

CITY OF BLAKELY,
GEORGIA



URBAN
REDEVELOPMENT
PLAN

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I. Executive Summary

In 2024, the City of Blakely embarked on developing an Urban Redevelopment Plan to address housing and infrastructure challenges, revitalize blighted neighborhoods, and support economic growth across the city. Recognizing that revitalization is essential to enhancing the quality of life for residents, the City initiated this plan in accordance with Georgia’s Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. Title 36, Chapter 61). This law enables local governments to undertake comprehensive redevelopment efforts by granting them powers to address and eliminate blighted conditions through a structured, implementable plan.

This Urban Redevelopment Plan includes the following essential components as mandated by the Urban Redevelopment Law:

1. **Identification of Blighted Areas:** Specific neighborhoods and sections of Blakely are identified as “blighted,” qualifying them for focused redevelopment efforts. These areas collectively form the designated "Urban Redevelopment Area."
2. **Assessment of Negative Conditions:** This plan outlines key issues within the designated area, including housing deterioration, lack of infrastructure, and other factors that impede quality of life and economic vitality.
3. **Land Use Objectives:** The URP establishes targeted land use goals to support residential, commercial, and public space improvements, contributing to a cohesive urban environment.
4. **Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:** An analysis of this URP’s alignment with the City of Blakely’s Comprehensive Plan ensures that redevelopment activities support the city’s long-term vision and strategic goals.
5. **Property Acquisition:** Specific land parcels identified for potential acquisition to facilitate redevelopment.
6. **Demolition and Rehabilitation Plans:** The plan details structures proposed for either demolition or rehabilitation, prioritizing safety, aesthetic improvement, and functional utility.
7. **Relocation Strategy:** Provisions are included to ensure compliant and fair relocation support for any potentially displaced residents, aligning with HUD standards.
8. **Property Covenants and Restrictions:** Covenants and use restrictions on redeveloped properties are outlined to support the plan’s long-term goals.
9. **Public Infrastructure Enhancements:** Public infrastructure improvements, including transportation, utilities, and streetscapes, are described to support and stimulate redevelopment in the designated area.
10. **Implementation Strategy:** A comprehensive, phased approach for executing the URP is included, outlining the steps, partnerships, and funding strategies to bring this vision to fruition.

This plan represents Blakely’s commitment to fostering a resilient and thriving community by addressing housing, supporting economic opportunities, and enhancing the overall urban landscape. The URP is designed to engage community stakeholders, leverage public-private partnerships, and pave the way for sustainable growth and improved quality of life for all residents.

II. Goals

The goals of the City of Blakely’s Urban Redevelopment Plan reflect a comprehensive approach to revitalizing neighborhoods, enhancing infrastructure, and supporting residents’ housing needs. This plan prioritizes affordable housing development, critical infrastructure improvements, and sustainable community growth to foster a thriving, inclusive environment for all residents. By aligning with the City’s long-term vision and leveraging funding sources such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, these goals are designed to address current challenges while laying the foundation for future prosperity.

- Goal 1: **Increase the Supply of Quality, Affordable Housing.** Expand Blakely’s affordable housing options by promoting the construction of new affordable rental and ownership units, particularly in blighted and underutilized areas. This goal addresses the housing needs of low-to-moderate-income residents and fosters diverse, accessible housing options.
- Goal 2: **Enhance Infrastructure and Public Facilities to Support Housing and Economic Growth.** Improve essential infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, lighting, and utilities, in targeted redevelopment areas. These enhancements will create a safer, more accessible urban environment and support sustainable development, aligning with CDBG funding opportunities.
- Goal 3: **Strengthen Homeownership Opportunities for Blakely Residents.** Support pathways to homeownership by offering financial education, down payment assistance, and affordable mortgage options. These efforts aim to stabilize neighborhoods, encourage investment in the community, and provide residents with opportunities for long-term housing stability.
- Goal 4: **Improve Housing Quality through Rehabilitation and Code Enforcement.** Upgrade existing housing stock by implementing targeted rehabilitation programs and enforcing building codes. This includes financial support for repairs and modernization, ensuring that residents live in safe, well-maintained homes and preserving the integrity of Blakely’s housing inventory.
- Goal 5: **Foster Inclusive Development and Community Engagement in Redevelopment Efforts.** Ensure that redevelopment addresses the diverse needs of Blakely’s population by promoting equitable access, fair housing, and inclusive planning. Engage residents in the redevelopment process to create policies and projects that reflect the community’s values and vision for sustainable growth.

III. Methodology

The city of Blakely’s Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Team worked with the University of Georgia to conduct the initial housing assessment. The city later reached out to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for assistance. All parties worked together to complete the survey.

For this survey, homes were assessed based on the external physical appearance of the primary elements of a housing structure, namely the roof, foundation, doors, windows, exterior, porch, and steps. The city utilized Fulcrum Software, which helps organizations collect and share information about field activities. It offers a Property Inspection app that allows users to assess a home’s aesthetics, functionality, and physical integrity. The app can also guide users to key inspection points in and around the house.

Roofs and the foundation were weighted most heavily, as they are usually labor- intensive and costly to repair or replace. Additionally, these elements often cause other issues that may occur within the home. Doors and windows were the next most heavily weighted elements, followed by the exterior’s appearance and the porch or steps. The most common visible signs of needed repairs include stairs, windows, roofs, and foundations.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

Data Collection and Preparation

- » Create a comprehensive housing inventory:
Utilize GIS data and Fulcrum Software to identify and capture images of all residential housing units in Blakely.
- » Develop assessment forms:
The software was utilized to create the data collection forms for recording housing condition data based on the provided scale.
- » Assemble assessment teams:
The University of Georgia trained the GICH Team and Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) staff to conduct field inspections.
- » Coordinate with local government:
The GICH Team Coordinator, Denice Harris, and City of Blakely staff worked with RC staff to coordinate data collection.

Field Assessments

- » Conduct visual inspections:
The GICH Team and RC staff assess the exterior condition of each housing unit using the scale provided (see scale below).
- » Compile Report and Analyze Data:
RC, UGA, and the GICH Team worked together to compile the report and analyze the data.

POINTS SCALE

Fulcrum Software shows the points associated with each housing condition on a digital map, and these are added together to place properties on the following scale:

Well Maintained (Less than 3 points)

New or in good condition. Does not need any repairs.

Sound (3-9 points)

In good condition but needs maintenance work, such as repainting or minor repairs.

Minor Repairs Needed (10-14 points)

The housing unit has several deferred maintenance issues or one moderate repair project (i.e., replacement of several windows)

Moderate Rehabilitation Needed (15-39 points)

Requires multiple repairs, including the repair/ replacement of one major component.

Substantial Rehabilitation Needed (40-55 points)

Requires the repair and replacement of most or all exterior components.

Dilapidated (More than 55 points)

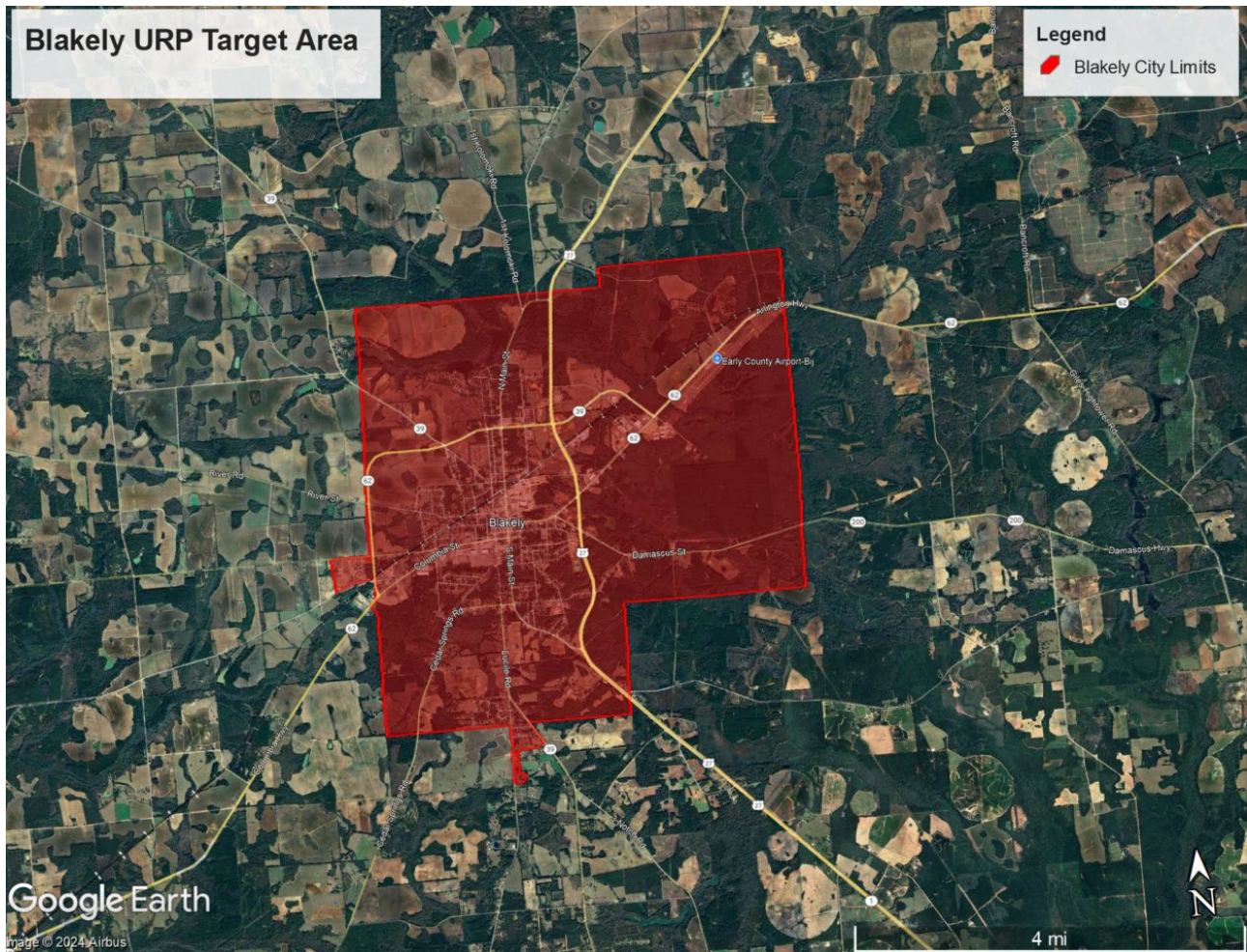
The housing unit suffers from excessive neglect, appears structurally unsound and not safe for human habitation, and may not be feasible to rehabilitate.

IV. Urban Redevelopment Plan Elements

1) Definition of Urban Redevelopment Area

The City of Blakely Urban Redevelopment Area is coterminous with the corporate limits of the City of Blakely. The map below shows the boundary.

City of Blakely Urban Redevelopment Area



2) Description of conditions in the Urban Redevelopment Area

ON THE GROUND

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission, in partnership with the city of Blakely, assessed the current housing conditions. The SWGRC staff conducted a windshield survey of the housing conditions of homes within the city limits of Blakely. All assessments performed were based on the physical appearance of the homes from the exterior.

Each home was scored based on the physical appearance of the roof, foundation, doors, windows, exterior, and porch/steps. Approximately 2,700 homes were surveyed, 70.20% were categorized as well maintained. 13.60% were sound, 6.1% need minor repairs, 7.54% need moderate rehabilitation, 1.50% need substantial rehabilitation, and 1.04% were considered dilapidated. While some of the neighborhoods appeared to be declining, most of the housing stock appeared to be structurally sound.

City of Blakely Household Size, 2022*

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING	PERCENTAGE	RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL
1-Person	175	22.2%	167	20.3%	342
2- Person	302	38.4%	242	29.4%	544
3-Person	91	11.6%	67	8.1%	158
4+ Person	219	27.8%	347	42.2%	566
Total	787	100%	823	100%	1,610

Source: US Census Bureau Tenure by Household Size, Decennial 2022

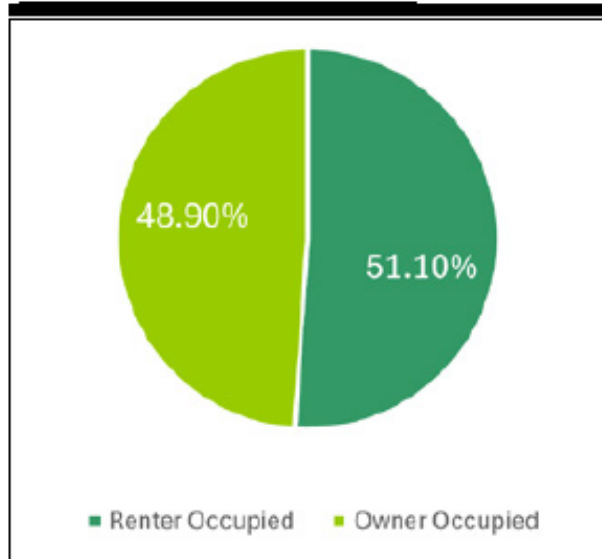
RENT OCCUPIED VS. OWNER OCCUPIED

There are more renter-occupied units than owner occupied. It is important to note that 42% of rental occupied units are a household of 4 or more (see *City of Blakely Household Size, 2022**). For owner-occupied units, most households have a smaller size with a 2-person household making up 38%.

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS

Blakely, Georgia has approximately 2,199 housing units. About 192 housing units, or 8.73% of the housing stock, are vacant. Since 2010, housing has increased by 168 units while vacant units have decreased by 23 units. Most houses are single family detached housing.

City of Blakely Renter vs. Owner, 2022



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Reviewing the U.S. Census Age of Housing Stock data, the majority of housing stock in the city of Blakely was built between the years of 1960-1999.

Older homes often require more maintenance and repairs, increasing housing costs for owners and renters. These homes also tend to be less energy efficient, leading to high utility bills for the elderly and low-income residents. Many older homes also lack features that are accessible to people with disabilities and those who are aging, not allowing them to age in place.

The median price of house in the city of Blakely cost approximately \$128,800 according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s housing characteristics. The most common price range of houses rest between \$50,000 and \$99,999.

The dominance of single-family detached homes (78%) in Blakely, Georgia, is typical of many rural communities. This housing type often represents the traditional American dream of homeownership. Conversely, manufactured housing (13.3%) provides an alternative option, particularly for those seeking affordability or flexibility.

RENTAL HOUSING NEEDS

According to Housing and Urban Development, the threshold of spending 30% or more of one’s income on housing is defined as being “cost-burdened.”

This means that a significant portion of a household’s income is dedicated to housing costs, leaving less for other essential needs like food, transportation, healthcare, and savings.

This impacts the economy and can negatively affect physical and mental health. These

City of Blakely Age of Housing Stock, 2022

YEAR BUILT	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
2020 or Later	9	0.47%
2000 - 2019	296	15.66%
1980 - 1999	576	30.48%
1960 - 1979	525	27.77%
1940 - 1959	323	17.09%
1939 or Earlier	146	7.72%

Source: US Census Bureau, Housing Characteristics, ACS 2022

City of Blakely Age of Housing Values, 2022

YEAR BUILT	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Less than \$50,000	163	17.3%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	259	27.5%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	193	20.5%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	129	13.7%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	117	12.4%
\$300,000 - \$499,999	73	7.7%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	9	1.0%
\$1,000,000 or More	0	0%
Total	943	100%
Median (dollars)	\$128,800	

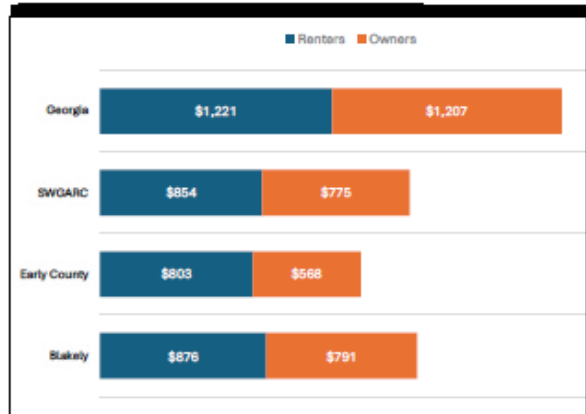
Source: US Census Bureau, Housing Characteristics, ACS 2022

City of Blakely Age Number of Housing Units, 2022

YEAR BUILT	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1-unit, detached	1,475	78.0%
1-unit, attached	12	0.6%
2 units	62	3.3%
3 or 4 units	15	0.8%
5 to 9 units	13	0.7%
10 to 19 units	8	0.4%
20 or more units	54	2.9%
Mobile Home	251	13.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, Housing Characteristics, ACS 2022

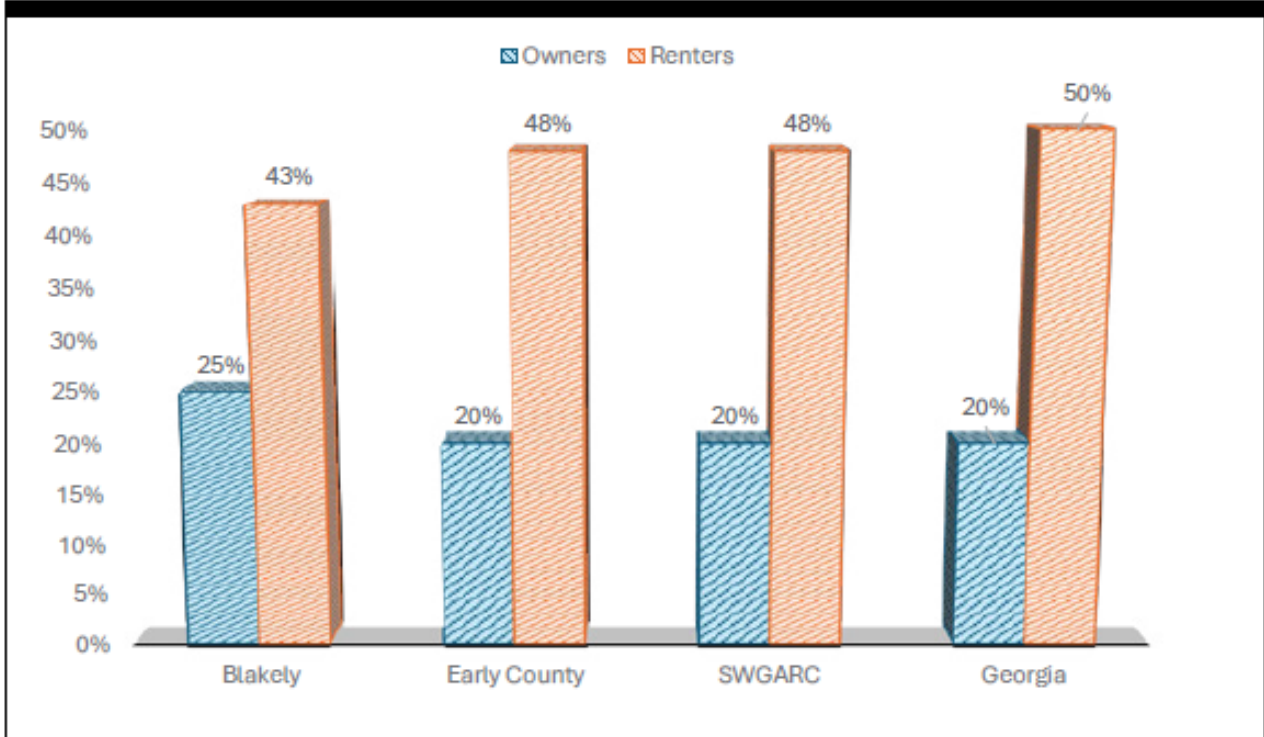
City of Blakely Median Housing Costs, 2022



Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

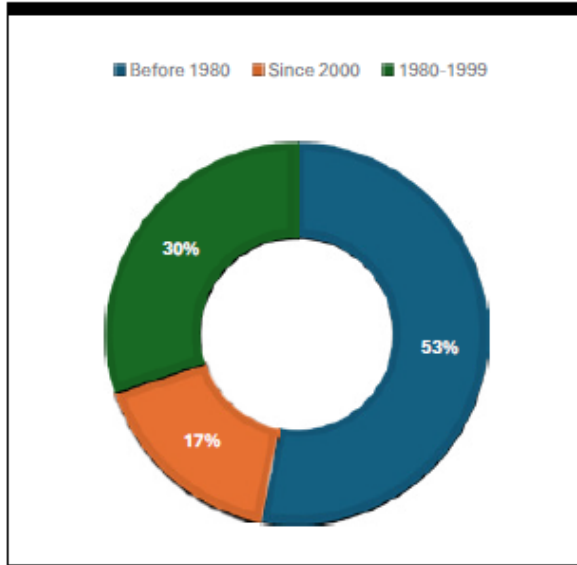
households are also at a higher risk of eviction, contributing to homelessness.

City of Blakely Housing Cost-Burdened Households, 2022



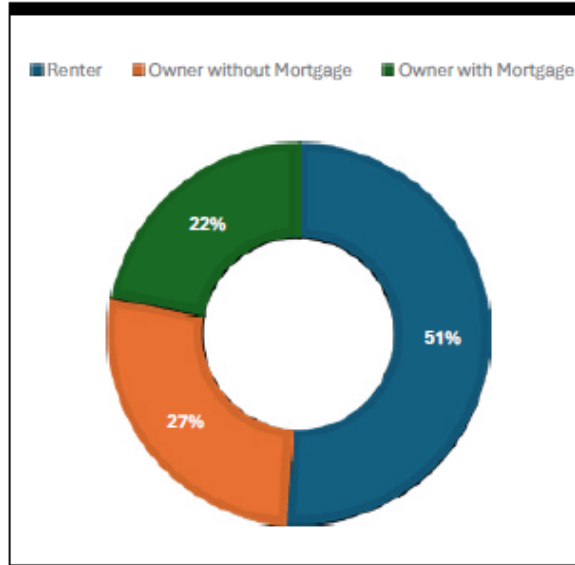
Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

City of Blakely Year Structure Built, 2022



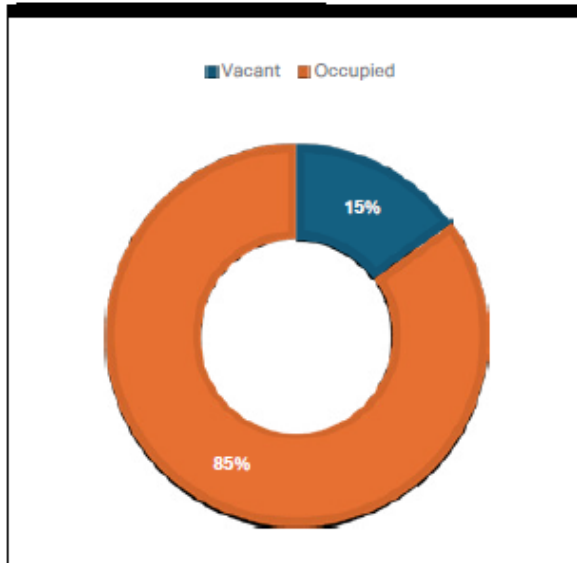
Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

City of Blakely Tenure & Mortgage Status, 2022



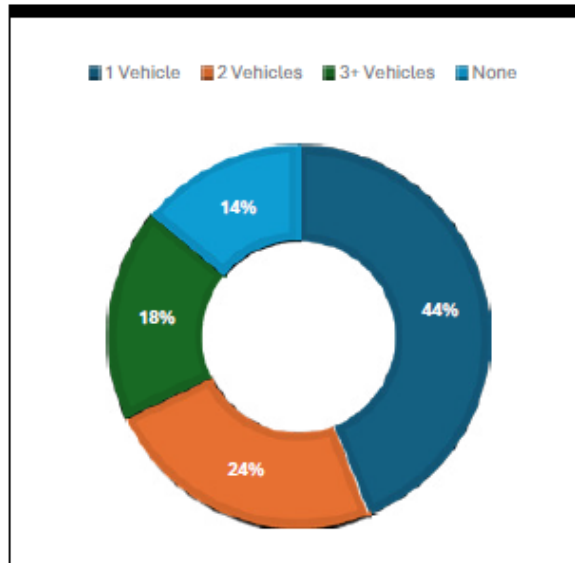
Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

City of Blakely Occupancy, 2022



Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

City of Blakely Vehicles Available, 2022

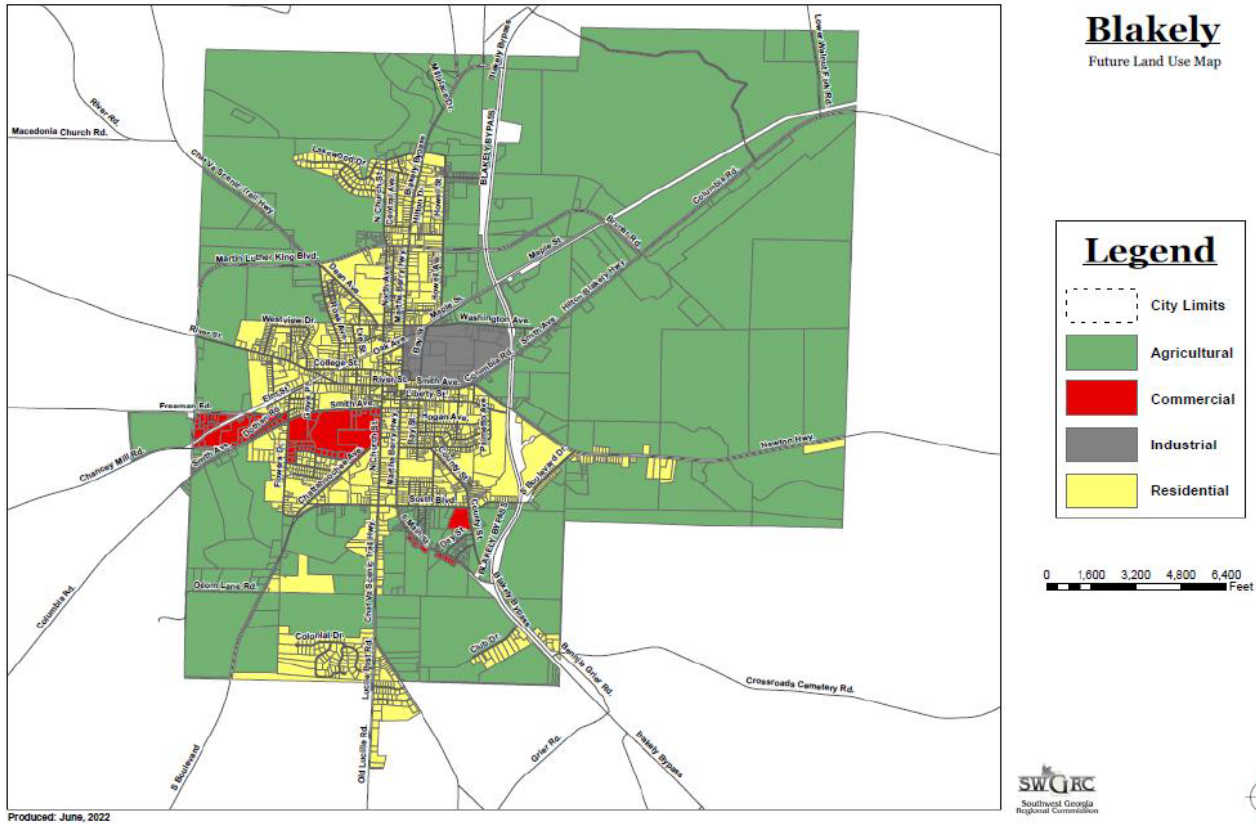


Source: American Community Survey, 2022 5-Year Estimates

3) Land use objectives

The land use objectives of this Urban Redevelopment Plan are the same as those of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Blakely (a joint plan that also applies to Early County and the Cities of Damascus and Jakin). The Comprehensive Plan includes a Land Use Element with maps and descriptions of various land classifications that are intended to guide future development in the community. For each Land Use Classification, the Comprehensive Plan provides a description, a vision for the future, and measures for implementing that vision.

The map and descriptions of character areas within the Urban Redevelopment Area are shown below:



City of Blakely Future Land Use Map (source: 2022 Comprehensive Plan)

Land Use Classifications Descriptions

(source: 2022 Comprehensive Plan)

Land use for small communities must maintain rural characteristics and strengthen economic potential. Rural communities must identify strategies that they are able to implement with their limited resources. Appropriate land use supports the establishment of agricultural activities and non-agriculture activities that encourage sustainable rural development, while respecting the rights of rural communities and residents.

The future land-use categories are not zoning classifications. Instead, they act to inform leads on decisions regarding rezoning and development. The future land- use categories are defined below:

Land Use Classifications	
Residential	The predominant use of land is residential, single- family and multi-family dwelling units
Commercial	Non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
Industrial	Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.

<p>Public/Institutional</p>	<p>Includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc.</p>
<p>Transportation/Communication/Utilities</p>	<p>Includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.</p>
<p>Parks/Recreation/Conservation</p>	<p>Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.</p>
<p>Agriculture/Forestry</p>	<p>Land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.</p>
<p>Undeveloped/Vacant</p>	<p>Lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.</p>

4) Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

As Section 3 of this plan demonstrates, the land use objectives of this Urban Redevelopment Plan are thoroughly consistent with those of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the land use objectives, there are various goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan that are well aligned with this Urban Redevelopment Plan.

The following goals from the 2022 Comprehensive Plan are especially relevant to this Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Economic Prosperity:

Our community will encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Local leaders should seek community-based initiatives that foster citizen engagement and support workforce development. Business retention and expansion, entrepreneurial development, tourism and retiree attraction should be encouraged to strengthen local economies.

Efficient Land Use:

Our community will maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. Early County and its cities should encourage and support smart infrastructure in land use planning and community design and in compact development which conserves open space in communities. Development should be directed toward the town center.

Local Preparedness:

Our community will identify and put in place infrastructure to support and direct new growth and ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired. Leadership and staff will be capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges and undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response. Community leaders are currently struggling with this issue due to a lack of resources and capacity. Local resource development and increases in the tax base will lessen dependence on diminishing state and federal funds. Leaders should direct development toward existing infrastructure and public facilities and develop and implement a Hazard Mitigation Plan and Service Delivery Strategy.

Sense of Place:

Our community will protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. Early County and its cities all have a strong sense of place and this has been attained by the vibrant connections that exist among the people and the community they live in. Natural, cultural and historic resources should be protected through zoning and other regulations. Local ordinances should be reviewed and revised as needed.

Housing Options:

Our community will promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive and resource efficient housing in the community. Zoning ordinances should be reviewed or revised to allow for mixed-land uses and walkable communities. Communities should direct growth toward existing infrastructure and toward the

community's center and create neighborhoods that people young and old will not want to leave. Expand housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the cost of housing and transportation. Development incentives should be encouraged.

Community Health:

Our community will ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods and good work opportunities. Rural communities like Early and its cities have limited access to goods and services and job opportunities. Poverty and lower income levels have taken their toll on residents with chronic illnesses and other high-risk indicators. Leaders should encourage development that allows greater access to fresh and healthy foods and provides access to quality, affordable healthcare. Developers should provide open space, parks and recreational space in their design. Communities should continue to work together to make regional infrastructure improvements.

5) Land parcels to be acquired

No parcels of property are to be acquired by the City of Blakely at this time. Should circumstances change making property acquisition probable or necessary, this plan will be amended to reflect these changes.

6) Structures to be demolished or rehabilitated

During the creation of the Urban Development Plan, no structures in the Urban Redevelopment Area were identified to be demolished, relocated, or rehabilitated. However, it is anticipated that future phases of redevelopment will require the demolition, relocation, or rehabilitation of certain dilapidated and/or deteriorated structures. Should the demolition, relocation, or rehabilitation of buildings be required in future phases of the Urban Redevelopment Plan, the Plan will be amended to reflect those changes.

7) Strategy for relocating displaced residents

Because no occupied structures are identified to be demolished, relocated, or rehabilitated in this plan, the City of Blakely has determined that the development of a relocation strategy is not necessary at this time. In the event displacement of residents becomes necessary at a later date, the Urban Redevelopment Plan will be amended to incorporate a strategy for relocating displaced residents in accordance with all local and state statutory requirements.

8) Covenants or restrictions

No covenants or restrictions will be placed on properties at this time. Should property covenants and/or restrictions be adopted in the future, this plan will be amended to include

such covenants and/or restrictions.

9) Public infrastructure to be provided

The Urban Redevelopment Area is currently serviced by the City of Blakely with regard to infrastructure and urban services. Infrastructure improvements and upgrades will continue to be identified and implemented through interdepartmental planning and capital improvements initiatives (for example, comprehensive plan implementation and URP amendments). At this time, no additional infrastructure needs have been identified within the designated Urban Redevelopment Area.

10) Implementation strategy

Phased Approach and Timeline

The City of Blakely will implement the Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) in a phased approach, with each phase guided by resource availability, community needs, and stakeholder feedback. Instead of adhering to rigid deadlines, the city will adaptively manage the plan to address challenges and opportunities as they arise. The following outline provides a general framework for implementation:

1. Initial Planning and Capacity Building

- Conduct public meetings to inform and engage residents and stakeholders.
- Establish partnerships with state and regional agencies, including the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC).
- Finalize agreements with private developers, local nonprofits, and community organizations.
- Begin applications for funding through programs such as CDBG, CHIP, and OneGeorgia Workforce Housing.

2. Infrastructure Upgrades and Pre-Development Activities

- Prioritize infrastructure improvements such as roads, utilities, and streetscapes in the Urban Redevelopment Area.
- Conduct detailed surveys and engineering studies to identify additional infrastructure needs.
- Secure Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) allocations to finance affordable housing development.
- Launch housing rehabilitation efforts using CHIP funds to address immediate housing quality issues.

3. Housing Development and Workforce Initiatives

- Begin construction of new affordable housing units supported by LIHTC, Georgia Dream, and private investment.
- Collaborate with the OneGeorgia Workforce Housing program to support workforce housing development, aligned with economic growth goals.
- Promote homeownership by offering financial education and down payment assistance through the Georgia Dream program.

4. Community Services and Program Expansion

- Develop parks, recreational areas, and open spaces to enhance quality of life for residents.
- Implement programs to support homeowners and renters, including energy efficiency retrofitting and financial counseling.
- Continue to identify and implement infrastructure improvements based on ongoing evaluations.

5. Monitoring and Plan Refinement

- Conduct regular assessments of plan outcomes to measure progress against objectives.
- Adjust the plan based on findings, community feedback, and changing conditions.
- Ensure the sustainability of improvements through policy updates and maintenance strategies.

Leveraging Private Resources and Public-Private Partnerships

The City of Blakely will maximize public investments by engaging private resources and partnerships, including:

- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC):** Partnering with developers to secure LIHTC allocations for affordable rental housing projects. These projects will target areas within the redevelopment plan to address housing affordability gaps.
- **Local Financial Institutions:** Collaborating with banks to provide construction financing and affordable mortgage products to residents.
- **Private Developers:** Offering incentives such as tax abatements and expedited permitting to encourage private investment aligned with redevelopment goals.
- **Nonprofits and Community-Based Organizations:** Partnering with local organizations to deliver supportive services such as job training, financial counseling, and housing assistance.

Funding and Program Alignment

The plan will rely on a combination of local, state, and federal funding sources, leveraging programs such as:

1. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** Funding infrastructure improvements and community services in the redevelopment area.
2. **Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP):** Supporting housing rehabilitation to address blighted conditions and improve living standards.
3. **OneGeorgia Workforce Housing Program:** Targeting workforce housing solutions that support economic development.
4. **Georgia Dream Program:** Assisting residents with homeownership through down

payment assistance and financial education.

5. **Local Tax Allocation Districts (TADs):** Capturing property tax increments to reinvest in redevelopment area improvements.

Monitoring and Community Engagement

A dynamic monitoring and engagement process will ensure that implementation remains flexible and aligned with community priorities. Key steps include:

- **Continuous Feedback:** Gather input through public meetings, surveys, and other communication channels to adjust strategies as needed.
- **Performance Metrics:** Track key indicators such as the number of housing units rehabilitated, infrastructure projects completed, and homeownership rates.
- **Regular Updates:** Provide transparent progress reports to residents, city officials, and stakeholders.

By maintaining flexibility and actively engaging the community, the City of Blakely will ensure that the Urban Redevelopment Plan remains responsive and effective in revitalizing the Urban Redevelopment Area.

11) Exceptions to Development Regulations

To encourage redevelopment and facilitate the goals of the Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP), the City of Blakely will consider allowing exceptions to certain development regulations on a case-by-case basis. These exceptions aim to reduce barriers to development, attract investment, and ensure projects align with the community’s vision for revitalization. All exceptions will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate city departments, boards, and commissions, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Purpose of Exceptions

Exceptions to development regulations are intended to:

- Promote redevelopment in areas where rigid adherence to existing regulations may hinder progress.
- Support innovative design and development approaches that align with the URP's goals.
- Encourage public-private partnerships by reducing costs or delays associated with regulatory compliance.
- Align regulatory flexibility with the city’s comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and design guidelines.

Possible Exceptions

The City of Blakely may consider exceptions in the following areas:

1. Zoning and Land Use Requirements

- Adjustments to zoning classifications or land use restrictions to accommodate mixed-use, higher-density housing, or commercial developments in targeted areas.
- Allowance for transitional zoning to enable development in areas undergoing significant revitalization.

2. Parking Requirements

- Reductions in parking space minimums for developments that demonstrate shared parking opportunities, access to alternative transportation, or a focus on walkability.

3. Setback Requirements

- Modifications to front, side, or rear setback requirements to maximize the use of irregular or constrained parcels.

4. Building Height Limits

- Increases in height restrictions to allow for denser, multi-story developments in appropriate areas, particularly for affordable and workforce housing projects.

5. Lot Size and Coverage

- Flexibility in minimum lot sizes and coverage limits to accommodate innovative housing designs or infill developments.

6. Infrastructure and Utility Requirements

- Waivers or deferrals for infrastructure improvements that would otherwise place undue financial burdens on developers, provided the city determines the existing infrastructure is sufficient or improvements can be phased.

7. Design and Aesthetic Standards

- Relaxation of certain design standards to allow for cost-effective construction methods, particularly for affordable housing developments, while maintaining a focus on community character.

Review and Approval Process

All requests for exceptions to development regulations will follow this process:

- 1. Application Submission:** Developers must submit a formal application outlining the specific regulation for which an exception is sought, including justification and alignment with the URP's goals.
- 2. Staff Review:** City planning and zoning staff will review the application and prepare a recommendation based on the potential impact of the exception on the redevelopment area and surrounding community.

3. **Public Input:** When appropriate, public hearings will be held to gather input from residents and stakeholders.
4. **Approval Authority:** The Planning Commission, City Council, or another designated body will review and vote on the proposed exception, ensuring compliance with state and local laws.

Conditions for Approval

To qualify for exceptions, proposed projects must:

- Align with the goals and objectives of the Urban Redevelopment Plan.
- Demonstrate a clear public benefit, such as increasing affordable housing, improving infrastructure, or stimulating economic growth.
- Avoid creating adverse impacts on adjacent properties or the community at large.

Monitoring and Reassessment

The City will monitor the impacts of granted exceptions to ensure they achieve the intended redevelopment outcomes. If necessary, policies regarding exceptions may be updated to address emerging challenges or opportunities.

By incorporating regulatory flexibility, the City of Blakely aims to foster an environment conducive to revitalization while maintaining accountability to its residents and stakeholders.

Appendix

A. Resolution of Necessity

B. Urban Redevelopment Plan Boundary

C. Public Hearing Agenda

D. Public Hearing Proof

E. URP Adoption Resolution

Resolution of Necessity

City of Blakely, Georgia

Resolution No. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BLAKELY DECLARING THE NECESSITY FOR THE ADOPTION OF AN URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT LAW (O.C.G.A. TITLE 36, CHAPTER 61) TO ADDRESS CONDITIONS OF BLIGHT, IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS IN THE CITY OF BLAKELY.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Blakely have determined that certain areas within the city limits suffer from blighted conditions, including housing deterioration, inadequate infrastructure, and barriers to economic growth, which adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the conditions of blight impair sound growth, hinder private investment, and pose a threat to the long-term economic vitality of the City of Blakely; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. Title 36, Chapter 61) empowers local governments to undertake comprehensive redevelopment efforts through the preparation and adoption of an Urban Redevelopment Plan to address and eliminate such blighted conditions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Blakely has conducted a thorough assessment of the housing, infrastructure, and economic conditions within its corporate limits, identifying areas in need of targeted redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to improve housing quality, enhance public infrastructure, promote economic growth, and foster a sustainable and inclusive community; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Urban Redevelopment Plan will leverage federal, state, and local funding sources, including but not limited to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP), OneGeorgia Workforce Housing Program, Georgia Dream Program, and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), in partnership with private investors and community stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this resolution is a prerequisite to the approval and implementation of the Urban Redevelopment Plan as required by state law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLAKELY, GEORGIA:

1. Declaration _____ of _____ Necessity:
The City of Blakely hereby declares that the existence of blighted conditions within its jurisdiction constitutes a necessity for the adoption and implementation of an Urban Redevelopment Plan to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare.
2. Designation _____ of _____ Urban _____ Redevelopment _____ Area:
The corporate limits of the City of Blakely, as described in the Urban Redevelopment Plan, are hereby designated as the Urban Redevelopment Area pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 36-61-2(18).

3. Adoption of Urban Redevelopment Plan:
The City of Blakely Urban Redevelopment Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is adopted in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law.
4. Authorization of Implementation:
The Mayor, City Administrator, and other appropriate city officials are authorized and directed to take all necessary actions to implement the Urban Redevelopment Plan, including but not limited to applying for funding, entering into agreements with private and public partners, and executing redevelopment activities.
5. Effective Date:
This resolution shall become effective upon its adoption by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Blakely.

RESOLVED, this ____ day of _____, 2024.

CITY OF BLAKELY, GEORGIA

By:
Mayor

Attest:
City Clerk

Exhibit "A" – Urban Redevelopment Plan Boundary

