



# Norcross Comprehensive Plan Update & Town Center Livable Centers Initiative Update

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### Overview

This Community Engagement Plan (CEP) documents the communication and public engagement strategies for the City of Norcross's Comprehensive Plan update and Town Center Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) update. It serves as a guide and management resource for the planning team and will be updated, as needed, throughout the planning process.

The CEP documents the following:

- How the planning team will engage with, collect input from, and communicate with the public and community stakeholders throughout the planning process,
- Who the planning team will engage within the City of Norcross, and
- Types of stakeholder and community engagement activities.

Engagement of all community members, including both the general public and community stakeholders, is paramount to a successful planning process. Stakeholders have direct knowledge of initiatives, opportunities, and needs that impact the growth and development of the city and may be unknown to the general public. The general public has firsthand knowledge of issues impacting their day-to-day activities. The planning team is also committed to reaching underserved and underrepresented communities in Norcross throughout the planning process.

### Engagement Goals

The CEP will be updated as needed to help facilitate the achievement of the following goals:

- Engage a diverse public that is representative of the City of Norcross.
- Build project awareness by executing strategic and creative community outreach.
- Build relationships with cultural groups and community champions to ensure an equitable engagement process and to build project support.
- Gather and incorporate meaningful input from community members to ensure their priorities and needs are reflected in the recommendations and outcomes.

### Outreach Schedule

The planning process will be conducted in 5 phases. Within each phase, the planning team will carry out different forms of community engagement, as illustrated in Figure 1.

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Figure 1. Engagement Activities



## Who will we engage?

The Comprehensive Plan Update will focus on collecting input from the general public, while the LCI plan will target input from community members that utilize the Buford Highway corridor as pedestrians and that currently utilize or would like to utilize electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. Leveraging local cultural and community groups will be a priority for targeting Buford Highway travelers. The planning team will also work with the City and Sustainable Norcross to target the EV user population.

The planning team will prioritize “going where the community is” to maximize participation and facilitate receipt of diverse input. The Norcross community is very diverse, comprised of 39.8 percent Hispanic/Latinx, 31.2 percent White, 25.5 percent Black, and 13.4 percent Asian, and 9.6 percent two or more races (*US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2021*). Figure 2 illustrates the geographic distribution of the Norcross community’s diversity. The base color of each Census Tract identifies the predominant race/ethnicity, and the overlaying pie chart shows the overall racial/ethnic breakdown of the Census Tract’s population. Table 1 provides the actual percentages that are represented in each pie chart.

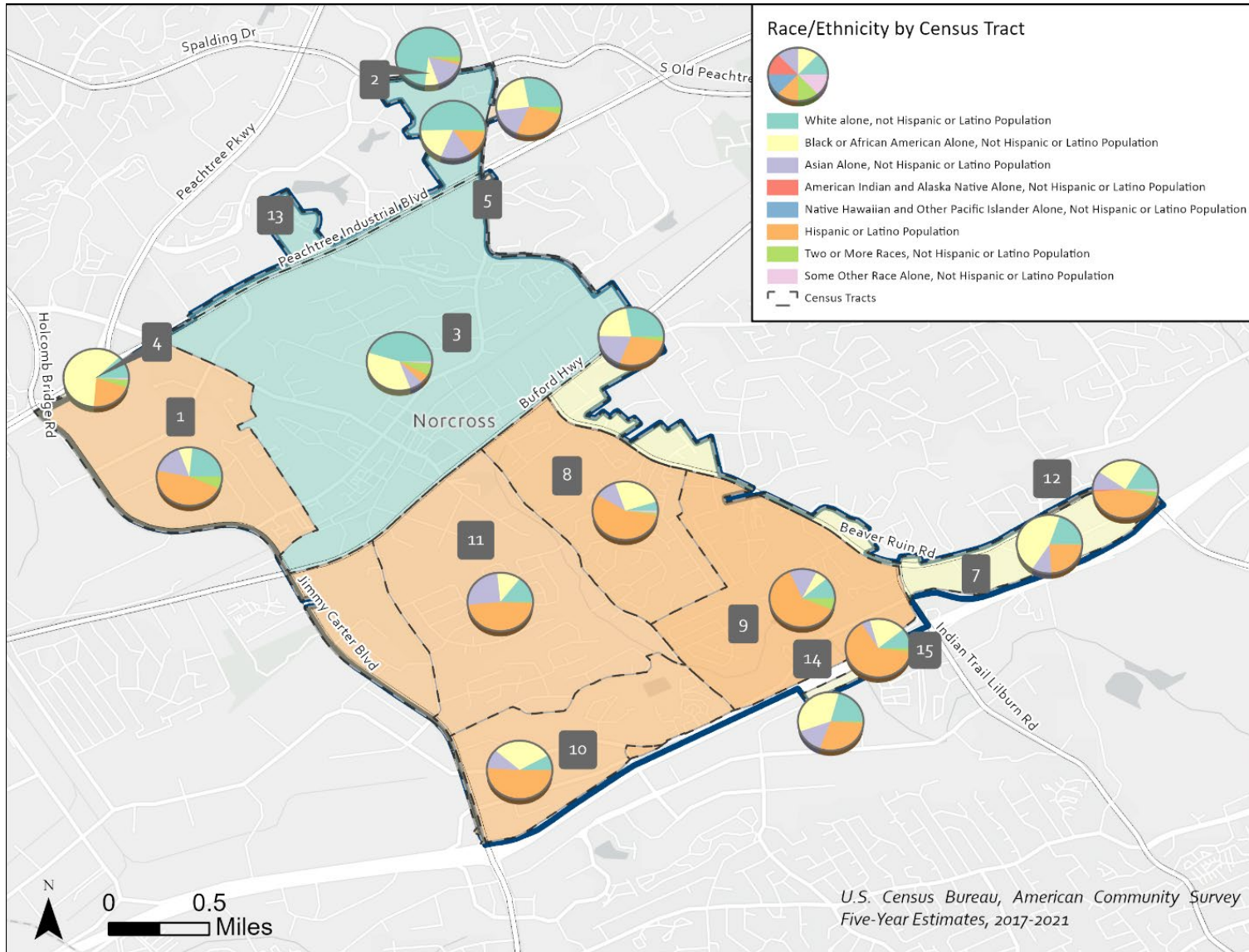
As shown in Figure 2 and the corresponding Table 1, large concentrations of Hispanic/Latinx community members live in southeast and southwest of the city, along Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway. Large concentrations of Black/African American community members are just north of Beaver Ruin and west of I-85.

The planning team will make extra effort to engage with minority groups of the community by working with cultural and community groups to help get the word out, working with the City to boost social media ads, and when possible, coordinating pop-up booths with the community groups that directly serve these populations.

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**Figure 2. Predominant Race/Ethnicity by Census Tract in the City of Norcross**



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**Table 1. Racial/Ethnic Breakdown per Census Tract**

Census Tract ID	Total Population	% White	% Black	% American Indian /Alaska Native	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	% Some Other Race	% Two or More Races	% Hispanic/ Latino
1	3,693	23%	8%	0%	16%	0%	0%	6%	47%
2	3,604	73%	8%	0%	15%	0%	0%	3%	1%
3	3,639	46%	35%	0%	7%	0%	1%	6%	5%
4	3,487	12%	62%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	22%
5	4,960	28%	24%	0%	16%	0%	0%	4%	28%
6	3,831	28%	22%	0%	19%	0%	0%	2%	29%
7	4,387	19%	46%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	24%
8	4,005	5%	26%	0%	11%	0%	1%	1%	56%
9	2,975	11%	6%	0%	15%	0%	0%	6%	62%
10	2,370	8%	31%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	51%
11	2,731	14%	13%	0%	25%	0%	0%	1%	48%
12	4,942	16%	25%	1%	10%	0%	1%	3%	45%
13	3,149	50%	18%	0%	17%	0%	0%	1%	14%
14	2,560	21%	35%	0%	14%	0%	0%	1%	30%
15	4,384	11%	19%	0%	5%	0%	0%	2%	64%

## Communications

The planning team will use multiple communication methods and tools to engage the community throughout the planning process and keep the public up to date on upcoming pop-up events, input activities, and project milestones.

### Project Website

The project website will serve as the information hub for the project, providing the public with up-to-date information and access to project-related documents, project background information, schedules, and contact information. The content from these plan updates will be integrated on the City's existing Imagine Our Future website, [www.imagineourfuture.org](http://www.imagineourfuture.org). The website will highlight ways for the community to provide feedback and get involved, including upcoming meetings and events, and serve as the launchpad for the online surveys. The website's URL and QR code will be used on printed and electronic engagement materials, as appropriate, allowing the public quick access to the site for project details and online activities.

### Communications/Promotional Tools

The planning team will utilize the following promotional tools to promote public input opportunities and project milestones.

#### Social Media

Social media content and posts will be drafted and shared with the City of Norcross Communications Team to publicize information about project events and plan updates. The City will be responsible for distributing posts across existing City of Norcross social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The consultant team will provide the City's Communications Team with social media content at least four weeks out from each event for refinement and posting.

#### Banners

Three movable banners advertising the comprehensive plan update and LCI update will be available for positioning at highly visible government buildings or public spaces, depending on the time in the planning process. The City of Norcross' staff will assist in maintaining and moving the banner signs as needed. At least two of the banners will travel with the planning team to events such as pop-up activities and the open house.

The consultant team will design and procure banners during Phase 2 of the planning process in close coordination with the City. These banners will serve the duration of the planning process. Banners will be marked with "Property of the City of Norcross."

#### Yard Signs

Ten yard-signs will be designed to promote community surveys and upcoming pop-up events and installed in highly visible locations throughout the city. The planning team will solicit input from Norcross staff and the Steering Committee on locations for placing yard signs. The yard signs will be printed double-sided, with English on one side and Spanish on the other.

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The consultant team will design and print up to ten-yard signs during Phase 2 of the project, with the option of reserving five of the ten signs for design and printing later in the process. Yard signs will be marked with “Property of the City of Norcross.”

### Handouts and Signs

Handouts will provide information on the Comprehensive Plan and LCI updates such as links to active surveys, input tools, and the website. Handouts will be printed and distributed during pop-up events. In addition, digital handouts will be delivered to the City for printing and placing in government and public buildings, and to local organizations to distribute at their own events. As helpful, the consultant team will provide chalk or white board based signage at event locations to promote and direct participants to the outreach booth or area.

### Translations

In order to reach the Hispanic/Latinx population, the following promotional tools and outreach items will be translated into Spanish:

- Banners
- Yard signs
- One flyer per event
- Two hand-outs per pop-up event

The planning team will utilize the online translation tool, Blend, for an efficient and accurate translations. Translation requests are translated within one day, with an option to be expedited in 9 business hours. The project website, described below, will also have a built-in translation tool. The planning team will monitor the site to ensure that the plug-in is working throughout the life of the project.

## Public Engagement Activities

This section documents the different ways in which the public can actively participate in the planning process and provide input.

### Public Hearings and Council Meetings

The planning team will meet with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council throughout the planning process to present information and receive any input. These meetings are identified in Table 2. The public hearings provide an opportunity for public comment whereas the regular meetings will just include a presentation and questions/comments from elected officials.

**Table 2. Formal Hearings and Meeting Presentations**

Formal Public Presentations	Anticipated Timing
City Council Public Kick-Off Hearing	March 6/Phase 1
City Council Meeting	TBD/Phase 3
Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing	TBD/Phase 4
City Council Transmittal Public Hearing	TBD/Phase 5
City Council Adoption Meeting	TBD/Phase 5

### Surveys

The planning team will develop two community surveys— the first survey will be executed during Phase 2, and the second survey will be executed during Phase 3 of the project. The planning team will coordinate with community partners to promote the surveys. In addition to the online survey, a physical version will be produced in English and Spanish to make the survey more accessible. The planning team will rely on support from community partners to disseminate and collect hard copies.

- **The first survey** will run during the Data Gathering and Existing Conditions Assessment phase, in tandem with Pop Up #1 to maximize public participation. This survey will collect input on needs and opportunities pertaining to future growth and development, as well as gather input on a map about transportation issues in the Town Center area. The planning team anticipates using SurveyMonkey to collect input. The first survey will include several types of questions including multiple choice, ranking, open-ended comment boxes, as well as several demographic questions. The demographic questions will assist in monitoring engagement and fine-tuning strategies if needed.
- **The second survey** will gather feedback on priorities related to land use, public space improvements, EV solutions, transportation safety strategies, and other pertinent topics. The second survey may be done over a GIS platform, depending on status of the projects.



### Pop-Up Booths

The planning team will plan and execute three pop-up booths to help gather community input with an emphasis on reaching community members who are unlikely to participate in traditional public meetings. These pop-ups will “go where the community is” and either intercept people during their day-to-day activities or occur at highly attended family events hosted or sponsored by the City of Norcross. Pop-ups will be promoted on the project website and social media channels prior to each event.

The pop-up booths will inform the public on the planning process and obtain community input through interactive and fun input activities. At each pop-up event, the planning team will facilitate two to three input activities—one activity will be catered towards the youth and the other two will be fun and accessible for all members of the general public. Members of the planning team will host the pop-up events and provide summaries of the event and input collected. The planning team will partner with local cultural groups and organizations and encourage their members to assist with the pop-up booths (either through promotions prior to the event, or by volunteering to attend as needed). The team will also leverage cultural groups to potentially host pop-ups at their existing events or at their office locations. The planning team has identified existing City of Norcross events as potential locations, as detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3. Proposed Timing and Potential Locations for Pop-Up Events**

Pop-Up Event	Anticipated Timing	Potential Locations
Pop-Up #1	April 8, 2023	Easter Egg Hunt/Special Needs Easter Egg Hunt or ShopHop Eggstravaganza
Pop-Up #2	June 14, 2023	Norcross Community Market
Pop-Up #3	July 29, 2023	Cook Out with Council

### Public Open House Meeting

Near the end of Phase 4 in the planning process (October 19, 2023), the planning team will host an open house meeting to welcome feedback from all members of the Norcross community on key elements of the draft Comprehensive Plan and LCI updates. The planning team will coordinate closely with the City staff and Steering Committee to determine the appropriate venue and other logistics for the open house.

## Partner Engagement

### Artist Engagement

Art-based community engagement offers a sense of meaning and identification to its residents. The planning team will coordinate with Norcross's Public Arts Commission to identify and leverage local artists to help facilitate creative public input activities, leveraging the \$1000 project budget set aside for incorporation of art in the planning process. The planning team recommends coordinating a meeting with the PAC to brainstorm ideas and identify strategies to maximize the use of our budget to include collaborating with a local artist and creating art-driven input activities.

One idea the planning team suggests considering is "Free Art Friday." Free Art Friday is a global concept<sup>1</sup> that doubles as an art movement and a scavenger hunt. Local artists would place free art such as stickers, magnets, and small prints, and post on social media for followers to find and keep. The planning team would encourage artists to "Imagine the Future" through their art. Each art token would include a QR code to the project website and also encourage tagging the city through #ImagineOurFuture #Norcross.

### Collaboration with Cultural Groups and Community Organizations

The consultant team will engage with local cultural groups and community organizations early in the process. These groups will be asked to help disseminate information at their own events, share project information to their networks, and volunteer at pop-up events. The planning team will create and distribute promotional materials for these organizations to include at their own events. The following organizations are identified as conduits to our target communities and those traditionally underrepresented in the planning process:

- Latin American Association
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- Korean American Association of Greater Atlanta
- Gateway 85 CID
- Neighborhood cooperation ministries (non-profit)
- Young Norcross
- GA Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Corners Outreach
- Boy with the Ball

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ajc.com/entertainment/arts--theater/free-art-movement-doubles-city-wide-savenger-hunt/Sa2cYuQBORTLzNnNe33Xc/>

## Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders will be vital in the success of the public outreach and engagement process, not only to help steer the planning process but also to help engage the community and help reach as many community members and community voices as possible.

### Steering Committee

Both the Comprehensive Plan and the LCI Plan are required by either state or regional oversight to have a Steering Committee. The City of Norcross assembled a Steering Committee consisting of a diverse cross-section of the Norcross community. Members represent different parts of the City and different interests, including residents and businesses from both East Norcross and Downtown Norcross as well as the Norcross Public Arts Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Norcross Development Authority, and others. The Steering Committee's role is to help the City make decisions at major inflection points in the planning process. The Committee will also act as champions of the planning process and input opportunities within their communities to help expand public engagement. The planning team will facilitate five Steering Committee meetings. The meetings will occur during each phase of the planning process, as provided in Table 4. Meetings will be hosted in-person or virtually, depending on the preferences of the committee. As identified by the City, Steering Committee members may have alternates participate as their proxy in their absence.

**Table 4. Steering Committee Meeting Plan**

Meeting	Phase of Process	Anticipated Timing
1	Project Management/Project Kick-Off	March 7, 2023
2	Data Gathering and Existing Conditions Assessment	May 9, 2023
3	Technical Review of Needs and Opportunities	August 8, 2023
4	Implementation Strategy Development	October 10, 2023
5	Adoption	January 9, 2024

### Stakeholder Interviews

The consultant team will work with the City during Phase 1 to schedule stakeholder interviews, which will be facilitated by the consultant team. Interviewees identified include the following:

- City Council members,
- City staff,
- Norcross Downtown Development Authority members,
- Norcross Development Authority members, and
- Planning and Zoning Board members.

These interviews will help inform the existing conditions assessment, specific areas for improvement, and other key topics. These meetings may occur in a group or one-on-one format. Most interviews will occur virtually for ease of scheduling, but the planning team can host some interviews in-person if desired.