

# 2 Issues & Opportunities

## Overview and Purpose

This section identifies a series of concerns, needs, assets and opportunities that can help frame and prioritize the city’s discussions when developing the Community Agenda. Issues and opportunities were first identified in the Community Assessment and the Quality Community Objectives Survey (“QCO”), and the list evolved during the community participation component of the comprehensive planning process. These issues and opportunities helped orient the development of the objectives, policies, programs included in this Comprehensive Plan.

To guide the reader, the appointed policy number below identifies the ways the city aims to address each issue or opportunity. Policies can be found in Section 3.

## Economic Development

Issues	Policy
Downtown lacks a central theme or uniformity, restaurants, grocery store, and entertainment options. There is poor signage and streetscapes. Surrounding communities have enhanced their physical appearance, which draw visitors and local patronage away from East Point – for example, College Park has a defined downtown, and Hapeville has enhanced streetscapes.	<b>LU-8, LU-13, LU-15, ED-5, LU-15</b>
Downtown redevelopment has been discussed and planned but lacks clear implementation plans to evoke change.	<b>ED-5</b>
Reinvestment is needed on some industrial sites, “greyfields” and other commercial areas throughout the city.	<b>ED-7</b>
There are unknown environmental hazards that complicate the redevelopment of sites.	<b>LU-8, LU-1</b>

The central business “downtown” does not function as a true economic destination, has an abundance of vacant land, and lacks diversity of retail goods and services.	<b>ED-5</b>
Only 0.3% of the land in East Point is dedicated to mixed-use development.	<b>LU-3</b>
East Point’s unemployment rate is 13.7%.	<b>P-2, ED-1, ED-6</b>
Downtown East Point is not easily accessible from the airport, resulting in a loss of potential visitors.	<b>T-1</b>
Redevelopment of Ft. McPherson has had negative impacts on downtown East Point. This will continue if steps are not taken to be involved in the process and promote connectivity with the city.	<b>IC-1, IC-8</b>
The aesthetics of key corridors and neighborhood suffer due to blight and vacancies.	<b>ED-7</b>

Opportunities	Policy
Create linkages with Ft. McPherson and capitalize on redevelopment.	<b>IC-1, IC-8</b>
Reinvestment and development downtown could create a world class city center. There are opportunities for a hotel, auditorium, theater, grocery store, civic center, and infill mixed use developments.	<b>ED-5, LU-7</b>
Capitalize on opportunity to attract and retain small business with East Point’s location and variety of choices for commercial space.	<b>ED-6, ED-1</b>
East Point’s location within metro Atlanta offers excellent access to the airport, downtown Atlanta and surrounding communities by several transportation modes including rail and major highways.	<b>T-1, T-10</b>
Capitalize on strategic location by capturing visitor dollars within the community by means of services offered (hotels, restaurants, etc.).	<b>ED-8</b>

Continue to expand on Camp Creek Marketplace success without drawing business away from downtown East Point.	<b>ED-3</b>
Existing industrial land with infrastructure in place provides opportunities to the business sector that few cities offer.	<b>T-10, LU-1</b>
Attract residents to fill jobs within East Point in order to reduce travel time and expenses, keep earned dollars in the community, and build a sense of place.	<b>ED-1</b>
Use the Parks & Recreation Master Plan to help facilitate investment in public amenities such as parks, trails, public open space, and greenspace.	<b>NCR-1</b>
Capture a catalyst project to ignite infill mixed used redevelopment of the Central Business District.	<b>ED-5</b>
Build on planning efforts to articulate a city identity.	<b>ED-6,</b>
Continued growth opportunities near Virginia Avenue as a regional center with hotels and services.	<b>ED-7</b>
Use Economic Development Department and Business and Industrial Development (BIDA) Board to promote and facilitate economic development activity.	<b>ED-8</b>
Capitalize on commercial corridors with established street networks, infrastructure, excellent access, and incentive programs (Tax Allocation Districts and Opportunity Zones) to attract new development and redevelopment in these areas.	<b>ED-3, T-7</b>
Build and maintain a balanced tax base.	<b>ED-1, ED-8</b>
The City has adopted an LCI and TADs that establish framework for redevelopment and growth; need to promote these as signals to market that the City is investing in sound planning and infrastructure.	<b>LU-7, ED-7</b>

## Natural and Cultural Resources

### Issues

	<b>Policy</b>
East Point does not participate in any land conservation programs, either at the state or national level or on its own. Several large forested tracts of land in the city, which are currently unprotected, could become community amenities if preserved.	<b>NCR-1, NCR-5, NCR-8</b>
There is no historic preservation district or ordinance in place to protect valuable cultural resources including housing stock near downtown.	<b>NCR-6, NCR-7</b>
Historic preservation has not been addressed to preserve buildings such as the auditorium, library and Fire Station No. 1.	<b>NCR-6, NCR-7, NCR-8</b>

### Opportunities

	<b>Policy</b>
Stream buffers and undeveloped flood zones, which are required in the city’s development regulations, could be converted to accessible community greenspace.	<b>NCR-1, NCR-8, NCR-9</b>
Additional opportunities for listing on state or federal historic registers.	<b>NCR-7</b>
There is an active historical society, the East Point Historical Society.	<b>NCR-8</b>
Grants and financing for parks and recreation facilities due to a recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	<b>NCR-1, CF-5</b>
Existing power transmission line buffers could be used as bicycle or pedestrian trails to connect neighborhoods in the city.	<b>NCR-1, CF-5</b>
The Dick Lane Velodrome is a unique but underutilized community asset.	<b>NCR-1, CF-4</b>
Parks and greenspace can be used to naturally retain and treat stormwater, reducing runoff.	<b>NCR-1</b>

# Housing

Issues	Policy
The jobs-housing balance is low. In East Point, there is less than 1 job per worker; few people are living and working in the same place.	<b>ED-1, P-6</b>
There is a need for higher-end apartments. Young professionals need a place to live, and the city lacks the apartments to attract first-time homeowners.	<b>H-1</b>
There is no historic district to protect the unique bungalows and housing mix in the downtown area.	<b>H-11, H-12</b>
Need for additional affordable housing choices: Almost half (44.2%) of households in East Point are cost burdened, or pay more than 30% of their household income towards housing costs.	<b>H-1, H-7</b>
There is a lack of special needs housing (mental and mobility handicapped) in East Point.	<b>H-4</b>
Many non-conforming multifamily residential units exist in the urban residential, or R-1A, zoning district; when redevelopment occurs, these multifamily units will not be permitted to remain in the district.	<b>LU-19</b>
Over 24% of the housing units in East Point are vacant, including public housing sites.	<b>H-9, H-11, H-13, H-14</b>
Rentals vs. Homeownership is an approximate 50/50 split with the desire to reach a 60% owner/ 40% renter mix to enhance the stability of neighborhoods.	<b>H-1, H-8</b>

Opportunities	Policy
Mixed use development is permitted in several districts but is only sparsely represented in the community. Allowing for mixed use in more zoning districts could create more opportunities for individuals to live, work, and shop in one place.	<b>H-1</b>
The downtown district has many opportunities for mixed use or loft conversion of historic properties.	<b>H-1</b>
There are a number of strong neighborhood associations in East Point. These groups can be used to promote community development and build on East Point’s identity and character.	<b>H-2, H-8</b>
Robust and diverse housing choices throughout the community offer East Point residents and those outside of the community excellent housing choices for all ages and income levels.	<b>H-1</b>
Accessory dwelling units are permitted in residential zones, providing additional housing options. “Granny flats” or garage apartments are typically more affordable and can make neighborhoods more diverse, opening them up to a wider portion of the population.	<b>H-1</b>
There are lots of historic homes scattered throughout the community.	<b>H-12, H-14</b>
Vacant housing provides affordable choices for businesses looking to provide housing to employees.	<b>H-11, H-14</b>
Many infill opportunities for high density housing, especially to attract commercial uses, like a Publix.	<b>H-1, H-11</b>

## Community Facilities and Services

Issues	Policy
The city suffers from a perception of political strife, staff turnover, instability of the development process, and financial problems.	<b>CF-3</b>
Educational opportunities are limited, given poorly performing schools, especially as children reach middle school and high school.	<b>CF-10</b>
Deficit of 100 acres of park space as identified in the 2011-2020 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.	<b>CF-5</b>
The communities west of I-285 are disconnected from the remainder of the city and are lacking community facilities.	<b>T-1, T-2</b>
Charter schools here have long wait lists.	<b>CF-10</b>
Opportunities	Policy
Potential for partnerships with neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations (including grant funding), and athletic associations.	<b>IC-4</b>
The city owns and runs key services such as water and power.	<b>CF-3, CF-4</b>
New facilities including a library, customer care center and municipal complex are planned.	<b>CF-8</b>
New civic plaza or greenspace facilities downtown.	<b>CF-5, CF-8</b>
Opportunity for brownfield conversion to park space, mixed use development, or community gardens.	<b>CF-5</b>

## Land Use

Issues	Policy
Downtown is not meeting potential as true destination; currently no viable gathering place or unifying design treatment for cohesive look and feel to create sense of place.	<b>LU-3, ED-5</b>
Incompatible land use districts within the city limits. For example, heavy industrial districts abut residential uses without appropriate buffers.	<b>LU-5</b>
Land use regulations need to modernize to: (1) allow mixed use more easily (e.g. C1, C2, CL, and LI do not currently allow residential; existing CUP districts not located near amenities); (2) protect small businesses with controls on noxious odors from industry; and (3) address the 396 nonconforming multifamily in the R1-A districts.	<b>LU-5, LU-19</b>
The industrial areas and grayfields need conversion strategies, especially area north of Jefferson Park.	<b>LU-8</b>
Aesthetic improvements are needed throughout strategic areas of the city. Cleveland Avenue especially needs attention such as evaluating new design standards, promoting more professional buildings, addressing the old project housing.	<b>LU-18</b>
Opportunities	Policy
Downtown offers great foundations to create a sense of place for East Point if expanded, mixed uses allowed, historic character protected, live/work options promoted and MARTA station capitalized upon.	<b>ED-5, LU-3, LU-9</b>
Residential historic assets can benefit from a Historic District which would protect and enhance the valuable cultural resource that exists in the downtown neighborhoods.	<b>H-12</b>

Industrial spaces and grayfields offer conversion opportunities to create artist communities (like Metropolitan Avenue and Castleberry Hill) or other live/work developments.	<b>LU-7, LU-3</b>
There exists a good supply of industrial land in the city, which is already developed with heavy rail infrastructure and represents an economic asset for the community.	<b>LU-1, LU-1</b>
Infill development can occur on vacant and underutilized properties. Applying the Infill Development Ordinance will help to protect the existing character of East Point’s neighborhoods.	<b>LU-1, LU-1</b>
The city can build on existing diversity of residential, commercial, and industrial uses to seek balanced tax base.	<b>LU-3</b>
Recommendations from the 2010 update to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan could be implemented to address the identified 100 acres of park space needed.	<b>CF-5</b>
The city benefits from an active Housing Authority that can acquire vacant and abandoned land to address vacancies.	<b>H-13</b>
The planned government center can be considered a signal to market that the city is investing in new facilities and inviting private investment.	<b>ED-4</b>
Abundance of vacant land served by infrastructure to be used for neighborhood renewal and infill development projects; industrial space offers unique conversion opportunities for loft and other mixed-use.	<b>CF-6</b>
Comprehensive Plan will provide policy direction for updating and refining zoning and design controls.	<b>LU-5</b>
Development opportunity of large tracts of land in southwest East Point to become sustainable, pedestrian-friendly communities with housing clustered near activity centers and amenities.	<b>LU-7, LU-3</b>

## Transportation

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Freight rail lines and MARTA rail lines create physical barriers within the community.	<b>T-1</b>
Challenging permitting and coordination relating to changes in facilities due to the facilities being under the jurisdiction of another entity.	<b>IC-1</b>
Streets in the community are not designed according to their use in order to assure appropriate travel speeds, particularly through downtown, making pedestrian activity unsafe and uninviting.	<b>T-3</b>
The City of East Point does not have enough sidewalks, and those that exist are in need of maintenance improvements.	<b>T-3</b>
A lack of wayfinding signage contributes to the lack of identity in the city and increases the difficulty of navigating within the city.	<b>LU-15</b>
Many community streets, pedestrian paths, and bicycle routes are not utilized because they are not inviting facilities. Other areas are lacking the facilities all together.	<b>T-3, T-4</b>
Regional reliance on the roadway system has shifted business away from downtown toward locations along major interstates.	<b>T-1</b>
Major corridors through East Point suffer from congestion, including Camp Creek Parkway/SR 6, Main Street/US 29, Washington Road and Cleveland Avenue, due to heavy peak period traffic volumes.	<b>T-8, T-9</b>
There is a conflict of scale between the city’s competitive advantage in hosting industrial uses with freight truck activity and its goal of compact, pedestrian-friendly infill development.	<b>T-6</b>

There are no dedicated bike paths, multi-use trails or bike lanes within the city nor are there any connections to multi-use trails outside the city.	<b>T-3, T-4</b>
Gateways into and corridors through the city lack signage and are not aesthetically pleasing.	<b>T-5</b>
A one-way Main Street is a problem.	<b>T-8</b>
There are parking needs downtown and at the MARTA station.	<b>T-7</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Policy</b>
MARTA station located downtown can be used to promote public transportation to ease traffic congestion and provide a basis for transit oriented development.	<b>T-8</b>
Enhancement of Washington Road to serve as a connection between downtown East Point and Camp Creek Marketplace in order to join the two commercial districts together.	<b>T-5</b>
Great connectivity exists throughout most of the city, although there is a need to maintain and repave city streets.	<b>CF-6</b>
Provide a public parking deck downtown, as identified in the LCI, to remedy existing and future parking issues, providing adequate parking for retail customers.	<b>T-7</b>
Enhanced gateways and signage will draw people to East Point.	<b>T-1, LU-15</b>
Transit Oriented Development around MARTA with streetscape enhancements will attract citizens and visitors to downtown.	<b>T-8</b>

## Intergovernmental Coordination

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Additional coordination needed with Fulton County School Board. Schools perceived as not meeting the community’s need lead to citizens departing the community.	<b>IC-3</b>
Minimal collaboration with Fulton County or adjacent cities for Comprehensive Planning purposes.	<b>IC-1</b>
Except for state notification requirements related to zoning and related changes, no formal mechanisms exist regarding border agreements.	<b>IC-1</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Sharing of services, such as parks and recreation, 911, police, water, or sewer, with other local governments.	<b>IC-2, IC-4</b>
Increased involvement at local and regional group meetings.	<b>IC-1, IC-8</b>
Continued coordination with county, regional, and state agencies regarding infrastructure, environmental issues, and water management.	<b>IC-1, IC-8</b>

## Population

Issues	Policy
Not enough discretionary income. The per capita income levels for the city are approximately half of those for the City of Atlanta or Fulton County. East Point’s income per capita is \$20,726, which is less than \$38,147 in Atlanta and \$36,486 in Fulton County.	<b>ED-1, P-6</b>
High turnover in renter-occupied units in East Point contributes to a lack of pride and involvement in the Community.	<b>H-8</b>
The educational attainment for the city is behind that of the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and the State. Only 29.4% of East Point graduates have a college degree, compared to about half of Atlanta and Fulton County residents.	<b>P-2, P-6, IC-6</b>
Total population decrease of 5,883 or 15% since 2000. And based on historical trends, forecasted population for East Point is expected to remain flat over the next 30 years.	<b>P-7</b>
Perception of crime keeps people from wanting to stay in or visit East Point. Proximity to airport increases crime rates for items such as car break-ins.	<b>P-9</b>
The population is aging, with an expected 20% increase of those 65 and older in the next 30 years.	<b>P-4</b>
Opportunities	Policy
Diversity in a community adds to its uniqueness and opportunity to learn from others. East Point is rich in diversity not only with regards to race but with its different age groups as well.	<b>P-1</b>
Many neighborhoods where families feel safe, children can leave bikes in the front yard without concern of theft. Commercial Corridors also have a sense of safety.	<b>P-9</b>
Promote young families to the city in order to build a stable, diversified community.	<b>P-7</b>