

CITY OF BUFORD LCI STUDY

Buford, Georgia



TUNNELL-SPANGLER-WALSH & ASSOCIATES



Buford is a historic small town of 10,700 residents located 35 miles northeast of Atlanta. As part of one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, Buford is in the direct path of development pressure along I-985. In summer of 2004 TSW was retained by the City of Buford to prepare a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study for the downtown area that would protect and enhance its historic character, while establishing a framework for quality new growth in the undeveloped areas ringing it. Assisting TSW in this effort were the URS Corporation, providing transportation services, and Basile Baumann Prost & Associates with marketing and feasibility services.

During a six month public planning effort TSW worked with Buford residents, businesses and property owners to establish a vision for positive change. Through this effort, the community envisioned downtown as a unique pedestrian-oriented town center catering to the shopping and services needs of residents and visitors. With

its many trees, wide sidewalks, and safe, slow streets, the community believed that downtown's form should encourage walking and strengthen community bonds, while ensuring that automobile and bicycle traffic moved in a safe and efficient manner. Pocket parks and plazas were envisioned throughout, and important historic structures preserved and protected.

The study recommended that downtown include a variety of uses, with low-rise, mixed-use buildings creating a pedestrian-oriented shopping area along Main Street. This should transition to less intense live-work and studio uses as the distance from the center increases; residential buildings should be of high quality. It called for existing neighborhoods to be protected, but better connected to Main Street through new sidewalks and trails. To the south, light industrial and commercial uses should be enhanced through the addition of streetscape improvements, while a new government center should rise at the intersection of South Hill Street and Buford Highway, connected to the historic Main Street by sidewalks.

The study identified over \$27.5 million in public sector projects that should be pursued, including new streets, pedestrian upgrades, park improvements, bicycle trails, wayfinding signage, and intersection improvements. Most significantly, it recommended an access management plan for Buford Highway to prevent future development from creating gridlock. To-date, several Study recommendations have already been implemented, including streetscape upgrades, right-of-way acquisition, and development of a new City Hall.



top left: Historic Main Street
left: Concept plan showing the future vision for Main Street
below: Concept plan showing how new townhomes and live/work uses could be established along Buford Highway

