

GARDEN CITY 2040-2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Informing and Engaging Council
& Stakeholders

Meeting II



Agenda

- 1. Establish Comp Plan Chapters**
- 2. Chapter wise breakdown**
 - **Purpose**
 - **Key Themes**
 - **Notable Highlights**
 - **2040 to 2045 Chapter Evolution**



Comprehensive Plan Chapters

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



COMMUNITY PROFILE



COMMUNITY GOALS



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



LAND USE



TRANSPORTATION



HOUSING



NATURAL RESOURCES



QUALITY OF LIFE



SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM & ROA



Community Profile

The Community Profile chapter lays the foundation for understanding who lives in Garden City, how the population is changing, and what these shifts mean for future planning. It provides demographic, social, and economic context for all other plan chapters - especially housing, transportation, and economic development.

Notable Highlights:

- **Population growth remains slow** compared to nearby cities, but Garden City's regional context is shifting rapidly.
- **Increasing diversity**, with growing diversity in race, ethnicity, and cultural background.
- **Higher proportion of renters and non-family households** compared to Chatham County and state averages.
- **Lower educational attainment levels** tied to local employment in logistics and industrial sectors.
- **Aging and housing data** suggest increased pressure for affordable, accessible homes

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

✓ New	↻ Updated	✗ Removed / Streamlined
2045 population projections (cohort method)	ACS data refreshed to 2018–2022 5-Year Estimates	Older 2010–2016 projections and formatting
Racial and ethnic diversity breakdown, including nativity and Hispanic growth	Expanded discussion on household type and structure	Removed dense technical footnotes not relevant to policy
Educational attainment now linked to workforce themes	Refined figures for age cohorts and dependency ratios	

Direction + Implications

This chapter gives sharper insight into the social makeup and emerging needs of Garden City residents. It reveals that the city is becoming more diverse, more renter-driven, and more economically diverse. These realities underscore the urgency of inclusive planning - especially in land use, housing supply, infrastructure equity, and workforce development.

Community Goals and Accomplishments

This chapter captures the vision, values, and strategic goals shaping Garden City's future. It articulates how public feedback, and local leadership informed a shared direction, and it outlines measurable objectives across land use, economic development, housing, design, equity, branding, and recreation.

Notable Highlights:

- **7 Core Goals Reconfirmed:** Retail diversity, redevelopment, code reform, buffering neighborhoods, design quality, branding, and recreation access.
- **Vision Statement Clarified:** "Safe, Family-Oriented, and Business-Friendly" remains the anchor.
- **Work Program Review Added:** Each strategy is tracked by status (Met, Partially Met, Not Achieved) with an updated 2045 policy disposition.
- **Public Feedback Updated:** 2045 reflects new surveys, stakeholder sessions, and input beyond the 2040 cycle.
- **Redevelopment Target Areas Emphasized:** Garden City South, Highway 21 Corridor, and adjoining residential zones have specific goals for infill and historic preservation.

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

✓ New	↻ Updated	✗ Removed / Streamlined
Full Work Program Scorecard w/ status + 2045 disposition (pp. 13–16)	Vision and goals wording simplified for readability	Dense procedural footnotes from 2040 removed
Specific metrics for housing, resilience, zoning reform	2040 goals retained but aligned with actual projects (e.g., URP, design guidelines, code updates)	UDC adoption dropped in favor of targeted zoning fixes
Tracking of moratoria, rezonings, and youth development links	Reframed transit and street goals to fit Garden City's scale	Goals with no local jurisdiction (e.g., prison reentry) dropped

Direction + Implications

This chapter positions Garden City as an increasingly intentional and adaptive city, one that honors its identity but recognizes the need for strategic, equitable growth. It links vision to action with clearer accountability and invites stakeholders to help shape how goals evolve with future pressures like port expansion, housing demand, and aging infrastructure.

Any Questions?

Economic Development

This chapter examines Garden City's evolving role within the Savannah regional economy, especially its position as a logistics and industrial hub tied to the Port. It evaluates workforce trends, land use challenges, training infrastructure, and sectoral shifts to guide future economic resilience.

Notable Highlights:

- **Garden City is a regional job center:** 96% of its jobholders are commuting from surrounding jurisdictions.
- **Port & logistics are the economic backbone:** The Garden City Terminal drives warehousing, trucking, and industrial development at unmatched regional scale.
- **Workforce mismatch:** Many residents don't work locally and lack access to higher-paying logistics and manufacturing roles due to skill gaps.
- **The Hyundai Metaplant impacts are surging:** Garden City is key to its logistics chain, and this opens new roles in advanced logistics and manufacturing.
- **Retail leakage and commercial underperformance:** While industrial growth is robust, Garden City loses commercial and retail activity to Pooler and Savannah.
- **Shift in logistics market dynamics:** Overbuilt warehouses have caused vacancy rates to rise (10.6% in 2026), ending the “easy growth” era.
- **Need to create robust and innovative infrastructure systems to handle services like water and sewer,** to cater to the increase in demand for development.

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

✓ New / Added	↻ Updated	✗ Removed or De-Emphasized
Inclusion of Hyundai Metaplant ripple effects and “Meta-Pro” workforce concept	Workforce data & commute trends now use 2025-2026 labor stats & OnTheMap visuals	Less focus on general business climate; shifted to skills and resilience
Emphasis on post-COVID recovery and new vacancy dynamics in warehousing	Retail and small business challenges now tied to corridor performance and investment risk	No longer assumes industrial expansion will be “automatically beneficial”
Detailed SWOT with SEDA and RISE alignment	Economic narrative is now explicitly regional, not isolated to Garden City boundaries	

Direction + Implications

Garden City is transitioning from a warehouse-dependent node to a more intentional economic hub , one that needs to balance industrial efficiency with quality of life, workforce upskilling, and diversification. The City must now curate industrial land, prioritize “value over volume,” and focus on attracting skilled logistics, clean manufacturing, and small business vitality.

Land Use Element

Guide the physical development of Garden City through 2045 by coordinating land use with infrastructure, environment, and community identity.

Key Themes:

- Strategic focus on nodes and corridors rather than spread-out growth.
- Reinforcement of Garden City's dual identity: logistics hub and neighborhood protector.
- Expanded integration with housing, transportation, economic development, and hazard mitigation efforts.

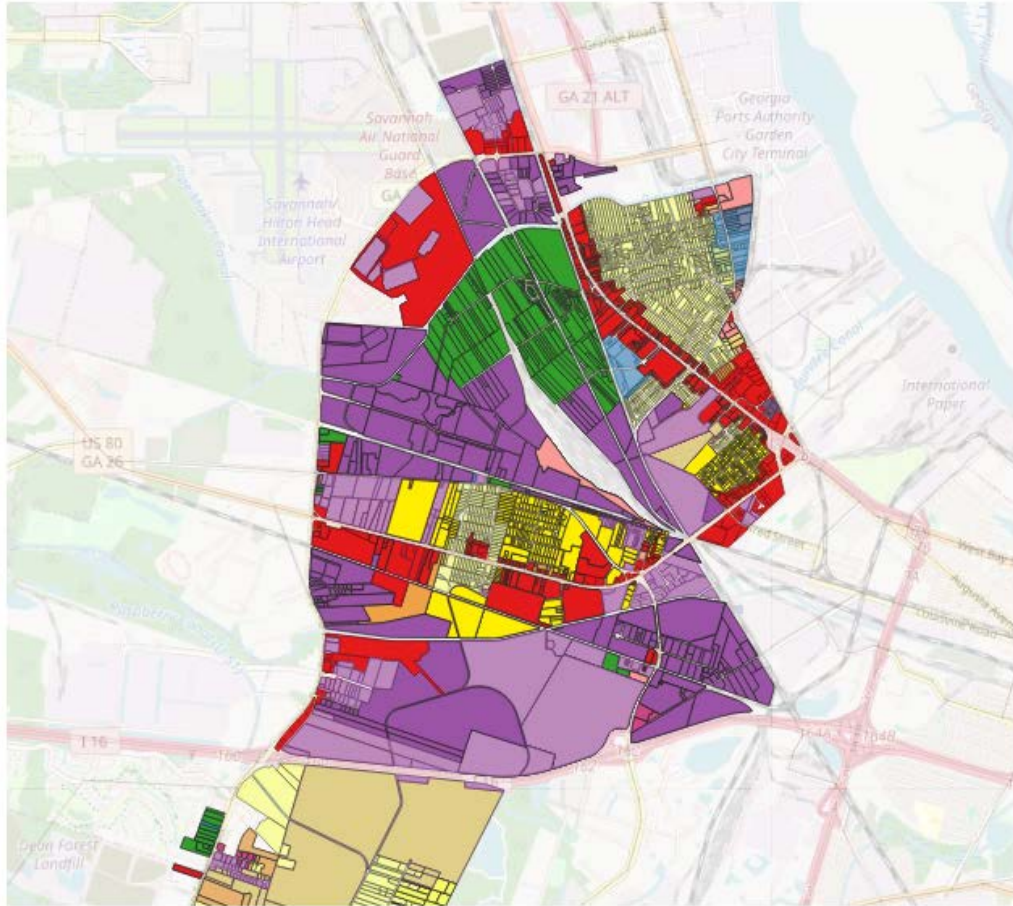
Notable Highlights:

- **Nodes & Corridors Framework formalized:** classifies strategic growth areas and defines their character.
- **Creation of Character Area Map (CAM)** to complement the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
- **Recognition** of Garden City's role in the regional freight and employment system.
- **Introduction of land use tools** like *Suburban Retrofit*, *Town Center Overlay*, *Traditional Neighborhood Overlay*, and *Green Infrastructure Plan*.
- **Updated analysis** of land use trends, zoning patterns, and **infill** opportunities.

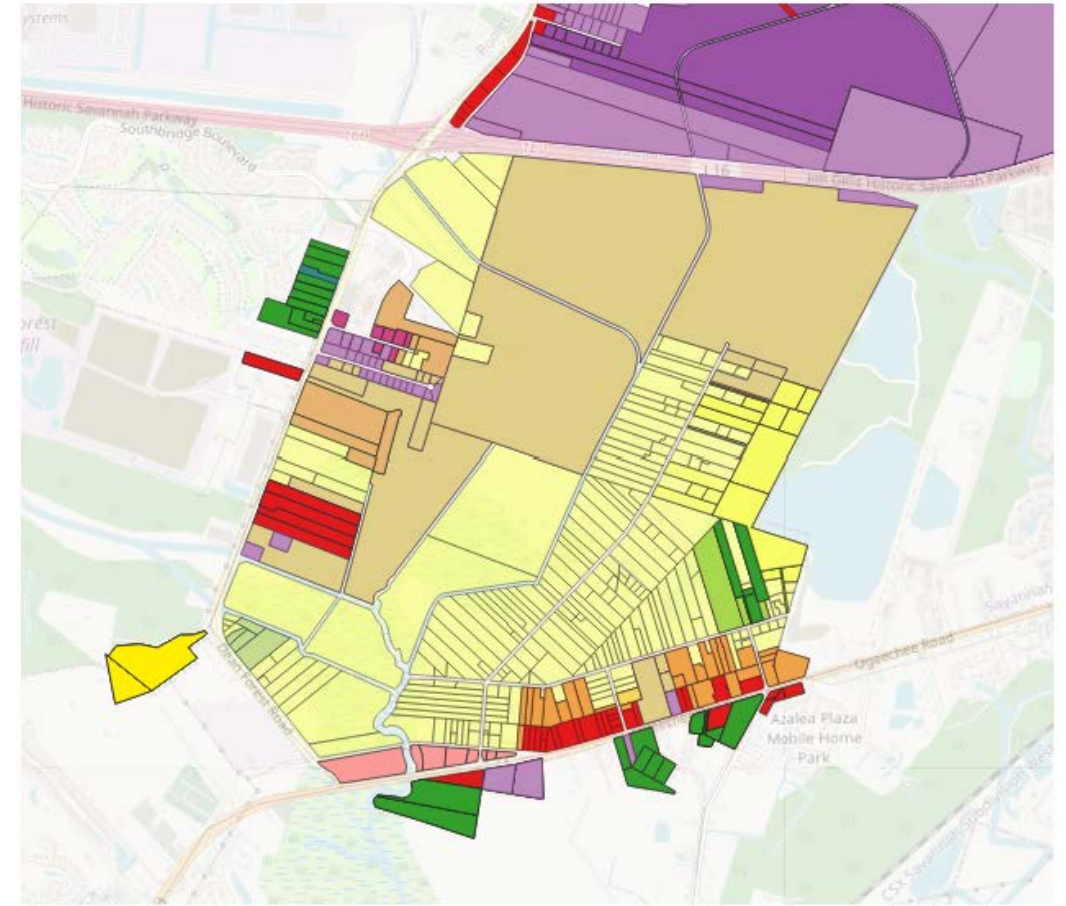
What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

Category	2040 Plan	2045 Update Highlights
Growth Strategy	Emphasis on general growth	Clear shift to “ <i>Strategic Nodes and Corridors</i> ” framework
Industrial Policy	Heavy industrial expansion focus	Adds emphasis on buffering , green infrastructure, and logistics clustering
Mixed-Use Vision	Limited detail analysis	Clear designation of Mixed-Use Urban Anchor , Town Center concept codified
Zoning Tools	Conventional categories	Addition of overlays , incentives, and transitional buffers
Environmental Integration	General goals	Specific tools like Green Infrastructure Plan , conservation zoning, and easement strategies
Redevelopment Strategy	General URP references	Updated to reflect modern industrial trends and new housing needs

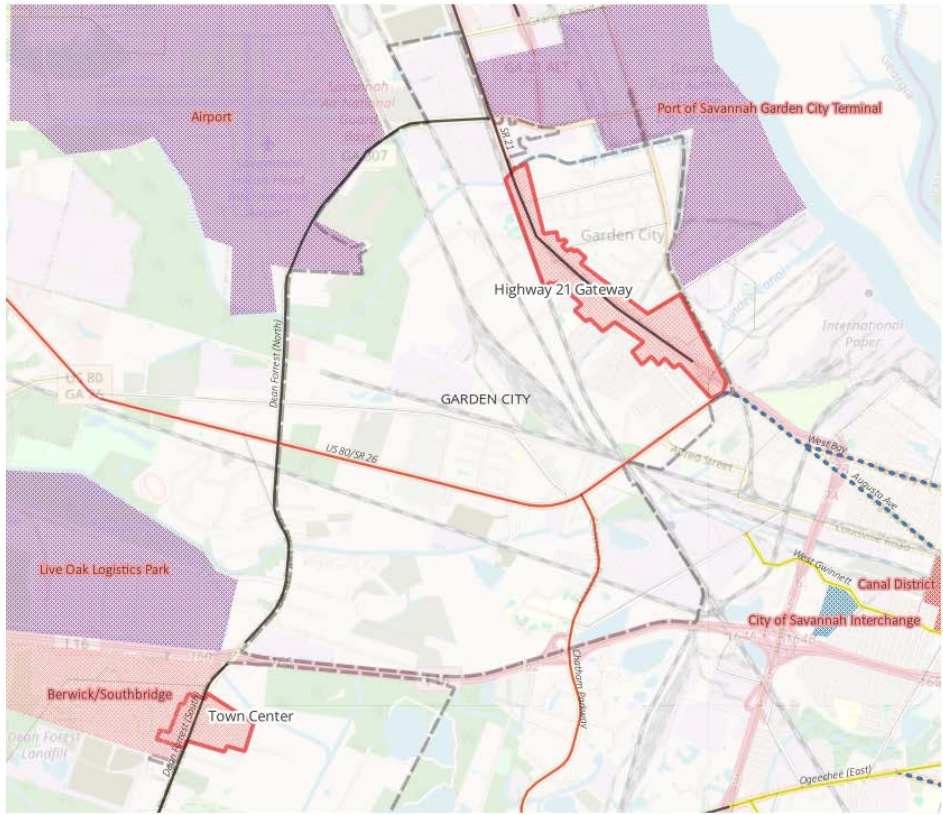
Zoning Map



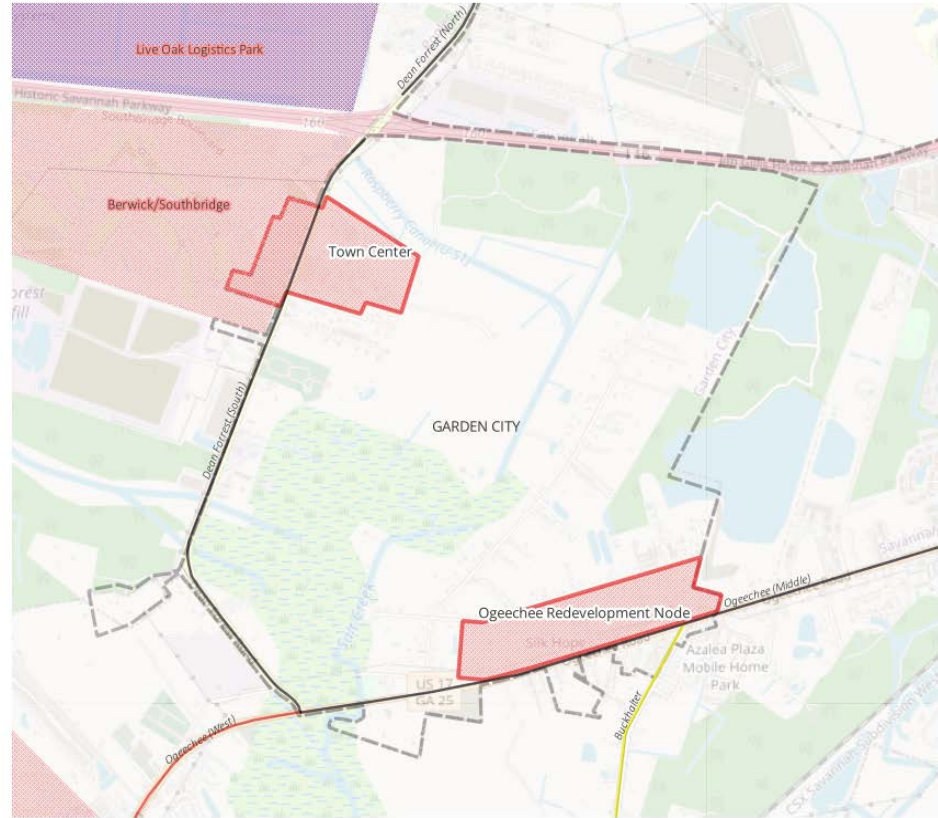
- Centerlines
- All Roads
- GC Zoning
 - C-1
 - C-2
 - C-2A
 - C-2A (BW)
 - I-1
 - I-2
 - P-C-2
 - P-C-2A
 - P-I-1
 - P-I-2
 - P-R-1
 - P-R-A
 - R-1
 - R-2
 - R-A
 - R-I-N
- OpenStreetMap



Nodes



- Centerlines
- All Roads
- Corridors
- Employment/Freight
- - - Neighborhood/Retrofit
- Regional Mixed-Use
- Cross Town/Commuter
- Nodes
- Community Mixed-Use
- Employment
- Employment/Freight
- Regional Mixed-Use
- GC_Potential_Nodes
- Mixed-Use
- OpenStreetMap
- Garden City



- Centerlines
- All Roads
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- Mixed-Use
- OpenStreetMap
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Nodes

Name	Description	Strategic Character
<p>Highway 21 Gateway</p>	<p>Identified in the URP as a critical entry point to the city, currently suffering from deteriorating industrial buildings, vacant lots, and poor property maintenance. It serves as the primary northern gateway into Garden City.</p>	<p>Gateway Revitalization: The strategic focus is transforming this area from a blighted industrial strip into an attractive entryway. Priorities include demolition of dilapidated structures, strict code enforcement, and establishing design standards to improve aesthetics and signal community investment.</p>
<p>Town Center (Dean Forrest & I-16)</p>	<p>Positioned at a major regional interchange, this area is envisioned as the commercial and civic heart of Garden City. It benefits from high visibility and accessibility but currently lacks a cohesive "downtown" identity.</p>	<p>Civic & Commercial Hub: The goal is to create a true "Town Center" with mixed-use development. Strategic character focuses on vertical density, walkability, and concentrating retail, office, and civic uses to create a sense of place distinct from the industrial zones.</p>
<p>Ogeechee Redevelopment Corridor</p>	<p>Corresponds to the "Garden City South" target area in the URP. This corridor faces challenges such as poor housing conditions, lack of public infrastructure (water/sewer), and vacant commercial buildings. It aligns with the broader Middle Ogeechee Corridor strategy.</p>	<p>Corridor Retrofit & Stabilization: Strategic priorities include extending water and sewer infrastructure to unlock development potential, implementing traffic calming measures, and incentivizing infill development. The focus is on revitalizing the commercial spine while stabilizing adjacent residential neighborhoods.</p>

Direction + Implications

- **Balanced Dual Role:** Plan acknowledges Garden City's continued role as a freight/industrial hub while improving livability for residents.
- **Implementation Ready:** Provides zoning tools and overlays that support rezoning, redevelopment, and infrastructure upgrades.
- **Proactive Resilience:** Incorporates floodplain protection, buffers, and environmental overlays to reduce vulnerability.
- **Clear Policy Guidance:** CAM and FLUM align development expectations with zoning, strengthening day-to-day decision-making.

Any Questions?

Transportation Element

This chapter outlines Garden City’s multimodal transportation conditions and future priorities, placing the city in the regional mobility context shaped by freight, industrial activity, and port-related logistics. It highlights updated MPO plans, rail and highway projects, pedestrian and transit conditions, and Garden City's critical role in moving goods and people across the Savannah region.

Notable Highlights:

- **Garden City is a regional job hub:** 96% of its workforce lives outside city limits, and 93% of residents work elsewhere.
- **Port of Savannah + GPA dominate freight movement:** Garden City houses the Mason Mega Rail Terminal and critical intermodal infrastructure.
- **New planning tools since 2021:** Includes SR 21/307 access studies, Coastal Empire freight studies, and updated 2050 MTP with new funding models.
- **Bridges and truck bottlenecks matter:** A low-clearance bridge on Chatham Parkway restricts freight efficiency.
- **Multimodal growth:** CAT added six new ADA-accessible bus stops in Garden City and introduced microtransit and smart planning tools.
- **Biking & walking gains:** Garden City now participates in CORE MPO’s regional bike/ped facility studies and plan updates.

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

✓ New	↻ Updated	✗ Removed / De-Emphasized
Full inventory of regional & local projects (SR 21, I-16, CAT improvements, bike/ped updates)	Commuting patterns and mode share data (2022 ACS, MPO projections)	Static road descriptions replaced with MTP + TIP project maps
Freight-intensive land use mapping & truck parking data	Expanded port and rail data, including Mason Mega Rail + Airport logistics role	Simplified road hierarchy; focus shifted from classification to function
Non-motorized plan + sidewalk/crosswalk prioritization	CAT stop performance, ADA expansion, ridership trends by route	Overlapping federal/state plan definitions removed for clarity
Bridge clearance & structural performance now tied to freight impact	MPO coordination (e.g., TIP 2024–27, MTP 2050) better contextualized	

Direction + Implications

Garden City must strategically manage the tension between its industrial freight role and its residents' need for safe, connected, and accessible infrastructure. The 2045 Plan emphasizes integration by layering transit, local mobility, and freight priorities through MPO partnerships and smart local investment. The city's leadership in multimodal coordination (rail, port, highway, and transit) makes it vital in regional economic mobility.

Housing Element

Provide a comprehensive analysis of Garden City's housing conditions, affordability challenges, and strategic policy responses from 2020-2025.

Key Themes:

- Evolving housing demand driven by population and port-related industrial growth.
- Structural housing imbalance, aging stock, and affordability pressures.
- Emphasis on diverse housing types, neighborhood preservation, and policy-driven stability.

Notable Highlights:

- Shift toward multifamily and missing-middle housing amid sustained single-family dominance.
- Substantial increase in cost-burdened renters and homeowners, especially mortgage-free seniors and low-income families.
- Rise in median home values and rental rates, with limited new construction post-2020.
- Strategic partnerships (e.g., Habitat, Housing Team), zoning reforms, and incentives for redevelopment and resilience.
- Coordination with the Port, CAT, MPC, and FEMA to manage housing-transport dynamics and flood vulnerability.

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

2040 Plan	2045 Draft Update
Focused on eliminating substandard housing and improving quality	Adds structural affordability analysis, cost burden data, and CHAS alignment
Emphasized neighborhood stabilization	Introduces policy frameworks for missing-middle housing, regional affordability responses
Noted public housing and poverty broadly	Detailed data on tenure, race/ethnicity, age, cost burden, and housing condition
Targeted general zoning flexibility	Specific zoning reforms (R-2, mixed-use), STR ordinances, flood resilience tied to housing

Direction + Implications

Garden City's housing vision has evolved from improving housing quality to proactively balancing affordability, equity, and resilience. The 2045 update adopts a systems approach, linking housing to transportation, climate risk, and workforce retention while seeking deeper regional alignment to address entrenched and emerging housing gaps.

Any Questions?

Natural Resources

Outline the environmental systems that shape Garden City's development, public safety, and long-term resilience, while identifying local and regional strategies for protection, mitigation, and sustainability

Key Themes:

- Tidal wetlands, floodplains, and the Floridan Aquifer define ecological and infrastructure risks.
- Increased flood vulnerability, canopy loss, and water quality challenges from industrialization and climate change.
- Emphasis on integrated resilience strategies across stormwater, land use, equity, and energy sectors.

Notable Highlights:

- **Major land cover shifts:** 22.6 sq. mi. forest loss and 15 sq. mi. high-intensity development gain (1996–2021).
- Wetlands and floodplain function declining; Pipemakers Canal and Salt Creek now listed as impaired water bodies.
- Sea level rise and stormwater drainage inefficiencies now tied to industrial corridors and Port-adjacent infrastructure.
- Garden City saw a 13% increase in canopy from 2014–2020, highest among Chatham municipalities.
- Strong regional alignment with Port sustainability, Coastal Stormwater Supplement, and renewable energy planning.
- Integration with Coastal Empire Resilience Network and resilience equity frameworks.

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

2040 Plan Focus	2045 Update Enhancements
General narrative on wetlands, floodplains, aquifer	Incorporates <i>NOAA land cover data, storm surge maps, and climate vulnerability indexes</i>
Wetland protection via buffers and Corps permits	Adds <i>hydrologic risk modeling, tidal backflow analysis, compound flooding assessments</i>
Stormwater strategy discussed at surface level	Includes drainage <i>basin-by-basin challenges</i> and project-level strategy tables (e.g., flood storage, outfall upgrades)
Tree canopy mentioned minimally	Provides <i>city-level growth tracking</i> and maintenance guidance; ties to urban heat island mitigation
No mention of climate vulnerability or equity	Adds <i>EPA Climate Vulnerability Index</i> maps and <i>resilience equity strategies</i>

Direction + Implications

The updated plan repositions Garden City as a frontline community navigating intertwined environmental and infrastructural stress, from tidal flooding to equity in resilience. It reframes natural resource management as a central determinant of development capacity, public safety, and livability, with a proactive call for capital investment, regional coordination, and smarter land use decisions under future climate conditions.

Quality of Life

Address the human side of planning , from health, safety, and education to cultural access, recreation, broadband, and social cohesion. This chapter focuses on the infrastructure and systems that support wellness, equity, and livability in Garden City

Key Themes:

- Deepening access to parks, health, and cultural services.
- Acknowledging legacy disinvestment, social fragmentation, and flooding vulnerabilities.
- Fostering pride of place through art, branding, walkability, and safety improvements.

Notable Highlights:

- Equity-driven mapping of public service coverage:** identifies underserved areas and locates resources by type and walk distance (e.g., fire, food, parks, schools).
- Recreational access is uneven:** 50% of households don't live within a 10-minute walk of a park (see bar chart, page 8).
- Cultural identity efforts expanding:** Plan supports branding, mural programs, and historic preservation, particularly in Garden City South and 5th Street corridor.
- Youth and senior programming gaps highlighted:** Interviews and pop-ups; overlaps with mobility and housing
- Public safety needs reframed:** Greater emphasis on walkability, lighting, and place-based design as public safety infrastructure.

What's Changed Since 2040 Plan?

2040 Plan	2045 Draft Update
Focused on general community appearance	Introduces <i>placemaking, public realm design, and art activation</i> strategies
Mentioned healthcare access broadly	Includes spatial equity maps for <i>clinics, broadband, food, parks, and schools</i>
Emphasized general safety	Now tied to <i>environmental design, flooding, and walkability</i>
Recreation discussed mostly in acreage	Now addresses <i>proximity, access, safety, and cross-agency coordination</i>
Limited discussion of historic/civic pride	Added <i>branding, community history, and mural/public art initiatives</i>

Direction + Implications

This chapter reframes “Quality of Life” as a spatial and equity issue. Investment in services, culture, and safety must be place-based and tied to Garden City’s evolving identity. The 2045 update equips the city to be more intentional in where and how it supports community health, belonging, and visibility - especially for residents who’ve felt overlooked.

Conclusion

The Garden City 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update reflects **your feedback, local priorities, and regional realities.**

Each chapter has evolved to be more **data-driven, equity-focused, and implementation-ready.**

We've centered **livability, resilience, and economic opportunity** while protecting Garden City's identity as a place to live, work, and grow.

Your continued input is critical as we move from **draft to adoption** - and from plan to action.

Thank you



Key Dates & Milestones

Date(s)	Meeting / Milestone	Description / Action
April – May 2026	Public Outreach Period	Public outreach coordination with Garden City meetings through May 22, 2026
June 15, 2026	Garden City – City Council Meeting	Consideration of Transmittal Resolution
July 1, 2026	Submittal Deadline	Comprehensive Plan submitted to the Coastal Regional Commission for its 45-day review
September 15, 2026	Review Incorporation Deadline	Incorporate required changes from the Coastal Regional Commission into the Comprehensive Plan
October 19, 2026	Garden City – City Council Meeting	Final approval and adoption consideration
October 31, 2026	State Deadline	Final State deadline for Comprehensive Plan adoption

Questions?

