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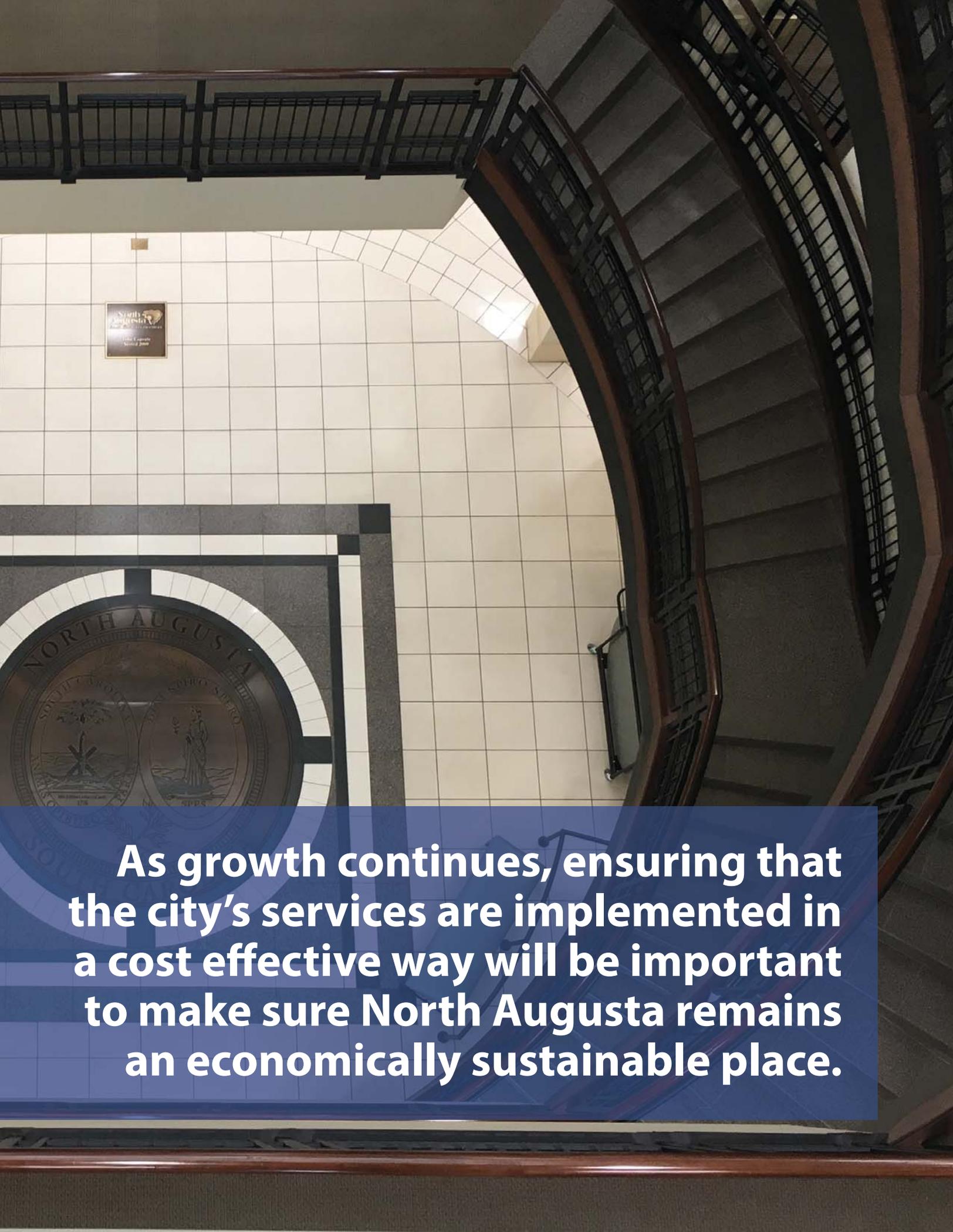
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# 5

**EFFICIENT, HIGH  
QUALITY CITY SERVICES**



**As growth continues, ensuring that the city's services are implemented in a cost effective way will be important to make sure North Augusta remains an economically sustainable place.**

**WHAT?**



**city council and city staff**

▲ *The City Council is the legally constituted law and policy-making body for the City of North Augusta with general oversight and direction for the city staff to implement its plans and budgets*

**WHY?**



**implement our vision**

▲ *We need highly committed City Service members if we hope to create our vision for North Augusta's future and their leadership in implementing the comprehensive plan.*

The City of North Augusta, as a municipal corporation, provides urban services to its various constituencies. The City has a Mayor-Council form of government and the City Council is composed of a mayor and six council members elected at-large on a partisan basis. The Mayor is elected to a four-year term. Every two years, three Council members are elected to serve four-year staggered terms.

City Council has the authority to call bond referendums in the city and enter into contracts, as well as, the following duties:

- adopt an annual budget
- establish an annual property tax rate
- enact local ordinances

- enact policies for the operation of the city
- appoint the Municipal Judges, City Attorney, City Clerk, and members of various boards.

As a result of the Great Recession and the subsequent recovery, municipal governments are more keenly focused on economic efficiency and low risk financial management. As growth continues, ensuring that the city's services are implemented in a cost effective way will be important to make sure North Augusta remains an economically sustainable place.

# CURRENT CITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## General Government

The City of North Augusta is governed by a mayor and six City Council members, all elected at large. The term of office is four years with City Council members serving overlapping terms. The mayor is the chief executive officer of the City and presides over all meetings of Council. The City Council is the legally constituted lawmaking and policy-making body for the City of North Augusta.

North Augusta’s Administration Department is comprised of the City Administrator and City Clerk. The City Administrator coordinates the day-to-day activities of the government. The Administrator is appointed by the Mayor as authorized by City Council for an indefinite term. The major duties of the City Administrator include:

- supervising and coordinating activities of the city departments
- attending Council meetings and making recommendations on appropriate matters of business
- ensuring that all orders and policies of City Council are implemented
- recommending the annual budget
- keeping City Council advised on the financial condition of the city
- representing the City in business with other agencies

The City employs 234 full-time and 18 part-time people in seven general department areas under all funds. These departments are:

- Administration
- Planning and Development
- Finance
- Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
- Public Safety
- Public Services
- Public Works and Engineering

The City Clerk serves as Clerk of Council and is appointed by Council, upon the recommendation of the City Administrator, for an indefinite term. The major duties of the City Clerk include:

- keeping all records of City Council
- preparing, authenticating and recording ordinances and resolutions
- keeping elections records
- notifying Council of impending expiration of the term of office of Board and Commission members and keeping the official seal of the City



▲ A view of Brick Pond Park from City Hall

The Information Technology division maintains the city's computer system, a wide range of network and internet services and the city's voice and data network.

The Human Resources manager maintains systems to attract, motivate, develop and retain employees. Human Resources also provides salary administration and employee benefits administration to attract and retain qualified employees, posts and advertises departmental position openings and provides orientation to new employees. The City owns and maintains a number of municipal government buildings used to bring high quality services to its citizens.

### Planning and Development

The Department of Planning and Development is responsible for a variety of activities associated with the growth and development of the city. The city's comprehensive planning, mapping, zoning administration and development regulation procedures are managed by the department. Planning is also responsible for providing staff to the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. Annual planning is conducted by the Director.

Department staff also coordinates the publication of the periodic updating and production of a community Economic Profile and Business Startup Guide and a variety of special projects. The department is staffed by two full-time employees including the director and a planner.

### Finance

The Department of Finance is responsible for financial accounting and reporting, tax collection, business licensing, and utility billing. The department is comprised of eight employees including:

- the department director, who serves as the Director of Finance
- Finance Manager
- Utility Billing Coordinator
- Business License Clerk
- Tax Clerk
- two customer service representatives
- Finance Accountant

The department bills and collects taxes for real and personal property and the municipal hospitality and accommodations taxes. The department issues business licenses which are required of any business located or performing work within the city limits. The department also coordinates billing of residential and commercial utility customers. The utility bill includes charges for water, sewer, sanitation, recycling, street lights, stormwater, and outside city fire protection, if applicable.

### Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism is comprised of 22 full-time and three part-time employees in five program areas. The program areas are Recreation Programs and Services, Parks, the Riverview Park Activities Center, the North Augusta Community Center and Tourism.

## Public Safety

The North Augusta Department of Public Safety provides police and fire services to residents within the North Augusta city limits and fire services to an expanded 29 square mile service area. The department operates out of three stations. Public Safety headquarters are located in the southern portion of the city. Station 2 is located on Five Notch Road on the north side of I-20 and primarily serves the northern and eastern areas of the city. Station 3 is located in the east central area of the city. The department operates three divisions, each managed by a captain under the supervision of the Director of Public Safety. The divisions are:

- Patrol Operations
- Fire Suppression and Training
- Criminal Investigations

### Patrol Operations Division

The Patrol Operations division is responsible for day-to-day patrol, response to crimes in progress, investigation of suspicious activities, initial investigation of crime, investigation of traffic accidents, security for municipal court and detention facility operations.

### Fire Suppression and Training Division

All Public Safety Officers (PSOs) in the department are certified in both law enforcement and firefighting. They are also certified as emergency first responders. As a result, continuing training in all three areas is necessary. PSOs complete more than 300 hours of training each year. Volunteer firefighters complete a minimum of 240 hours of fire training each year.

## Criminal Investigations Division

The Criminal Investigations division is responsible for criminal investigations of all major felonies including murder, armed robbery, rape, and others. The division is also responsible for the management of all cases adjudicated through the courts of General Session and Family Court. The division has a captain, a sergeant, one general investigator, two narcotics investigators, a lieutenant, and a corporal.

### Emergency Medical Services

The Department of Public Safety and the Aiken County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) cooperatively respond to 911 medical emergencies in the city limits. Upon receipt of a 911 medical emergency call, a North Augusta PSO, trained as a first responder and equipped with emergency medical equipment and an automated external defibrillator, is dispatched to the scene by a North Augusta dispatcher. The dispatch officer links the caller to the Aiken County Sheriff's Office dispatch who issues the call for an ambulance. Aiken County EMS operates a fleet of ambulances and rescue stations located throughout the county. One of the stations is located near the City limits on US 25/Edgefield Road.

## Public Services

The Department of Public Services is comprised of eight divisions:

- Code Compliance
- Fleet Maintenance
- Materials Recovery Recycling
- Property Maintenance
- Sanitation Collection
- Wastewater Operations
- Water Operations
- Water Production

## Water Treatment

The city operates a 12 million gallon per day (MGD) surface water treatment plant on the Savannah River adjacent to Riverview Park. The Water Treatment Plant utilizes conventional treatment methods. Pre-chlorination, coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, fluoridation and post-chlorination are the specific unit processes involved in the treatment. The city provides potable water service to residential, commercial and industrial customers in an area of approximately 27.76 square miles.

## Water Storage and Distribution Operations

The water distribution system consists of 155 miles of water mains ranging from two to 30 inches in diameter. There are five elevated tanks and three ground storage tanks with a total capacity of 5.05 million gallons. Water is distributed throughout the system and pressure is maintained by three pump stations.

The maintenance of water quality after it enters the distribution system is a continuing effort of the Water Operations division.

## Wastewater Service and Demand

The Wastewater Operations Division currently provides wastewater collection services for more than 11,474 residential, commercial and industrial customers. The service system area is approximately 218 square miles in size and includes approximately 228 miles of sewer collection lines. The system covers 16 drainage basins and includes 21 lift stations with pumping capacities up to 3,760 gallons per minute. The City of North Augusta accepts wastewater from Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority and discharges into the Aiken County Public Service Authority's Little Horse Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. Average daily wastewater flow collected is approximately 4.3 to 4.7 million gallons a day.

## Sanitation Services

The City of North Augusta provides once weekly removal of residential garbage, yard debris and recyclables to approximately 10,799 customers. The Division of Sanitation Services currently maintains a workforce of 25 employees who operate three automated side-loading garbage trucks, three front-loading garbage trucks, three knuckle-boom loaders, three shuttle trucks, three rear-loading garbage trucks and one flatbed truck. Commercial waste collection is provided to approximately 615 commercial customers.

In 1993, the city opened the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and commenced the automated co-collection recycling program. City sanitation customers, both residential and commercial, co-mingle all recyclables. The recyclables (aluminum, glass, plastic, paper) are removed from the waste stream at the MRF, sorted and sold to reprocessing companies. The balance of the waste is taken to the landfill. The MRF also processes recyclables from the Aiken County, the Savannah River Site and several private waste disposal companies.

## Public Works and Engineering

The Department of Engineering and Public Works is comprised of 23 full-time employees in four program areas. The program areas are Engineering, Stormwater Management, Building Standards, and Streets and Drains.

### Engineering

The Engineering division employs a South Carolina licensed Professional Engineer who is also the director of the Department of Engineering and Public Works, a Civil Engineer and an Engineering Technician. The department provides technical support to citizens and other City departments in areas involving land development, public works and public utilities. Daily functions include reviewing site and subdivision development applications in conjunction with the Department of Planning Development, construction inspection, preparation of plans and technical specifications for city construction projects, and preparation and maintenance of infrastructure maps including utilities, streets and storm drainage.

The Engineering Division performs annual pavement evaluations on all roads within the city and recommends street resurfacing projects and other roadway improvements to the SCDOT. The department is also responsible for coordinating and overseeing several of the Aiken County Capital Projects Sales Tax projects including road reconstruction, resurfacing and sidewalk installation.

### Stormwater Management

The North Augusta Stormwater Management Program was initiated in 2001 in response to regulations established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to the Clean Water Act. Components of the program include:

constructing and maintaining stormwater drainage systems to alleviate local flooding problems; inspecting, cleaning and maintaining the city's stormwater drainage system; providing stream bank protection; permitting and monitoring construction sites to enforce erosion control maintenance; and implementing public awareness programs related to the protection and improvement of water quality. The Stormwater Management division is staffed by a stormwater manager and an inspector. The Stormwater Management division has identified "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) and developed a Stormwater Management Manual that describes the aspects of the Stormwater Management Program.

The Stormwater Management division is organized and funded as a municipal utility through a monthly stormwater utility fee. An Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) per structure is used to set the stormwater management fee for private residential and commercial properties. A flat rate is charged to residential property owners and a variable rate (a multiple of the ERU) is charged to commercial property owners. The commercial ERU is based on specifics of the commercial property including size, impervious surface area and on-site stormwater management installations.

### Building Standards

The Building Standards Department is the building code enforcement agency of the city. It is responsible for completing code compliance reviews on plans for all new building construction and for additions and renovations to existing structures. Inspections and testing are performed at various stages throughout construction to ensure compliance with the building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical codes adopted by City Council.

The department is staffed by a Certified

Building Official (CBO) as required by section 6-9-30 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina. The CBO oversees the issuance of building permits and the building inspection program. There are three building inspectors and two secretaries under the supervision of the CBO.

### Streets and Drains

The North Augusta Streets and Drains division is responsible for maintenance activities for approximately 114 miles of state and city owned streets. Maintenance activities include pothole repair, concrete curb, gutter and sidewalk replacement, storm drainage pipe and catch basin cleaning and street sweeping. The Streets and Drains division also installs and maintains traffic signals and street signs, constructs new storm drainage facilities and implements other special construction projects.

### Educational Facilities

#### Public Schools

The Consolidated School District of Aiken County is the administrative unit serving the City of North Augusta. The district is the sixth largest in the state and is made up of five administrative areas. The district is governed by the Aiken County Board of Education, which is comprised of seven members elected to four-year terms.

Students in North Augusta (Administrative Area Two) are served by four elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school.

Other schools in the North Augusta Planning Area include Clearwater Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, Langley-Bath-Clearwater Middle and Midland Valley High in Aiken County and Merriweather Elementary, Merriweather Middle and Fox Creek High in Edgefield County. Fox Creek

High School is a charter public school and is open to all Edgefield County students. It opened in 2004.

#### Libraries

The Nancy Carson Library, located at 135 Edgefield Road in North Augusta, is the North Augusta branch of the Aiken-Bamberg-Barnwell-Edgefield Regional Library System (ABBE) and is one of 14 libraries within the four county region. The Nancy Carson Library is a 16,000 square foot facility with 18 public access computers. The ABBE System also offers a Bookmobile service with regular stops throughout the region including several sites in North Augusta.

### Emergency Medical Services and Health Facilities

North Augusta residents enjoy a large group of healthcare providers and facilities from which to choose. The Aiken-Augusta metropolitan area is one of the largest medical centers in the southeast with eleven hospitals, over 4,000 hospital beds and more than 25,000 employed in the health care industry.

Primary care and mental health services are available through the Aiken County Health Department in Aiken. There are numerous private practitioners in the city offering a variety of healthcare services including family medicine, dentistry, orthodontics and chiropractic care. There are also two assisted living facilities and a nursing home in the city.

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

## 5.1

### ESTABLISH ANNEXATION AND GROWTH STRATEGIES:

Determine where and how North Augusta should grow in order to ensure effective services for citizens

#### 5.1.1 Determine a future growth strategy and possible areas of annexation.

Before understanding how future growth can impact the City's ability to offer services affordably and efficiently, a growth strategy and possible areas of annexation must be determined. City staff should work with the public, consultants, businesses, and local economic development organizations to write a growth plan. With this as a foundation for the future, growth can occur in a way that reinforces North Augusta's financial security.

#### 5.1.2 Expand utilities to areas of targeted growth as needed.

Once areas of annexation are determined, the City should develop a funding and implementation plan to extend utilities to areas of future growth. Extension of utilities can take years to implement, and development is unlikely to occur without them.



Image Source: Cross Country Roads

▲ The I-520 and I-20 exit. This connection has the potential to attract future growth.

## 5.2

### ENSURE THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA:

Develop strategies that ensure the efficient delivery of city services

#### 5.2.1 Prioritize infill development and compact growth to ensure North Augusta's tax base can support city services.

Areas already served by the City's infrastructure are the best locations for future development in North Augusta. Increasing population within the same area will grow the tax base, while maintaining the same cost for providing services. This growth strategy avoids the capital cost of expanding services and minimizes the on-going maintenance costs.

#### 5.2.2 Establish a long-term financial plan for public sector investments.

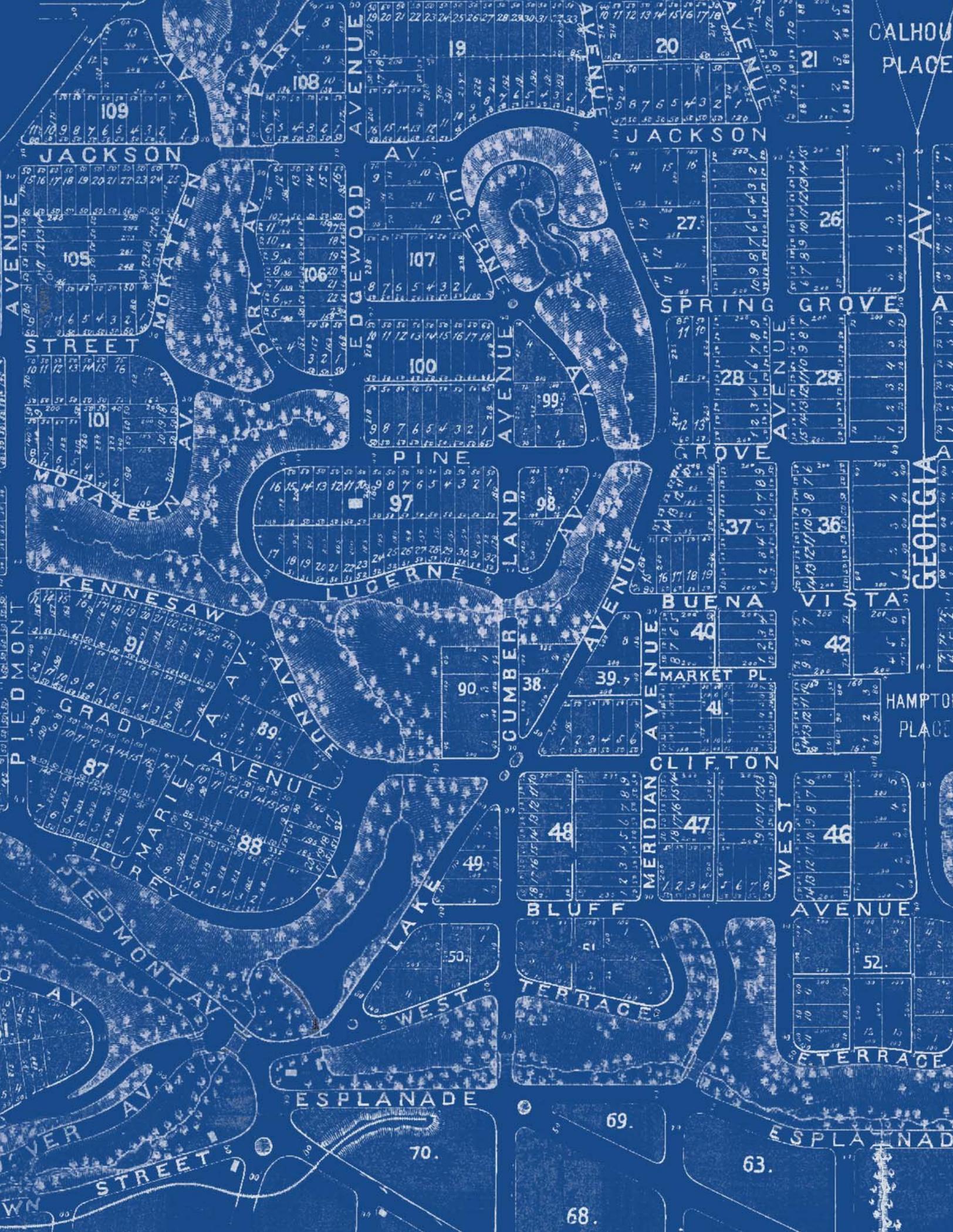
In many cases public sector investment is necessary to attract and retain development. Catalyst projects can spin off great returns on investment but it is important to prioritize them in a way that achieves North Augusta's goals most efficiently. Adopting a 5-7 year capital improvement plan (CIP) will help North Augusta prioritize its investments based upon expected future revenues.

#### 5.2.3 Seek out partnerships wherever possible.

In order to best leverage the City's limited funds, the City will team with other businesses, developers, and organizations to meet the goals of this Comprehensive Plan. This will help the City see greater change over a shorter amount of time. Continuing the success of public-private partnerships established as a part of the Project Jackson project will lead to continuing transformative change for North Augusta.

#### 5.2.4 Continue to implement innovative financial mechanisms such as tax-increment financing (TIF), municipal improvement districts (MID), and impact fees for new development.

Implementing funding mechanisms as part of public and private sector development can help manage and grow revenue. The financing mechanism used in Project Jackson, tax-increment financing districts ensure taxes collected within an area are applied to that same area. Municipal improvement districts collect an extra tax on businesses or residents to then spend in the specific district where they reside. Mobility fees collected from developers can be spent on projects that help mitigate or support some of the effects of new development, like an increase in traffic or the need for additional trails. All of these mechanisms can help ensure resources are spent in the areas that will see the greatest return on investment.



CALHOUN PLACE

109

108

19

JACKSON AV.

20

21

JACKSON STREET

105

106

107

SPRING GROVE AV.

26

MOKATEE AV.

101

100

99

28

29

MOKATEE AV.

PINE AV.

97

98

GROVE AV.

37

36

KENNESAW AV.

91

LUCERNE AV.

90

CUMBERLAND AV.

38

39

BUENA VISTA AV.

40

42

GRADY AV.

87

LAUREL AV.

89

MARKET PL.

41

HAMPTON PLACE

GEORGIA AV.

PIEDMONT AV.

88

LAUREL AV.

88

MERIDIAN AV.

48

47

46

CLIFTON AV.

WEST

46

PIEDMONT AV.

LAKELAND AV.

49

BLUFF TERRACE

51

WEST AV.

52

ESPLANADE

69

63

WEST TERRACE

PIEDMONT AV.

70

68

ESPLANADE

PIEDMONT STREET