

Housing in Bartow County

An Advisory Document on Current Housing
Trends, Policies, and Opportunities

Prepared by Georgia Conservancy
in collaboration with partners
for the USDA's Rural Economic Development Initiative
& Bartow County



Bringing Everyone to the Table
To Build a Better Community



Table of Contents

I. Introduction	4-5
II. Project Origin	6-7
III. Project Scope	8
IV. Engagements	9
V. Review of Past Plans	10-14
VI. Current Trends & Projected Growth	15-25
VII. Extended Stay Hotel Pilot Study	26-29
VIII. Zoning & Infrastructure	30-39
IX. Proposed Next Steps	40-42

I. Introduction

Bartow County is a predominantly rural county located on the northwestern edge of the burgeoning Atlanta metropolitan region. Like many of its neighbors, especially those on the frontier of Atlanta’s outward expansion, Bartow is experiencing increased development pressure on its land due to new and sustained interest in the county’s industries, natural resources, and picturesque environment.

The county is no stranger to this pressure. Growth projections (put forth in the comprehensive plans for Bartow County and its county seat of Cartersville) have forecasted heavy influxes of new residents. While the housing crisis of 2008 paused that growth for a little while, the pressures of an increasing population have accelerated once again as more and more households identify Atlanta and its neighbors as attractive places to live and work.

This housing assessment is intended to provide the leadership of Bartow County, its cities, and local institutions interested in sustainable economic development with an in-depth look at the county’s current housing conditions. In this document, we will review several key data related to what Bartow County’s housing looks like, including aspects related to housing type, costs, location, development patterns, and projected aggregate demand.

While the assessment is comprehensive, it is a starting point for future housing and economic development endeavors. Ultimately, this assessment should be used as a foundation for future conversations about how to create a holistic economic development strategy that positions housing as a focal point to Bartow County’s overall sustainable growth.

Project Team

- Doug Belisle** – Executive Director, Bartow Collaborative
- Michael Gawrys** – Doctoral Student, University of Georgia
- Quincy Haisley** – Research Consultant, Georgia Conservancy
- Nick Johnson** – Senior Planner, Georgia Conservancy
- Katherine Moore** – President, Georgia Conservancy
- Joy Moten-Thomas** – Assistant Administrator for Community Development and Outreach, Fort Valley State University
- Luben Raytchev** – Planner/Designer, Georgia Conservancy
- Dr. Kim Skobba** – Director, University of Georgia’s Center for Housing and Community Research

County Staff

- TJ Leffew** – Director of Information Services
- Melissa McClain-Lasebikan** – GIS Developer/Analyst
- Patrick Nelson** – Community Redevelopment Coordinator
- Peter Olson** – County Administrator

Bartow County Context

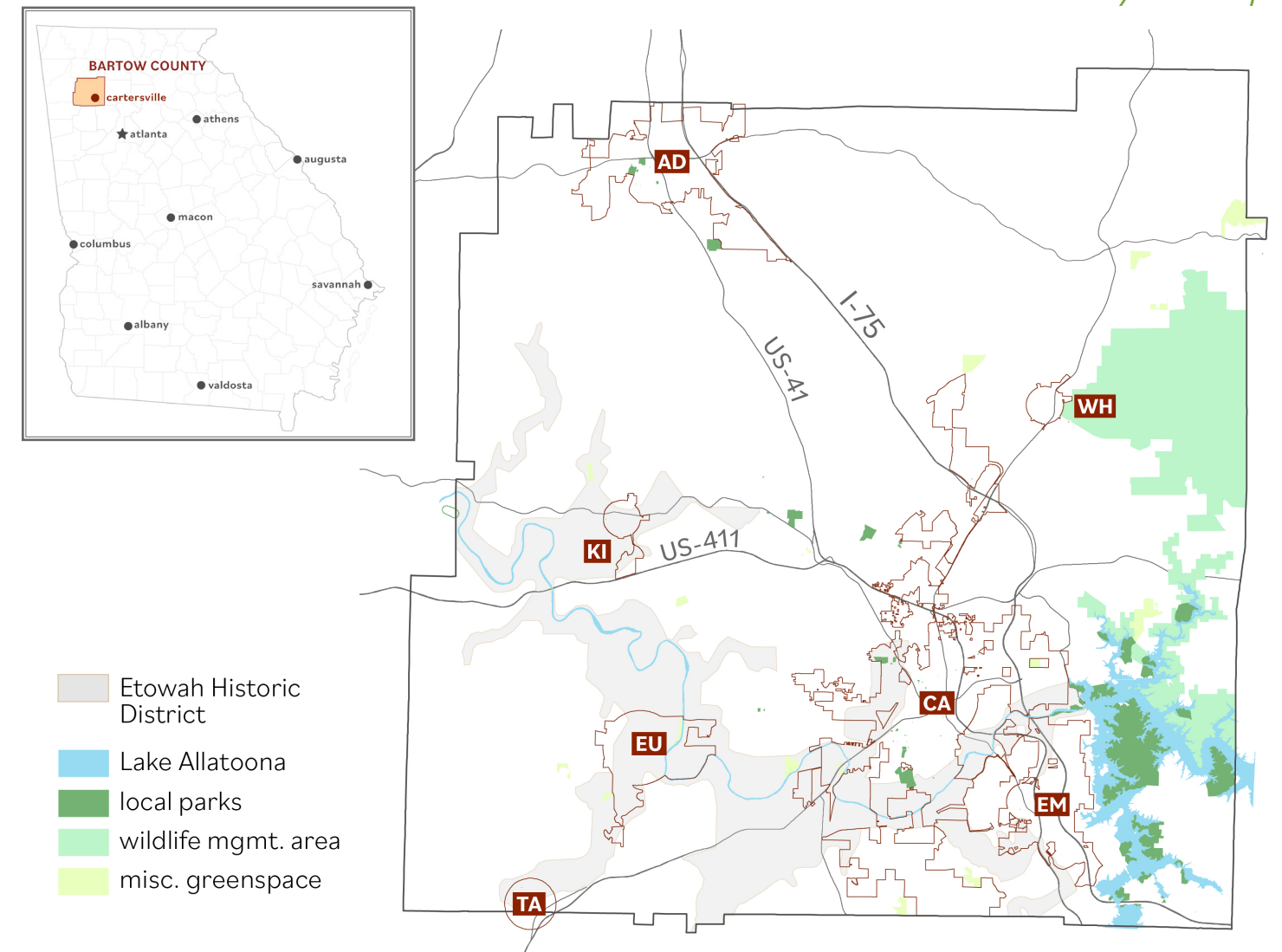
Population (2019):

Bartow County:	104,919
Cartersville (CA):	20,870
Adairsville (AD):	4,856
Euharlee (EU):	4,309
Emerson (EM):	1,754
White (WH):	860
Kingston (KI):	513
Taylorville (TA):	263

Planning:

County Seat:	Cartersville
Regional Commission:	Northwest GA
Water Planning District:	Metro North GA
Projected Growth Rate:	+0.83%/year

Bartow County Basemap



- Etowah Historic District
- Lake Allatoona
- local parks
- wildlife mgmt. area
- misc. greenspace

II. Project Origin

The Bartow County Housing Assessment emerged from a collaboration between multiple entities interested in the convergence between Bartow County’s historic rural character and sustainable economic development at scale.

In June 2019, Bartow County was selected as a beneficiary of a multi-jurisdictional grant through the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). Funding from REDI was used by Purdue University and Fort Valley State University’s Cooperative Extension Program (FVSU CEP) to support the efforts of Georgia Conservancy and the University of Georgia’s Center for Housing and Community Research in providing the contents of the “Housing in Bartow County” report. A team of community leaders and advisors, dubbed Mission Bartow, was assembled to champion this effort at the local level. They are responsible for identifying key “quality of life” challenges that are holding the county back from sustainable economic development.

One of these main challenges identified in the early stages of the program included workforce housing. Across Georgia, cities and counties large and small have struggled with this issue, which has become even more urgent in the past few years. In Bartow County, concerns have emerged about the capacity of the county’s current housing to accommodate its growing workforce, especially as economic development picks up its pace. Furthermore, when the supply of quality—or even adequate—homes dwindles, those who have less economic mobility tend to be forced into more difficult housing situations.

It is imperative for any county to provide & incentivize the development of housing of various types, sizes, and price points, such that the entirety of its workforce—from the “factory floor” to the C-suite—can find a quality home. Not only does this benefit the county’s overall economic development goals, it also contributes to a more vibrant community.

In order to fully understand the complex issue of workforce housing, it is prudent to investigate the entirety of the housing landscape. Hence, this study examines various components of how housing ties into economic development and quality of life, with the ultimate goal of providing strategic direction for Bartow County stakeholders, including policymakers.

To accomplish this, Mission Bartow contracted with two organizations—Georgia Conservancy and University of Georgia’s Center for Housing and Community Research. Together, they collected and analyzed key housing data and trends that could serve the county in their efforts to approach this issue thoroughly and thoughtfully. This contract began in October 2020.

Project Partner Organizations

Technical partner & co-author of report: Georgia Conservancy (GC). GC is a statewide conservation nonprofit whose mission is to protect Georgia through ecological and economic solutions for stewardship, conservation, and sustainable use of the land and its resources. Housing is often overlooked as a pertinent topic in conversations about environmental stewardship; with careful planning and clearly-communicated values, decisions we make about use of land can be supportive of our natural resources as well as our economic growth.

Technical partner & co-author of report: University of Georgia (UGA). UGA’s Center for Housing and Community Research helps communities identify and address housing needs and highlights emerging housing issues in the state of Georgia. The Center accomplishes this by facilitating change through a collaboration with communities, faculty members and students within the University of Georgia, and a Board of Advisors comprised of statewide representatives from all aspects of the housing industry.

Local host institution: Bartow Collaborative (BC). BC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a member of the Georgia Family Connection Network whose mission is to engage community partners to promote healthy, educated, and self-sufficient children and families in Bartow County. Housing forms a central component for their work given that housing is the foundation upon which healthy and self-sufficient families rely.

Project advisor & financial contributor: Fort Valley State University, Cooperative Extension Program (FVSU CEP). Chartered in 1890, FVSU has a prolific history as an HBCU that advances education with an emphasis on community fulfillment. The CEP program has a demonstrated history of, commitment to, and direct involvement in working with limited resource clientele in rural Georgia, inclusive of persistent poverty communities.



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III. Project Scope

This project was designed to provide a thorough understanding of current housing conditions in Bartow County and its cities. In concert with the main objectives of Mission Bartow, specific emphasis was placed on understanding how demographic trends interacted with population projections, existing housing stock and current land policy. From there, the project team determined general recommendations related to specific housing needs.

I. HOUSING CONDITIONS

Evaluate current housing and demographic data, including:

- Demographic data (age of owners/renters, income of owners/renters, household sizes, etc.)
- Housing economic data (median monthly costs of owners/renters, cost-burden rates, etc.)
- Housing stock data (vacancy, size, configuration, and other factors)
- Housing tenure gaps/phenomena (extended-stay hotels, workforce housing availability, etc.)

Evaluate trends among data, from 2016 to most recent data year available.

Review local and regional plans to understand the following questions:

- What aspects of housing are considered priorities by local governments?
- What steps have been taken to strengthen local housing markets and construction?

II. HOUSING DISTRIBUTION & LAND POLICY

Assess current zoning codes to understand what types of construction/housing are allowable in which jurisdictions.

Map current land policy to understand where different types of housing are permitted.

Assess housing data spatially to understand patterns related to housing costs, incomes, and distribution of housing types.

Gain a basic understanding of infrastructure capacity and potential growth challenges.

III. HOUSING PROJECTIONS

Compare existing data with population growth projections.

Contrast growth percentages with available housing resources, including land and existing housing units.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Identify potential next steps for local jurisdictions to operationalize the data, as well as general guiding principles for jurisdictions to consider.

IV. Engagements

This assessment was carried out by the Mission Bartow team and its partners. Because of its nature as a technical report with a focus on data analysis, engagements were limited to the Mission Bartow team and key constituents of Bartow County’s leadership. The project team met approximately once a month to monitor project progress, review findings, and discuss potential implications of information revealed in the analysis.

Individual stakeholder interviews and engagements were conducted with key staff from several Bartow County departments. Spatial data in the form of GIS shapefiles were provided by the County’s GIS department.

In May 2021, the Mission Bartow team requested to present to Bartow County staff regarding our findings thus far. Four members of the Mission Bartow team—Mr. Belisle (Bartow Collaborative), Mr. Johnson (Georgia Conservancy), Ms. Moten-Thomas (FVSU), and Dr. Skobba (UGA)—presented to three Bartow County staff members: Mr. Olson, County Administrator; Mr. Leffew, Director of Information Services; and Mr. Nelson, Community Redevelopment Coordinator. The presentation was well-received, and all participants engaged in thoughtful discussion about the findings. The Mission Bartow team plans to return to local government leaders to present final conclusions from the project.

V. Review of Past Plans

In order to obtain a thorough understanding of housing challenges, opportunities, and priorities in Bartow County, the project team began by reviewing past planning efforts undertaken by the County and its cities. Past plans contain indispensable information and resources for getting a lay of the land; not only do they provide a historical record of local action and vision, but they also demonstrate what local governments have formally committed to through their planning exercises and adoption process.

The project team assessed eight plans covering Bartow County and its cities. The Bartow County Comprehensive Plan covers all jurisdictions within the county, giving individual attention to each city in its work plan. Most of the plans the project team assessed focused on Cartersville and its immediate surroundings (including Emerson and the area of southeast Bartow County known as Allatoona). This is not surprising, as these are not only the largest jurisdictions by population and area but also the fastest growing and most pressured by new development. Cartersville also contains the highest concentration of jobs in the county.

Plans Reviewed, in order of publication:

- Cartersville “Vision 2030” (2007)
- Cartersville Urban Redevelopment Plan (2010)
- Cartersville Downtown Master Plan 2024 (2013)
- Allatoona Urban Redevelopment Plan (2015)
- Bartow County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2017)
- Bartow County Transit Development Plan (2017)
- Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Water Resource Management Plan (2017, amended in 2020)
- Adairsville Downtown Master Plan (no date)

The project team reviewed these plans for key findings and recommendations across four major categories: economic development, housing, natural environment and resources, and infrastructure. In keeping with the goals of this housing assessment, priority was placed on recommendations and information related to housing, especially if housing challenges or configurations were mentioned in plans where housing was not the central area of study (i.e. if housing was mentioned in transit or parks and recreation studies).

Housing

Almost every plan reviewed by the project team engaged with the subject of housing, acknowledging it as an area of great concern across the county and its cities. While each jurisdiction possesses unique challenges and opportunities, a few common themes emerged:

A crucial first step is to understand the lay of the land. Several plans mentioned the need for comprehensive housing assessments and/or inventories of existing buildings and vacant lots. Chronicling what already exists provides additional insight into what’s still needed. (This housing assessment and the data it has compiled is designed to aid future studies and inventories undertaken by Bartow County governments.)

Infill and redevelopment should be facilitated and encouraged. The Bartow County Joint Comprehensive Plan, Cartersville Urban Redevelopment Plan, Cartersville “Vision 2030”, and Cartersville Downtown Master Plan 2024 all encouraged the pursuit of small-scale housing infill projects in places already serviced by infrastructure, especially in commercial or post-industrial buildings that have remained vacant for some time. Language in the plans indicated that the plan authors understood this to not only be less costly for the city than greenfield development, but also a worthy investment in the economic development potential of central Bartow County.

Housing Policies & Projects

	Action Item	BC	AD	CA	EM	EU	KI	TA	WH
Projects	Prepare housing assessment county-wide of workforce, senior, multi-family, and other forms of housing and develop planning & zoning recommendations and future land use changes to accommodate those housing types.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Develop Senior Housing Task Force.	x	x			x			
	Review land use and development ordinances, revising to allow green infrastructure to treat stormwater runoff.	x		x		x			
	Develop incentives for desired housing types and price points through density bonuses, grant and loan programs, and others.	x				x	x		
	Research ways to foster redevelopment of aging commercial centers and industrial buildings, with a focus on mixed use.			x					
	Identify and apply for grant options like CHIP or CDBG. Identify areas suitable for CHIP grant application & revolving loan fund.	x			x				
	Prepare inventory of vacant properties, focusing on infill.	x	x			x			
Policies	Co-locate infill development within areas already serviced by infrastructure.			x					
	Enforce building codes, specifically in relation to multi-family.	x				x			
	Use redevelopment, infill, infrastructure improvements, and code enforcement to improve housing conditions.	x				x			

Key: BC = Bartow County | AD = Adairsville | CA = Cartersville | EM = Emerson | EU = Euharlee | KI = Kingston | TA = Taylorsville | WH = White |

Financial incentives and penalties can be powerful tools for housing redevelopment and maintenance.

Several plans mentioned possible avenues for funding housing improvements and attainability, including down payment assistance programs to make homeownership accessible or redevelopment grant opportunities, including the Community Home Investment Program (CHIP, state-administered) or Community Development Block Grants (CDBG, federally-administered). Conversely, blight taxes and code enforcement fines—when paired with education and outreach--were offered as tools to spur redevelopment and community investment.

Policy must support solutions. Several of the plans mentioned the desire to undertake zoning audits, building code reviews, and other in-depth studies of policy tools that govern housing type, size, and location. In addition, some plans mentioned collaborations with quasi-public organizations that could be instrumental in housing improvements. These included the Etowah Area Housing Authority and the Bartow-Cartersville Land Bank.

Overall, the amount of energy already put forth by Bartow County governments regarding housing improvements has been substantial. It is clear that local leaders have researched housing solutions and incorporated them into their vision for a sustainable, vibrant Bartow County. Even though this housing assessment originated from sources outside the county, it is our hope that county staff find the information useful for advancing toward these ambitious and progressive housing goals. incorporated them into their vision for a sustainable, vibrant Bartow County. Even though this housing assessment originated from sources outside the county, it is our hope that county staff find the information useful for advancing toward these ambitious and progressive housing goals.

Economic Development

Issues related to economic development were explored thoroughly across all of the plans. Depending on their scope, they approached economic opportunities from different perspectives, with some focusing on job creation and others on tourism and identity. A few common themes emerged in this category as well:

Several of the smaller area plans, especially those pertaining to Cartersville, acknowledged housing as an economic asset. Cartersville “Vision 2030” recommends restoring the original facades of historic buildings, while also encouraging new housing and neighborhood-serving retail in central, walkable areas. Other site-specific redevelopment projects were also suggested, including the ATCO mill village property.

The health of cultural and educational institutions is paramount. Bartow County is host to several impressive museums that offer unique educational opportunities to residents and visitors. Investing in these and tying them into the experience of visiting Bartow County could pay dividends far down the line.

Partnerships with schools, community groups, and quasi-governmental organizations can advance opportunities for Bartow County’s workforce.

Most of Bartow’s workers commute outside of Bartow County. The plans suggest a two-pronged strategy of providing more job opportunities locally and creating a vibrant community in which to work.

Housing-Adjacent Economic Development Policies & Projects

	Action Item	BC	AD	CA	EM	EU	KI	TA	WH
Projects	Partner with Bartow College & Career Academy, Cartersville, and Bartow School Systems to improve tech and manufacturing programs.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Partner with Cities and Chamber of Commerce to recruit restaurants, gathering spots, performers, and/or develop local venue for events.	x	x	x		x			
	Redevelop ATCO mill village property.			x					
	Enhance marketing efforts, using historical and cultural resources as key attraction.	x	x	x			x		
	Support restoration of old facades and buildings.			x					
	Prepare plans related to downtown (Master Plans, Revitalization Plans, Needs Assessments).				x	x	x		
	Identify commercial properties with redevelopment potential, as well as parcels on the fringe of downtown that could be leveraged as commercial.		x				x	x	
Policies	Increase viability of live, work, and entertainment choices downtown.			x					
	Balance development of new non-residential areas with additional units downtown.			x					

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Infrastructure

In this case, “infrastructure” is a catch-all term that refers to the built environment, including parts we don’t readily see. This includes streets, water and sewer networks, broadband access, pedestrian and cycling facilities, and schools and civic infrastructure.

Most of the plan recommendations that have bearing on future housing development involve conducting assessments of existing systems to better understand their capacity to absorb new households and structures. Cartersville plans emphasized exploring their water/sewer and transportation networks’ capacity for growth, while Bartow County mostly focused on school infrastructure and broadband access. Questions related to infrastructural capacity will be explored later in this report.

Natural Environment & Resources

Fewer recommendations in the “Natural Environment” and “Infrastructure” categories touch on housing, but their suggestions do inform housing types and development patterns.

New developments should preserve existing open space and greenspace, while also adding new places for residents to recreate. Preserving Bartow’s existing natural resources as much as possible can support long-term sustainability, while new open space offers opportunities for green infrastructure and innovative stormwater management practices.

Identifying trail corridors can better unite neighborhoods and connect people to downtown. Trails offer an exciting opportunity for city-based recreation, while serving as important connectors of people to services.

Incorporate assessments of Tree and Landscaping Ordinances when conducting larger code audits. In addition to zoning and building codes, developers regularly consult tree, stormwater, and other ordinances to build out a project. Encouraging new development that avoids altering our natural landscape provides a potential path forward as well.

Housing-Adjacent Natural Resources Policies & Projects

	Action Item	BC	AD	CA	EM	EU	KI	TA	WH
Projects	Design and map county-wide connecting trail and greenway system to tie together City trail systems with greenways, blueways, and other pathways.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Promote Bartow Carver Park regionally, and ensure its listing on outdoor recreation websites and apps.	x							
	Develop/enhance drainage/stormwater runoff infrastructure, especially in older, steeper areas of Cartersville.			x					
	Develop pocket parks throughout Adairsville.		x						
	Organize community clean-ups in coordination with Bartow County.	x			x		x	x	
Policies	Protect and conserve all natural areas which have important recreational, ecological, and aesthetic values early in development process.			x					
	Encourage the preservation of open space and greenspace in all new developments.			x					
	Partner with external agencies to ensure water quality and implement green infrastructure.			x		x		x	

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VI. Current Trends and Projected Growth

Following an examination of Bartow County’s past planning efforts, the project team pivoted to crunching the numbers of Bartow County’s current housing landscape, as well as projected population growth it could expect in the next few decades.

Population Growth

In short, Bartow County is growing. The 2019 American Communities Survey (administered by the U.S. Census Bureau) measured Bartow County’s population at 104,919, which is the highest its population has ever been. Cartersville, the largest city in Bartow County, is home to an estimated 21,798 residents. For the most part, their growth trends have followed similar patterns: populations swelled from 1990 to 2010 and have since begun to level off. Whereas Bartow grew by 25,000 people from 2000 to 2010, it only added 7,000 new residents from 2010 to 2019.* Based on these trends, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budgeting projects Bartow County to reach 131,085 people by the year 2050.

Household Growth

When devising a housing strategy that can flexibly accommodate new residents and provide housing choice for all, it is often useful to consider household growth in tandem with population growth. The 2019 American Communities Survey (ACS) measured Bartow County’s household population at 37,627; Cartersville’s household population sits at 7,835. (See below for comparisons between these figures.)

For this assessment, the project team decided to analyze trends within a tighter time-frame, both forward and backward. Throughout this section, we will be analyzing trends from the last five years related to demographic factors, socioeconomic factors, and housing type and location in order to inform housing needs for the next five years.

*This recent deceleration of Bartow County’s growth rate provides important context for future growth. Based on population projections found in some of the plans reviewed, it seems that local governments were expecting growth rates to skyrocket through the next few decades. Cartersville’s “Vision 2030” document, written just before the 2008 financial crisis, projected the city’s population to reach 44,129 by 2030, over double what it was in 2019. If growth continues at its current pace from 2010 to 2019 (~10%), Cartersville could likely expect just 2,000 more residents. The project team recommends a closer look at some of these projections to better inform housing demand in the city.

Based on existing population growth trends and the average household size of Bartow County (according to 2019 ACS data), Bartow County can likely expect approximately 2,500 new households to call the county home by 2025, bringing the total household count in the county to approximately 40,000.* In later sections, we will review data related to the County’s existing housing stock and what strategies might be necessary to accommodate these new households.

Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends

To start, the project team dove into trends related to ownership and rentership across different factions of people in Bartow County. This exercise not only provided a more nuanced view of housing tenure (own vs. rent), but also of how different types of people are responding to housing availability, price, and other market forces. The project team focused on demographics that would speak to a few concerns common among previous planning efforts:

- Attracting younger households to Bartow County through improving quality of life
- Providing quality, accessible accommodations for seniors
- Increasing affordability and promoting workforce housing in strategic areas

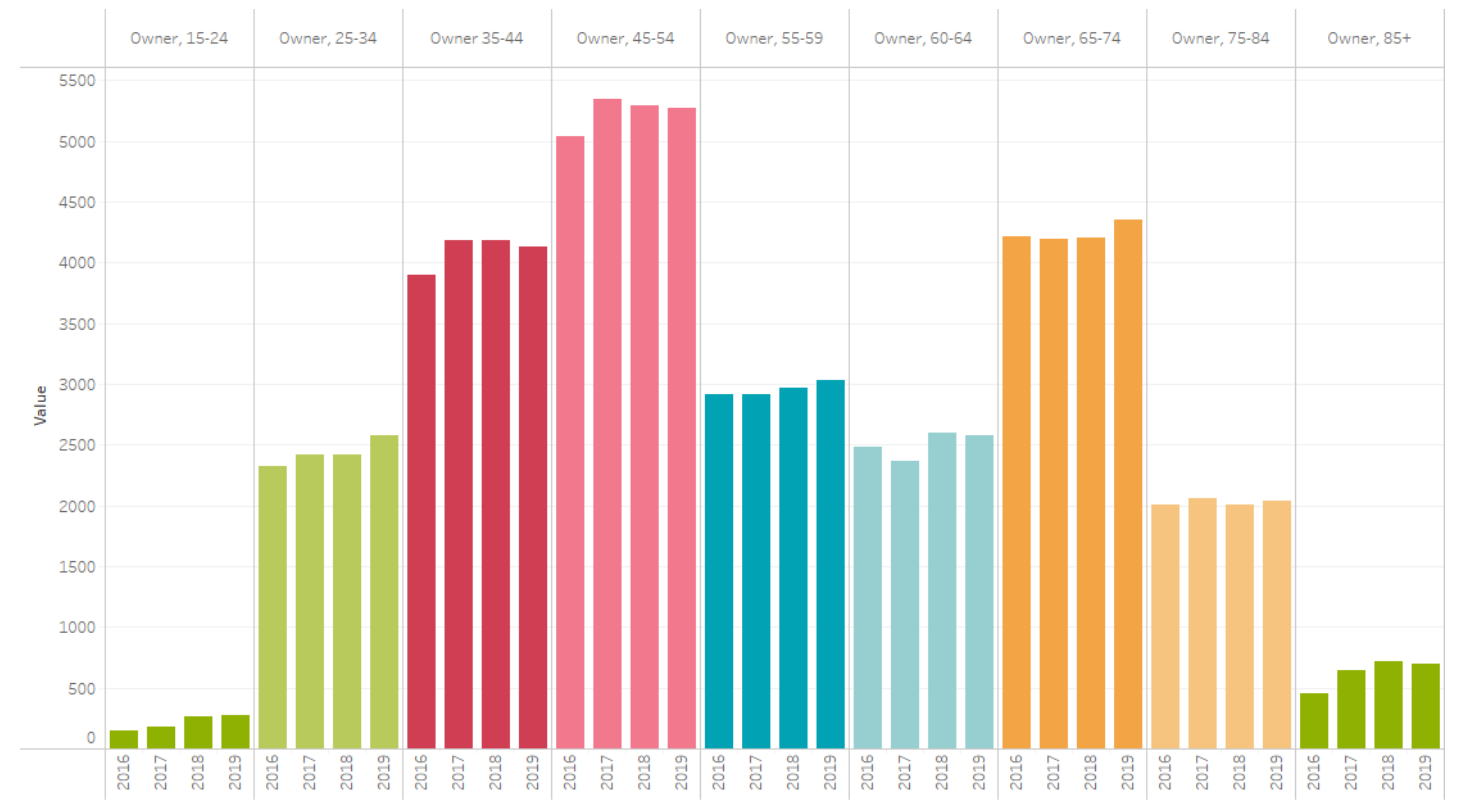
Age

In general, Bartow County households are moving modestly toward homeownership. From 2016-2019, homeownership increased across all age groups, with significant gains among 35-54 year-olds.

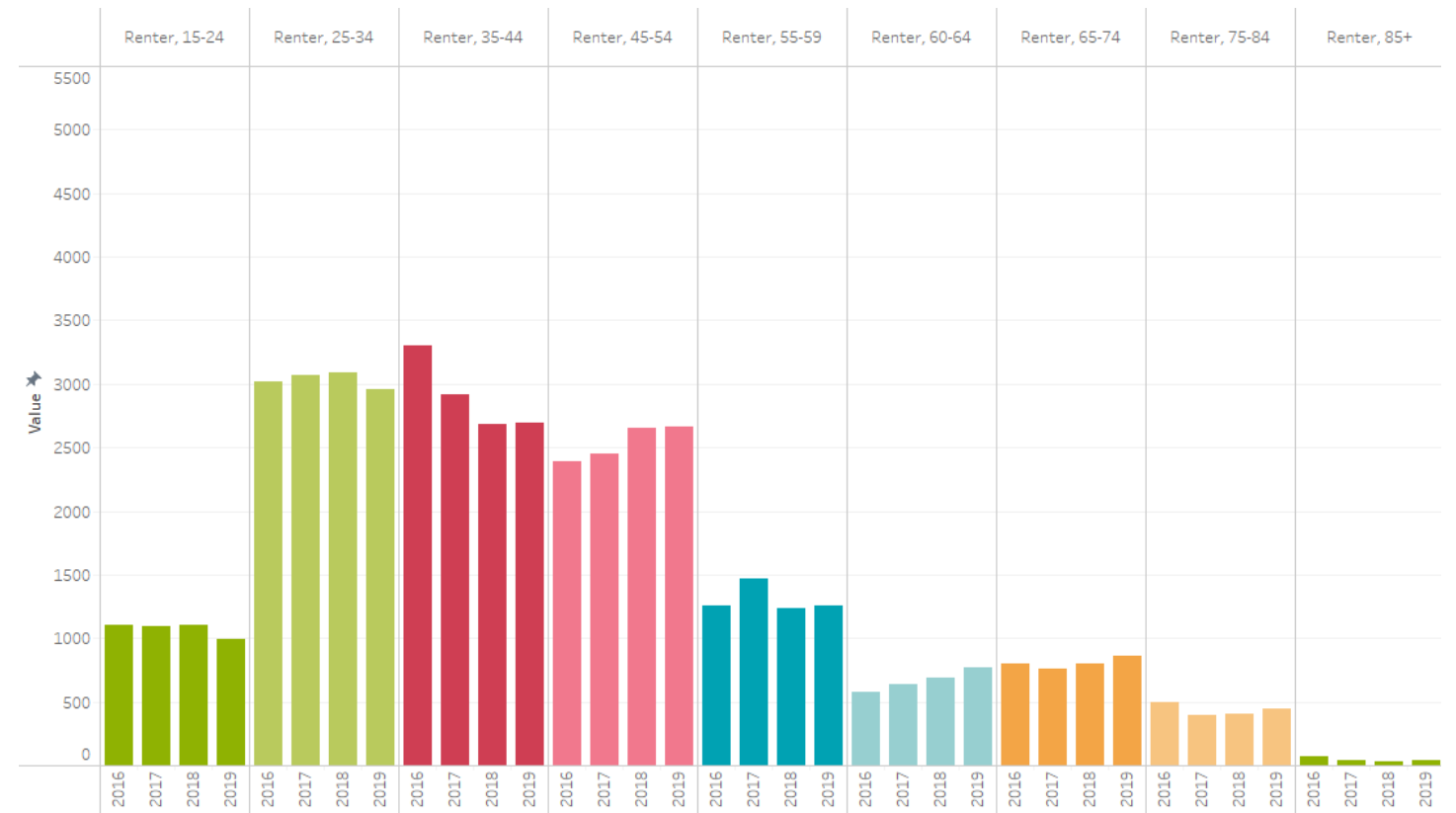
With any increase in homeownership, an accompanying drop in rentership could be expected. However, in Bartow, most age groups saw a rise in rentership as well, 25-44 being the most prominent exception. Most other age groups witnessed an increase in renting, especially seniors.

These data could be the result of an influx of one particular group; however, population distribution data suggests that the proportions of different age groups have remained fairly steady since 2016. It is possible, then, that more 35-54 year-olds have found new opportunities for homeownership in Bartow County, which may not have existed before.

*These numbers should be reviewed and updated upon the release of data from the 2020 Census.



Ownership by Age



Rentership by Age

Income

Comparing ownership to rentership across income strata tells a different story related to the distribution of housing opportunities. Homeownership is decreasing among groups that make less than median household income (~\$57,423), while ownership has increased—to a large degree—among higher-income households. Ownership among households with incomes greater than \$100,000 increased by almost 32% from 2016-2019.

Meanwhile, renting has increased among higher-income households as well, especially those making \$75,000 or above. In general, the amount of renters is significantly less than the amount of owners, which could speak to household preference but is likely representative of the amount of rental options in the county.

The fluctuations in these numbers could suggest that households are getting wealthier in Bartow County, implying that there is demand for higher-end units. On the other hand, the decline in lower-income households likely implies that fewer places remain affordable for those making less than median income. (See opposite page for figures describing income trends.)

Cost-Burden

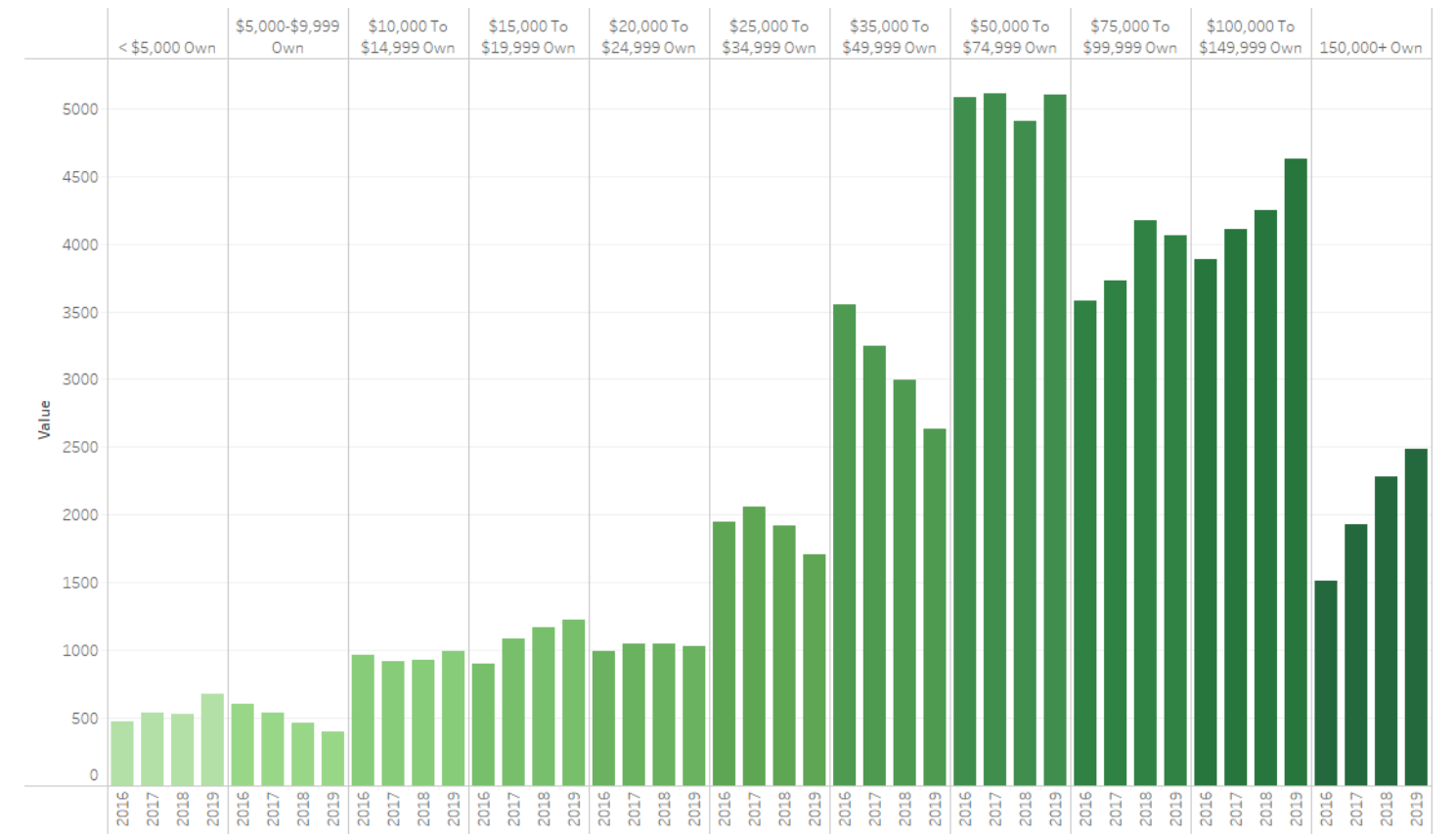
Cost-burden is a useful metric for understanding economic challenges faced by households within a jurisdiction. A household is considered “burdened” by its housing costs if it spends 30% or more of its income on housing. Households who spend 50% or more are often considered “severely” cost-burdened.

In 2019, 28.3% of Bartow County’s households spent 30% or more of their income on housing (not including transportation costs). While this is lower than both the statewide average, as well as the national average, that means over 1 in 4 households struggle with housing-related costs. Moreover, Cartersville has a higher concentration of cost-burdened households than the county at large.

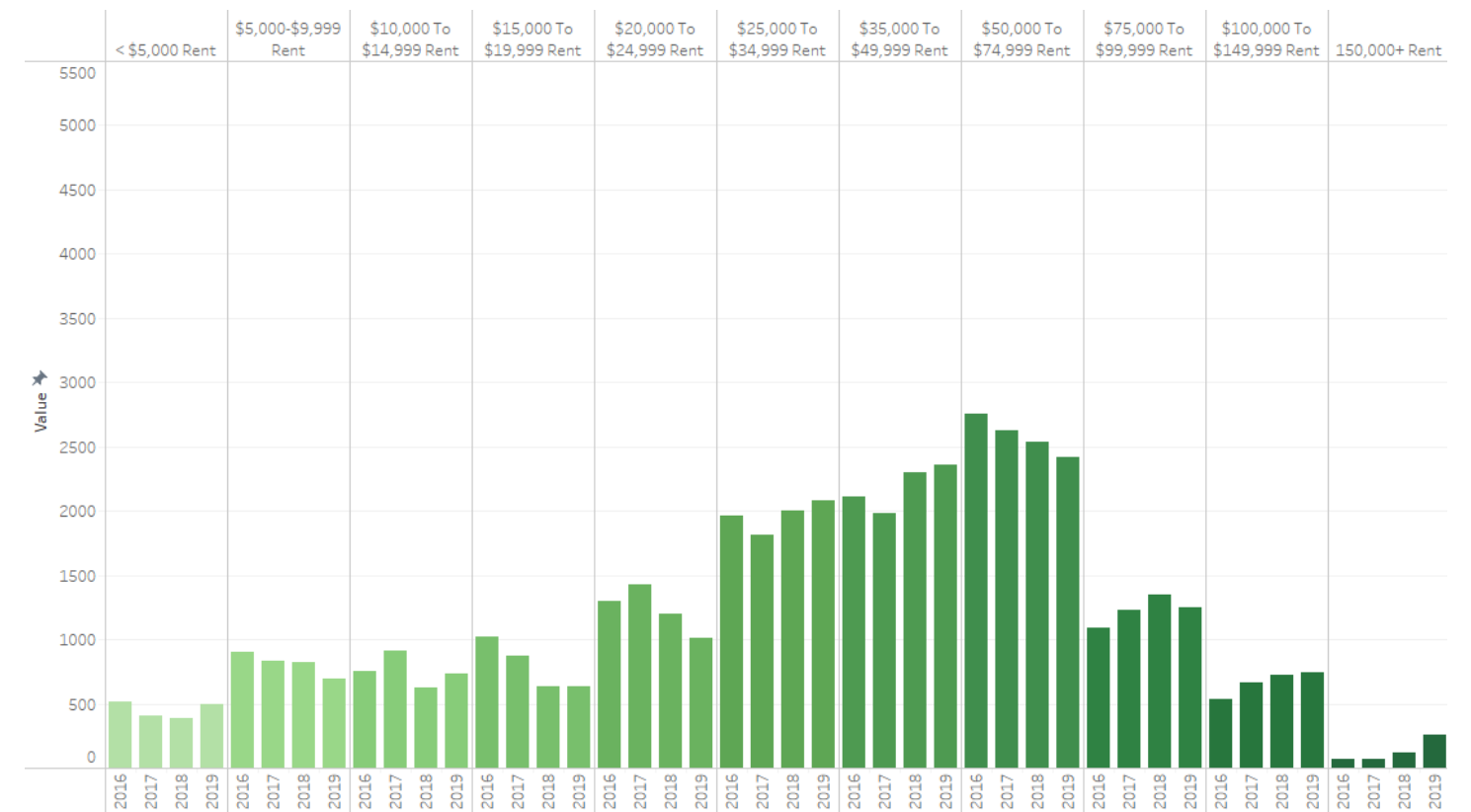
Geography	Median Housing Costs	Cost-Burden Rate
Georgia	\$1,031	31%
Bartow County	\$948	28%
Cartersville	\$899	36%
Adairsville	\$961	28%

Geography	Median Housing Costs	Cost-Burden Rate
Emerson	\$953	27%
Euharlee	\$1,103	21%
Kingston	\$580	30%
Taylorville	\$589	16%
White	\$760	24%

Data sourced from ACS 5-year survey for 2019, table B25105.



Ownership by Household Income



Rentership by Household Income

Household Size & Housing Size

Another demographic trend worth exploring within conversations of housing is that of household size. Overall, Bartow’s average household size is approximately 2.76. However, the distributions of different-sized households tell a different story (see graph on opposite page). The distribution of different household sizes in Bartow County is fairly even, slightly favoring 2-person households.

When compared with the size of Bartow County’s housing units, a mismatched pattern emerges. Bartow County’s housing stock is overrepresented with 3-bedroom homes, while 1-bedroom homes are scarce. In fact, 55.3% of Bartow’s households consist of 1 or 2 people, while only 27% of its houses are 2 bedrooms or less.

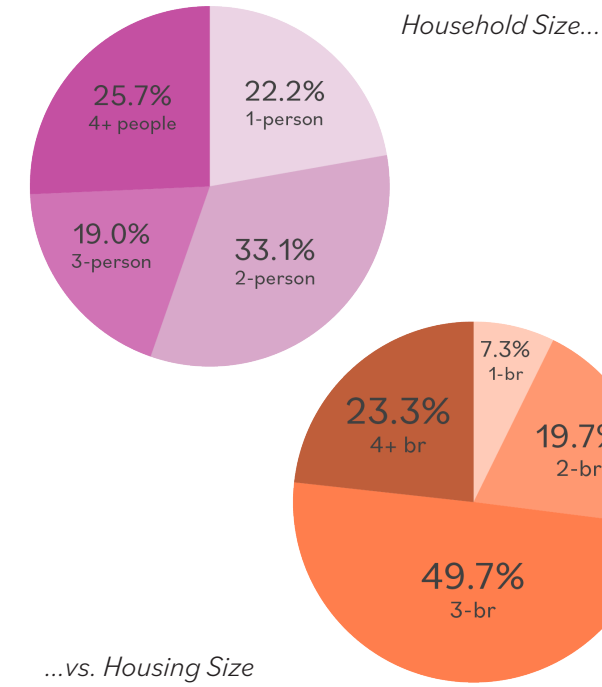
This is referred to as **housing mismatch**, which refers to the difference between what households want or need from their housing and the options available that fit those needs. While there are almost certainly 1-person households in Bartow who desire larger housing options to grow into, there are likely plenty who also want smaller options that simply don’t exist in Bartow County. Providing options of different housing types to different family types goes a long way to cultivating a flexible housing market and build a vibrant community that attracts a variety of residents.

Geographic Distribution of Housing Economics

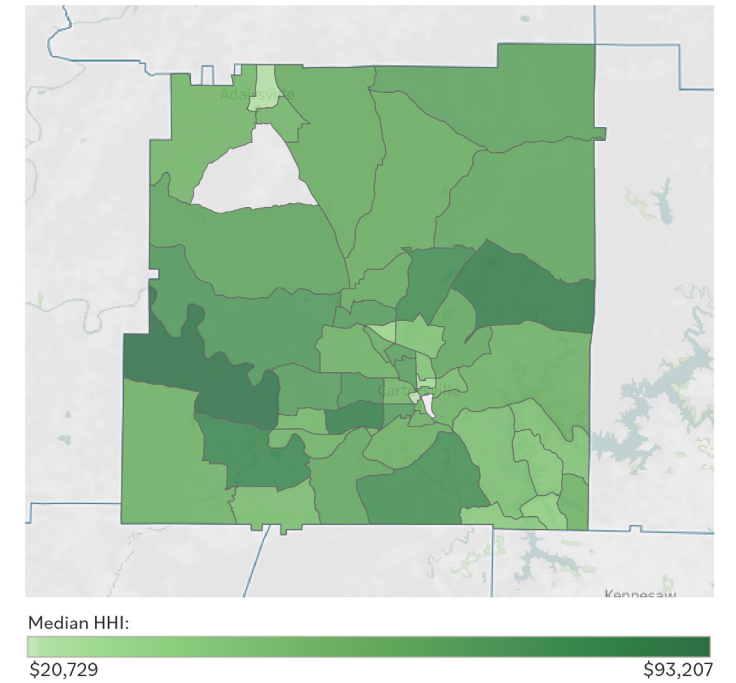
Putting these factors together, the project team investigated how incomes, ownership costs, and rent manifested spatially across the county. Using census block groups as the geographical division, the project team mapped median household income, median home value, and median rent, looking for relationships between them (see figure below).

In general, census block groups with higher median incomes and home values are fairly evenly distributed throughout the county. Most tracts with higher medians tend to lie outside the county’s main cities, although some census block groups closer to Cartersville feature higher median incomes and home values.

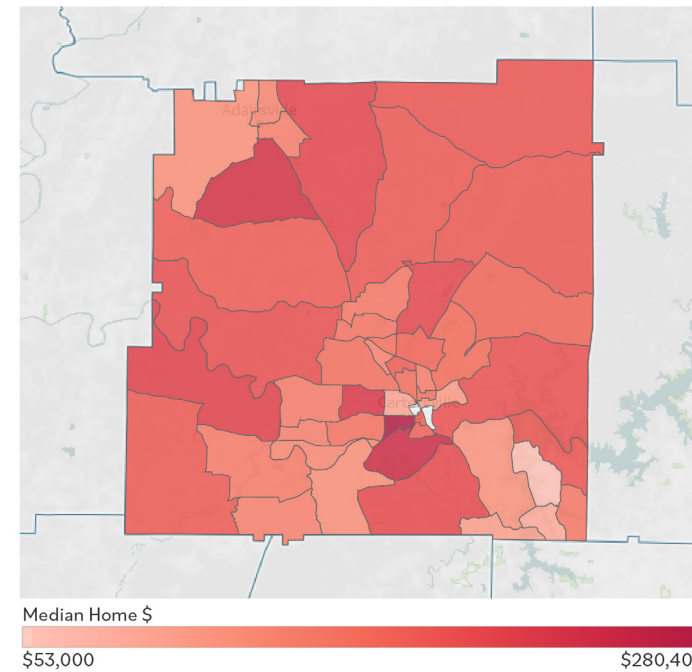
Rents are also fairly evenly distributed, although Cartersville seems to have a disproportionately high median rent when cross-referenced with the household income map. Based on these data, rents appear to be slightly higher where incomes are lower, particularly around Cartersville and, to a lesser extent, Emerson.



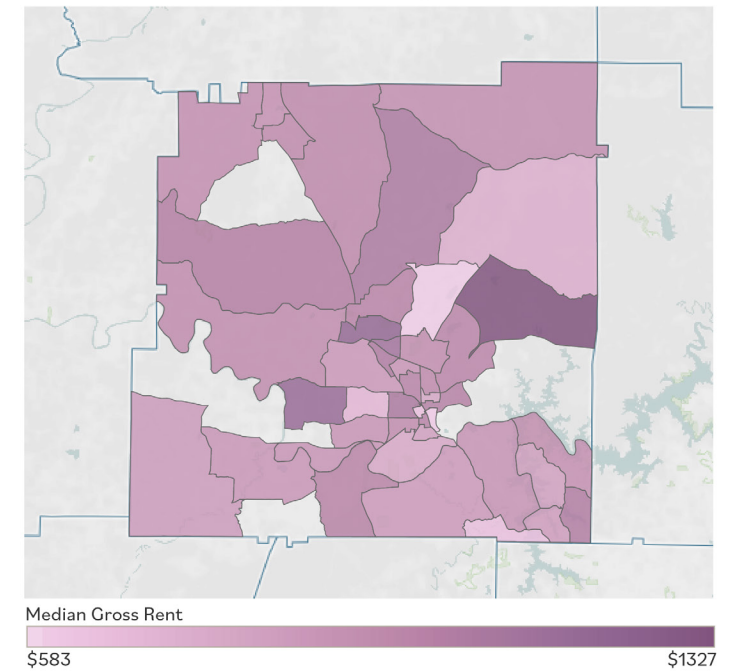
Household Income by Block Group



Median Home Value by Block Group



Median Gross Rent by Block Group



Housing Stock Trends

Upon analyzing the demographic and socioeconomic trends, the project team then examined Bartow County's housing stock more deeply. While these numbers are presented in aggregate, they provide useful information on general trends the county is witnessing related to distribution of housing stock, what choices households have, and where the gaps are. A comprehensive building inventory would likely provide even more accurate data.

Geographic Distribution of Housing Types

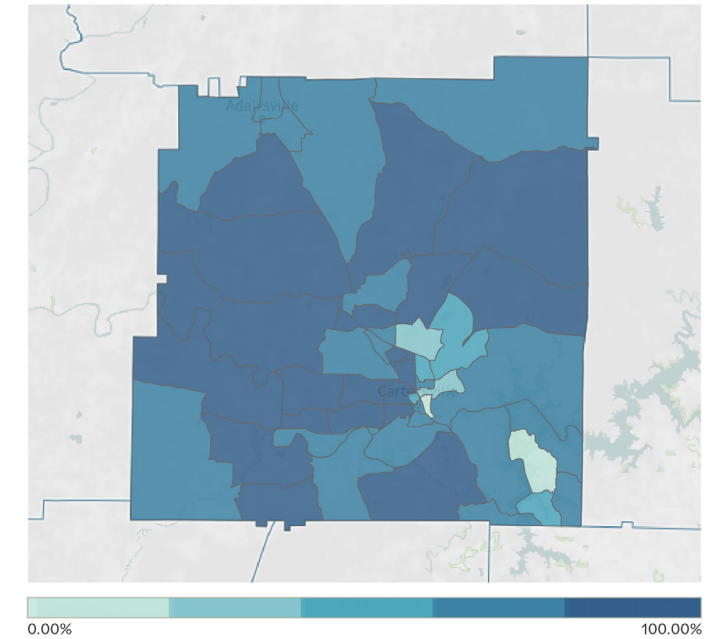
The overwhelming majority of homes in Bartow County consists of single-family detached structures. This is not surprising, given the county's largely rural character and the geographical reach of its single-family and agricultural zoning districts (see chapter VII).

Alternatives to single-family detached housing are most commonly found in Cartersville and its immediate vicinity (see maps on opposite page), though some "missing middle" housing (i.e. duplexes, small-scale multi-family, living above retail) can also be found in Adairsville. These housing types, however, are still far less common than single-family structures, even in these focal cities.

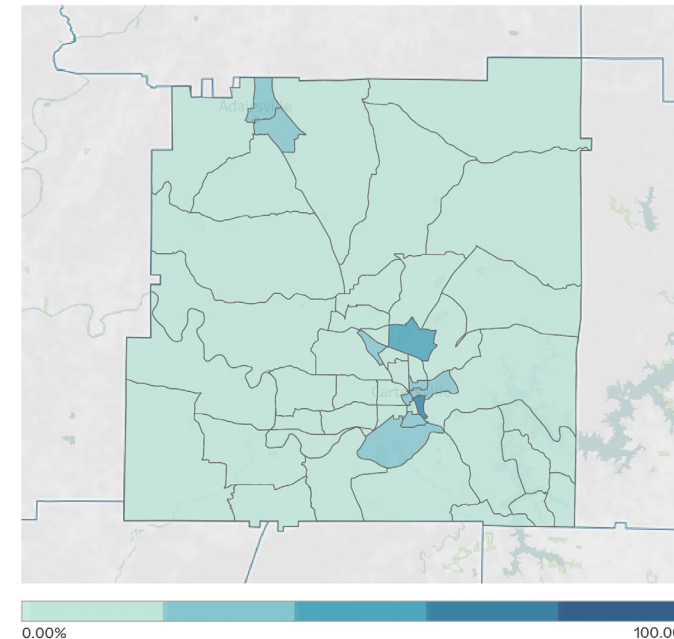
It is worth noting that between 2016 and 2019, it appears that both the county at large as well as Cartersville and Adairsville witnessed growth in their housing stock. According to building permit data, most of this growth consisted of new single-family, with only a few permits being granted to multi-family projects.

Perhaps the most notable feature of Bartow's housing stock distribution is the high prevalence of mobile homes. Though examples of this type of housing can likely be found throughout the county, there is a large concentration of mobile homes around Lake Allatoona, particularly near the southeastern corner. Currently, this area feels geographically isolated from the rest of the county; the Bartow County Comprehensive Plan mentions the Allatoona Community and Glade Road Corridor several times in reference to engaging in housing rehabilitation and redevelopment, extending connections to the community, and improving access to economic opportunities for its residents.

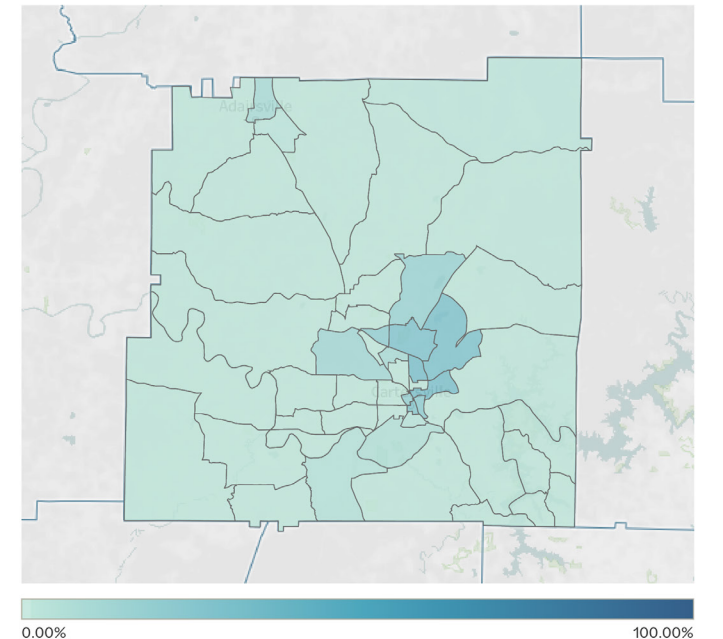
% Single-Family



% Missing Middle (2-9 units per building)



% Multi-Family (10+ units per building)

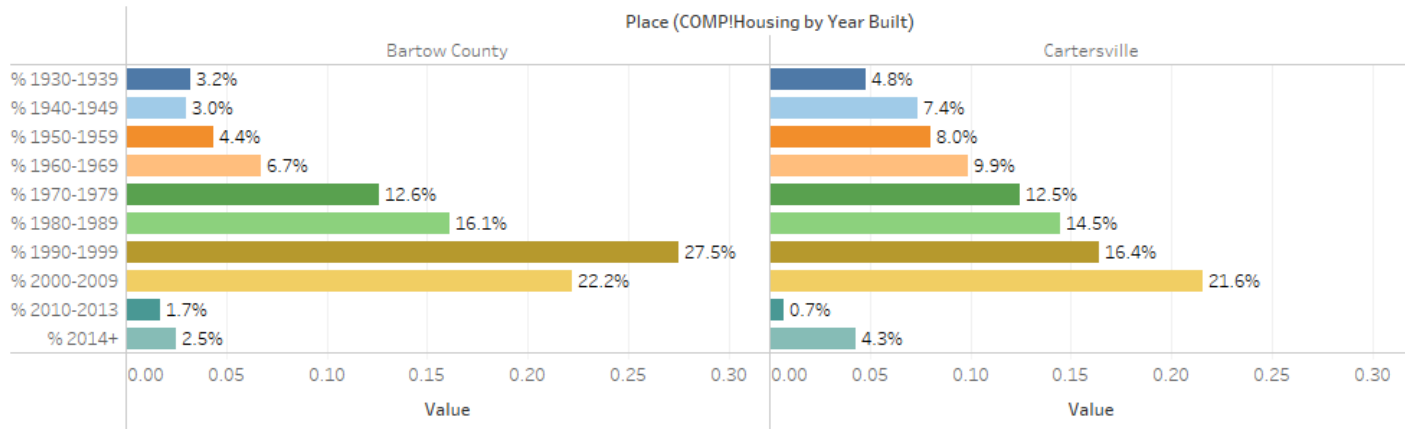


Building Age & New Construction

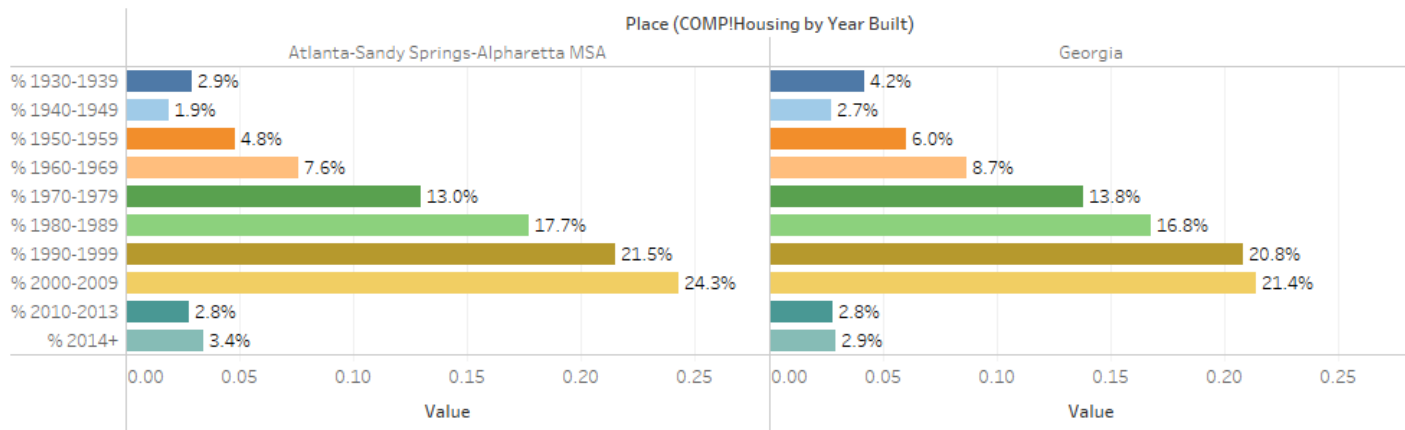
Most of Bartow County’s housing stock is on the older side, with much of it being built in the 1990s and early 2000s. Like much of the rest of the US, construction halted after the 2008 financial crisis and has been slow to pick back up. Just 2.4% of Bartow’s 41,000 housing units were built in 2014 or later. The lack of new supply is notable, given that Bartow County’s vacancy rate is fairly low at 8.4%.

While many jurisdictions seek to keep their vacancy rate on the lower side—more tenants means more economic value for the city or county—it is worth remembering that a jurisdiction’s vacancy rate not only includes units that are market-ready, but also those that are of lower quality or unsuitable for habitation. not having enough suitable vacancies can backfire and discourage new residents from moving in.

Local Housing Age



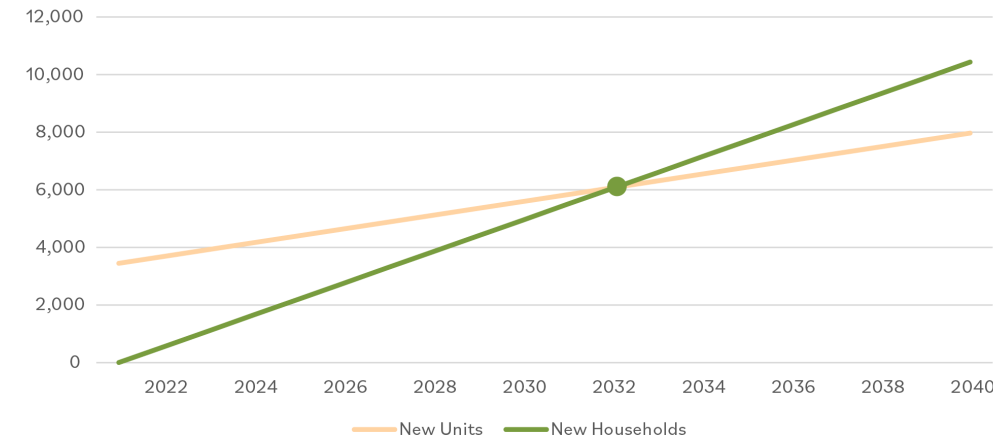
Metro & State Housing Age



Comparison of Housing by Year Built across Metro & State

Moving Forward

What do these data mean for Bartow County? Based on population projections, Bartow can expect to receive approximately 2,500 additional households by 2025. Based on its vacancy rate (approximately 3,445 units) and current housing monoculture (predominantly single-family), Bartow County is likely to experience additional housing scarcity at its current construction pace (~238 new units per year).*



Looking at raw counts for new units and new household growth, Bartow County will likely grow out of its available housing stock by 2032, given a business-as-usual scenario.

Despite this increase in new units, a lower vacancy rate suggests that current and prospective households might have additional difficulty finding a home that suits their needs. Moreover, given that the vast majority of new building permits have consisted of applications for single-family construction, it will be just as difficult for households looking for alternatives to single-family (i.e. walk-up apartments, duplexes, etc.) to find desirable accommodations.

Based on these projected numbers, Bartow County stakeholders should carefully consider the following axes when developing a progressive housing strategy to accommodate new households:

- First, who is coming and what are their preferences? Are we providing options to match their preferences?
- How many units do we need to offer households multiple, comfortable choices of where they can live?
- How can we ensure new households have the opportunity to own their home, or rent a place they can afford?
- Lastly, where can new units go? Are we providing options based on location?

These last few questions will be explored in upcoming sections.

*While on paper, it appears as though Bartow County has enough units to absorb future growth, it is important to remember that some households are potentially already not satisfied with their current housing. Providing a wealth of options allows households the freedom and flexibility to choose a home that’s right for them.

VII. Extended Stay Hotel Pilot Study

In the project team’s conversations with stakeholders in Bartow County, a distinctive trend related to housing tenure emerged: many of Bartow’s households have found long-term accommodations in extended-stay hotels. Households across all ages rely on extended-stay hotels as housing, though they usually have either no children or one child and they earn less than \$25,000 a year.

The phenomenon of extended stay hotels becoming workforce housing by default has not been well-studied or even well-documented. A Gwinnett County study of extended-stay tenants revealed several precipitating factors that drive households to choose them, namely poor credit history, lack of funds for a security deposit, or excessive debt. This pilot study in Bartow County sought to learn if these underlying factors are present in Bartow County as well.

Background

Hotels and motels are increasingly used as a stopgap form of housing for lower-income individuals and families in Georgia. Rising housing costs, the lack of lower-cost market-rate rental housing, and a shrinking supply of subsidized housing have resulted in fewer housing choices for people living at the lower end of the income distribution.

Across the state of Georgia, extended-stay hotels are filling an affordable housing gap. A recent study of residents living in extended-stay hotels in Norcross, Georgia, found that 40 percent had lived in a hotel for at least a year, and an astonishing 22 percent had resided in these accommodations for at least three years. Officials from Cobb County estimate that one-third of the rooms in the county’s 30 extended stay hotels are occupied by families using hotel rooms as a form of housing.

While extended-stay hotels fill a void in the housing continuum, they do not always alleviate the financial burden or provide a stable source of housing. An otherwise temporary arrangement leaves many unable to save enough cash to move out and ordinances that limit the length of stay can promote movement among motels in the area.

However, extended-stay hotels do provide lower-income residents flexibility and access to housing. Management often accepts cash, weekly and irregular timing of payments, and perhaps most importantly, they do not conduct background checks on credit, criminal history or previous evictions. While payments may be analogous to local rents, unlike landlords, hotels also do not require two months’ rent plus utilities as a security deposit.

Extended Stay Hotels in Bartow County

The prevalence of hotels and extended-stay hotel use as primary housing is difficult to identify due to the large number of hotels in Bartow County and the range of uses—including tourism, short-stay employment, and primary housing. Bartow County has 10 places, with over 700 units, which explicitly provide an extended stay option, and over 50 hotels and motels in the county. Our research indicates that lower-income individuals and families use both extended stay and more traditional hotels as a form of permanent or semi-permanent housing. Thus, we estimate that at least 500 extended stay units are serving as permanent housing for residents in Bartow County. This number is likely much higher. A recent study in Norcross, Georgia found that of the 14 extended-stay motels identified in the city, the majority (84%) were living in the motels as their primary housing.

Pilot Study Process

The project team conducted 14 interviews with residents who were living in extended-stay hotels in Bartow County. The interviews gathered demographic information, information on their current residence (a hotel/motel), housing histories for the previous 5 years, and plans and barriers to future housing. Participants were recruited using flyers distributed at two extended-stay hotels and through referrals from local social service providers.

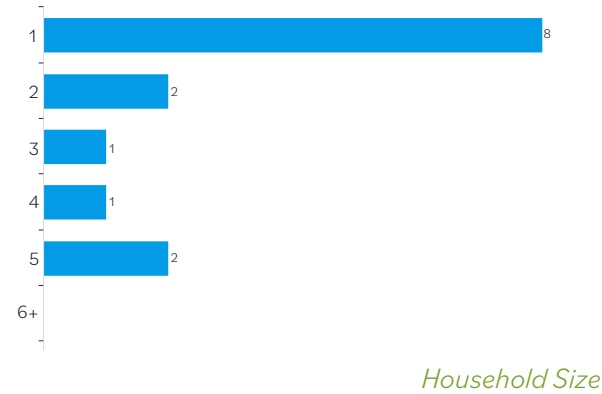


An extended stay hotel in Bartow County

Profile of Extended-Stay Residents

Household Size & Children

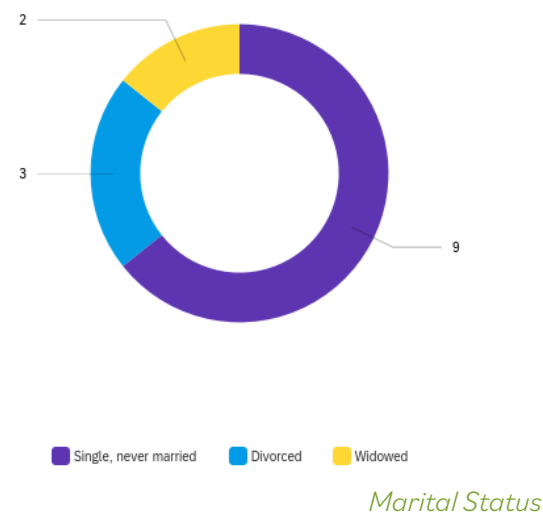
Most of the residents interviewed were living alone or with one other person. Two residents lived in 2-person households. Ten of the residents lived in households without children. Several of the people living alone had minor children who did not live with them. Four of the residents interviewed had one or more children living in their household at least part-time.



Age, Gender, Race & Ethnicity, & Marital Status

Eight of the residents were men, six were women. The average age of the residents interviewed was 43 years. The range was 20 to 64 years, five residents were age 55 or older. Eight of the residents identified as White, four as Black, and two as more than one race/ethnicity.

Nine (the majority) of the extended-stay hotel residents were single, never married. Three were divorced and two were widowed. None of the residents interviewed were married.



Education & Employment Status

The extended-stay residents we interviewed had relatively low levels of educational attainment. Four had less than a high school diploma or GED, another four had a high school diploma or equivalent, and the remaining six had some college (4) or had completed a two or four-year degree (2). About half of those interviewed were working full-time or part-time. Four were retired or on disability and unable to work. Three people were looking for work. Most of those who were working were employed in the area.

Income & Housing Costs

Almost all of the residents interviewed earned less than \$40,000 per year, well below the median household income for Bartow County. Weekly rent varied from \$180 per week to \$500 per week. The typical weekly rent was about \$200, which translates to \$800 per month for an efficiency-size unit.

Insights: Income Challenges

Ten of the extended-stay hotel residents interviewed said they did not earn enough to pay for rental housing or had looked but could not find rental housing that was affordable. Lack of rental housing that is affordable to households earning less than 50% of the median household income in Bartow county means that the low-wage workforce serving the county has few available housing options.

Saving for a deposit is difficult when living in an extended-stay hotel. Six of the residents interviewed indicated that the inability to save enough for a deposit was standing in the way of a more stable option.

Tenant screening barriers, particularly poor credit, rental or criminal histories - were identified as challenges by about half of the people interviewed.

Insights: Housing Pathways & Length of Stay

None of the residents were living in extended-stay hotels on a short-term, temporary basis. The average length of stay at their current extended-stay hotel was about 8 months.

The average cumulative time spent living in extended-stay hotels in the previous 5 years was 16.5 months. Residents interviewed had typically lived in 2 extended stay hotels within the past 5 years.

With a few exceptions, the residents we interviewed had experienced housing instability over at least some portion over the last 5 years. Two residents had an extended period of homelessness, staying at hotels and motels on a nightly basis when they could afford it and living in their car or sleeping outside.

Insights: Attitudes about Living in Extended-Stay Hotels

Residents described the convenience and predictability of living in an extended-stay hotel as an advantage. Flexibility to pay rent weekly and the inclusion of utilities, wi-fi, and cable were identified as positive aspects of living in an extended-stay hotel.

Management rules about guests and curfews were appreciated by some, while others felt the rules were too restrictive. Rules appear to vary among extended-stay hotels in the area.

Many saw their stay in the extended-stay hotel as temporary, even if they had no other housing options available. A few residents indicated that they were satisfied with the space, location and accommodations and did not have any plans to move.

VIII. Zoning & Infrastructure

After analyzing demographic, socioeconomic, and building construction trends over the past several years, the project team then pivoted to envisioning where prospective new housing units could go based on existing regulations and infrastructural constraints. The two main subjects of focus for this part of the analysis included:

1. zoning codes for the county and its major cities and
2. infrastructural capacity for growth, specifically among water and sewer networks, transportation networks, and school pressures.

Land Policy

Bartow County and its cities utilize separate zoning codes to determine land use. The project team analyzed the zoning ordinances of Bartow County, Cartersville, Emerson, Euharlee, and Adairsville, paying particular attention to what types of structures are allowed, at what scale they're allowed, and any special designations that might be required to build them. We have included these tables below.*

Unincorporated Bartow County

Category	Codes	% Parcels	Min. Lot Sq. Ft.	Min. Sq. Ft. per Unit	SFD	SFA	2P	4P	TH	MF	Loft
Agricultural/Rural Estates	A-1, RE-1, RE-2	43.5%	2-3 acres	1200	x						
Single-Family Residential	R-1, R-4, R-8	25.6%	7000-15,000	1200	x						
Townhomes & Two-Family Res.	R-2	2.0%	15000	360-1200	x		x	x	x		
Multi-Family Residential	R-3	3.4%	1 acre	600-900	x				x	x	
Medium-High Transition Res.	R-7	<0.01%	15000	600-900						x	
Small-Scaled Mixed (General Bus.)	C-1	1.6%	15000	(unknown)							x
Planned Unit Development	PUD	2.6%	7500	(variable)	x		x	x	x	x	x
Non-Housing (Commercial, Industrial, etc.)	O/I, C-N, I-1, I-2, M-1, BP	0.7%									

Key: **SFD** = single-family detached | **SFA** = single-family attached | **2P** = duplex | **4P** = quadplex | **TH** = townhomes | **MF** = multi-family | **SU** = special use permit required

Overall, Bartow County's zoning establishes a few opportunities for innovative housing solutions. The County has regulated for 7 different types of residential-only districts. Among them is a district for 2-, 3-, and 4-family homes and townhomes; another district allows for high-density single-family, while another accommodates multi-family. A Planned Unit Development category supports mixed-use developments.

*Note that several of these categories have been combined for legibility; this same approach was taken for the maps on pg. ### and ### for visual clarity. For full zoning codes and maps, please see Bartow County's website.

Cartersville

Category	Codes	% Parcels	Min. Lot Sq. Ft.	Min. Sq. Ft. per Unit	SFD	SFA	2P	4P	TH	MF	Loft
Agricultural	AG	<0.1%	5 acres	1100	x						
Single-Family Detached Residential	R-20, R-15, R-10, R-10A, R-7	62.25%	7000-20,000	900-1300	x						
Single-Family Detached/Attached	RA-12	2.4%	2000 per unit	1000	x	x		x	x		
Duplex Residential	R-D	<0.1%	7000 per unit	900	x		x				
Multi-Family	MF-14	2.1%		600-900			x	x		x	
Senior Living	RSL	<0.1%	1600-3000	1000	x	x			x		
Planned Development	P-D	6.4%	2000 per unit	450-1000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Multiple Use	M-U	8.8%	2000 per unit	450-1000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x (SU)
Downtown Business District	DBD	1.6%		450-1000					x	x	x (SU)
Commercial w/ Walk-Up Res.	P-S, N-C, O-C, G-C	5.9%		450-900							x (SU)
Non-Housing (Commercial, Industrial, etc.)	L-I, H-I, MN, P-I, FG, PC-D	18.5%									

Key: **SFD** = single-family detached | **SFA** = single-family attached | **2P** = duplex | **4P** = quadplex | **TH** = townhomes | **MF** = multi-family | **SU** = special use permit required

Cartersville's zoning districts are even more diverse than Bartow County's. Several categories (grouped together in "mixed housing" in the table below) support multiple housing types, including two-family structures and condos. Most impressively, walk-up apartments above retail are permitted by special use in all of Cartersville's commercial codes, while townhomes and multi-family is permitted by right in the downtown business district. There is an argument to be made for consolidation of some of these types to make the code easier to navigate, but from the standpoint of what's allowable, Cartersville's zoning code is quite progressive.

Adairsville

Category	Codes	% Parcels	Min. Lot Sq. Ft.	Min. Sq. Ft. per Unit	SFD	SFA	2P	4P	TH	MF	Loft
Residential	R-1, R-2, R-3, O/I	84.8%	7000-15000	1200-1500	x						
Multi-Family	MF	0.8%		450-900						x	
Planned Unit Development	PUD	0.1%	7500		x		(x)	(x)	(x)	x	(x)
Non-Housing (Commercial, Industrial, etc.)	C-1, C-2, IND-G, IND-H	14.4%									

Key: **SFD** = single-family detached | **SFA** = single-family attached | **2P** = duplex | **4P** = quadplex | **TH** = townhomes | **MF** = multi-family | **SU** = special use permit required

Though Adairsville is Bartow County's second largest municipality, it has managed to maintain its small-town character largely through its charming single-family building stock. Alternative housing options are provided for in the multi-family and "planned unit development" categories, both of which mostly focus on larger-scale apartments. On the surface, the PUD category seems to permit a mix of housing and retail following the approval of a site plan; however, it is unclear whether or not duplexes, small-scale apartments, or townhomes are possible. Reaching clarity on this could be useful, given that Adairsville has a large tract zoned PUD to the immediate west of downtown.

Emerson

Category	Codes	% Parcels	Min. Lot Sq. Ft.	Min. Sq. Ft. per Unit	SFD	SFA	2P	4P	TH	MF	Loft
Residential	R	81.8%			x						
Residential - Conservation	RC	0.1%			x		x		x		
Multi-Family	RM-6, RM-12	0%							x	x	
Neighborhood Retail	C-1	4.0%									x (SU)
Mixed Use	MU, MU-2	6.2%	20,000-30,000	1800-2000	x		x		x	x	x (SU)
Non-Housing (Commercial, Industrial, etc.)	C-2, HI, LI	7.8%									

Key: **SFD** = single-family detached | **SFA** = single-family attached | **2P** = duplex | **4P** = quadplex | **TH** = townhomes | **MF** = multi-family | **SU** = special use permit required

Euharlee

Category	Codes	% Parcels	Min. Lot Sq. Ft.	Min. Sq. Ft. per Unit	SFD	SFA	2P	4P	TH	MF	Loft
Agricultural/Rural Estates	A-1, RE-1, RE-2	1.2%	3-5 acres	1200-1500	x						
Single Family Residential	R-1	97.8%	15000	1200-1500	x						
2-, 3-, and 4-Family Residential	R-2	0%	15000				x	x			
Multi-Family	R-3	0%			x				x	x	
Planned Unit Development	PUD	0%	10000		x		x	x	x	x	x
Non-Housing (Commercial, Industrial, etc.)	O/I, C-N, C-1, I-1, I-2, M-1	2.2%									

Key: **SFD** = single-family detached | **SFA** = single-family attached | **2P** = duplex | **4P** = quadplex | **TH** = townhomes | **MF** = multi-family | **SU** = special use permit required

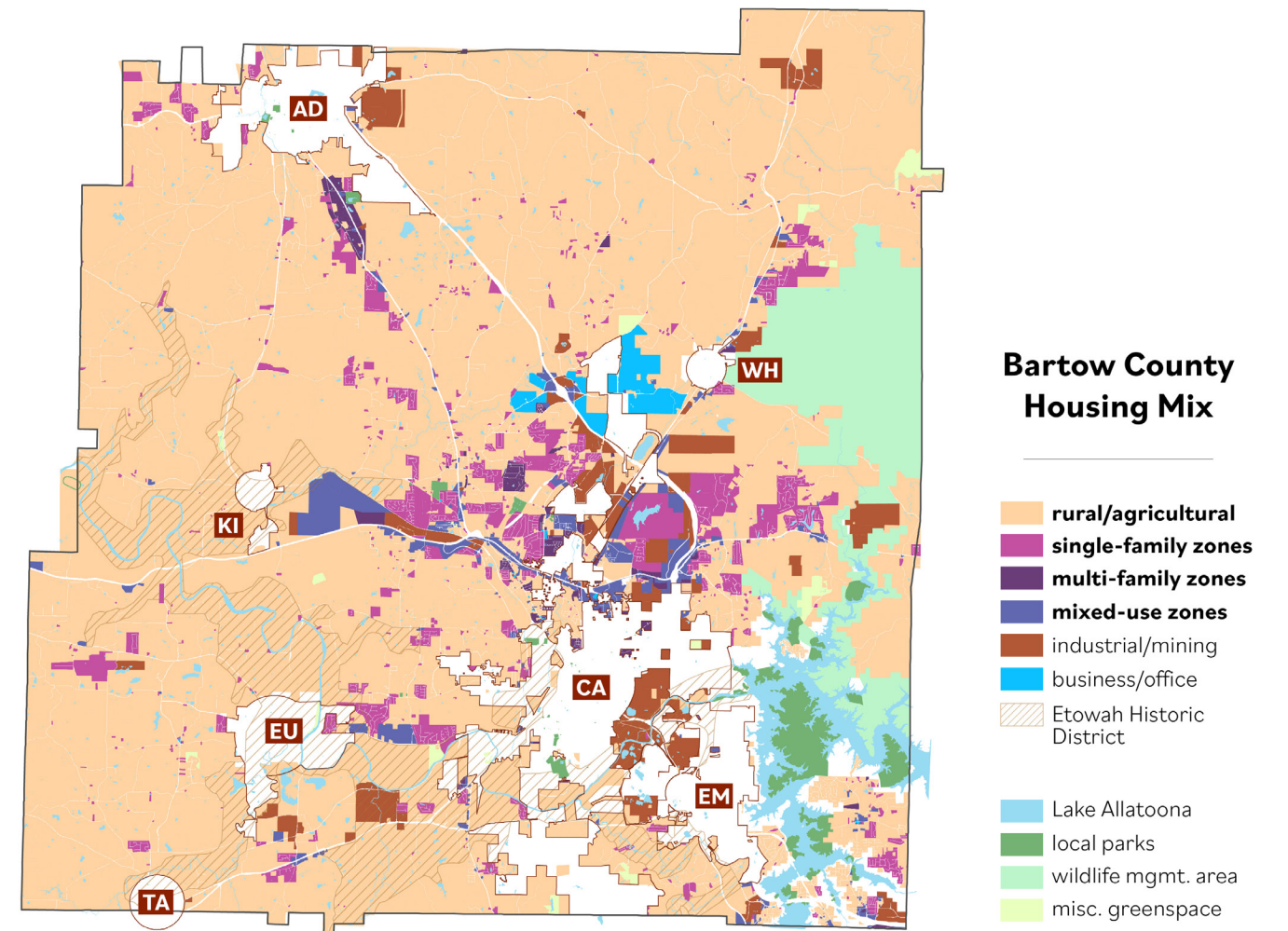
The two closest cities to Cartersville differ dramatically in their zoning priorities. Similar to Cartersville, Emerson allows multi-family and above-retail apartments in a variety of zoning districts. The majority of Emerson’s land is also zoned for mixed-use development. Meanwhile, Euharlee’s codes are more restrictive: while there are categories that allow for missing middle housing and multi-family, those districts do not appear on the zoning map. Still, codifying the potential for these housing types in the zoning ordinance itself is a great first step.

Land Policy

In addition to examining the zoning codes themselves, the project team reviewed the zoning district coverage in each of these jurisdictions.

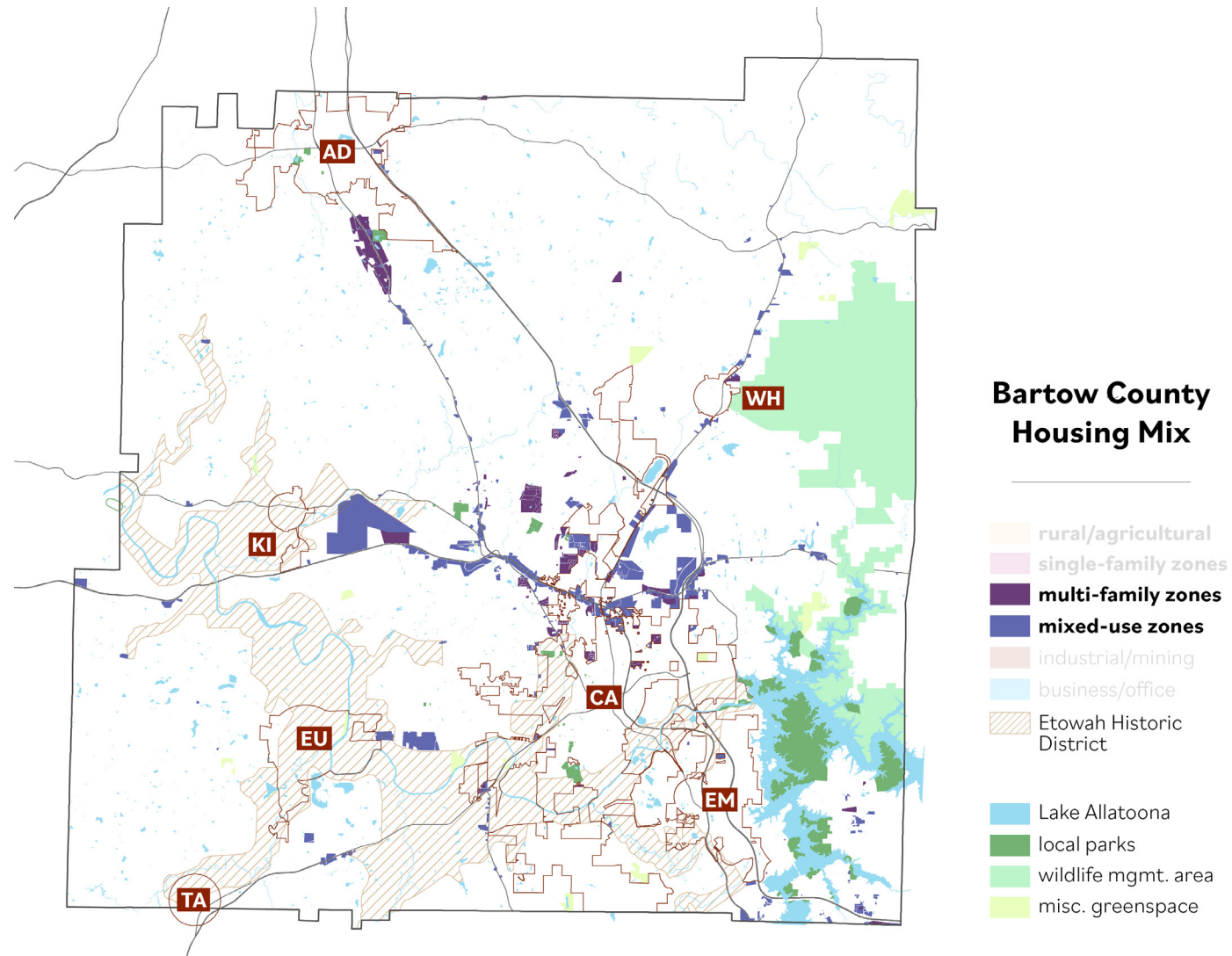
Unincorporated Bartow County

As previously stated, Bartow County’s character is predominantly rural. Almost 90% of the county is set aside for agricultural, rural, or single-family uses. This high number fits with the county’s character and offers a roadmap for where alternative forms of housing could and should go.



Bartow County Land Policy [simplified for legibility]

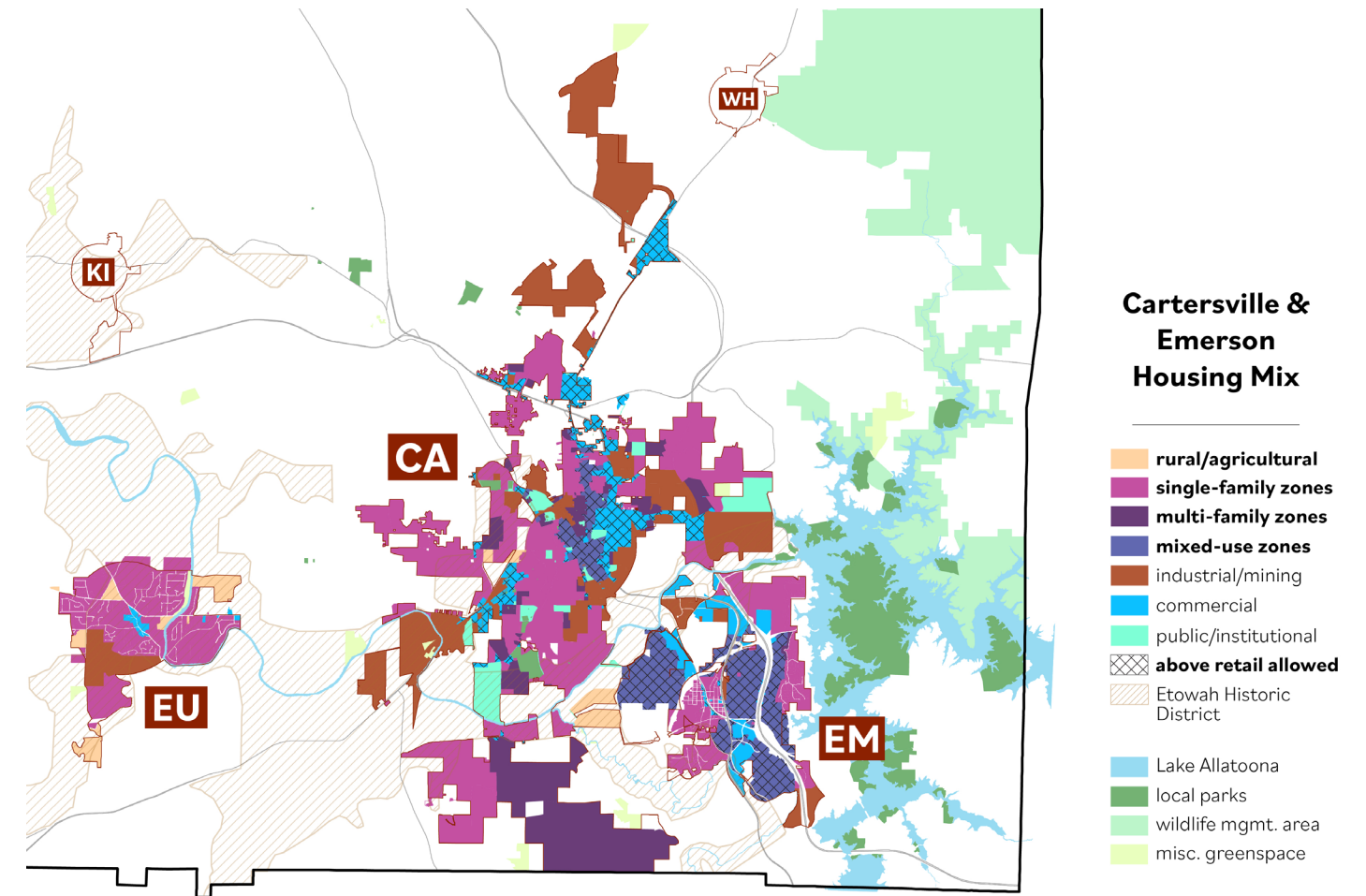
9.6% of Bartow County’s parcels could support multi-family development or mixed-use. These parcels are mostly located just north of Cartersville at the convergence of I-75, US-411, and US-41, though some have extended westward and northward along major corridors. Locating these different housing types close to existing services and infrastructure—whether in the City of Cartersville or just outside—expands accessibility to jobs, retail, and other resources.



Bartow County Multi-Family Zoning Districts [simplified for legibility]

South-Central Bartow [Cartersville, Emerson, & Euharlee]

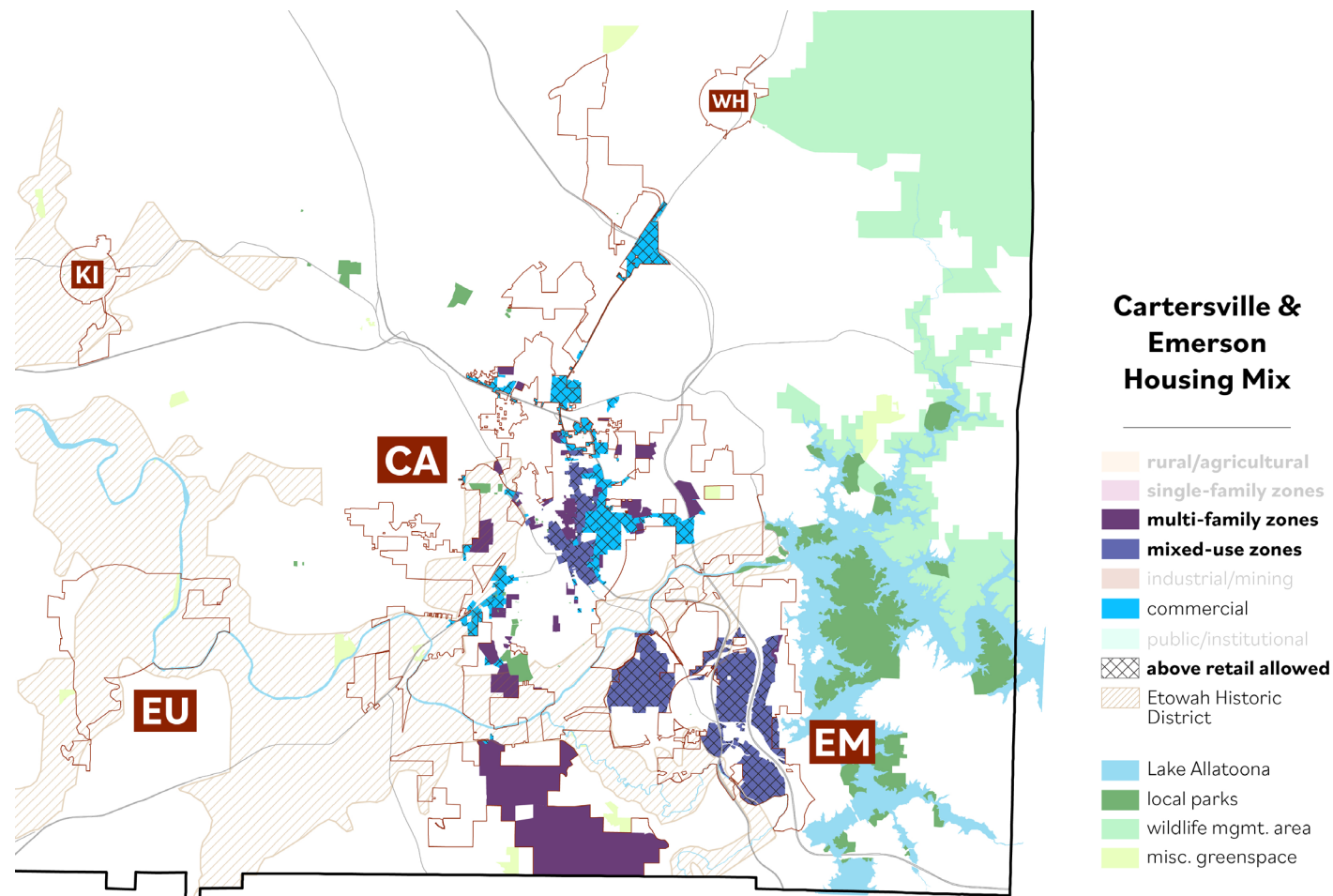
To further reiterate Cartersville’s progressive approach to housing, a very significant portion of its land already permits a variety of housing options aside from single-family. 38.1% of its parcels can support multi-family or mixed-use—this is largely thanks to the provision in the zoning code that above-retail living is allowed through special use permits in several districts. While the special use permit itself could be a barrier to infill and redevelopment projects, the provision to consider them indicates that city leadership is open to housing options.



Cartersville, Emerson, and Euharlee Land Policy [simplified for legibility]

Emerson has a similar provision to Cartersville’s established, although it extends over a lesser percentage of its parcels (10.3%).

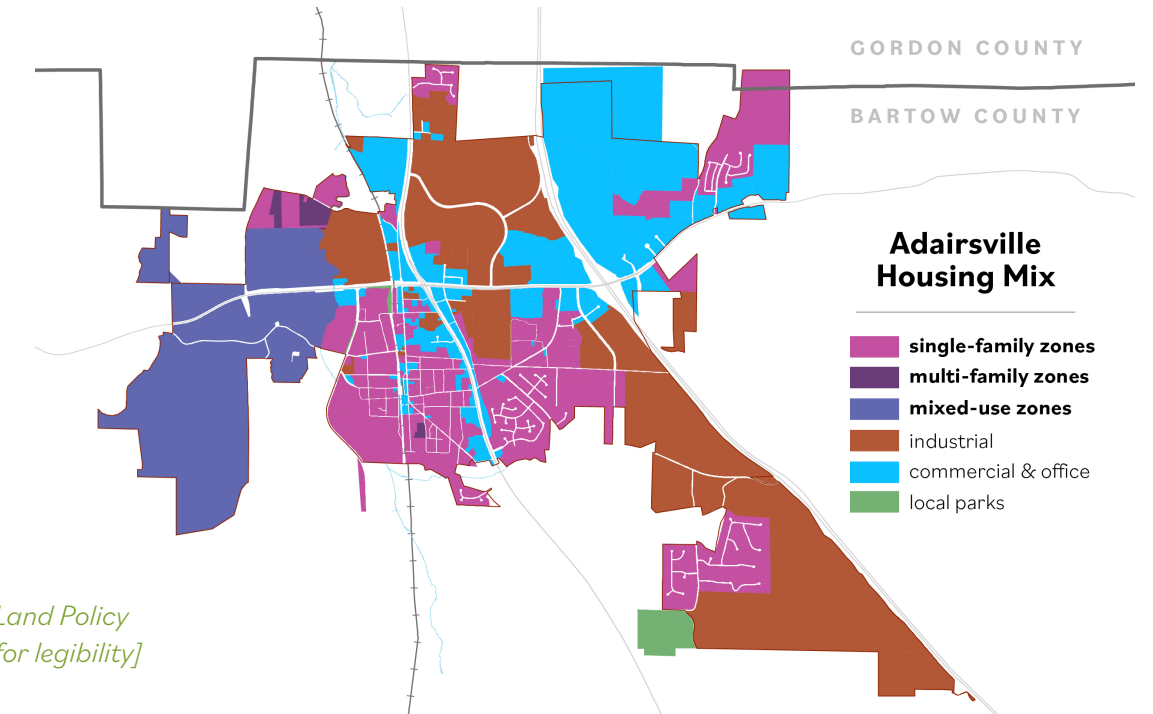
Nearby Euharlee, unfortunately, has zero parcels zoned for housing types other than single-family, although the zoning ordinance does include code designations permitting alternative housing types.



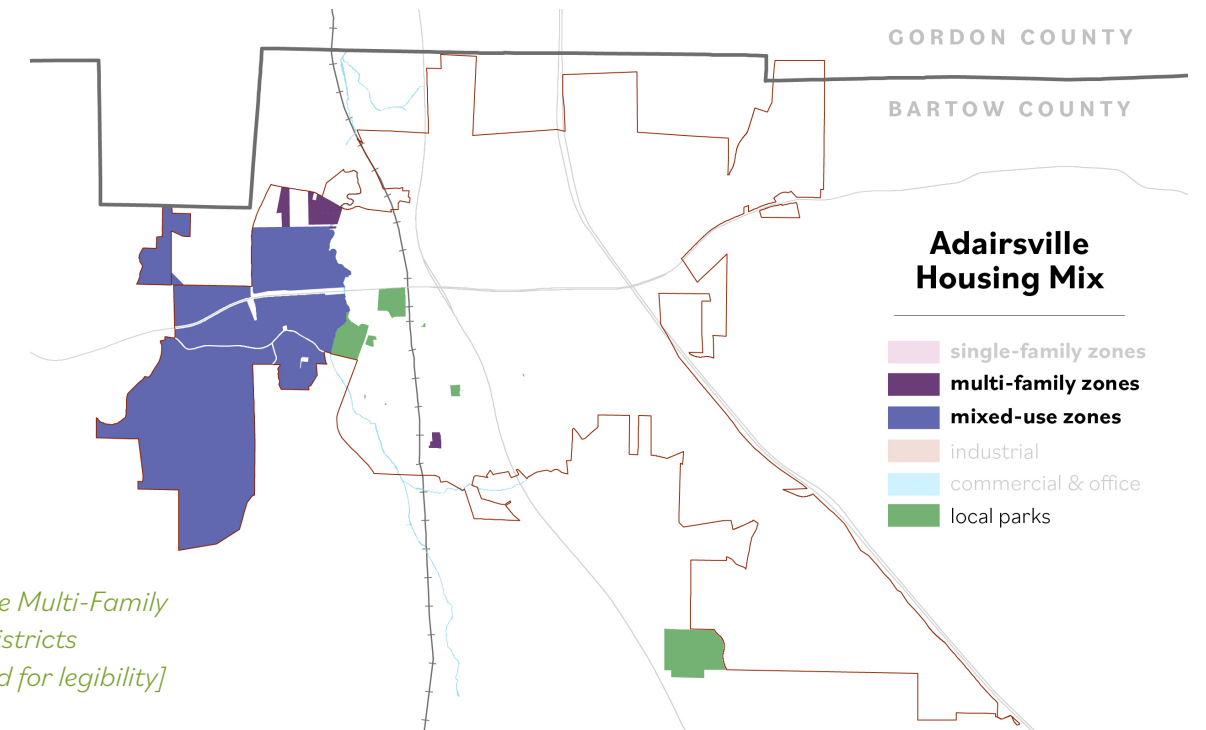
Cartersville, Emerson, and Euharlee Multi-Family Zoning Districts [simplified for legibility]

Adairsville

Compared to Cartersville and Emerson, Adairsville’s land policy is somewhat more restrictive. Permissions for housing options other than single-family do exist, though they are mostly confined to a general multi-family district stipulating large-scale apartments. Mixed-use is possible through a planned unit development (PUD) district; a large tract along GA Hwy. 140 was recently annexed into the city and zoned as such, expanding potential for alternatives to its single-family core. Exploring above-retail options could be beneficial in the long run for Adairsville’s charming downtown strip.



Adairsville Land Policy [simplified for legibility]



Adairsville Multi-Family Zoning Districts [simplified for legibility]

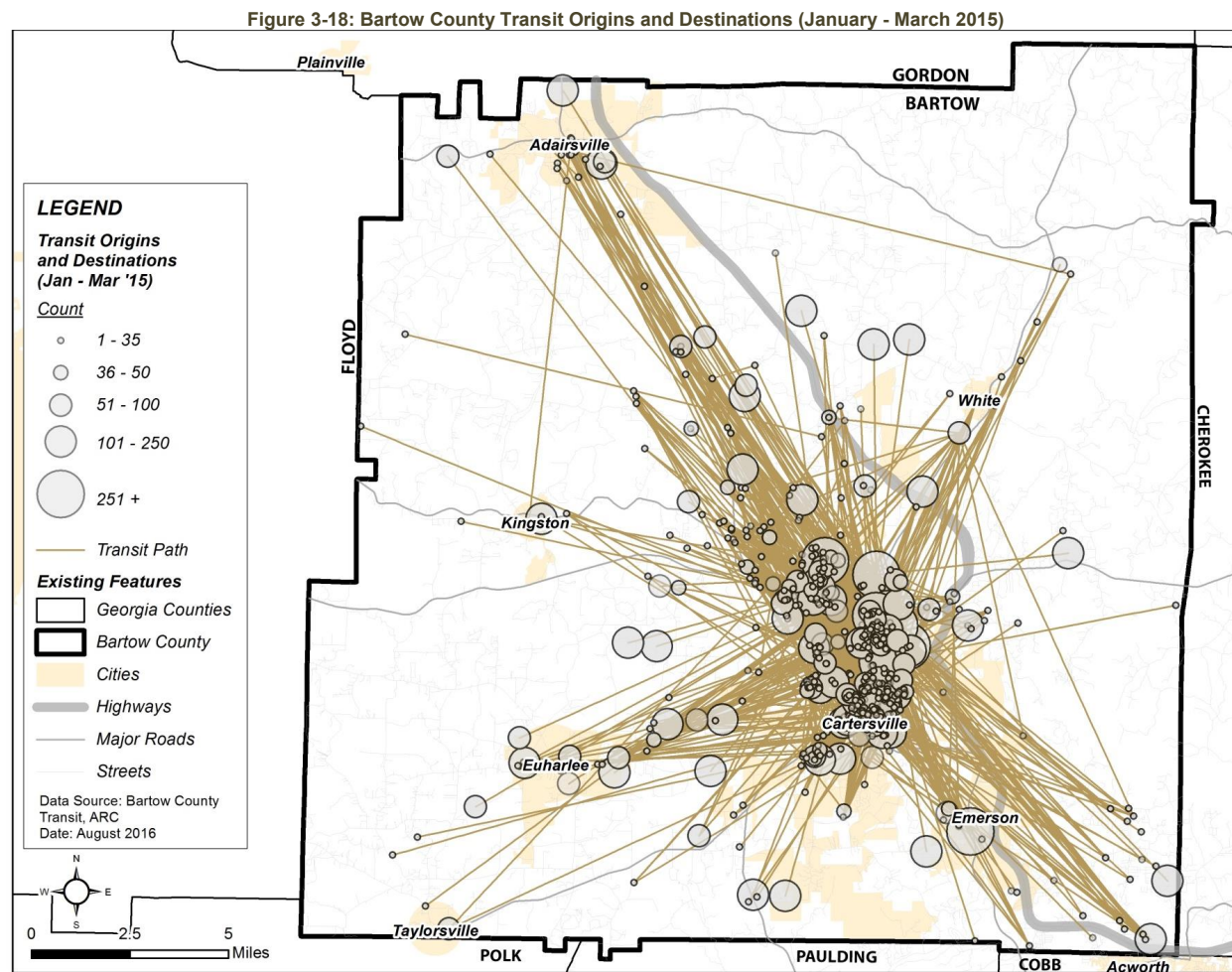
Infrastructure

Through external research and stakeholder conversations, the project team broadly explored the capacity of the county's infrastructure to accommodate new housing.

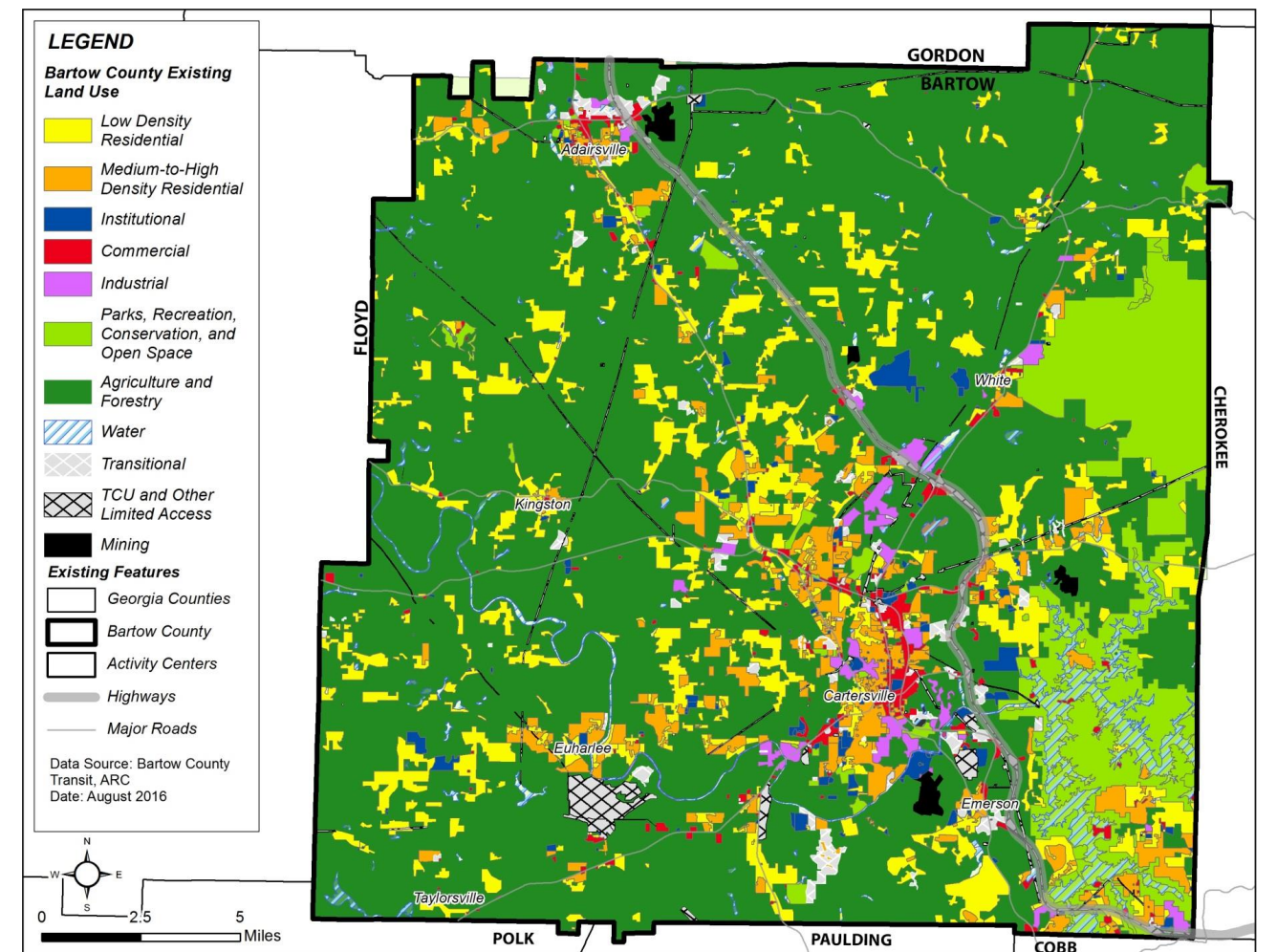
Put together, a few findings emerged from this review of Bartow County's zoning and infrastructure:

- Cartersville is truly the center of daytime activity in Bartow County. The Bartow County Transit Development Plan mapped commute patterns throughout Bartow (see below); even though most of Bartow's workforce commutes out of the county, those that commute in and those who stay mostly work in and around Cartersville. This suggests further demand for housing in central Bartow, not just to co-locate housing next to the majority of the county's jobs, but also to establish a vibrant, walkable downtown district.

- The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Water Resource Management Plan (2017) indicated that Bartow County is in a good position to accommodate new growth. While existing capacity could be limited depending on how quickly that growth arrives, the plan listed several capital improvement projects that would expand capacity of its pumping stations, wastewater treatment plants, and pipe network by 2025.
- Co-locating new housing units with existing services and infrastructure has the added benefit of reducing development pressure on Bartow's agricultural lands and natural resources. Another figure from the Bartow County Transit Development Plan (below) shows the extent of the county's forestry and agricultural operations; aside from a few pockmarked places where low-density residential has appeared, this landscape is mostly intact. Focusing on redevelopment and infill in areas already disturbed by development brings people closer together, builds a customer base for small businesses, and preserves our natural resources.



Excerpt from the Bartow County Transit Development Plan (2017) showing commute patterns in the County



Excerpt from the Bartow County Transit Development Plan (2017) showing distribution of forestry & agriculture uses is widespread throughout the County

IX. Proposed Next Steps

As stated in the introduction, this report is designed to provide Bartow County leadership—including its elected officials, county staff, and community advocates—with information regarding Bartow County’s current housing landscape, projected growth, and future development. Through this assessment, the project team determined several key findings, using them to craft a few simple next steps for Bartow County to undertake when contemplating a long-term housing and growth management strategy.

Overall Findings

Bartow County is growing. Atlanta’s outward expansion, coupled with recent economic development activity and the county’s natural beauty, are drawing people to the area.

While residents of all age groups are enjoying increased rates of homeownership, those with the lowest household incomes are struggling to find adequate housing. This trend is reflected both in household income trends as well as the project team’s interviews with households staying in extended-stay hotels.

Demand for new housing will eclipse Bartow County’s current development pace, unless something changes. Thankfully, that tipping point is not on the immediate horizon, and Bartow County has some time to determine the best approaches to take.

The zoning codes of Bartow County, Cartersville, and Emerson are fairly permissive of housing options other than single-family. A combination of redevelopment of existing buildings and rezonings in strategic areas would offer opportunities to expand its stock of alternative housing choices.

Bartow County leaders, along with those from several municipalities, have invested significant time, energy, and funds on scrutinizing and proposing solutions to current housing issues. This is often one of the biggest barriers to housing development and expansion of choice facing jurisdictions. Continuing to advance the conversation will help county and city officials innovate in the housing space.

Recommendations Related to Extended-Stay Hotels

Conduct a workforce housing study targeting employees of large employers in the area to better understand the connection between wages, housing affordability, and options for people working in the area. Focusing on this specific demographic subset will offer a more nuanced insights into how the prevalence or paucity of jobs and housing affect each other.

Some single adults were satisfied with their extended-stay hotel accommodations and had no plans to move. This suggests living in extended-stay hotels may provide a housing match for some household types, particularly single retirees. This should be a factor when considering ordinances which limit the length of stay.

Look for opportunities to increase the amount of units that offer rent based on income. This can better serve renters who are earning 50% of the median income and lower, particularly for seniors and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes.

Maintain existing sources of market-rate, low-cost housing to avoid increasing the number of households dependent on extended-stay hotels as primary housing. While mobile home parks and manufactured housing are often unpopular with local governments, they likely provide an important source of unsubsidized housing.

Immediate Next Steps

There are several actions Bartow County can take to (1) further understand housing in the county and (2) prepare for increased development pressure in a thoughtful, equitable way.

- 1. First, identify one (or more) target area(s) for new or retrofitted development, and determine if those areas are zoned appropriately for developments that expand housing variety and housing choice.** Select these target areas based on community needs related to transportation, cost, and proximity to services.
- 2. Within that target area, complete a building inventory to better understand the characteristics and condition of each structure.**

(continued on next page)

3. Meanwhile, complete the policy-related projects outlined in the Comprehensive Plan:

- Complete an audit of Bartow County’s zoning districts. Partner with cities interested in doing the same with their own ordinances.
- Review development ordinances, revising as needed to ensure community amenities and infrastructure are prioritized.
- Explore opportunities for funding mechanisms that increase attainability of high-quality, low-cost housing.

4. Identify developers interested in doing things differently. Working together, choose a pilot site and embark on a pilot project of just a few additional units of mixed type. Small wins lead to bigger ones.

5. Before the next comprehensive plan update, reassess growth rates in order to determine how quickly Bartow is growing. From there, revise approaches to housing to fit with how Bartow County’s landscape will change.

Bartow County is on the precipice of a surge in household and economic growth. The County has demonstrated their interest and will to provide a flexible, quality, and strong housing market for its citizens. The data and analysis presented here will hopefully form the basis for future explorations into Bartow County’s housing opportunities, needs, and gaps that will build a stronger, more vibrant Bartow County for its established residents and new arrivals.