The size and complexity of the circle will affect the cost, however. The appropriate traffic circle size will most likely result in the need to acquire right-of-way for at least two (2) of the circles. Grant money and other financial sources should be pursued in order to construct the most complete and applicable traffic features possible as the aesthetic quality of these measures is greatly increased for larger circles with extensive landscaping.

Another recommendation is the installation of median islands between Hermitage and Lakeshore Drive (*Traffic Circle and Median Illustration figure*). The median islands would complement the suggested traffic circles and help to slow traffic. Few curb cuts are present along this section of North Berkeley Lake Rd., therefore, few traffic conflicts would result from the installation of the medians. Landscaped medians would complement landscaping in the traffic circles and provide this section of the corridor with a boulevard appearance. A high-speed segment of this corridor is located around the intersection with River District

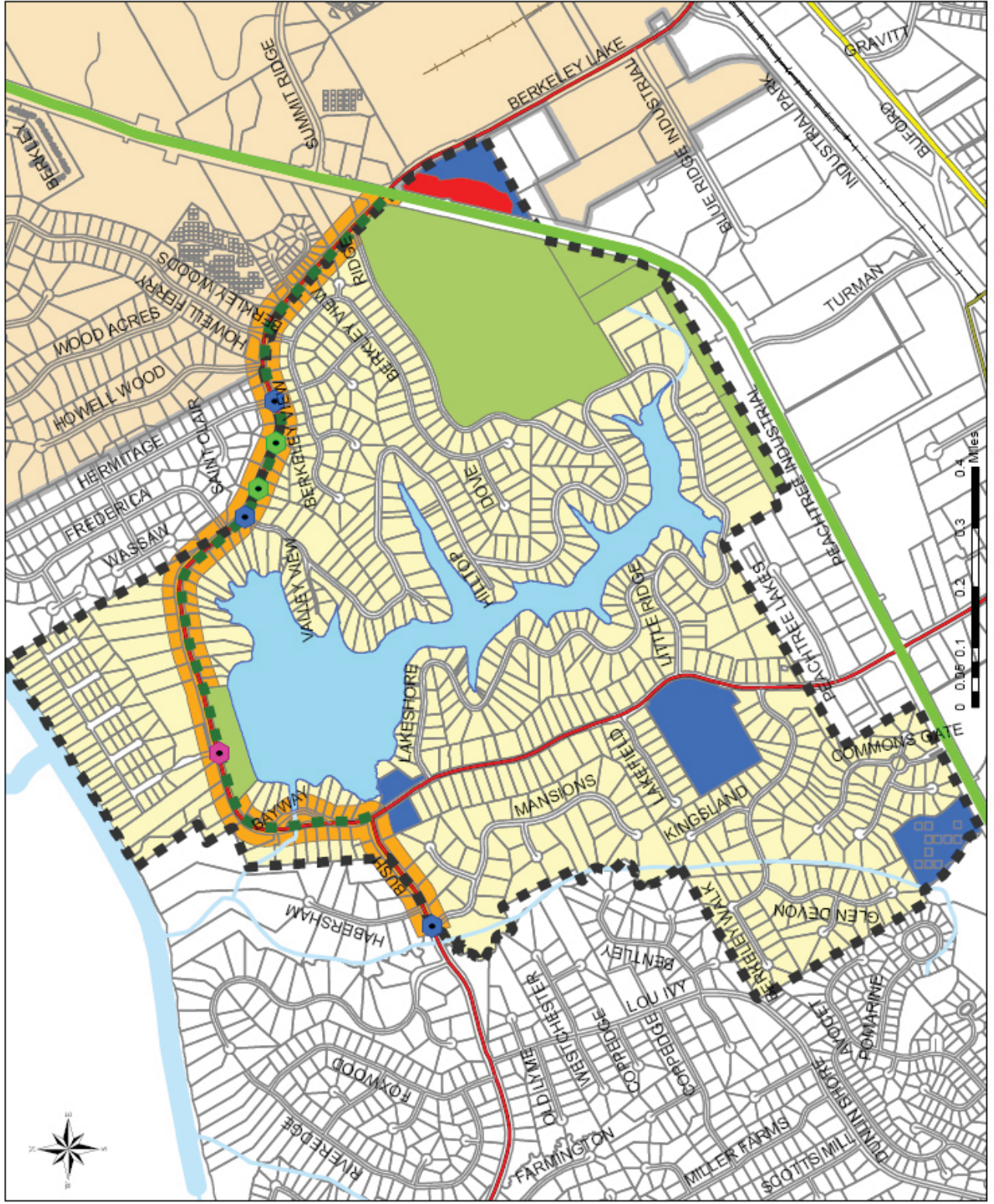


# Potential Road & Pedestrian Improvements

## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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- Legend**
- City Limits
  - City of Duluth
  - Mobility 2030 Ped/Bike Improv.
  - High Traffic Area
- Streets**
- Local Roads
  - Interstate
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Primary Arterial
  - Lake
- Road Improvements**
- Converging Chevrons
  - Median Island
  - Traffic Circle
  - Sidewalk
  - Open Space
  - Commercial
  - Office/Institutional

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Drive, with the area becoming a speedway as few curb cuts and few visual distractions are present to capture driver attention. Converging Chevrons, where white striping is used to concentrate driver attention and draw attention to an intersection, are suggested for this intersection.

Finally, sidewalks are proposed for the entire length of North Berkeley Lake Rd. This proposal would help to minimize vehicle/pedestrian/bicycle conflicts as all users use the same portion of the roadway. Any sidewalk would be most effective if constructed with a two foot (2') landscape buffer, otherwise, pedestrians would be reluctant to use the facility, especially along the faster segments. Gwinnett County is currently designing a sidewalk that should help to focus driver attention, especially with the presence of significant pedestrian activity.

In addition, the installation of sidewalks would most likely receive more than just local usage. The Atlanta Regional Commission's Mobility 2030 Plan has initiated improvements to Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and recently installed a multi-use path. A sidewalk along N. Berkeley Lake Rd. would complement this path and provide pedestrian connectivity through the City.

## Quality Community Objectives

Implementation measures presented for this Character Area address the following Quality Community Objectives:

- Our community maintains its sidewalks well so that walking is an option some would choose.
- In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.
- Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.
- Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.
- We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.
- Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.
- We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.
- Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.
- We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region-wide strategies.
- We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.

# Traffic Circle & Median Illustration

City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Environmentally Sensitive Areas

### Area Defined

The key natural feature of the City of Berkeley Lake is Lake Berkeley itself. This Lake was formed by impounding a perennial tributary to the Chattahoochee River. The Lake serves as a scenic enhancement to numerous lots abutting the lake and provides identity, recreation and character to the community. Protection of this natural resource is important to the local ecology as well as to the local economy, as this amenity is a primary contributor to the community's residential home values. The City is involved with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and has adopted the following model ordinances to support their mission of protecting the region's water quality: Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection Ordinance, Post-Development Stormwater Management Ordinance, Stream Buffer Ordinance, Floodplain Management Ordinance, Litter Control Ordinance and Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

A primary measure protecting the Lake, as well as the Chattahoochee River and affected tributaries, is Gwinnett County's Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection Ordinance, which Berkeley Lake has also adopted. This ordinance prohibits the discharge of anything other than stormwater into the stormwater system, which helps to prevent dumping of chemicals and other harmful pollutants that would enter the stormwater system and eventually the Lake.

The City of Berkeley Lake has also adopted Gwinnett County's Floodplain Management Ordinance. This ordinance for monitoring and evaluating potential developments affecting the Chattahoochee floodplain prevents construction of projects at risk of flood damage or harmful to the floodplain. This measure ensures floodwaters are not diverted to other areas of the City should inappropriate development occur.

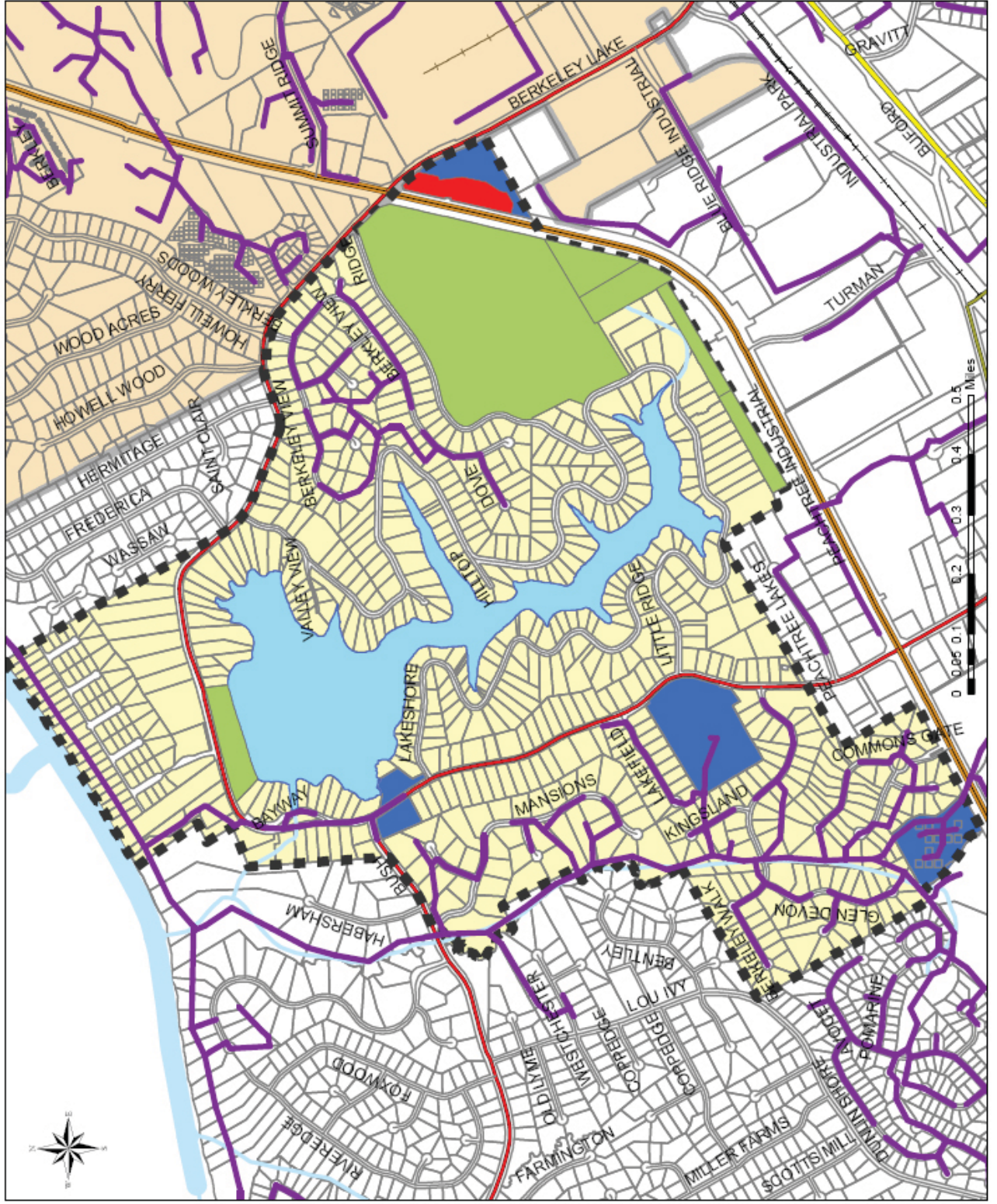
The Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance was adopted in order to establish a fifty (50) foot buffer along all perennial streams within the City in order to protect those streams as well as downstream water resources. The established buffer requires undisturbed vegetation along the stream and prohibits construction or clearing for conventional purposes. The purpose of this buffer is to filter pollutants before they enter the stream, reduce soil erosion, contribute organic matter, provide for riparian wildlife habitat and provide tree canopy.

The Conservation Subdivision Ordinance allows for a subdivision to be developed which conserves the environmentally sensitive areas of a property while promoting design flexibility.

# Gravity Sewer Facilities City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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## Legend

- City Limits
- City of Duluth
- Streets**
  - Local Roads
  - Interstate
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Primary Arterial
- Lake
- Gravity Sewer
- Commercial
- Office/Institutional
- Residential Area
- Open Space

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The purpose of this ordinance is to enhance stormwater protection, promote interconnected greenways, encourage street designs that reduce traffic speeds, and promote the construction of landscaped walking trails.

Another measure of protecting the Lake is the City's Septic Tank inspection ordinance. The City contains lots with Gwinnett County central sewer facilities as well as lots operating on septic systems (*Berkeley Lake Gravity Sewer Facilities figure*). Unfortunately, the lots operating on septic systems are located along the Lake. Any leakage, backup or malfunction may cause untreated sewage to be discharged directly into the Lake. The City's Septic Tank inspection ordinance helps to ensure this does not happen. The ordinance requires inspection of all septic systems once every five (5) years and also monitors extensions to septic systems. This ordinance keeps systems from falling into disrepair and helps to minimize accidents occurring from failing systems impacting the Lake.

In 1973, the Georgia General Assembly adopted the Metropolitan River Protection Act (Georgia Code 12-5-440 et seq.), which created the 2000-foot Chattahoochee River Corridor. The Corridor runs along both banks of the river between Buford Dam and the downstream boundaries of Fulton and Douglas Counties and includes the City of Berkeley Lake's entire river frontage. Under the Act, all land-disturbing activity in the Corridor is subject to review for consistency with the standards of the Chattahoochee River Corridor Plan, which was authorized under the Act. The Plan standards include limits on land disturbance and impervious surfaces, an undisturbed buffer and impervious surface setback on the river, undisturbed buffers on certain tributaries and requirements in the river floodplain. The City has adopted the Act as a City Ordinance.

Beyond ordinance protection, the City has taken an active role in greenspace preservation through the purchase of property and the donation of conservation easements to the Gwinnett Open Land Trust (GOLT). These tax parcels, R6267 003C, R6289 215, and R6267 065 are situated adjacent to the right of way of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, southeast of the Lake. Through conservation easements, a number of activities are prohibited, such as commercial uses, signage, dumping, camping and biking. The area serves as passive open space providing runoff protection for the Lake as well as a visual enhancement of the Peachtree Industrial Blvd. corridor.

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Implementation

The City of Berkeley Lake has taken a number of regulatory as well as property acquisition steps to protect their Environmentally Sensitive Areas. These ordinances and preservation efforts have been effective in protecting both the ecological as well as aesthetic qualities of the Lake and associated stream, river and open space. As two of these ordinances are references to State and County ordinances, Gwinnett Co. Floodplain Ordinance and The Metropolitan River Act, updates to these ordinances would automatically be effective within the Berkeley Lake City limits. As the remainder of the ordinances appear to be effective, monitoring of these ordinances would be the most appropriate action at this time. Finally, annexing watershed property, specifically along Peachtree Industrial Blvd., should be considered in order to ensure proper watershed protection measures are utilized during redevelopment.

## Quality Community Objectives

Implementation measures presented for this Character Area address the following Quality Community Objectives:

- If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.
- We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.
- Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.
- Our community has a greenspace plan.
- We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.
- We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.
- We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community.
- We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.
- We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.
- We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.
- Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.





# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

- We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.
- We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region-wide strategies.
- We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.

## **Office Institutional/Commercial Areas**

### Area Defined

Berkeley Lake has an established business park along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. These properties provide stable tax base and employment opportunities for the City. Berkeley Lake has also recently developed a commercial/office mixed-use project at the intersection of Peachtree Industrial Blvd., a Primary Arterial, and North Berkeley Lake Rd., a Major Collector. The City is also home to the Berkeley Lake Elementary School on South Berkeley Lake Road. These three parcels comprise the entire supply of Berkeley Lake's commercial and institutional zoned property.

The mixed-use project on the Peachtree Industrial Blvd. property has recently been developed as a commercial/office project and will become a substantial addition to the tax base of Berkeley Lake. The project includes separate commercial retail buildings containing individual tenant spaces. The project also includes individual office buildings large enough to accommodate a variety of office tenants. This configuration should allow for a sustainable mixture of retail and office tenants capable of attracting a mix of uses and can be expected to be occasionally vacant as tenants turn-over. This will allow for a flexible project that will continue to produce income, jobs and necessary services to the City without relying on a single employer. As this intersection already contains pedestrian crosswalks, and a multi-use path along Peachtree Industrial Blvd., this area can be considered easily accessible to pedestrians from Berkeley Lake as well as the surrounding community.

### Implementation

The mixed-use project on Peachtree Industrial Blvd. should be a vibrant shopping/office center for a number of years into the future. This area, as well as the existing business park, should be policed regularly to ensure inappropriate activity does not occur. Also, code enforcement should ensure the properties are properly maintained.

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Quality Community Objectives

Implementation measures presented for this Character Area address the following Quality Community Objectives:

- We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.
- In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.
- Our community has jobs for skilled labor.
- We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).
- We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.
- We have clear and understandable guidelines for new development.
- We have a diverse job base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.
- Our community maintains its sidewalks well so that walking is an option some would choose.
- Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.
- Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.
- Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.
- We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.

## **Potential Annexation Areas**

### Area Defined

There are three opportunities for Berkeley Lake to expand the City limits and incorporate nearby subdivisions (*Potential Annexation Areas figure*). The first area is located between Berkeley Lake and the City of Duluth and is bounded by the Chattahoochee River to the North. This suburban island is approximately 67 acres in size and consists of 117 parcels, approximately 99 of which contain occupied single-family residences. The entire subdivision, referred to as Hermitage, is zoned R-100. As of 2008, the average value for a residential lot & home is approximately \$251,353. This subdivision does not have a wide range of home prices, with most of them being very close to the calculated average.

The second subdivision, located West of Berkeley Lake and referred to as River Mansions (separate from the neighborhood within the city limits with the same name), is a more expensive subdivision with home prices ranging from \$425,200 to \$1,063,300, as of 2008. The subdivision

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

has 44 occupied lots and no vacant lots. The average value was \$752,177.27 in 2008.

The third subdivision, located West of Berkeley Lake and referred to as Habersham, contains homes with prices ranging from \$242,400 to 741,400, as of 2008. The subdivision has 14 occupied lots and one vacant lots. The average value was \$562,548.33 in 2008.

Berkeley Lake contains approximately 610 R-100 occupied parcels, with the average value, in 2008, being approximately \$300,788. The City has 638 taxable parcels total. A wide variation of home prices can be found within the City. The original lake-front homes are mostly lower than the calculated average, while some of the homes in newer neighborhoods can be double the calculated average or even exceed \$1 million.

Based on 2008 figures, Berkeley Lake's estimated expenditures for future years are calculated to be approximately \$399,103. Therefore, expenditure per housing unit is estimated to be \$654 per house. The total taxable value of all taxable lots in Berkeley Lake for 2006 was \$75,312,000. At a 3.6629 millage rate, each home generates approximately \$440, on average. The difference in expenditures versus revenue is made up by taxes on vacant land, City investment earnings, licenses/permits, fines and SPLOST funds.

The total taxable value, in 2008, of Hermitage is \$10,122,480. Therefore this subdivision, paying a 3.6629 millage rate, would produce approximately \$368 per housing unit per year. Additional taxes would be generated from vacant land as well. As no significant infrastructure or other expenditures are anticipated for this subdivision, the additional tax revenue could be used to help offset City costs and make up the difference between expenditures and revenues.

In 2008, the total taxable value of Habersham and River Mansions is \$41,534,025.83. With 59 homes paying a 3.6629 millage rate, these homes would contribute \$2,578 per house, per year, and would add significant revenues to the City tax base.

## Implementation

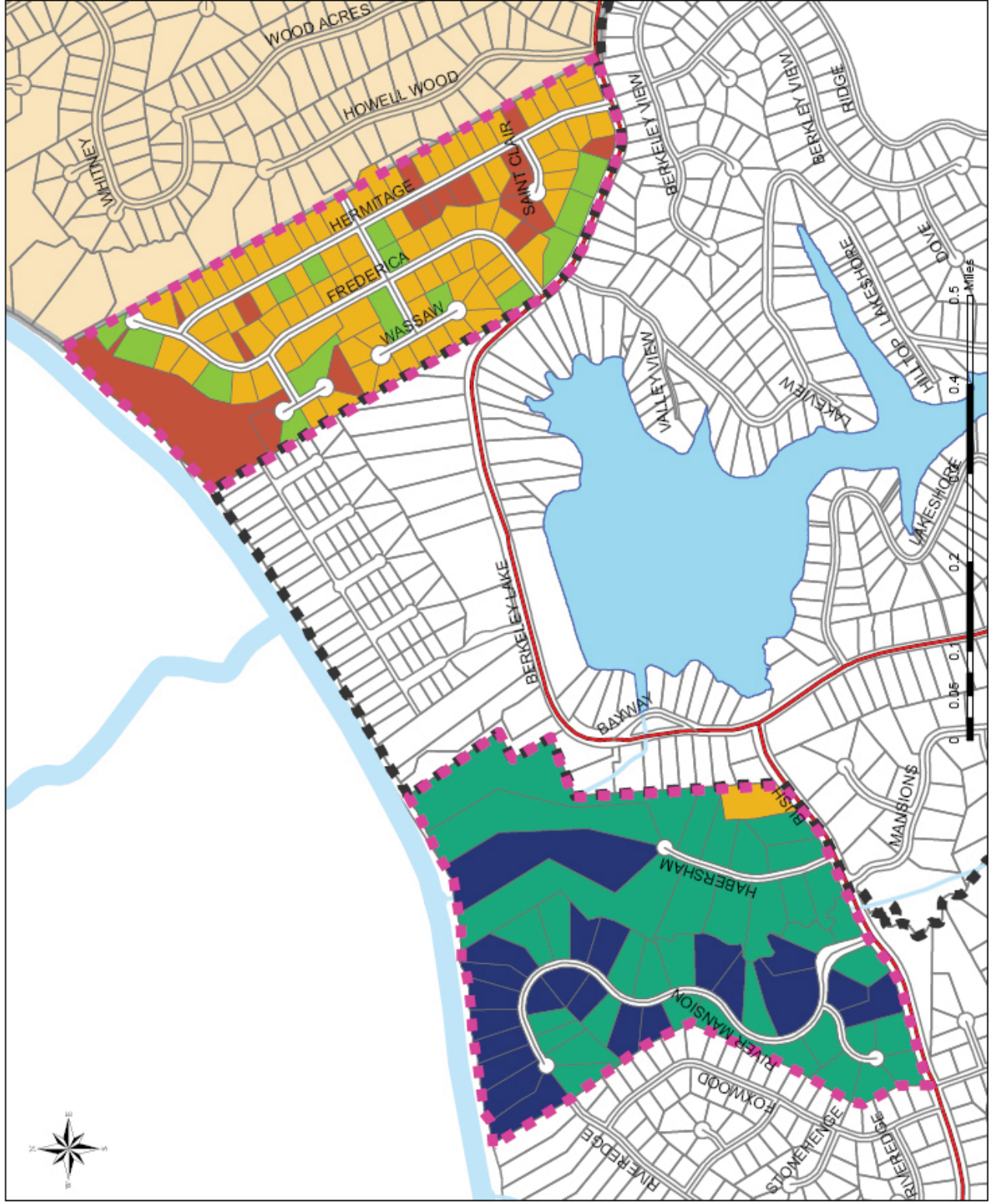
Berkeley Lake relies upon licenses and permits as well as fines, forfeits and investments to generate revenue beyond residential taxes. Commercial property taxes will also help to boost the property tax base in future years, once existing commercial begins generating taxable revenue.

# Potential Annexation Areas

## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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- Legend**
- City Limits
  - City of Duluth
- Streets**
- Local Roads
  - Interstate
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Primary Arterial
- Home Values**
- Vacant/Recreation
  - \$150,201 - \$275,000
  - \$275,001 - \$350,000
  - \$350,001 - \$750,000
  - \$750,001 - \$1,115,100
  - Potential Annexation Areas

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Expenditures will most likely increase and other revenues will most likely remain stable or fall in coming years. Habersham and River Mansions clearly would produce the tax revenue needed to contribute to the financial health of the City and would be an excellent choice for annexation. Local property owners should be approached by City officials and local amenities should be used to encourage annexation. Hermitage represents a financial gain of approximately \$4,150 per year total from the 100 homes, based on 2008 figures. Assuming costs do not increase as a result of the annexation, this would be additional revenue needed by the City. Any public works needs resulting from the annexation would most likely be covered by SPLOST funding. In addition, this annexation could also require additional monitoring of code violation issues and additional public safety, although public safety costs and staff costs are not likely to increase as a result of the annexation. In fact, monitoring of code violations and more responsive policing could benefit home values in this neighborhood. Finally, Hermitage does have community amenities, such as a pool, which could be a benefit to Berkeley Lake. Therefore, Hermitage represents additional revenue and an opportunity to stabilize this neighborhood without incurring significant additional costs and should be evaluated for potential annexation.

## Quality Community Objectives

Implementation measures presented for this Character Area address the following Quality Community Objectives:

- We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.
- Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.
- We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.
- We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region-wide strategies.
- We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Stable Residential Areas

### Area Defined

The City is comprised mainly of single-family residential parcels with an average value, in 2008, of \$300,788 ranging from half this calculated average to more than double, with some homes over \$1 million in value. The homes range from the original lake front residences built in the 1950's to newer construction and larger homes. These parcels are all zoned R-100, yet contain a wide range of lot sizes and dimensions. The original lake front homes and a few subdivisions have lots smaller than the required minimum size as well as smaller lot widths. The most problematic aspect of smaller lot sizes is the presence of septic tanks along the lake. Regular inspection is required and should mitigate most potential problems. The danger of a sudden septic system failure should be considered and weighed against the cost of installing public sewer facilities.

Another potential impact on the Lake would be redevelopment of the lake lots, or other lots in the community, and building of larger homes with more impervious surface coverage. Larger homes and larger driveways could replace some existing homes and lead to greater runoff and stormwater pollution. Stormwater protection should be given some attention, with the objective of minimizing pollutants affecting Lake quality.

### Implementation

The stability of existing neighborhoods will be reliant upon enforcement of existing zoning regulations as well as existing environmental protection ordinances and programs. Replacement of existing homes along the Lake is a particular concern, especially as replacement homes tend to be larger and have more impervious land cover. Replacements also disturb existing vegetation and increase stormwater runoff. A number of important issues, opportunities and implementation measures are presented in this document addressing these issues. These measures should be fully considered by the City and used to protect the quality of the Lake as well as the appearance of existing neighborhoods.



## Community Issues and Opportunities

A preliminary list of Community Issues and Opportunities was formulated through the Gwinnett County Unified Plan Community Assessment process and included a wide range of

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

observations by local residents. This preliminary list has been revisited through the Community Participation Process of the Comprehensive Plan and the list has been revised to reflect additional ideas, observations and comment. This list was revised during a public participation event where the existing list was delivered and discussed during a Powerpoint presentation with full input from attendees. In addition, existing land use maps and number dots were used to assist attendees in discussing and identifying location-specific issues and to generate additional discussion. The following is a summary of those issues and opportunities seen as most important to the City of Berkeley Lake. In addition, this list is followed by more detailed discussion of each element as further information was requested by event attendees. The Future Development Map and the Issues & Opportunities List are the basis for formulation of the policy section to be found later in this document.

## Population and Demography

- We don't expect any increase beyond 2000 population as we do not have much area to expand into, unless through annexation.
- We have seen some development in the River District subdivision, however, this represents the remainder of development possibilities in the existing City limits.
- If population remains static, the number of school children attending the Berkeley Lake Elementary school and other Duluth Cluster schools will most likely decline over time.
- We have seen a change in ethnic representation and see this as a reflection of the area and region in general.
- We do not expect to see any change in housing choices, except through annexation.

## Housing and Social Services

- We are concerned about the impact of tear downs and rebuilds of existing houses, particularly along Lakeshore drive, and their impact on stormwater runoff and visual impact along the Lake.
- We are concerned about the lack of assisted living facilities in the area which would allow residents to have older family members live close to their community.
- We would like the ability to ensure new houses on existing lots are compatible with the neighborhood and environmental setting, however, we are not interested in having an architectural review board.
- We are concerned that new houses replacing older houses on existing lots do not have to replace the existing septic systems.

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Economic Development

- We only have two commercial areas along Peachtree Industrial Blvd with no room for further commercial development unless through annexation.
- We should evaluate potential annexation of adjacent commercial areas in order to capture the tax revenues of business along Peachtree Industrial Blvd., particularly those using the Berkeley Lake name as advertisement.
- Local Economic Development is important as residents may need additional opportunities for family.

## Natural and Cultural Resources

- We were one of the first to actively invest in green space and it is now protected by a land trust. We will continue to seek further areas to protect in the same way if necessary funding can be found.
- Our tree ordinance can be improved.

## Facilities and Services

- We are aware of the fact that Gwinnett County has made significant efforts to encourage residents to replace septic systems with public sewer through a reduced requirement for number of petitioners and reduced costs.

## Transportation

- The community would like to enhance pedestrian mobility through the addition of more sidewalks, however, not at the cost of removing existing trees along potential sidewalk routes, particularly along North Berkeley Lake Rd.
- The community has concerns that installation of sidewalks, particularly along North Berkeley Lake Rd., will be cost prohibitive.
- Sidewalk installation should be selective and carefully considered.
- Traffic circles are seen as a solution to traffic speed issues along North Berkeley Lake Rd.
- Any Transportation improvement plans to convert Peachtree Industrial Blvd. into a limited access route and reduce lanes on Buford Hwy. would push additional traffic into Berkeley Lake and increase traffic along Berkeley Lake Rd., subsequently deteriorating quality of life for citizens of Berkeley Lake.
- Widening Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and adding access roads would result in increased impervious surface and severely compromise the ability of this corridor to filter stormwater and protect Lake water quality.
- City residents have concerns with cut-through traffic crossing the City from Peachtree Parkway to Peachtree Industrial Blvd.



# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Land Use and Development Patterns

- We are fiercely protective of our small City and its natural environment.
- We have some concerns about development along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and its possible impact upon our green space, homes, and lake. We are concerned with negative impacts from increased stormwater runoff and a potential increase in trash, vandalism, noise, crime, light pollution, and air pollution. We are also concerned with a potential decrease in water quality and negative impacts from inconsistent development standards.
- We should consider annexation of adjacent commercial areas in order to apply consistent development standards and ensure adequate environmental protection.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

- We feel Gwinnett County is not monitoring or inspecting construction adequately, especially as related to stormwater management.
- We feel Gwinnett County does not have consistent design standards for new projects or for redevelopment, especially along Peachtree Industrial Blvd., which will have a negative impact on Berkeley Lake.

## **Population**

Berkeley Lake has a stable population, with a mixture of retirees, working residents and families with children. As the housing stock ranges from lake-side cottages to larger suburban homes, a wide range of family types and ages can be accommodated, ensuring a relatively stable population mix into the future. Berkeley Lake's population in 2000 was 1,695 persons. Berkeley Lake has seen residential development in the River District, a subdivision approved for 82 homes which can be anticipated to add approximately 191 people to the population. Further population growth will be entirely dependent upon annexations.

Berkeley Lake's population contains significant representation in the middle-aged population groups, 35-44 and 45-54, as well as a younger group in the 5-13 age range. The middle-aged groups will most likely transition to the older groups, although housing opportunities may limit the number of aging residents who would like to transition to a smaller home and stay in Berkeley Lake. The City does have a range of housing, however, this range is in limited supply and turnover is not very high. However, both the elderly population and the teen-aged population will continue to grow, while the middle-age and young-adult population remains stable or declines. This will mean a transition from Berkeley Lake elementary school to a Duluth School Cluster middle or high school for many school children and perhaps difficult housing choices for the elderly. The Duluth School Cluster encompasses the City of Duluth, Berkeley Lake and parts of unincorporated Gwinnett County (2000 Census Population Figure). The areas of higher population, as distributed by Census Block Group, are located in

	<b>2000</b>
0-4 Years Old	133
5-13 Years Old	259
14-17 Years Old	77
18-20 Years Old	33
21-24 Years Old	27
25-34 Years Old	161
35-44 Years Old	394
45-54 Years Old	361
55-64 Years Old	128
65 and Older	122

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

the City of Duluth as well as South of Old Norcross Rd. Berkeley Lake has a fairly low density in comparison. These areas do not generate students for Berkeley Lake Elementary, however, Berkeley Lake middle school and high school children could attend schools in areas of higher population. Overcrowding could become an issue as more students age into the secondary school system.

Another aspect of Berkeley Lake’s population is the increase in Non-White population from 1990 to 2000. Non-Whites increased by over 300 persons over the decade, the majority being Asian or Pacific Islander. A significant number of African Americans and Hispanics also moved to Berkeley Lake during this time. This represents the populations of Berkeley Lake transitioning to racial mixes more similar to Gwinnett County and the Nation as a whole. Projections of Non-White population representation would also be dependent upon areas annexed into Berkeley Lake and cannot be accurately predicted for the long-term horizon.

## Housing

The City of Berkeley Lake represents an area of Gwinnett County with higher home values and a stable non-transient population. The housing stock is almost exclusively Detached Single Family homes, with the number of those nearly doubling from 1990 to 2000. The 2000 census indicates a small number of Attached Single Family homes, less than 1%, was built during this time frame. However, this information does not appear accurate as no multi-family construction was reported.

**Housing Type and Mix, 1990 & 2000**

	Number of Units		Percent of Total	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Detached Single Family	317	614	100.0%	99.4%
Attached Single Family	0	4	0.0%	0.6%
Multifamily	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Mobile Homes, Boats, etc.	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Units	317	618		

The age of Housing is predominantly less than twenty (20) years old, with a few homes built in the 1980s as well as some older homes built along the Lake in the 1950s. This compares closely to the rest of Gwinnett County.

**Age of Housing, 2000**

Year Constructed	Gwinnett	Berkeley Lake
1990 - March 2000	42%	51%
1980 – 1989	34%	23%
1970 – 1979	16%	13%
1969 or earlier	8%	13%

The 2000 Census shows Berkeley Lake to have a high median home value when compared to the Duluth School Cluster (*Median Home Value figure*). As these areas represent median home values, actual home values are much higher in some parts of Berkeley Lake. Other high home values are located to the West of the City, outside the Duluth School Cluster. The Block Groups

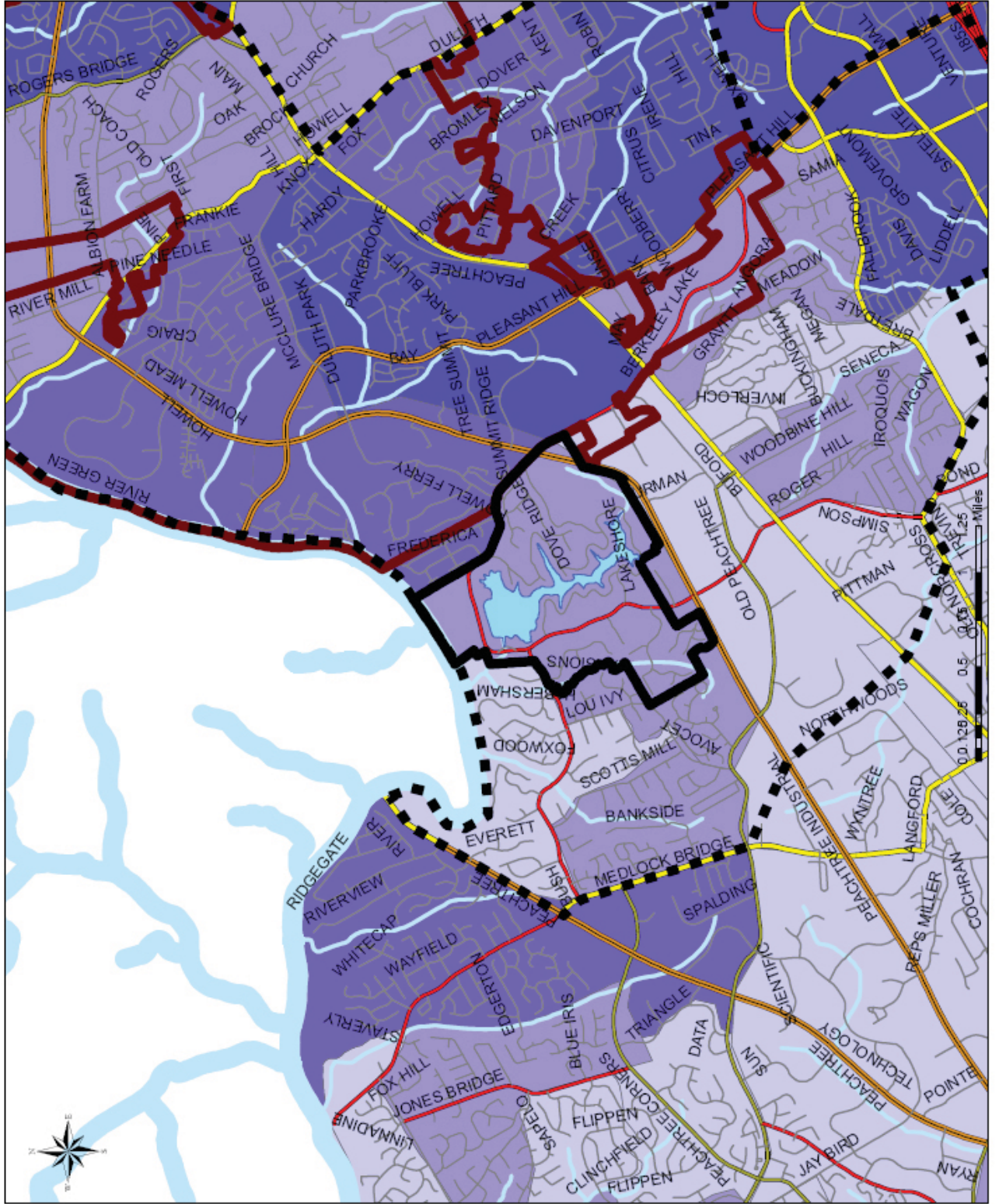
# 2000 Census Population City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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- Legend**
- City Limits
- Streets**
- Local Roads
- Interstate
- Minor Arterial
- Major Arterial
- Major Collector
- Primary Arterial
- City of Duluth
- Persons**
- 545 - 1,692
- 1,693 - 2,934
- 2,935 - 5,106
- 5,107 - 8,485
- 8,486 - 13,620
- Duluth School Cluster



# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

throughout the remainder of the School Cluster are considerably lower than Berkeley Lake, especially south of Buford Highway. Therefore, Berkeley Lake residents can be expected to pay a higher proportion of school taxes in comparison with the City of Duluth and the relevant areas of unincorporated Gwinnett County.

The 2000 Census also shows the City to have a lower proportion of renters (*Households Renter Occupied figure*), by Census Block Group, than much of the Duluth School Cluster. Half of the City of Duluth shows a considerable number of renters and areas south of Old Norcross Rd. also show a very high level of renters in comparison.

## Economic Development

The City of Berkeley Lake currently enjoys higher home prices and high incomes, relative to surrounding Gwinnett Co. In addition, income distribution has improved for City residents from 1990 to 2000, according to the US Census. The \$60,000 to \$74,000 income bracket has diminished, however, this has been replaced by more residents in higher income brackets. In particular, the \$150,000 and above income bracket has seen significant growth.

### Income Distribution, 1990 & 2000

	1990	2000
Less than \$9,999	0%	1.9%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	5.2%	1.6%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	1%	1.8%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	5.2%	2.1%
\$30,000 - \$34,999	4.2%	1.4%
\$35,000 - \$39,999	2.8%	2.1%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	12.1%	4.3%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	8%	5.3%
\$60,000 - \$74,999	25.6%	4.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	21.8%	18.8%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	6.6%	14.3%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	2.4%	12.7%
\$150,000 and above	5.2%	29.3%

Income brackets in Gwinnett County are considerably lower (*2000 Census Median Household Income figure*), as recorded by 2000 Census Block Group. Berkeley Lake is bordered by higher incomes to the West and by lower incomes to the East and to the South. Areas south of Old Norcross Rd. show the lowest income levels. With regards to persons living in poverty (*2000 Census Persons in Poverty figure*), Berkeley Lake has the lowest numbers, with higher numbers appearing in Duluth and south of Old Norcross Rd.

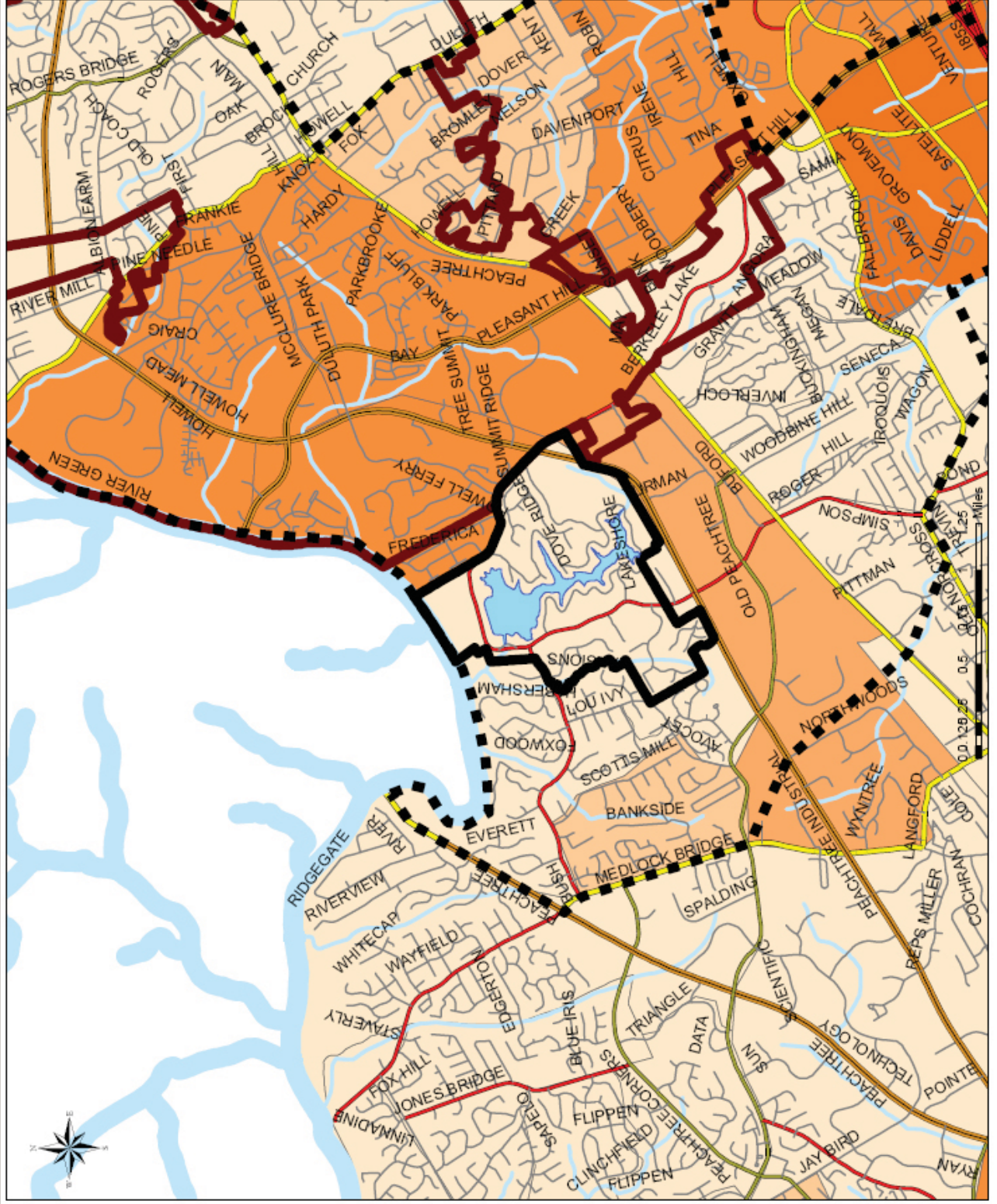


# 2000 Census Households Renter Occupied

## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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- Legend**
- City Limits
  - Streets**
    - Local Roads
    - Interstate
    - Minor Arterial
    - Major Arterial
    - Major Collector
    - Primary Arterial
    - City of Duluth  - Renter Occupied**
    - 0 - 152
    - 153 - 399
    - 400 - 788
    - 789 - 1,516
    - 1,517 - 3,050
    - Duluth School Cluster

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

These financial circumstances are a great benefit to the City, providing stable residential property tax income and the stability of owner-occupied upper-income residents. However, a number of commercial properties located near the City (Surrounding Zoning Districts figure) represent additional opportunities to increase property tax revenue through annexation. Limited commercial property is located near the City limits, however, annexation of bordering light industrial property could expand the City limits to those areas and could benefit the City through a rezoning to commercial use. This would create more income opportunities as well as allow the City to exercise more control over the design standards for new development on these parcels and protect the Lake's watershed.

The issue of annexation includes a number of factors. As Berkeley Lake will most likely need a future alternative to the current practice of contracting with Gwinnett County for additional police officers, Berkeley Lake may need to investigate other options, such as utilizing assistance from other jurisdictions, private security or city police. Adding additional security will incur more expense and annexation would provide additional revenue to pay for additional security. In addition, a local officer would also be able to enforce the zoning ordinance and would be able to cite people for illegal parking, property maintenance and nuisance violations.

Another factor affecting the decision to annex is the capacity of the Lake and membership in the Berkeley Lake Homeowners Association. The Berkeley Lake Homeowners Association does regulate access to the Lake, Beach and other amenities. Therefore, an organization is present to monitor Lake activity. Should membership grow to an unmanageable size, membership could be limited to a certain number and new applicants would have to be placed on a waiting list in order to ensure the Lake does not become overcrowded. Therefore, annexation of residential areas would not necessarily result in overcrowding.

Residential annexation could offer additional benefits, including availability of new amenities, such as a pool or River access. Annexation could also ensure adjacent residential areas are properly inspected for code violations and monitored on a regular basis. Such monitoring and inspection could help to stabilize or even raise property values in adjacent areas and minimize their impact on Berkeley Lake home values. These benefits, however, could be offset by additional infrastructure costs. Infrastructure costs would have to be assessed and compared to additional tax revenue before an annexation agreement could be reached. Infrastructure issues could be remedied through the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) agreement with Gwinnett County.

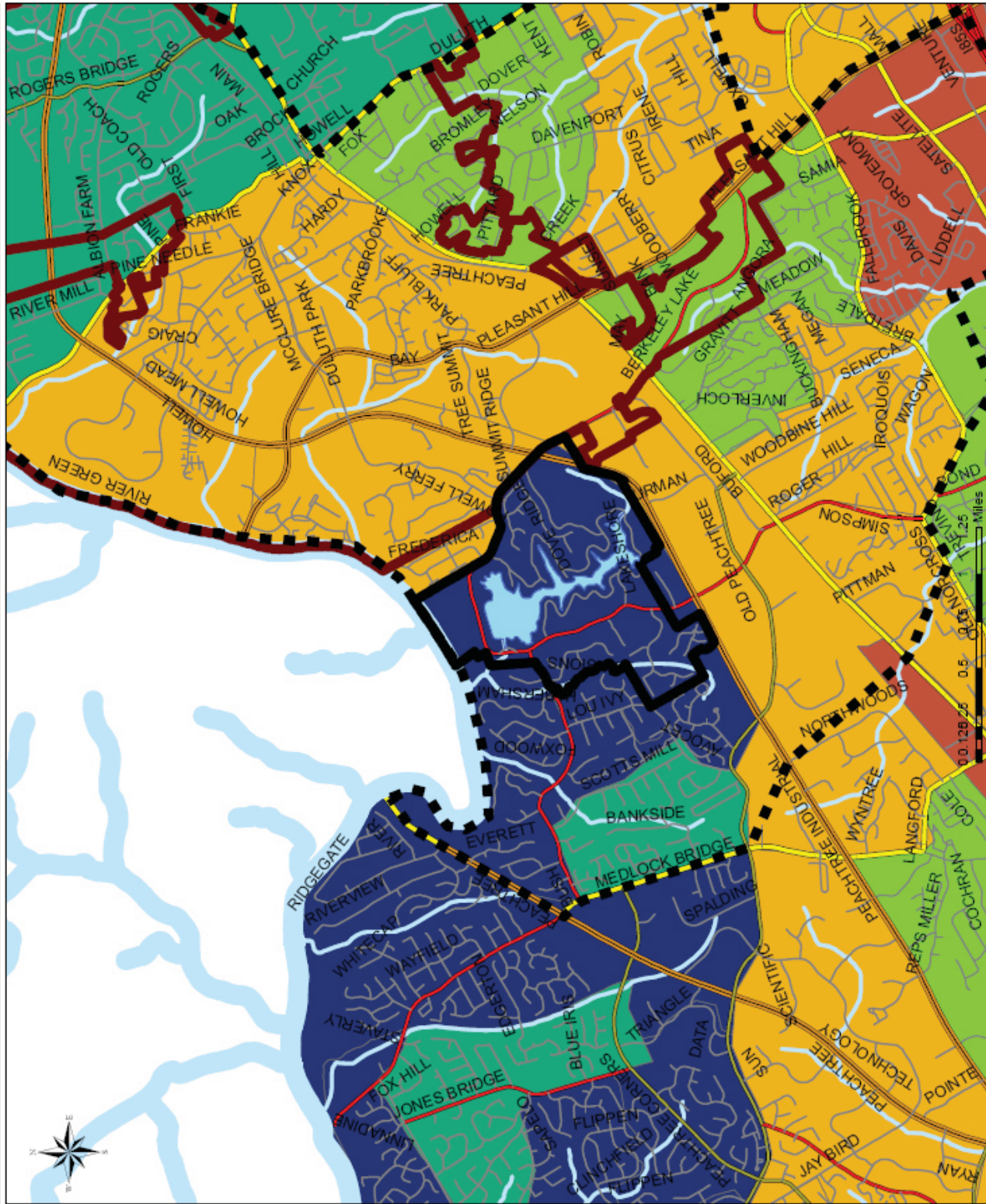
With regards to non-residential annexation, the majority of adjacent property along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. is zoned Industrial. This zoning reflects both existing uses as well as traditional uses that will transform and induce pressure to rezone to commercial and other uses. Gwinnett County will be faced with these redevelopment pressures and may or may not respond by allowing uses favorable to Berkeley Lake. The City of Duluth will most likely attempt to annex properties along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and offer commercial zoning as an incentive. Berkeley Lake should also pursue annexation if residents have concern over the possible transformation of uses along this corridor. Annexation would allow for additional tax revenue and greater control over design and stormwater runoff standards and should be considered by the City.

# 2000 Census Median Household Income

## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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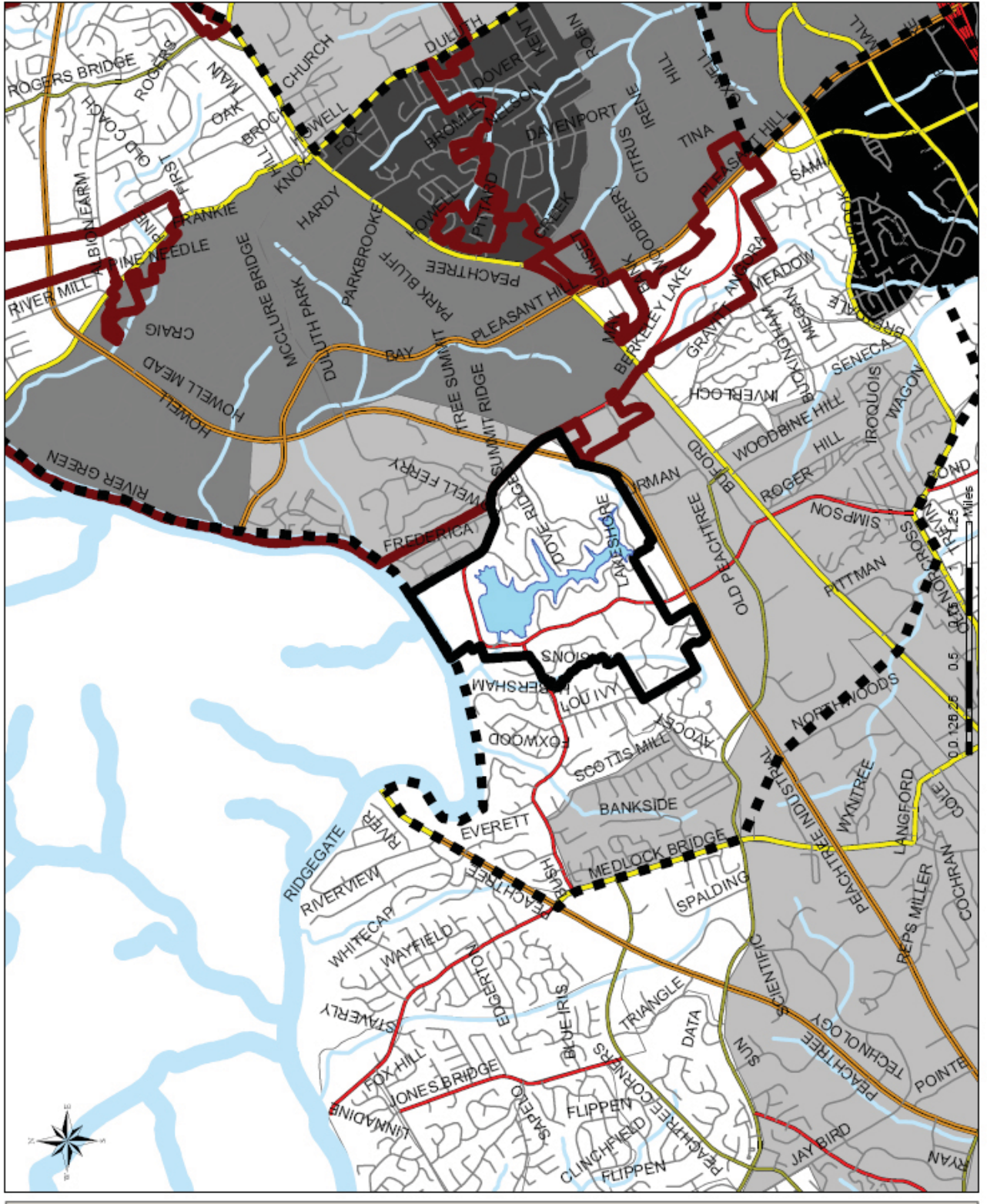


- Legend**
- City Limits
  - Streets
    - Interstate
    - Local Roads
    - Minor Arterial
    - Major Arterial
    - Major Collector
    - Primary Arterial
    - City of Duluth
  - Median Income
    - \$22,404 - \$45,393
    - \$45,394 - \$60,147
    - \$60,148 - \$75,697
    - \$75,698 - \$99,201
    - \$99,202 - \$149,246
  - Duluth School Cluster



# 2000 Census Persons Living in Poverty

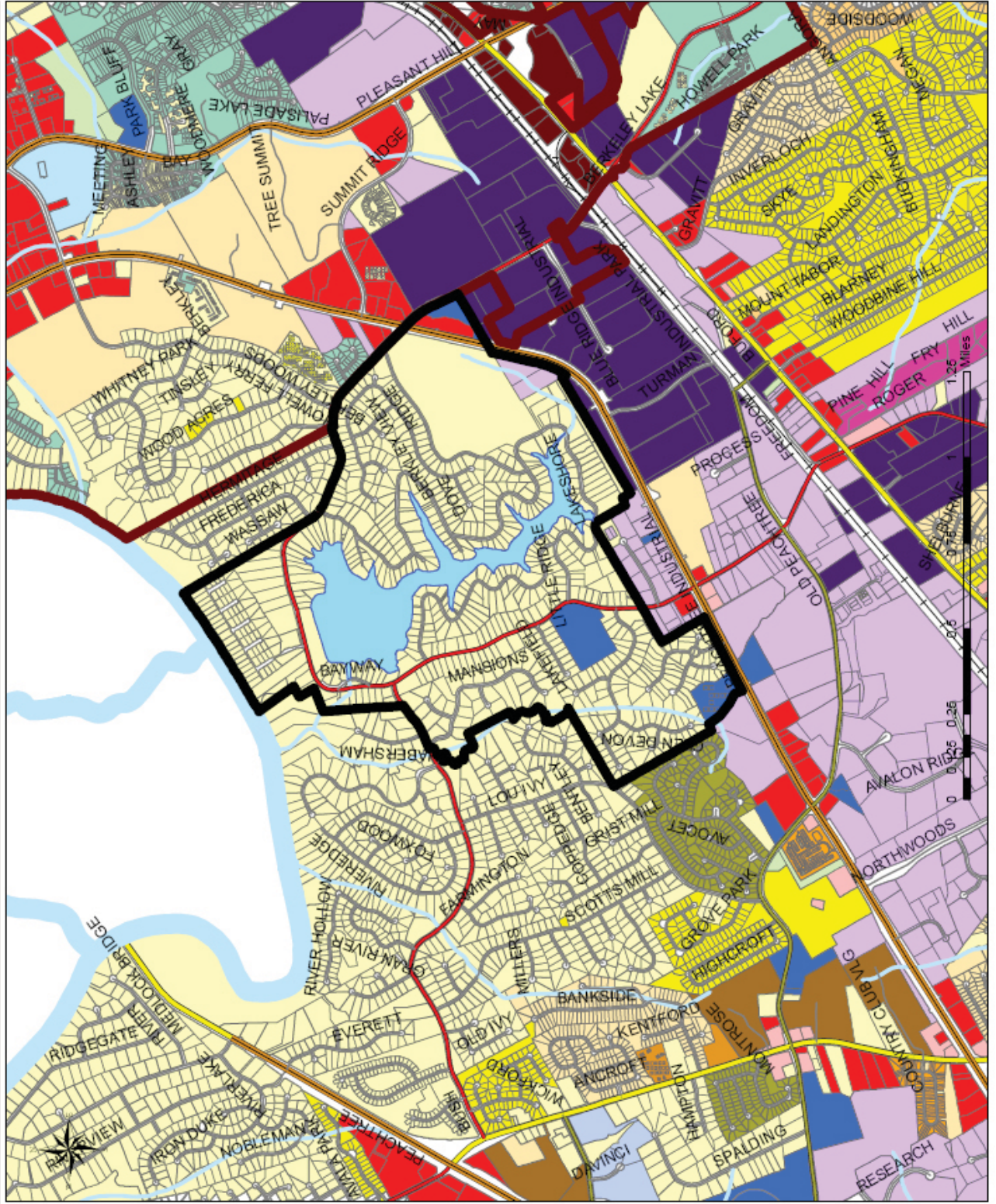
## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



- Legend**
- City Limits
  - Streets**
    - Local Roads
    - Interstate
    - Minor Arterial
    - Major Arterial
    - Major Collector
    - Primary Arterial
    - City of Duluth  - Persons in Poverty**
    - 0 - 73
    - 74 - 170
    - 171 - 342
    - 343 - 619
    - 620 - 957
    - Duluth School Cluster

# Surrounding Zoning Districts City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan

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- Legend**
- City Limits
  - Streets
  - Local Roads
  - Interstate
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Primary Arterial
  - City of Duluth
  - R-100
- Zoning**
- C1-NBHD Business
  - C2-General Business
  - HC-Highway Commercial
  - M1-Light Industry
  - M2-Heavy Industry
  - MH-Mobile Home Park
  - OBP-Office-Business Park
  - OI-Office-Institutional
  - POD-Planned Office Develop
  - PRD-Planned Residential Dev
  - PUD-Planned Unit Development
  - R100-Single Family Residence
  - R100C-Single Family Residence
  - R80-Single Family Residence
  - R75-Single Family Residence
  - RA200-Agriculture/Residence
  - RM-Multi-family Residence
  - RM10-Multi-family Residence
  - RM13-Multi-family Residence
  - RMB-Multi-family Residence
  - RMD-Multi-family Res-Duplex
  - RTH-Single Family Res-Townse
  - RZT-S F R-Zero Lot Line/Townse

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Natural and Cultural Resources

The natural and cultural resources of Berkeley Lake consist of the Lake itself and the wooded environment of the community. The Lake has some measure of protection afforded by the septic tank inspection regulations imposed by the City. This helps to limit the potential for septic system leakages into the lake and/or complete septic system failures. However, another measure of protection is the lack of impervious surface cover and the high density of tree cover surrounding the Lake. The original lake-side lots and the older residential parcels in the community are generally larger and have more tree cover (*2005 Aerial Photograph figure*). These lots function as a natural buffer and filter stormwater run-off, allowing for much of the water to be absorbed into the ground before reaching the Lake. The trees and understory vegetative growth filter out pollutants, such as automobile oil and fluids, which accumulate on driveways and road surfaces.

A significant concern of local residents is the impact of people demolishing the older lake-side homes and replacing them with new and/or larger houses. One initial concern is that existing trees are cleared, larger driveways are constructed, and the overall effectiveness of the residential lot's ability to filter and absorb storm-water is diminished. Two readily identifiable regulations in the City Code can be seen as

contributing to this concern. Firstly, the Tree Ordinance requires sixteen (16) Tree Density Units to be maintained on residential lots, unless the lot has fewer than sixteen (16) before redevelopment. However, should a lot contain more than the required Units, the remaining trees may be removed. This could result in fewer trees and less stormwater protection. A solution might be to limit the reduction in tree cover to a certain percentage. Another contributing aspect of the Tree Ordinance is the calculation of Tree Density Units, where new trees count for significantly higher (in some cases ten (10) times higher) number of units versus existing trees. This creates a huge incentive to remove existing trees and replace them with smaller ones. This imbalance will most certainly result in fewer mature trees and should be remedied through an amendment to the Tree Ordinance.

In addition, existing trees have well established root systems and have integrated understory cover. Removal of existing trees can result in significant soil disturbance that could take years to recover from. Existing trees have proven records of survival and can be less susceptible to disease and other hazards. Replacement of existing trees with fewer new trees is a contributor to diminished water quality in Lake Berkeley and could eventually result in algae blooms and other harmful impacts.

# 2005 Aerial Photograph

## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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### Legend

- City Limits
- City of Duluth

### Streets

- Local Roads
- Interstate
- Minor Arterial
- Major Arterial
- Major Collector
- Primary Arterial

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Community Facilities

The most important facilities affecting Berkeley Lake are the Elementary School, storm-water facilities and sewer facilities. The City is located in the Duluth School Cluster and does have an Elementary School. The aging of the population, including children in the elementary age bracket, will move students to the middle and high schools over the next decade with a steady or declining rate of younger students. Therefore, the Elementary School is not anticipated to have growth-related problems or over-population beyond current levels in the near future. Middle and high schools, however, could experience significant growth from Gwinnett County and Berkeley Lake students may very well encounter overcrowding as they move to secondary schools. Berkeley Lake can lobby the Gwinnett School Board and participate in Duluth School Cluster meeting. However, beyond public participation, influencing the quality of middle and high schools will be difficult for local residents.

Storm-water facilities can be viewed as structural and non-structural. The structural facilities are considered adequate to control storm-water runoff throughout the City. The Dam, in particular, serves as a significant facility controlling flooding. The non-structural storm-water facilities include the residential wooded areas as well as the wooded preserves of conservation land within the City. As little vacant land remains available, new residential developments are unlikely. Therefore, protection of water quality will be tied to protection of the existing wooded vacant and residential properties.

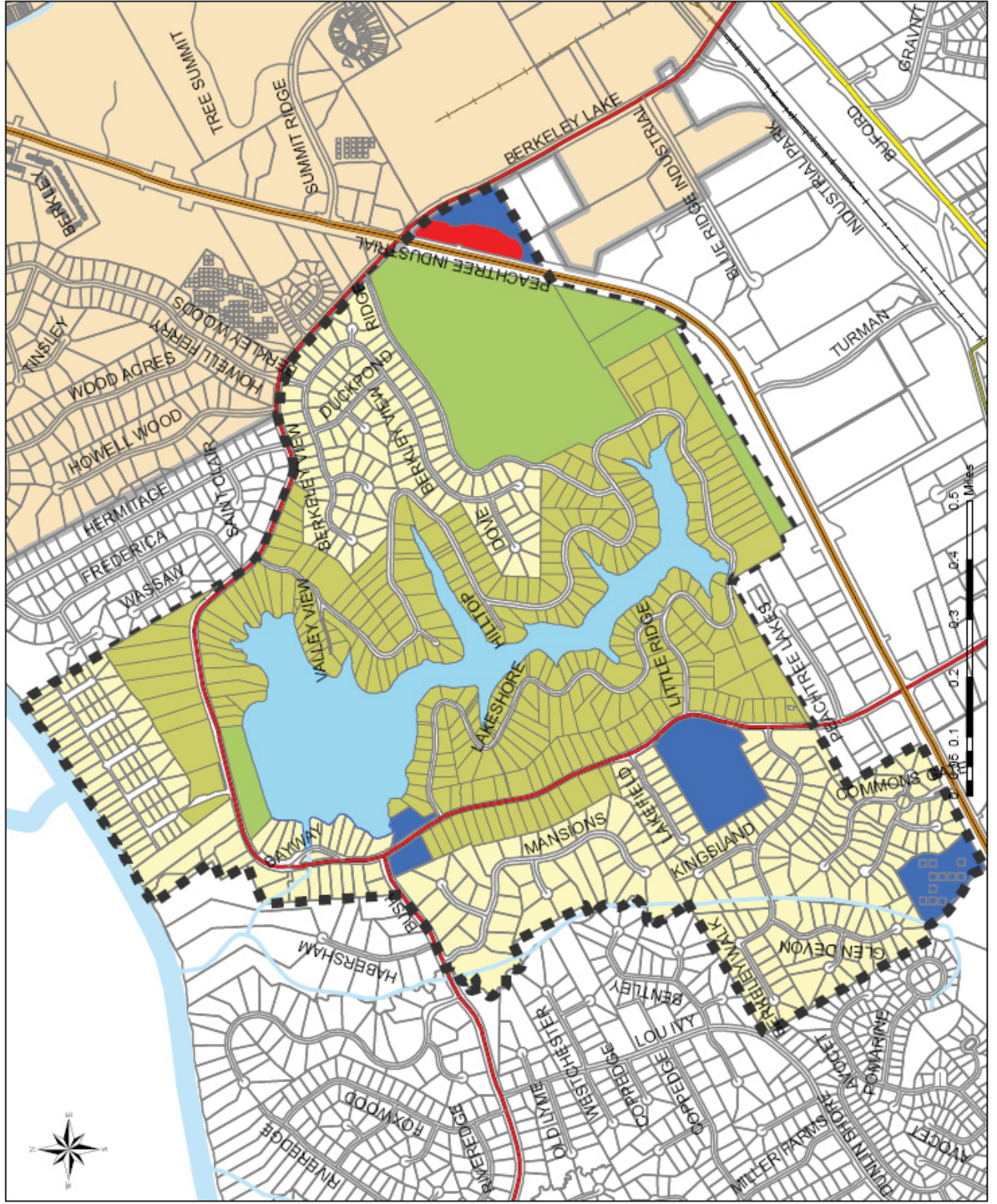
Public sewer facilities are available to much of the City, but are mostly limited to the newer subdivisions. A number of older homes and lots are located along the Lake without access to sewer and must operate on a septic system (*Properties without Sewer Access figure*). Aging septic systems along the Lake run the risk of failure and could significantly harm Lake water quality as they deteriorate. A septic system inspection program is in place for the City, however, eventual replacement of these systems should be the long-term goal for this situation. A major concern of local residents is the demolition of older lake homes and the construction of newer homes. These new homes are frequently much larger and yet still utilize older, smaller, septic systems from the original homes. A significant precautionary measure would be to require replacement of the septic system along with the building of a new home, especially if replacing a smaller home.

# Properties without Public Sewer Access

## City of Berkeley Lake Comprehensive Plan



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### Legend

- City Limits
- City of Duluth
- Streets**
- Local Roads
- Interstate
- Minor Arterial
- Major Arterial
- Major Collector
- Primary Arterial
- Lake
- Commercial
- Office/Institutional
- Residential Area
- Open Space
- Lots w/o Sewer

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Transportation

A significant community concern is the use of Berkeley Lake roads as cut-through routes for non-residents. In particular, North Berkeley Lake Rd. is used as a cut-through by Duluth and Gwinnett Co. residents during their morning and evening commute. Increased non-local traffic creates safety issues due to increased vehicle trips per day and a perceived lack of concern by non-local residents who do not live in the community. This is evidenced by motorists consistently being observed exceeding the posted speed limits. A number of transportation system modifications and traffic control measures are possible to help calm traffic and should be considered. According to County, Regional and State Transportation Plans, transportation networks throughout Gwinnett Co. are anticipated to experience more traffic and greater travel delays over the coming decades. Berkeley Lake will certainly be affected as nearby arterials will experience significant increases in traffic.

One particular local concern is the effect on North Berkeley Lake Rd. as Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and Buford Highway experience greater traffic. Residents are also concerned Georgia Department of Transportation and the Atlanta Regional Commission may transform Buford Hwy. into a limited access Rd., forcing motorists to use North Berkeley Lake Rd. as an alternate route. Traffic counts on both Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and Buford Hwy. are both already high and exceed Level of Service (LOS) "C" capacity. To attain LOS "C", or acceptable, rating a five (5) lane arterial typically has a capacity of 22,000 vehicle trips per day, on average. Peachtree Industrial had 36,200 trips in 2006 and Buford Hwy. had 28,440 trips per day in 2006 (*Average Daily Traffic Counts figure*). This puts these roads into the "D" or "F" category, depending upon curb cuts, traffic lights and other localized circumstances. This situation will most likely worsen over the coming decades.

Should GDOT modify Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and reduce access, a significant amount of traffic could decide to use North Berkeley Lake Rd. as an alternate route until sufficient access can be found. N. Berkeley Lake and S. Berkeley Lake Rds. could also experience a considerable increase in wait times or "stacking" of vehicles no longer able to use other access points. Stacking along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. could also affect Berkeley Lake and traffic could choose alternate paths along this route as well. Limiting access to Peachtree Industrial Blvd. is not seen as advantageous to Berkeley Lake and is anticipated to produce additional traffic difficulties. Finally, any plans to reduce the number of lanes on Buford Hwy. would also be seen as having a significant effect on North Berkeley Lake Rd. and should not be implemented.





# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Implementation Program

### Policies & Implementation Measures

#### Housing and Social Services

**H. 1.** The City should consider study of options regarding development of residential projects oriented towards elderly residents of Berkeley Lake. Focus on those wishing to transition to a smaller, more manageable house, and remain within the community. As local residents age, larger houses may not be preferred and some residents will most likely want to move to a smaller house yet still live within Berkeley Lake. Specifically, some residents may be unwilling or unable to maintain a larger home or a home with a yard and may desire a home without a yard, or one with a managed lawn and maintenance arrangement. This suitable housing type may take the form of accessory or ancillary housing within existing structures, with a required Special Use Permit and associated standards. An accessory housing zoning amendment would have to be adopted, along with appropriate standards, including separate entrances and kitchen facilities.

**H. 1. 1.** **Consider studying options for the Zoning code to allow for accessory housing and superior standards which ensure accessory housing does not compromise existing structures or neighborhoods.**

#### Natural and Cultural Resources

**N. 1.** Consider amendment of the city code to strengthen tree ordinance protection regulations and ensure adequate tree cover is maintained on residential lots. Replacement of older housing, especially along the Lake, often results in removal of existing trees and replacement with fewer trees. The trees along the lake, along with their root systems, are an important buffer serving to protect the Lake from stormwater pollution and help control erosion as well. As much tree canopy as possible should be maintained in all areas of Berkeley Lake. Two particular issues of concern are the lack of tree protection beyond sixteen (16) Tree Density Units (TDU) and the unbalanced value of new trees versus existing trees for meeting TDU requirements. Existing trees have well established root systems and their replacement can often harm understory vegetation and ground cover. New trees should not be considered superior to existing trees. A pilot project by the Georgia Forestry Commission and the USDA Forestry Service is expected to result in a study depicting the ideal tree density and species needed to maintain the environmental health of the urban forest within the City.

**N. 1. 1.** **Consider amending the City tree ordinance to better protect existing trees and use the results of the Georgia Forestry Commission/USDA Forestry Service pilot project study as well as the Gwinnett County tree ordinance as references.**

# City of Berkeley Lake 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Economic Development

ED. 1. Evaluate and consider annexation of light industrial, commercial and high-value residential property in order to increase the local tax base and to ensure a high level of design is imposed on new development. *Non-residential annexation can be seen as a supplement to the City's tax base and, therefore, all suitable projects should be considered. However, adequate stormwater protection and a high standard of design should be considered during any annexation. Residential annexation should be considered for developments with average home values similar to those of Berkeley Lake, or approximately \$200,000, in 2008 figures. A lesser value should be considered if additional City costs are not anticipated.*

**ED. 1. 1. Evaluate and consider annexation of residential subdivisions having an average home value, including amenities and vacant parcels, of approximately \$200,000 or more, in 2008 figures, depending on anticipated future costs.**

**ED. 1. 2. Evaluate and consider annexation of suitable non-residential property for rezoning, if necessary, and development/redevelopment.**

**ED 1. 3. Evaluate and consider annexation of properties important to environmental quality and which provide buffers for the Berkeley Lake watershed.**

## Transportation

T. 1. Implement suggested measures from Street Smarts traffic calming study after due consideration and careful study of impact. *Local residents feel North and South Berkeley Lake Roads and Bush Road are heavily utilized by non-local traffic and commuters from Duluth and other areas who do not value the community and violate local speed limits. A study was commissioned to perform a traffic analysis and suggest potential traffic calming measures. These measures include Traffic Circles along N. Berkeley Lake Rd. at Lakeshore Dr. and Hermitage Dr. as well as Bush Road at Mansions Parkway. The suggested measures also include median islands between Hermitage and Lakeshore Dr. Finally, the study suggests sidewalks along N. Berkeley Rd.*

**T. 1. 1. Implement the recommendations of the Street Smarts traffic calming study, through application for TE or other appropriate grant program funds.**

## Community Facilities

CF. 1. Consider amendment of zoning ordinance to require replacement of septic systems as a condition of issuing building permits in conjunction with demolition permits to ensure new septic systems are installed along with replacement housing, especially along the Lake. *A major issue regarding environmental quality along the Lake is the danger of failing septic systems and the possible resultant contamination of the Lake. Although the City does have a Septic System Inspection program, which the City should continue to enforce, this does not completely eliminate the danger of sudden septic system failure. When housing is demolished and replaced,*

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*this represents an opportunity to replace older septic systems with newer ones. The new systems will last longer and will also accommodate larger housing with higher usage.*

**CF. 1. 1. Continue to enforce the Septic System Inspection regulations.**

**CF. 1. 2. Consider amendment of zoning ordinance to require replacement of septic systems as a condition of issuing building permits in conjunction with demolition permits or replacement building permits.**

CF. 2. Consider studying alternative sewer systems for local neighborhoods in order to achieve the most efficient and practical public sewer service in these areas. *Serving local neighborhoods, especially along the Lake, with public sewer can be problematic with regards to topographic constraints and tree clearing. Standard methods of installing public sewer lines would require numerous lift stations and significant clearing for utility easements. A number of other options, including separation of gray-water and utilization of smaller house-specific pumps, could allow for fewer lift stations and lower impact easements. Although there does not appear to be practical technology currently available, the City should continue to look at technologies for sewer solutions in the future.*

**CF. 2.1 Consider studying alternative sewer systems for local neighborhoods in order to achieve the most efficient and practical public sewer service in these areas.**

## Intergovernmental Coordination

IC. 1. Investigate cooperation with local jurisdictions or utilization of private security to enhance local police capabilities. *A number of local jurisdictions may be available to supplement Berkeley Lake police capabilities on a contract basis. In addition, private security should also be considered for contracting services as well.*

**IC. 1. 1. Investigate cooperation with local jurisdictions or utilization of private security to enhance local police capabilities.**

IC.2. Coordinate with other local governments in implementing the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Plans. *In September 2003, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Board adopted three comprehensive plans to ensure adequate supplies of drinking water, to protect water quality and to minimize the impact of development on the District's watersheds and downstream water quality. The City of Berkeley Lake will coordinate with other local governments in implementing these District Plans and their future updates.*

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PROJECT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR					RESPONSIBILITY	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013			
<b>Housing and Social Services</b> Consider studying options for the Zoning code to allow for accessory housing and superior standards which ensure accessory housing does not compromise existing structures or neighborhoods.	X	X				City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b> Consider amending the City tree ordinance to better protect existing trees and use the results of the Georgia Forestry Commission/USDA Forestry Service pilot project study as well as the Gwinnett County tree ordinance as references.	X	X	X			City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund
<b>Economic Development</b> Evaluate and consider annexation of residential subdivisions having an average home value, including amenities and vacant parcels, of approximately \$200,000 or more, in 2008 figures, depending on anticipated future costs.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund
Evaluate and consider annexation of suitable non-residential property for rezoning, if necessary, and development/redevelopment.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund
Evaluate and consider annexation of properties important to environmental quality and which provide buffers for the Berkeley Lake watershed.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund
<b>Transportation</b> Implement the recommendations of the Street Smarts traffic calming study, through application for TE or other appropriate grant program funds.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Berkeley Lake	Varies	City of Berkeley Lake/Federal, State & Local Grants
<b>Facilities and Services</b> Continue to enforce the Septic System Inspection regulations.	X	X	X	X	X	City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund
Consider amendment of zoning ordinance to require replacement of septic systems as a condition of issuing building permits in conjunction with demolition permits or replacement building permits.		X	X			City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund/Private Funding
<b>Intergovernmental Cooperation</b> Investigate cooperation with local jurisdictions or utilization of private security to enhance local police capabilities.	X	X	X			City of Berkeley Lake	To Be Determined	General Fund