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## Implementing Your Comprehensive Plan

**Allison Stewart-Harris, TSW**  
**Yang Chen, Gwinnett County**

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### WHO WE ARE

 **Allison Stewart-Harris, AICP**  
Associate  
Principal/Comprehensive  
Planning Nerd at TSW

 **Yang Chen**  
Planning Division  
Director  
Gwinnett County

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### WHO IS TSW?

 **ATLANTA / GA**  
 **LEXINGTON / KY**  
 **CHATTANOOGA / TN**  
 **TULSA / OK**

**1** Planners (14 with AICP accreditation)  
**10** LEED Accredited Professionals  
**10** Registered Architects  
**10** Landscape Designers  
**1** Administrative Employee

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## PLANNING

- Code
- Comprehensive Plans
- Small Area Plans
- Urban Design
- Historic Preservation
- Transportation



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## AGENDA

- Comp Plan 101
- Start With the End in Mind: A Plan for Your Plan
- An Implementation Comp Plan: Top 5 Do's
- Implementation Case Study: Gwinnett County Unified Plan



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## COMP PLAN 101

Required by the State of Georgia to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status.

Must be a QLG to

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Water and sewer loans from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA)
- Economic development funding from the OneGeorgia Authority
- Environmental grants from the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- A variety of other state programs

Your comprehensive plan must be updated every five years.



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## COMP PLAN 101

## Requirements

## Four Core Elements



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## COMP PLAN 101

## Requirements

## Four Core Elements

1. Community Goals
2. Needs and Oppo.



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## COMP PLAN 101

## Requirements

**Four Core Elements**

1. Community Goals
2. Needs and Opportunities
3. Community Work Program



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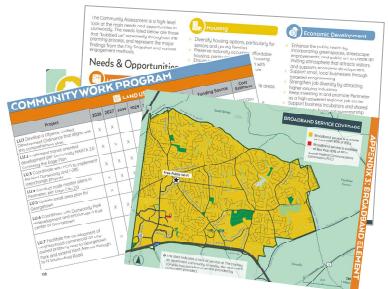
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## COMP PLAN 101

## Requirements

## Four Core Elements

- 1. Community Goals
- 2. Needs and Opportunities
- 3. Community Work Program
- 4. Broadband



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## COMP PLAN 101

## Requirements

A colorful illustration of a row of houses and buildings, including houses with orange roofs and larger apartment buildings, set against a green hillside.

**Additional requirements include the following:**

- Land Use Elements required if you have zoning
- Capital Improvement Program if your community has impact fees
- Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 111 communities must include an Economic Development Element
- Local governments in Metropolitan Planning Organizations must include a Transportation Element
- Entitlement communities under the federal Community Development Block Grant Program must include a Housing Element

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## START WITH THE END IN MIND

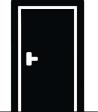


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**A PLAN FOR YOUR PLAN**



Type of Update:  Light  Full

Capacity and Expertise in House?:  Yes  No

**#1 DIY**

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**A PLAN FOR YOUR PLAN**



Type of Update  Light  Full

Capacity and Expertise in House?  Yes  No

Bags of money?  Yes  No

**#2 Regional Commission**

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**A PLAN FOR YOUR PLAN**



Type of Update:  Light  Full

Capacity and Expertise in House?:  Yes  No

**#3 Consultant** Also if you think....

- Your community has experienced a lot of change
- It may be complicated
- You need some political cover

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## A PLAN FOR YOUR PLAN



2 years out

### Map out your timeline

- Ideally, you'll want your planning team to have **15-16 months** to complete the work and move through the adoption process
  - Shorter than that can really compress the tasks and short-change engagement
  - Longer than that you begin risking early task's work/deliverables becoming stale and out-of-date



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## A PLAN FOR YOUR PLAN

Always keep in mind....

Your elected officials are the most important people in terms of implementation the plan. You will need their buy-in, and political will.

**Be sure to involve them at multiple points in the plan:**

- The two required public hearings are not enough



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## A PLAN FOR YOUR PLAN

**Plan for at least two rounds of one-on-one or two-on-one interviews:**

**two-on-one interviews:**

- 1. At the beginning to record key needs, opportunities, goals, issues
- 2. Near the end of the first draft to walk them through the plan, how it impacts them/their district, etc.
- Have at least one mid-point check-in at regularly scheduled meeting
- You are required to have an elected official on your steering committee

*- Make this decision wisely!*

- Make this decision wisely!



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**AN IMPLEMENTABLE COMP PLAN:  
TOP 5 DO'S**

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**DO #1**

**DO KEEP THINGS CONCISE!**

- Don't get lost in existing conditions – **focus on the changes/trends and move on**
- Do focus on the **top 3-5 needs and opportunities** and really understanding them
- Don't get too hung up on writing lots of policies, goals, objectives, etc.

Your plan should be **comprehensive in the quality of its thinking and recommendations...not the quantity of information**

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**DO #2**

**DO INVEST IN YOUR LAND USE ELEMENT**

- Don't just blindly build off your existing land use map/approach - really consider if it's serving your community well or not
- Consider the "stoplight" approach
- Whatever land use approach you choose, make sure your map is parcel-based
- As your planning team creates high-level policy, consider how it can parcel-based

CORE		
Appropriate land uses		
S	LAND USE	CONSIDERATIONS
Appropriate	House-Scale Paves* Townhouses* Local Commercial – Light Public/Institutional Parks/Open Space Utilities/Transportation	N/A
Appropriate If approved through SLUP process	Local Commercial – medium Local Commercial – Heavy	Along Corridor Drive only
	Senior/Assisted Living* Mixed Use* Multi-unit* Regional Commercial	N/A
Inappropriate	Large-Lot Residential Small-Lot Residential Cottage Courts	N/A

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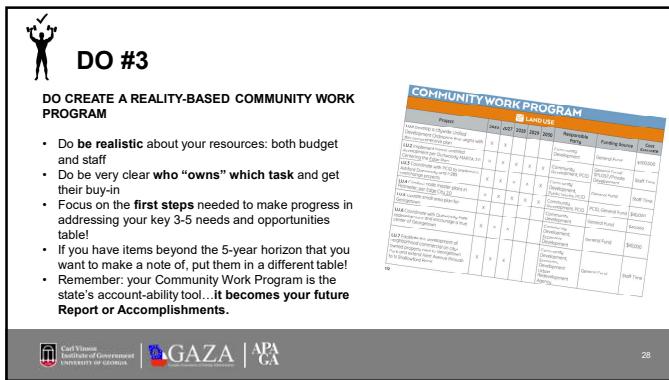
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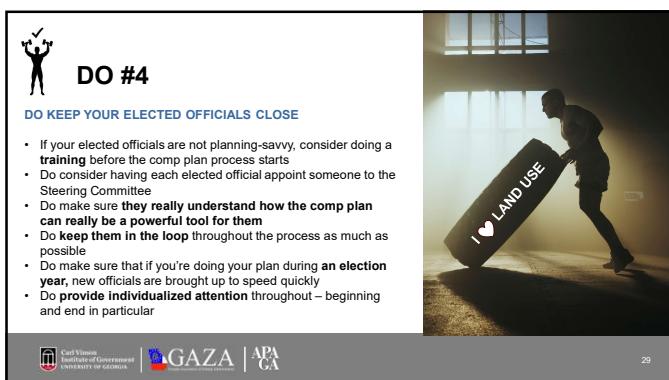
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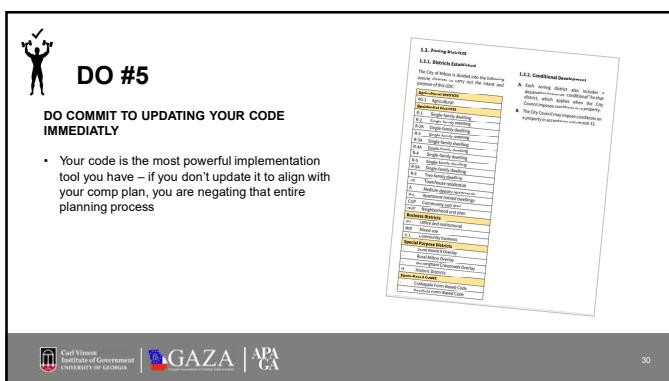
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**EASY, RIGHT?**

LET'S SEE HOW GWINNETT COUNTY IS DOING IT!



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## Gwinnett County Unified Plan Implementation



**Gwinnett**  
Department of Planning and Development



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## Fast Facts about Gwinnett County



Atlanta Magazine



- Created in 1818
- 30 miles north of Atlanta
- 437 square miles\*
- 1 million population
- 17 municipalities

\*294 square miles (unincorporated)



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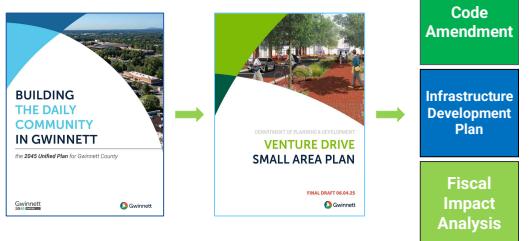
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## Gwinnett County Land Use Toolkits

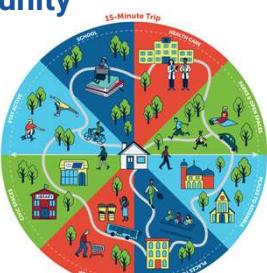


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## Daily Community

### Definition:

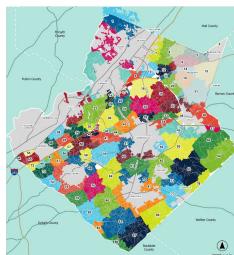
**Definition:**  
A community in which a resident can access work, goods and services within a reasonable distance of their home (~15 mins)



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## Daily Community

87 Daily Communities, each with its own unique identity



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## Daily Community

1 INTENSITY  
2 MIX OF USES  
3 WALKABILITY  
4 PEOPLE-FRIENDLY DESIGN  
5 PARKING MANAGEMENT

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## Daily Community

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## Daily Community

**Goal: Advocate for lifestyle choices in housing**  
Strategy: Align land use policies and regulations to accommodate more housing variety

**Goal: Ensure housing affordability**  
Strategy: Promote missing middle housing development

**Goal: Expand options for creative redevelopment**  
Strategy: Incentivize redevelopment of underutilized sites in and around suburban commercial centers  
Strategy: Promote quality, connected urban design in new development and redevelopment

**Goal: Develop a framework that protects remaining natural and rural parts from overdevelopment**  
Strategy: Conserve land with high ecological productivity, difficult development challenges, or both

**Goal: Strengthen administrative controls of development decisions**  
Strategy: Determine development types that can be permitted by right

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## Code Amendment



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## Code Amendment – Residential

### Added New Zoning Districts:

- **R-IF:** Infill development
- **LRR:** Low-rise multifamily
- **MRR:** Mid-rise multifamily



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## Code Amendment – Residential

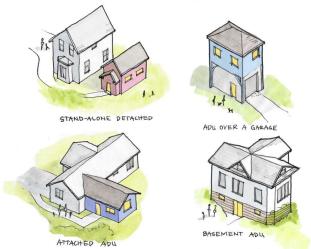
### Expanded Housing Types:

- Added **new housing types**: cottage court, triplex, fourplex, and multiplex
- Allowed **accessory dwelling and live/work** in more districts
- Allowed **multifamily** as a permitted use in the O-I zoning district



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## Code Amendment – Residential (ADU)



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## Code Amendment – Residential (ADU)

		Previous UDO	Current UDO
<b>Number of Zoning Districts allowed in</b>		7 Zoning Districts	11 Zoning Districts
<b>Heated Floor Area</b>		Between 400 and 800 sq. ft.	Not to exceed 50% of the primary dwelling
<b>Types</b>		Detached only	Detached, Attached or Within
<b>Location</b>		Rear Yard only	Side or Rear Yard (detached)
<b>Number of Occupancy</b>		No more than two (2) persons (including minor children)	No Requirements
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>		No more than two (2) bedrooms	No Requirements
<b>Window Location/ Screening</b>		Windows not to be directly opposite windows of a principal dwelling on an abutting lot unless screened	No Requirements
<b>Setback</b>		Vary per zoning district	More flexible (5 or 10 feet)

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## Code Amendment – Residential

### Added Flexibility:

- Removed **minimum heated floor area**
- Removed **minimum unit size** and **bedroom mix** for multifamily

	RA-200	R-LL	R-100	R-75	R-60	R-SR	R-TH	R-IF	LRR	MRR	HRR	OSC	TND	MU-N	MU-C	MUR
SFD	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Cottage Court				C	C			C					C	C		
Duplex						C	C	C					C	C		
Triplex						C	C	C					C	C		
Fourplex							C	C					C			
Multiplex							C	C	C				C			
Townhouse						C	C						C	C		
Multifamily								C	C	C			C	C	C	C
Live Work						C	C	C	C	C			C	C	C	C
ADU	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				C	C	C	C	C

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## Code Amendment – Mixed-Use

- Removed **Minimum Parking**
- Removed or Reduced **Minimum Project Area**
- Increased **Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Height**
  - **MU-N: 1 FAR, 60 feet**
  - **MU-C: 2 FAR, 75 feet**
- Added **FAR Bonus** for Affordability and other Amenities
  - **10% Set-Aside for 60-120% AMI Households: +0.5 FAR**
  - **10% Set-Aside for 30-60% AMI Households: +1.0 FAR**

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## Code Amendment – Design Form

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Removed or Reduced</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Lot Size</li> <li>• Lot Frontage Requirements</li> <li>• Minimum Lot Width</li> <li>• Setback (0 for commercial/office)</li> <li>• Minimum Parking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Added</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum Parking</li> <li>• Electric Vehicle and Bicycle Parking</li> <li>• Requirement for usable open space in residential and mixed-use development</li> <li>• Requirement for inter-parcel access</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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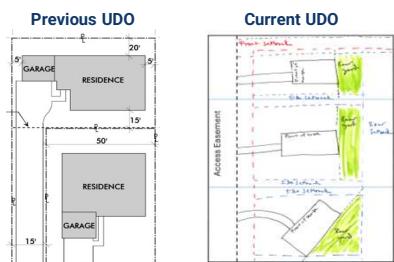


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## Code Amendment – Design Form (Frontage)




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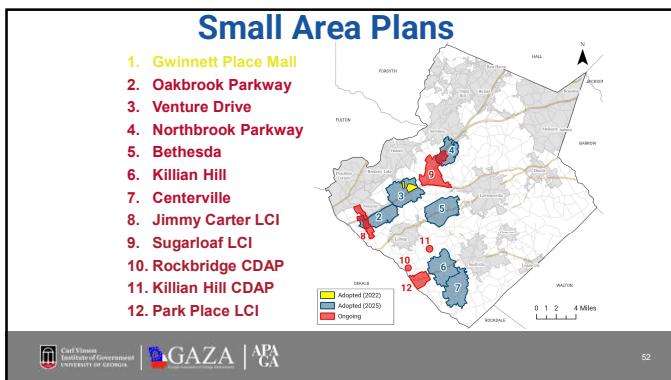
## Code Amendment – Administration

- Expanded the scope of **Administrative Variances**
- Expanded the scope of **variations** granted by Director

## Small Area Plans (SAPs) and Overlays

## Gwinnett County Land Use Toolkits





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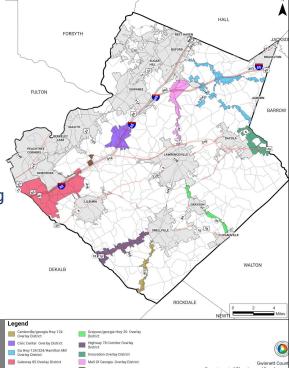


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## SAP Overlays

## Why overlays?

- Tie development outcomes to small area planning
- Provide development and design standards
- Remove administrative barriers by streamlining the permitting process and removing risk factors



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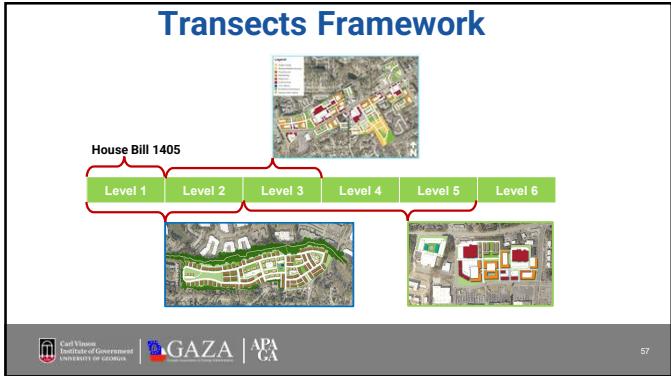
## Transects in Gwinnett

One **form-based overlay** framework that could apply to the entire County



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## Transects Framework



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## Overlay Components

- Override Base Zoning Districts and Zoning Conditions
- Use by Rights (apartments, live/work, etc.)
- Intensity Range (FAR)
- Built-to-line/zone/width
- Architectural Characteristics
- Placemaking and Open Space



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## Expedited Permitting



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## Expedited Permitting

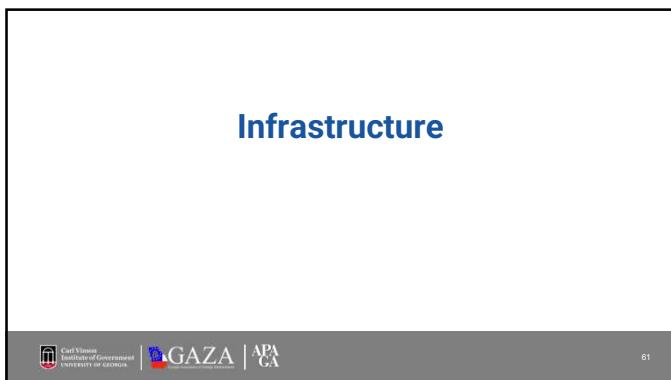
- The Director may grant variations from **any of the standards set forth in this UDO** except for **use or lot size** if:
  - The strict adherence to a provision creates a **hardship** due to topographical or site conditions, or
  - The applicant proposes a solution which does not circumvent the **purpose and intent** of this UDO

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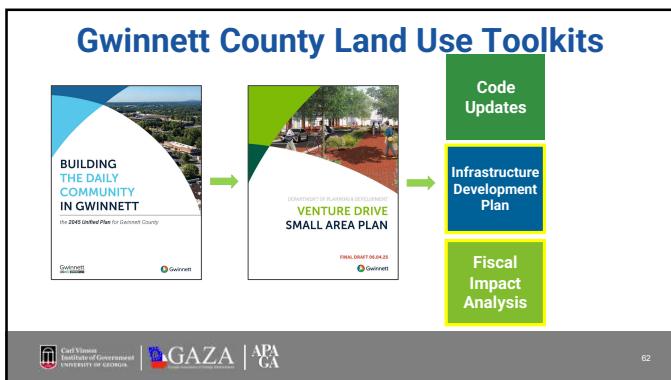
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## Infrastructure



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## Gwinnett County Land Use Toolkits

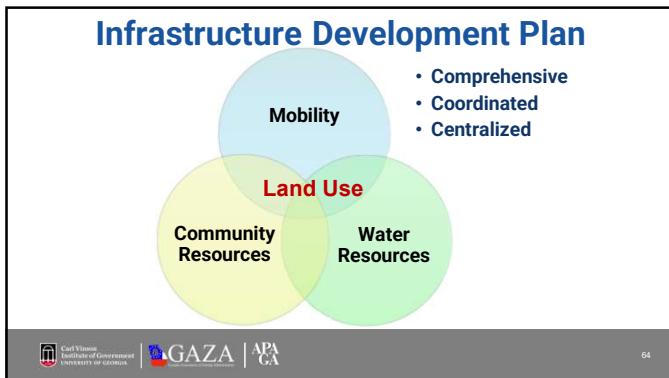


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## Infrastructure Development Plan



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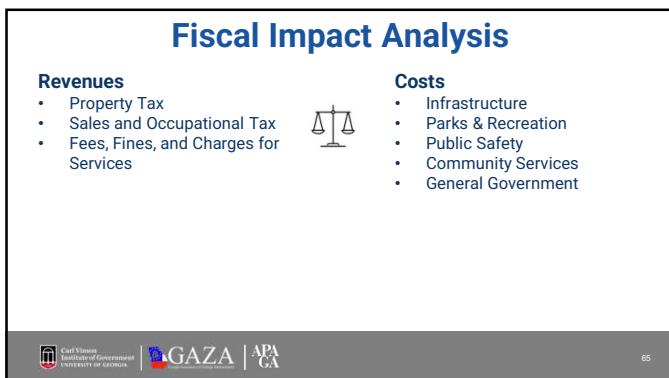


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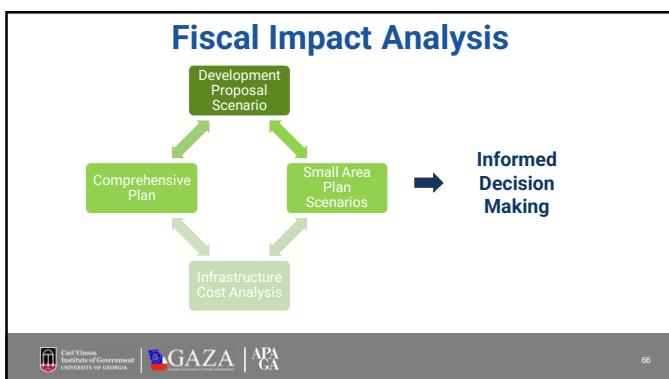


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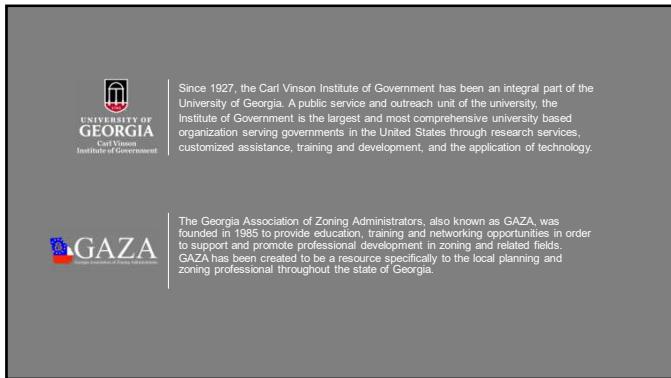


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