



★ CITY OF ★
WATKINSVILLE

2026 MAYOR & COUNCIL RETREAT

**Monday, February 23, 2026
9:00 AM**

**City Hall (191 VFW Drive)
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677**

AGENDA

- 9 AM** **Welcome** (Mayor Brodrick)
- 9:05 AM** **Vision & Values for Watkinsville**
- 9:30 AM** **2025 Year In Review** (Manager Dickerson)
- Significant Accomplishments of 2025
 - Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results
- 10:30 AM** **Review Strategic Initiatives & Priorities**
- 11 AM** **Long Term Planning & Visioning of Future Projects, Policies, & Programs** (Mayor Brodrick)
- Downtown Development Authority Update
 - Ideas from Council for Future Focus
 - Plans for America's 250th - July 3rd
 - Other Items from Council
- 12 PM** **LUNCH**
- 12:30 PM** **Prioritize FY27 Plans** (Mayor & Council)
- 1 PM** **Review and Finalize FY27 Plans** (Mayor & Council)
- 1:30 PM** **Public Safety Instruction** (Chief Arwood)
- 2 PM** **Adjourn**

NOTE: All reports shared are in draft form. No final action is taken at the Retreat. The Retreat is open to the public; however, public comments are received at Council's discretion.



WATKINSVILLE

COME · CONNECT · CREATE

MAYOR & COUNCIL

Vision: Create Georgia's Most Compelling Community by honoring our history, building community, and creating opportunities for citizens to engage and do business with one another every day.

Tagline: Come. Connect. Create.

The Watkinsville Way:

We will be a Connected Community. We will seek to create connections for our citizens through thoughtful design of our built environment, hosting award-winning and well attended community events, installing a modern technology infrastructure, and fostering connectivity between neighborhoods with non-automotive infrastructure.

We will honor our history while welcoming innovation and accommodating change. From public art to historic homes, we will honor our history and creativity while planning carefully for the future. Our community is anchored on a walkable historic downtown with an evolving mix of restaurants, retail shops and offices.

We will provide opportunities for all. As a welcoming and inclusive community, we will make all ages and types of citizens safe and comfortable by offering a mix of housing types, special events, and businesses that support different populations and create infrastructure that allows our citizens to age in place.

Our Values:

- Efficiency
- Inclusivity
- Kindness
- Transparency
- Creativity
- Connectivity

2025 SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following is a list of significant accomplishments in city programs/services, policies, plans, and/or projects during 2025. These items go beyond “normal” day-to-day services, and many are related to the City Council’s Strategic Initiatives, goals, and priorities.

- Selected as a 2026 Visionary City
- Received \$47,108.89 in GDOT Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (FY25 LMIG) funds
- Received \$57,794.71 in GDOT LMIG Local Road Assistance (FY25 LRA) funds
- Used FY25 LMIG and FY25 LRA funds (supplemented with \$182,480.71 in TSPLOST Funds) to pave or resurface the following city roads/streets:
 - Mulberry Street (formerly gravel road)
 - Thomas Farm Preserve (entrance road)
 - Cemetery Road
 - Stone Shoals Terrace (Stone Shoals Subdivision)
 - Stone Shoals Way (Stone Shoals Subdivision)
- Received \$54,924.74 in GDOT Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (FY26 LMIG) funds
- Used FY26 LMIG funds (supplemented with \$145,075.26 in TSPLOST Funds) to resurface the following city roads/streets:
 - Concord Drive (Bishop’s Vineyard)
 - Southland Drive (Bishop’s Vineyard)
 - Muscat Court (Bishop’s Vineyard)
- Received a \$6,000 Safety and Liability Management Grant from Georgia Municipal Association
- Hired a Downtown Development Director
- Completed the Downtown Strategic Plan (using \$35,000 Georgia Power grant)
- Downtown Development Authority organized and/or participated in the following events:
 - March - Hosted PBS View Finders Season 3 premier event at Publica Coffee
 - May – Organized WTK Women in Business event
 - June – Hosted Papa Palooza event at Rocket Field
 - August – Hosted BBQ & BINGO event at Rocket Field
 - September - Hosted Federal & State Tax Credit Lunch & Learn (43 attendees)
 - December - Sponsored 1st Annual Holiday Business Decorating Contest
 - December – Organized WTK Women in Business event
- Social Media:
 - City of Watkinsville – *Facebook*: 1.4 million views, 1,100 new followers; *Instagram*: 75,800 views and 394 new followers
 - Downtown Watkinsville – *Facebook*: 279,000 and 441 new followers; *Instagram*: 76,000 views and 394 new followers
 - Police Department – *Facebook*: 351,737 views and 441 new followers.

2025 SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed the following Harris Shoals Park Master Plan, Phase 3 improvements, using available SPLOST III funds:
 - Giardini Green, including irrigation, trees, landscaping, pergola and public art installation
 - Installation of metal art on pedestrian bridge
- Completed the following Thomas Farm Preserve Master Plan, Phase 2 improvements, using available SPLOST III funds:
 - Constructed a second bathroom in another room of the dairy barn
 - Stained the 4-board fence along road frontage and in Dog Park gravel lot
 - Constructed a 30' x 30' pavilion (behind main house)
 - Installed sidewalk connecting pavilion to restrooms
 - Painted 30' x 30' pavilion
 - Replaced roofs on dairy barn and concrete block garage
 - Constructed structural supports for the 50+ year old grape vine
- Continued work on the Simonton Bridge Road Pedestrian Connector Improvements using a 2.59%, 10-year loan of \$2,225,000 and a \$1,530,405 grant from the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) which included:
 - Continuing Phase 1 installation of approximately 1,880 linear ft of ADA-compliant pedestrian and bicycle friendly, concrete sidewalk (ranging in width from 10 ft wide to 6 ft wide) along Simonton Bridge Road from the Simonton Place neighborhood to Cemetery Road and extension of existing 30" RCP near Watkinsville Cemetery and extension of 18" CMP near Simonton Place
 - Contract agreements with AT&T, Charter/Spectrum, Parker Fibernet, and Georgia Power to remove five (5) telephone poles and bury all communication and power lines located along the Thomas Farm Preserve frontage on Simonton Bridge Road
 - Awarding a \$396,600 contract for Phase 2 to include the installation of approximately 1,270 linear feet of 8-10 foot wide, ADA-compliant pedestrian and bicycle friendly, concrete sidewalk along 3rd Street and Mulberry Street ending at a new proposed Pedestrian Bridge on Tax Parcel W 09 004A
 - Awarding a \$1,379,619 contract for Phase 3 to include the construction and installation of approximately 250 linear feet of ADA-compliant pedestrian and bicycle friendly, concrete sidewalk (ranging in width from 10-foot wide to 8-foot wide) on City of Watkinsville Parcels W 09 004A and C 03 022A, construction of a new 105 linear feet 10 ft wide pedestrian bridge with 3 concrete abutments, and extension of existing 12" RCP near Watkinsville Cemetery and new 18" RCP on the western side of the bridge.
 - Awarding a \$360,219 change order for Phase 1 Extension to include installation of approximately 1,186 linear feet of ADA-compliant pedestrian and bicycle friendly, concrete

2025 SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

sidewalk (ranging in width from 10-foot wide to 6-foot wide) along Simonton Bridge Road from the Simonton Place neighborhood to the eastern city limits line.

- Acquisition of a Quiet Title for 0.254 acres located in between 46 Mulberry Street and Parcel W09 004A (former Healy property)
- Police Department hosted the following community events:
 - Annual Easter Egg Hunt
 - Annual Cops 'n Bobbers Fishing Tournament
- Approved a defined benefit retirement plan and adoption agreement with the Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) Georgia Municipal Employee Benefit System (GMEBS) for eligible city employees, effective December 1, 2025 and designated a Pension Committee
- Approved the following ordinances:
 - Text Amendment to amend Article 13 of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow Special Events in the Downtown Zoning Districts as a conditional use, and in Corridor Commercial as a permitted use and related amendments to Article 4 and Article 10
 - Text Amendments to amend Article 10 "Outdoor Dining" and Article 13 "use regulation for clarifications and updates, define additional mobile vendors at 10.3, and revise the use chart at 13.01
 - Text Amendment to allow as a Conditional Use, Indoor Recreation in the Historic Main, Downtown, and Mixed-Use Office Districts and as a permitted use in the Corridor Commercial District, to expand the definitions at Article 4 and to revise the use chart as 13.01 accordingly.
 - Text Amendment to Article 13 of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow as a Conditional Use, Hotel (Boutique) in the Corridor Commercial District and the revise the use chart at 13.01 accordingly
 - Text Amendment to Article 13 of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow as a Conditional Use, Vending Machine in the Parks, Recreation, and Conservation [PRC] District and to revise the use chart at 13.01 accordingly.
- Approved the following policies:
 - PW-003 Policy &/or Procedure Statement for Streetlight Requests
 - PW-004 Policy &/or Procedure Statement for 35 Gallon Roll Cart Requests
 - PW-005 Policy &/or Procedure Statement for Memorial Bench Dedications
 - PW-006 Policy and/or Procedure Statement: Right of Way Maintenance
- Other:
 - Accepted ~6.15 acres of greenspace on Durham Street from RN Watkinsville Three, LLC (Waters Walk Age Restricted Development)
 - Erected Memorial Plaque at County Courthouse dedicated to 1905 Lynching Victims



CITY OF
WATKINSVILLE

2025 SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Processed 105 Open Records Requests (59% or 62 from one individual)
- Established Public Arts Committee
- Established Friends of Thomas Farm Preserve Committee
- Passed Resolution to establish Georgia Fund One account
- Relocated Georgia Power pole in middle of sidewalk at 6 N. Main Street
- Provided Standardized Roll Carts to residents through Curbside Services Garbage Contract
- Reestablished Stormwater Culverts in White Street subdivision
- Renovated City Hall Bathrooms due to sewage backup
- Hosted Annual Downtown is Trick or Treating
- Hosted Annual Christmas Parade & Tree Lighting



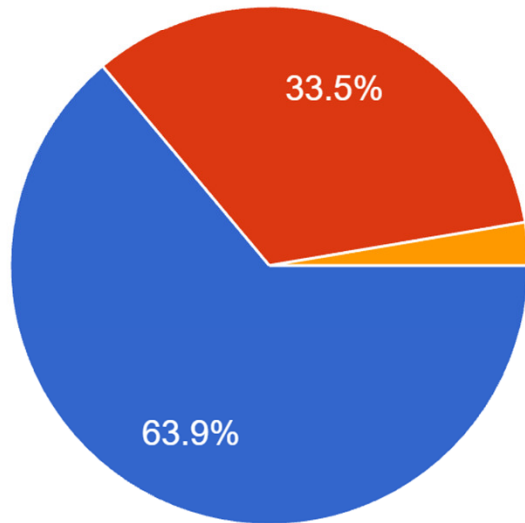
CITY OF

WATKINSVILLE

Citizen Satisfaction Survey
2026

Do you live within the City of Watkinsville limits?

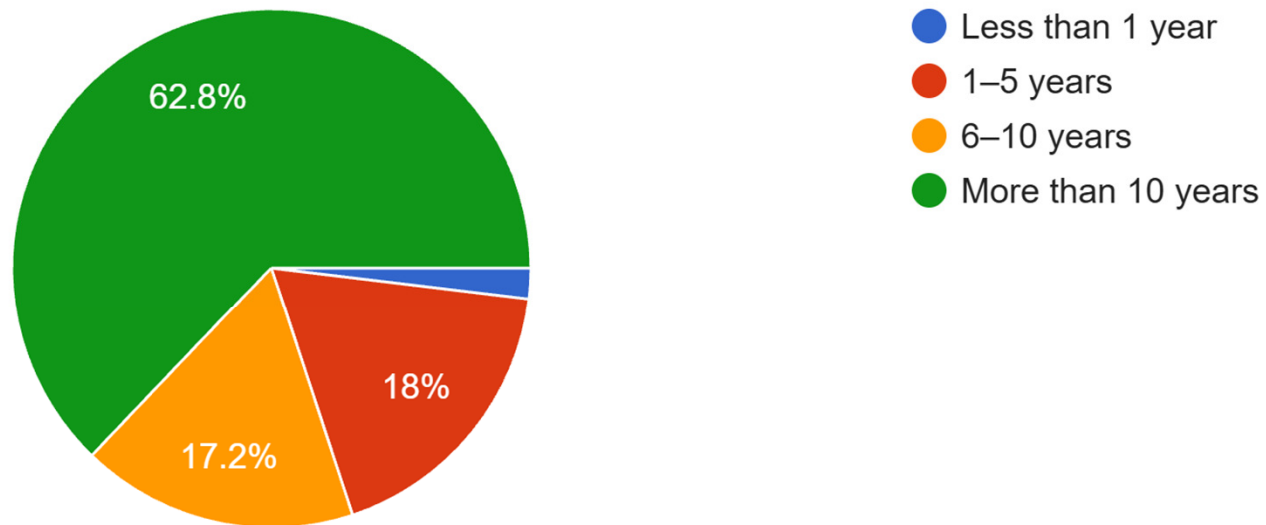
263 responses



- Yes
- No (but within Oconee County)
- Outside Oconee County

How long have you been a resident of Watkinsville (or nearby) and using City services such as parks, sidewalks, garbage, public spaces, etc.?

261 responses

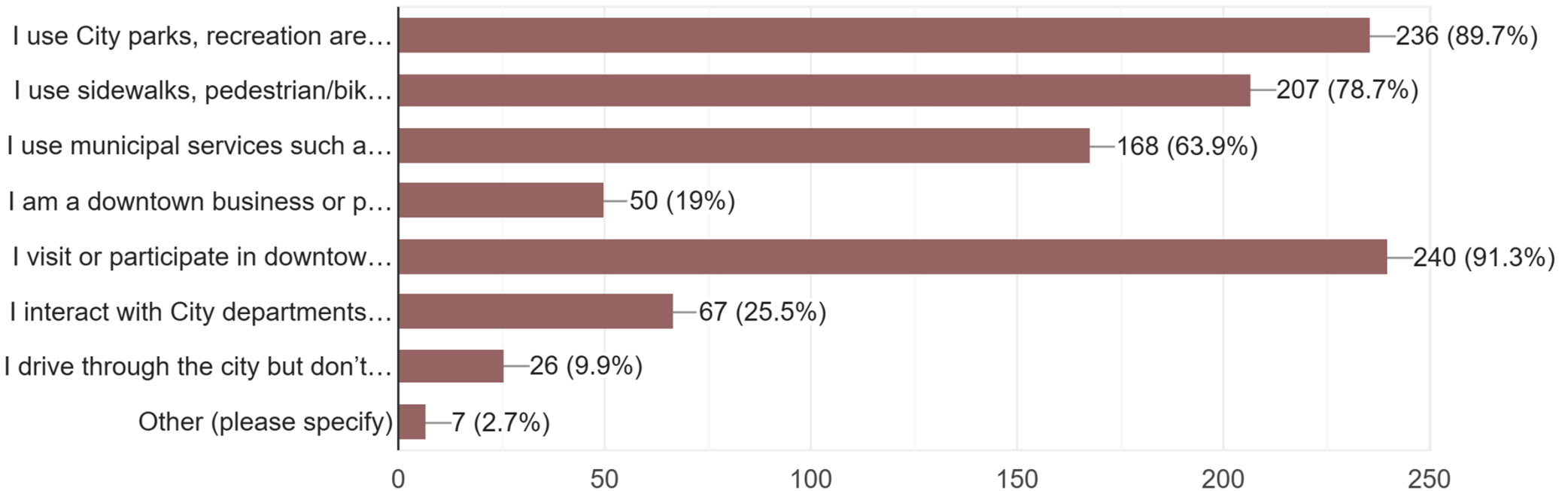


Which of the following describes how you use City services? Check all that apply.

- I use City parks, recreation areas, and green spaces
- I use sidewalks, pedestrian/bike paths, and street infrastructure
- I use municipal services such as garbage or leaf & limb collection
- I am a downtown business or property owner
- I visit or participate in downtown businesses, shops, restaurants, and events
- I interact with City departments such as code compliance, permitting, or municipal court
- I drive through the city but don't often stop
- Other (please specify)

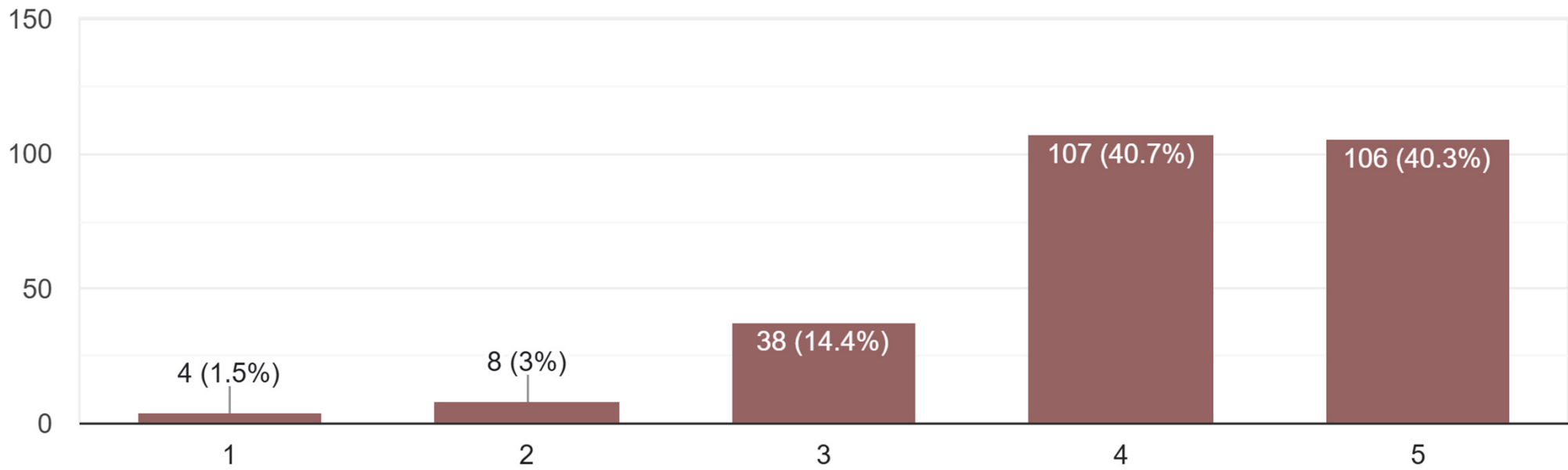
Which of the following describes how you use City services? Check all that apply.

263 responses



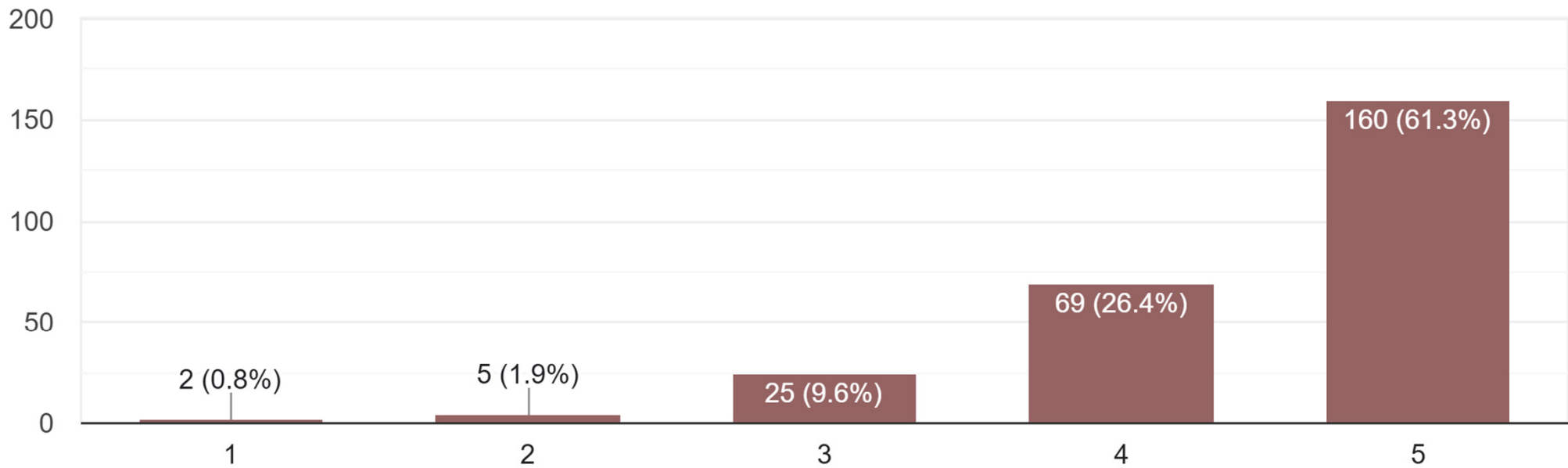
City streets, sidewalks, signs, and drainage are well maintained.

263 responses



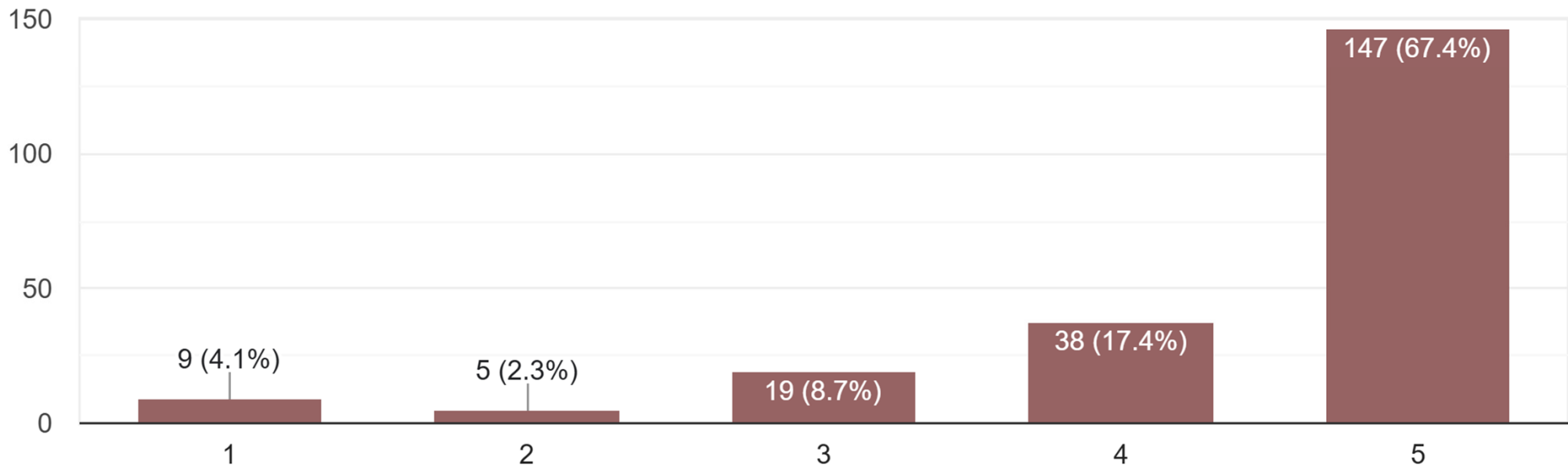
City parks and greenspaces are well maintained and enjoyable.

261 responses



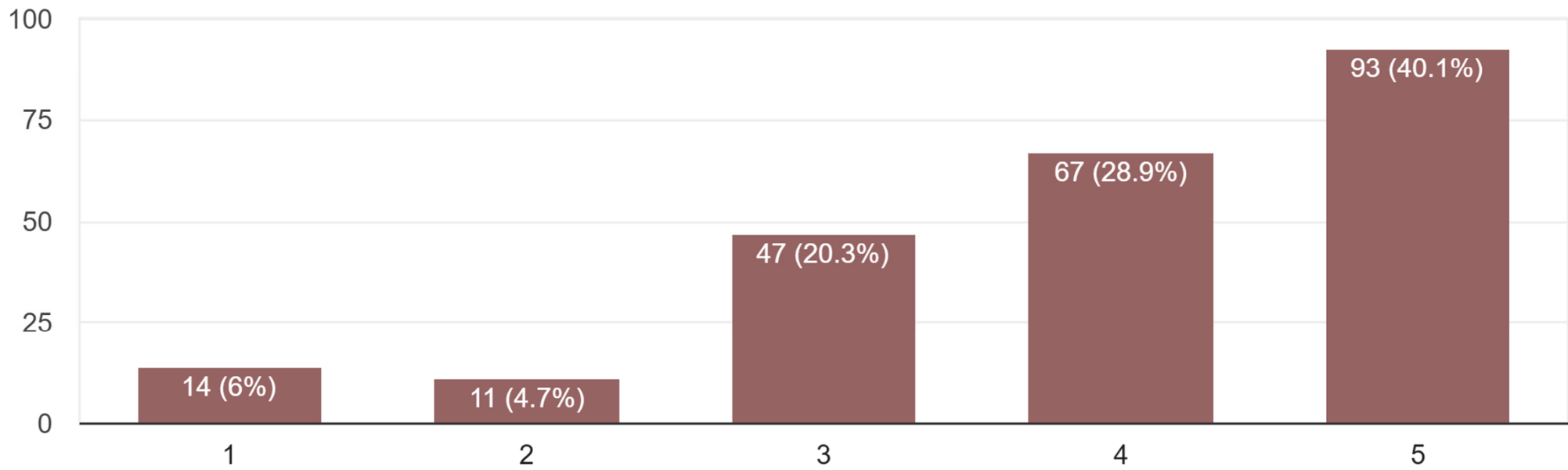
Garbage and leaf & limb collection services meet my needs.

218 responses



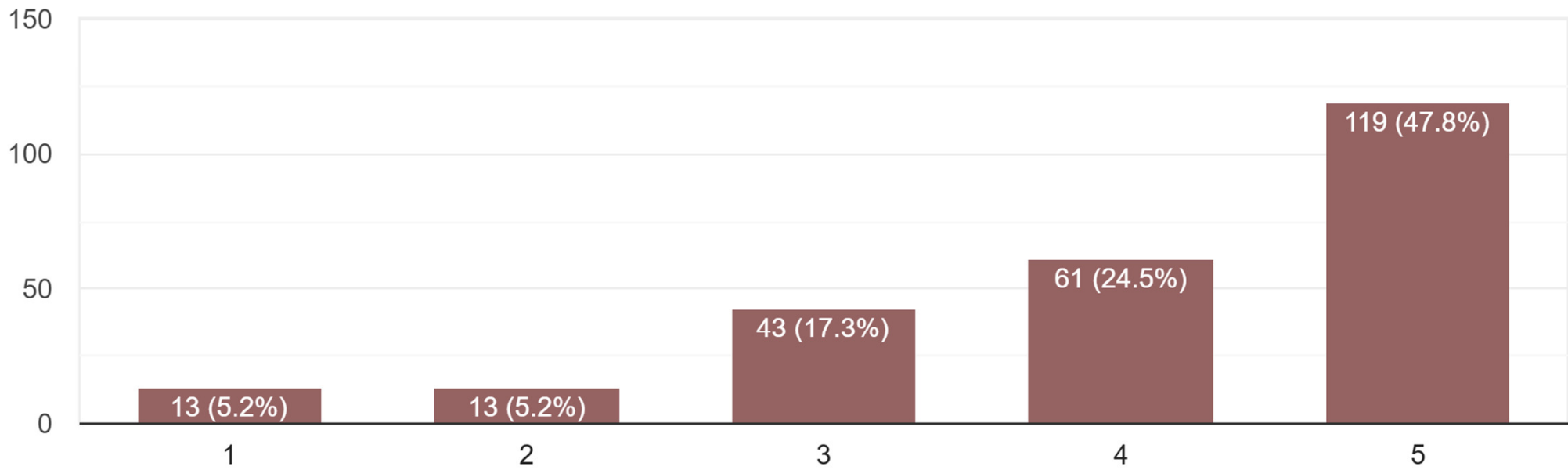
Code compliance efforts positively impact community quality of life.

232 responses



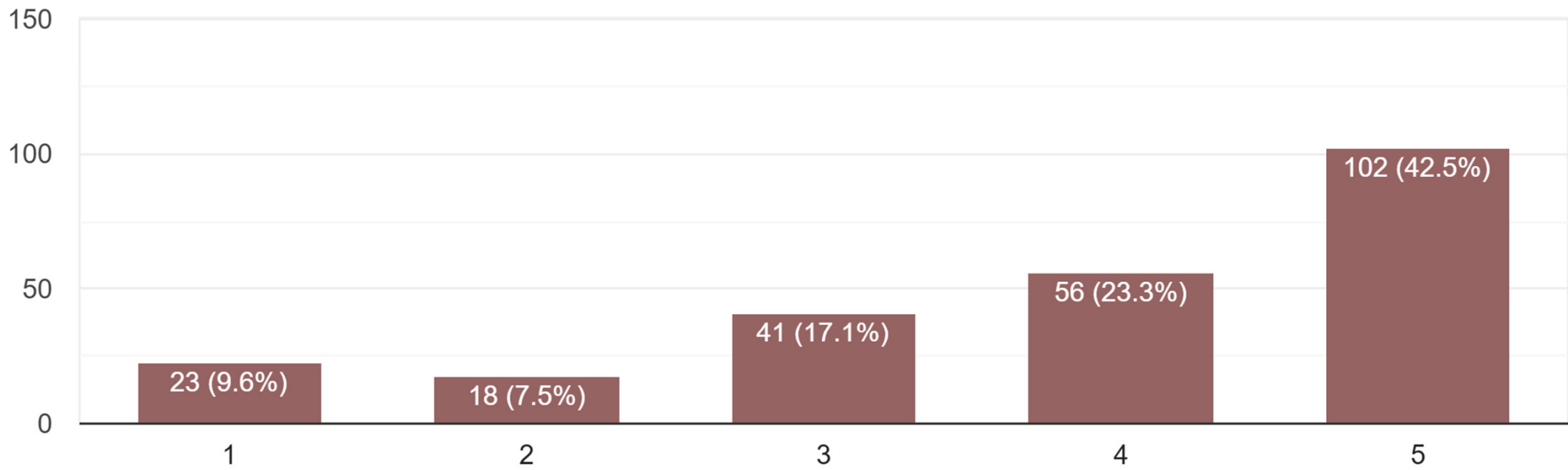
The city supports positive downtown business development and revitalization.

249 responses



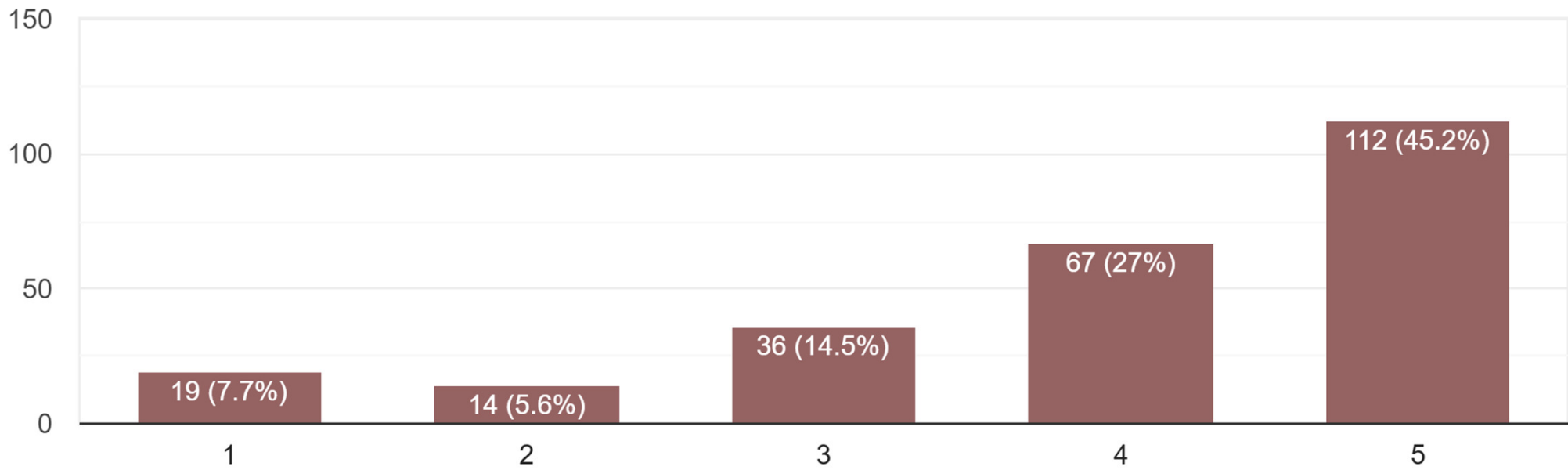
The City government communicates effectively with residents.

240 responses

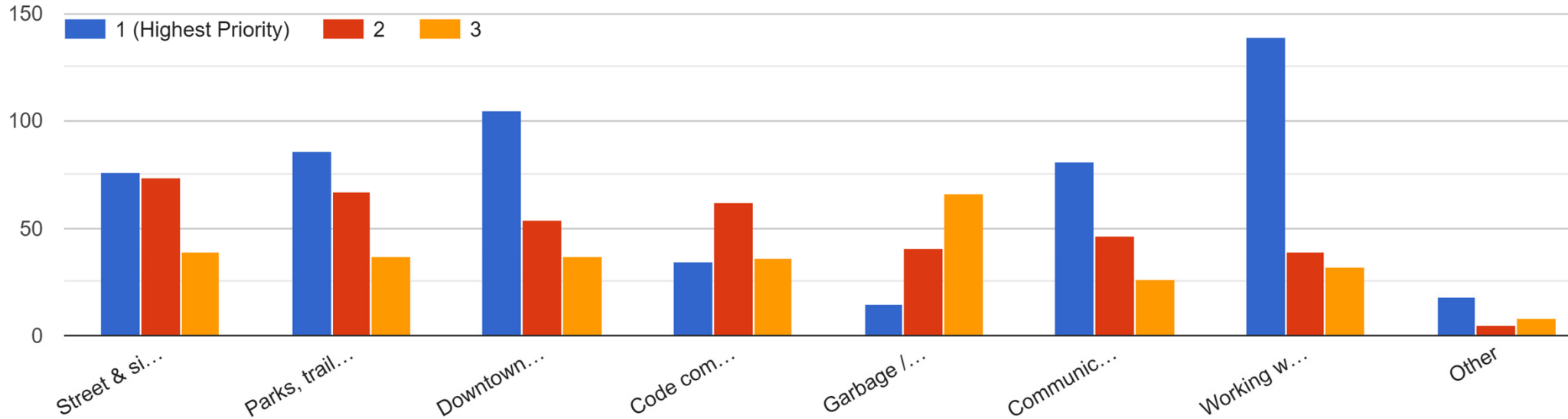


Overall, I am satisfied with the value of City services relative to the cost.

248 responses

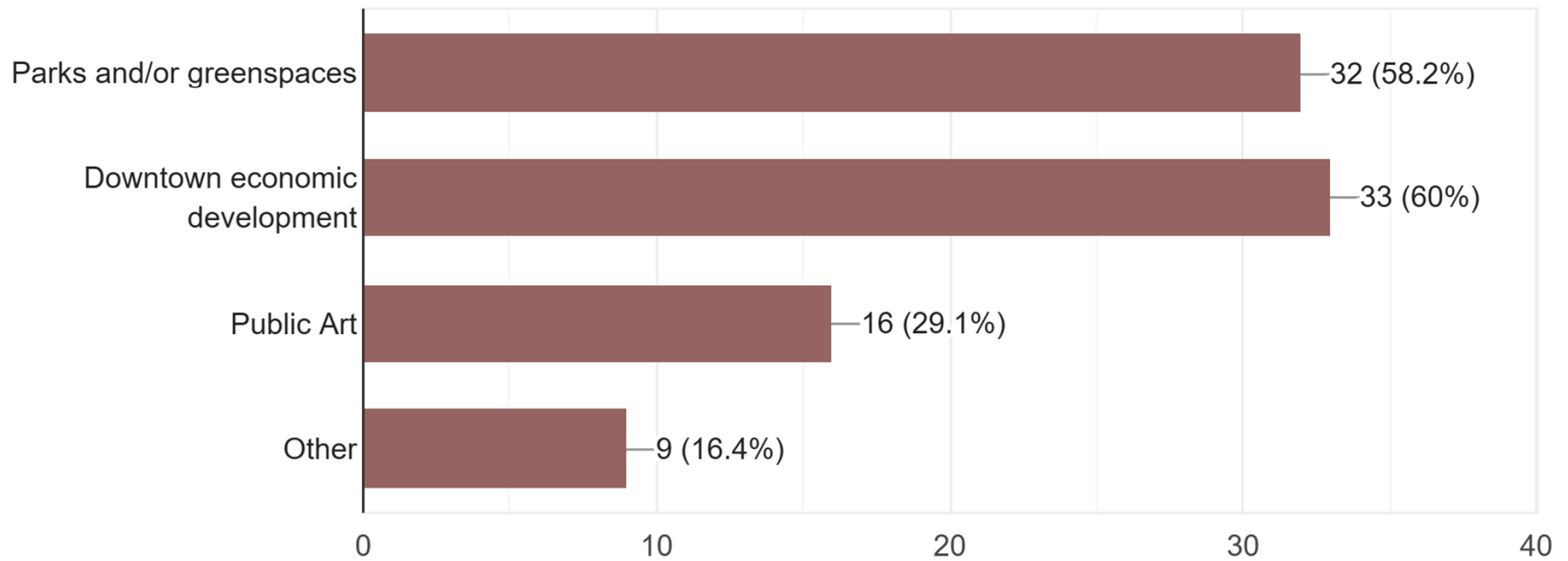


Please rank the top three areas the city should prioritize over the next 2–3 years.



Would you want to serve on a citizen committee?

55 responses





2026 Citizen Survey Summary Report
Total Responses: 263

Executive Overview

The 2026 Citizen Survey indicates that residents hold a generally positive view of City services, particularly parks, sanitation, and infrastructure maintenance. The dominant issue identified by respondents is traffic congestion, especially in and around the downtown area and major corridors.

Overall, the results reflect strong satisfaction with core municipal services while highlighting transportation and communication as key areas for continued focus.

Respondent Profile

- **64% (168)** – City of Watkinsville residents
- **33% (88)** – Oconee County residents (outside City limits)
- **3% (7)** – Outside Oconee County

The majority of feedback reflects the views of City residents.

Service Satisfaction Results

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Service Area	Average Rating
City parks & greenspaces	4.46
Garbage & leaf/limb collection	4.42
Streets, sidewalks & drainage	4.15
Downtown business development support	4.04
Overall value of City services	3.96
Code compliance impact	3.92
City communication effectiveness	3.82



How Residents Use City Services

(263 Total Respondents – Multiple Selections Allowed)

Because respondents could select multiple options, totals exceed 263.

Service Usage by Category

Service Category	# of Respondents
Downtown (shopping, dining, events)	244
Public spaces / community events	240
Parks & greenspaces	236
Streets & sidewalks	207
Garbage / leaf & limb services	168

Key Findings

1 Downtown is the Most Used City Asset

- **244 respondents (93%)** indicated they use downtown for shopping, dining, or events.
- Downtown functions as a central hub for community life.
- This reinforces the importance of traffic management and walkability improvements.

2 Parks and Public Spaces are Widely Used

- **236 respondents** use parks and greenspaces.
- **240 respondents** use public spaces and attend events.

These high usage rates align with the strong satisfaction scores parks received in the survey.

3 Streets & Sidewalks are Heavily Utilized

- **207 respondents** identified using streets and sidewalks.
- This reinforces the importance of infrastructure maintenance and traffic flow improvements.

4 Sanitation Services are Core but Less Visible

- **168 respondents** selected garbage/leaf & limb services.
- While fewer selected this option compared to parks/downtown, sanitation still received one of the highest satisfaction ratings in the survey.



Key Strengths Identified

Parks & Greenspaces

- Highest-rated service area.
- Strong community appreciation for maintenance and recreational value.

Garbage & Leaf/Limb Collection

- Consistently high satisfaction.
- Viewed as reliable and effective.

Infrastructure Maintenance

- Streets, sidewalks, and drainage are rated positively overall.

These areas represent strong performance benchmarks and can be highlighted in public communications and annual reporting.

Primary Community Concern: Traffic

The most consistent theme across open-ended responses was **traffic congestion**.

Mentions in open responses:

- Traffic – 62 references
- Downtown congestion – 29 references
- Bypass – 13 references
- Development concerns – 13 references

(Primary Community Concern: Traffic continued)

Common concerns included:

- Downtown traffic flow
- Hwy 15 and 441 congestion
- Harden Hill area
- Truck traffic
- Acceleration of bypass planning

Traffic concerns significantly outweigh all other open-ended issues.



Additional Themes

Development

A segment of respondents expressed concerns regarding:

- Pace of growth
- Downtown density
- Desire to maintain small-town character

Communication

While still positive overall, communication received the lowest average rating (3.82).

Residents appear to desire:

- More frequent updates
- Clearer explanations of City authority vs. State/County responsibilities
- Greater transparency on development and transportation efforts

Strategic Implications for Council

1. Maintain Strength in Core Services.

Continue strong investment in:

- Parks and greenspaces
- Sanitation services
- Street and infrastructure maintenance

These services are clearly valued by residents.

2. Address Traffic Through Communication & Advocacy

While many traffic issues involve GDOT and County coordination, residents associate the issue directly with City leadership.

Opportunities include:

- Regular public updates on bypass progress
- Clear explanations of jurisdictional authority
- Continued partnership messaging with County and State agencies



3. Enhance Communication Strategy

Given communication received the lowest satisfaction score:

- Increase frequency of visual updates (projects, improvements, planning)
- Expand use of e-newsletter and digital platforms
- Provide clear summaries of Council decisions affecting development and traffic

4. Downtown and public spaces are central to community life.

High usage supports continued investment in walkability, event programming, and infrastructure.

5. Parks are both heavily used and highly rated.

Continued maintenance and incremental improvements will likely maintain strong public support.

6. Traffic concerns correlate directly with usage patterns.

Because downtown and streets are used by the vast majority of respondents, congestion impacts most residents directly.

Overall Conclusion

The 2026 survey reflects a community that is broadly satisfied with City services and proud of Watkinsville's quality of life. Parks, sanitation, and infrastructure maintenance are viewed as strong assets.

Traffic congestion is the defining issue for residents and should remain a strategic priority, both operationally and from a communications standpoint.

The survey results provide a strong foundation for FY26 planning and reinforce the importance of infrastructure, transportation advocacy, and transparent communication.

Strategic Initiatives
City of Watkinsville

Council priorities from 2/26/2025 Retreat

KEY: DCA Short-Term Work Program, 2023-2027

Areas of

- Influence: ED - Economic Development
 LU- Land Use
 I - Infrastructure
 GOV - Government Operations
 CE - Community Engagement

Priority	Area of Influence	DCA Short-Term Work Program Reference	Description	Status Completed, In process, Ongoing, or Move forward (→)	Notes	Funding Source	Estimated Budget	Council Retreat Ranking
HIGH (TIED #1 OVERALL)	I14	13	Explore and/or Activate Adopted Transportation Plan elements not already identified, including connecting sections of existing infrastructure and construction of roundabouts and/or traffic calming mechanisms	COMPLETED: Sidewalks along New High Shoals, Industrial Blvd.; IN PROCESS: Complete Jackson Street to New High Shoals sidewalk segment along S. Main, Install additional RRFBs on Barnett Shoals @ Wire Park, entrance to Thomas Farm Preserve, and Third St at Mulberry Street	IMPLEMENT TRANSPORTATION STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS, SUCH AS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL, SIDEWALKS, BIKELANES, ETC. IN THE INTERIM, DIRECT STAFF AND PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS. INCLUDES LU4, I16, AND I17.	SPLOST III, TSPLOST, GTIB Loan/Grant	\$4 M - \$5 M	1, 1, 1, 3
HIGH (TIED #1 OVERALL)	LU13	2	Establish a Greenspace Program	IN PROCESS: February 2024 - Accepted donation of 12.85 acres from Trove residential subdivision. December 2024 - Purchase and activation of 100-Acre Thomas Farm. FY26 GOAL: Ask voters for a greenspace bond to preserve land in city for passive and/or active spaces.	PURCHASE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE PRIVATELY HELD GREENSPACES TO DEVELOP FOR PUBLIC USE AND/OR SEEK TO ASSIST PRIVATE OWNERS, IN PARTNERSHIP, WITH PRESERVING AND/OR PROTECTING GREENSPACES. SEPTEMBER 2023 - PURCHASE OF 100-ACRE THOMAS FARM. FEBRUARY 2024 - ACCEPTED DONATION OF 12.85 ACRES FROM TROVE RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION. TURN FOCUS TO IMPROVING ACQUIRED GREENSPACE, HOLD OFF PURCHASING NEW SPACES. DECEMBER 2024 - GRAND OPENING OF 100-ACRE THOMAS FARM PRESERVE.	General Fund, SPLOST III, ARPA Funds, GEFA Loan, LMIG	\$5 M - 8 M	1, 1, 1, 3
HIGH (#2 OVERALL)	LU19	1	Consider Historic Preservation Ordinance	COMPLETED: February 21, 2024 Council approved HP Ordinance. IN PROCESS: Identifying HP District, Establishing HP Commission	UGA Professor Reap has class helping city with development of HPO. <u>NOTE: THIS EFFORT WILL NEED TO ALIGN WITH DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN.</u>	General Fund	\$2,000	1, 1
HIGH (TIED #3 OVERALL)	GOV26		City Charter Amendments	COUNCIL TO RECONSIDER: *NOTE: COUNCIL APPROVED NEW CHARTER DECEMBER 2021	IN MARCH 2020, MAYOR SMITH PROVIDED COUNCIL WITH A DRAFT NEW CITY CHARTER. COUNCIL DISCUSSED THE FOLLOWING TENTATIVE TIMELINE: JULY 2021 ROUGH DRAFT, AUGUST 2021 FINAL DRAFT, SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER PUBLIC HEARINGS/MEETINGS, NOVEMBER 1ST COUNCIL READ, DECEMBER 2ND COUNCIL READ, JANUARY 2022 GA LEGISLATIVE SESSION. <u>UPDATE: LOCAL DELEGATION DID NOT SUBMIT IN 2022.</u>	GENERAL FUND		1, 2, 3
HIGH (TIED #3 OVERALL)	I22		Continue sidewalk expansions and improvements.					1, 2, 3

Strategic Initiatives
City of Watkinsville

Council priorities from 2/26/2025 Retreat

KEY: DCA Short-Term Work Program, 2023-2027

Areas of

- Influence: **ED** - Economic Development
LU - Land Use
I - Infrastructure
GOV - Government Operations
CE - Community Engagement

Priority	Area of Influence	DCA Short-Term Work Program Reference	Description	Status Completed, In process, Ongoing, or Move forward (→)	Notes	Funding Source	Estimated Budget	Council Retreat Ranking
HIGH (#4 OVERALL)	GOV9	4	Relocate Public Works Department facilities.	2025	STAFF CONFIRMED COUNTY WILL <u>NOT</u> BE ABLE TO LEASE/SHARE COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT FACILITIES FOR CITY USE - POSSIBLE LOCATION OF PUBLIC WORKS ON 100-ACRE THOMAS FARM. EVALUATE EXISTING PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING AS PART OF THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN EFFORT. TIE TO ED19. <u>NOTE: STAFF IS STILL EXPLORING ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS.</u>	General Fund, SPLOST	UNKNOWN	1, 3, 3
HIGH (#5 OVERALL)	LU20		Explore appropriate utilization of house at Thomas Farm Preserve (e.g.: museum, welcome center, community space with kitchen, etc.).					1, 3
HIGH (#6 OVERALL)	I5	10	Consider Improvements to Stormwater Conveyance Systems	COMPLETED: 2024 - Water Street drainpipe upgrade, Colham Ferry Ext and Jackson St crossover pipe replacements, and western side of school street resurfaced to address better water drainage. IN PROCESS OR RECOMMENDED: (1) GDOT work on catch basin near 6 N. Main Street (2) Implement citywide Culvert Maintenance Plan (3) Stormwater drainage improvements at Harden Hill Road (opposite pedestrian bridge)	ENGAGE CITY ENGINEER TO ASSESS AND EVALUATE THE EXISTING STORMWATER CONVEYANCE SYSTEMS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. <u>FOCUS WILL BE ON EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT STORMWATER AND INSTRUCTING THEM ON HOW BEST TO MANAGE.</u> 2022: REPLACE DRAINAGE PIPE UNDER LAYLE LANE 2023: COLHAM FERRY EXT CROSSOVER PIPE REPLACED. 2024: WATER STREET DRAINPIPE UPGRADED, JACKSON ST CROSSOVER PIPE REPLACED, AND WESTERN SIDE OF SCHOOL STREET RESURFACED TO ADDRESS BETTER WATER DRAINAGE.	SPLOST III, General Fund	UNKNOWN	2, 2, 2
HIGH (TIED #7 OVERALL)	CE12		Explore a youth leadership program to help engage younger citizens. Consider collaborating with high schools to facilitate an entrepreneurship effort. Include elementary, middle, and high schools.			GENERAL FUND		2, 2
HIGH (TIED #7 OVERALL)	I21	7	Evaluate Road Capacity of Barnett Shoals Road and Create/Implement Design	2027-2028	CONSIDER PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG BARNETT SHOALS ROAD TO ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY. <u>NOTE: MAYOR AND STAFF HAVE DISCUSSED WITH GA POWER TO MOVE POLES BUT LIKELY TO BE COST PROHIBITIVE (E.G.: \$50K/POLE PLUS ROW COSTS AND PROCESS. CONSIDER WORKING WITH COUNTY TO SHRINK ROAD AND WIDEN SIDEWALKS IN NEXT ROUND OF TSPLOST FUNDING.</u>	TSPLOST, County, Grant	\$1 M	2, 2

Strategic Initiatives
City of Watkinsville

Council priorities from 2/26/2025 Retreat

KEY: DCA Short-Term Work Program, 2023-2027

Areas of

- Influence: ED - Economic Development
LU- Land Use
I - Infrastructure
GOV - Government Operations
CE - Community Engagement

Priority	Area of Influence	DCA Short-Term Work Program Reference	Description	Status Completed, In process, Ongoing, or Move forward (→)	Notes	Funding Source	Estimated Budget	Council Retreat Ranking
HIGH (TIED #8 OVERALL)	I25		Explore relocation of City Hall/PD and Public Works, freeing up the existing City Hall for other (i.e.: private) investment			Future SPLOST		2
HIGH (TIED #8 OVERALL)	LU21		Explore opportunities for active recreation in our existing parks and greenspaces (e.g.: pickle ball, basketball, etc. items with little staff requirements)			Future SPLOST		2
HIGH (#9 OVERALL)	CE10		Support existing events that pull people to Watkinsville and increase cultural connectivity – Annual WPD Easter Egg Hunt, Annual WPD Cops 'n Bobbers Fishing Tournament, Farmer's Market, Oconee Chamber Annual Fall Festival, Downtown is Trick or Treating, Christmas Parade & Tree Lighting, and other events like First Friday and History day.	IN PROCESS: August 2024 - BBQ And Bake Off held at Rocket Field. FY26/FY27 GOALS: April/May 2025 - Art & Jazz Festival in collaboration with OCAF at Rocket Field. July 2025 - America's 250th birthday is Saturday, July 4, 2026. Consider partnership with Oconee County, Russ Tanner, partners, etc. Perhaps a weekend full of various celebrations.	CONSIDER FLAG DAY AND/OR JULY 4TH (SMALL) HOMETOWN PARADE AROUND ROCKET FIELD AND CONNECT TO HARDEN HILL SIDEWALK; WORK WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS (OCONEE TOURISM, UNG, ETC.) TO TAKE THE LEAD ON SOME OF THESE EVENTS. <u>OCTOBER 2023</u> - CREATIVE PLACEMAKING EVENT AT ROCKET FIELD; DOWNTOWN IS TRICK OR TREATING EVENT. <u>DECEMBER 2023</u> - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE & TREE LIGHTING. <u>APRIL 2024</u> - ANNUAL WPD EASTER EGG HUNT, FARMERS MARKET (THRU OCTOBER). <u>MAY 2024</u> - ANNUAL WPD COPS 'N BOBBERS FISHING TOURNAMENT. <u>AUGUST 2024</u> - BBQ AND BAKE OFF EVENT HELD AT ROCKET FIELD. <u>OCTOBER 2024</u> - OCONEE CHAMBER ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL, DOWNTOWN IS TRICK OR TREATING. <u>DECEMBER 2024</u> - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE & TREE LIGHTING	GENERAL FUND, PRIVATE SECTOR, GRANTS		3, 2
HIGH (#10 OVERALL)	ED21	5	Explore Truck Bypass	IN PROCESS: GDOT awarded \$5 million, 5-year contract to NV5 lead the Watkinsville Bypass project connecting SR 24 and SR 15	WORK ON MANAGING VEHICULAR TRAFFIC ALONG GATEWAYS/ROADWAYS ENTERING CITY; ENHANCE AND IMPROVE LOOK. 2021: MAYOR ASSIGNED COUNCIL MEMBERS CAMPBELL AND THOMAS TO WORK ON HWY 15 TRUCK BYPASS. <u>FALL 2023:</u> GDOT CONDUCTED FEASIBILITY STUDY. <u>DECEMBER 2024:</u> GDOT AWARDED \$5 MILLION BYPASS PROJECT TO NV5. WORK WILL INCLUDE GEOMATICS, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, ROADWAY AND BRIDGE DESIGN, HYDRAULIC AND HYDROLOGICAL ANALYSIS, TRAFFIC AND GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING, RIGHT-OF-WAY SERVICES, AND EROSION CONTROL. NOTE: CITY WILL CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR IT.	GDOT, FHWA	UNKNOWN	3, 3

Strategic Initiatives
City of Watkinsville

Council priorities from 2/26/2025 Retreat

KEY: DCA Short-Term Work Program, 2023-2027

Areas of

- Influence: **ED** - Economic Development
LU - Land Use
I - Infrastructure
GOV - Government Operations
CE - Community Engagement

Priority	Area of Influence	DCA Short-Term Work Program Reference	Description	Status Completed, In process, Ongoing, or Move forward (→)	Notes	Funding Source	Estimated Budget	Council Retreat Ranking
HIGH (TIED #11 OVERALL)	ED22		Evaluate creation of maker space in Industrial Area			Future SPLOST, PRIVATE SECTOR		3
HIGH (TIED #11 OVERALL)	LU1	9	Activate <u>AND FINISH</u> Harris Shoals Park Master Plan	COMPLETED: January 2025 - Phase 2 Boardwalk Reconstruction; IN PROCESS: Phase 3: Construct Giardini Green. Estimated completion April 2025. Release RFP for pedestrian bridge over dam.	<u>MARCH 2021 - MASTER PLAN ADOPTED BY COUNCIL. FALL 2023- PHASE 1: BATHROOM RENO, PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS. JANUARY 2025 - PHASE 2: BOARDWALK RECONSTRUCTION. ESTIMATED COMPLETION APRIL 2025 - PHASE 3: CONSTRUCT GIARDINI GREEN AND PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OVER DAM. CITY CONTINUES TO LOOK AT POSSIBLE PARK EXPANSION BUT TO DATE LANDOWNERS NOT INTERESTED.</u>	SPLOST III, TSPLOST, General Fund	\$1 M	3

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	CE11	14	Explore establishment of local history museum in partnership with the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation	2027	TIE TO ED19. <u>ADD</u> : THOMAS FARM PRESERVE AS A POSSIBLE LOCATION TO CONSIDER.	General Fund, Grants	UNKNOWN	
	CE13		Lean into collaborative opportunities and practical ways to engage with esp, Lidia's Place, OCAF			GENERAL FUND		
	CE14		Extension of Library Hours			GENERAL FUND		
	ED19	11	Develop a Downtown Master Plan	IN PROCESS : (1) Complete Reimagination of Rocket Field (e.g.: additional trees, shade sails). (2) Kick off effort to establish an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Downtown.	PLANNING SHOULD INCLUDE (1) POTENTIAL USE OF EXISTING PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING AT 1030 EXP STATION (2) HWY 53/EXP STATION/MARS HILL PHASE 3 EXPANSION (<i>County estimates completion ~2035</i>). <u>SEPTEMBER 2022</u> - ACTIVATED THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND BOARD. <u>JANUARY 2023</u> - HIRED A DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR. <u>MAY 2023</u> - DEVELOPED A WORK PLAN WITH INTENT TO DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN IN FUTURE YEARS. <u>NOVEMBER 2024</u> - RECEIVED \$35K GRANT FROM GEORGIA POWER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN. <u>JANUARY 2025</u> - HIRED NEW DDA DIRECTOR.	General Fund, Grants, Private Investment, SPLOST III	\$65,000	
	GOV24		Pursue certification of Police Department	2026	INVOLVES ESTABLISHING STANDARDS AND POLICIES FOR PD TO TRIGGER 3 YEAR CERTIFICATION (GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE) EFFORT. <u>CHIEF RECOMMENDATION IS TO CONSIDER GMA CERTIFICATION ("EXCELLENCE IN POLICING") AS IT IS LESS STAFF INTENSE AND IS SUSTAINABLE BY SMALLER AGENCIES. IT OFFERS A 5% REDUCTION IN GIRMA INSURANCE PREMIUM. ONCE ESTABLISHED, CHIEF SUGGESTS GOING AFTER STATE CERTIFICATION WITH THE GEORIGA ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE. ONCE ACHIEVED, THE CITY WOULD RECEIVE A 20% REDUCTION IN GIRMA INSURANCE PREMIUM.</u>	GENERAL FUND		

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	GOV28		Ordinance for shared kitchens			GENERAL FUND		
	GOV29		Update historic signs entering city. Also, historical markers.			SPLOST III		
	GOV30		Relocate Public Works facility and repurpose existing land and facilities for a higher and best use (perhaps a space for businesses).			SPLOST III, Future SPLOST		
	I13		Street lights and signs (Way finding, market and welcome signage); repair and replace as needed	COMPLETED: NOVEMBER 2023	UPDATE: SEE ALSO I15. TIES TO ED19 AND I4.	General Fund, SPLOST II, III		
	I15		Establish a Street Light Policy	IN PROCESS	CONSENSUS TO HANDLE VIA AN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT AND MAKE AVAILABLE ONLINE TO PUBLIC.	General Fund		
	I20	8	Construct Mulberry/Simonton Bridge Road Pedestrian Connector to Downtown	IN PROCESS: 2025	CONSTRUCT A 10-FOOT WIDE SIDEPATH/SIDEWALK ALONG SIMONTON BRIDGE ROAD TO PROVIDE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY TO DOWNTOWN. CITY APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED A GEORGIA TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK \$2.225M LOAN AND \$1.53M GRANT AWARD TO CONSTRUCT AN APPROXIMATELY 3,100 LINEAR FOOT, 10 FOOT WIDE PATHWAY ALONG SIMONTON BRIDGE ROAD FROM SIMONTON PLACE NEIGHBORHOOD TO MULBERRY STREET. WORK BEGAN IN JULY TO CONSTRUCT THE PATH.	GTIB LOAN/GRANT, SPLOST III, TSPLOST	\$4 M	
	I23		Remove powerpoles along Main Street and go underground with power and communication lines to improve and elevate streetscape.			Future SPLOST		
	I24		Connect Durham Street to HSP via sidewalks			Future TSPLOST		
	I26		More decorative streetlamps along city sidewalks			Future TSPLOST		
	I27		Explore Traffic Calming opportunities			SPLOST III		

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	LU4	6	Explore Rail Trail Opportunity	IN PROCESS: Unknown	POTENTIAL TO BE TRANSFORMATIVE FOR CITY. <u>NOTE:</u> RAIL LINE IS PRIVATELY HELD. CITY TO CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR RAIL TRAIL.	County, FEDERAL or STATE GRANTS, TSPLOST, PRIVATE FUNDRAISING	UNKNOWN	
	LU11	12	Consider Establishing Arts Committee	2025	PARTNER WITH OCAF; WORK TO FUND ONE PIECE A YEAR TO WORK TOWARDS A CITYWIDE COLLECTION (COULD CONSIDER ADDING A REQUEST OF NEW DEVELOPERS TO CONTRIBUTE X% TO CITY PUBLIC ART PROGRAM). TIES INTO ED19. <u>NOTE:</u> SUGGESTED POSSIBLY PARTNERING WITH THE DDA. <u>MAYOR ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY 2025.</u>	GENERAL FUND, SPLOST III, GRANTS	\$3,000	
	LU14	3	Establish a citywide beautification program.	ONGOING: MAIN STREET BEAUTIFICATION	NEED TO CONSIDER IMPROVING ENTRANCE SIGNAGE AND PLANTINGS ALONG ENTRY CORRIDORS. TIES INTO ED19. DECEMBER 2023: ENTRANCE SIGNS & LANDSCAPING - COMPLETED.	General Fund, Grants, SPLOST III	\$30,000	
	LU22		Investigate smaller, pocket parks around the city (e.g.: benches, picnic tables, play structures, etc.) within a preferred "walk shed"			Future TSPLOST		
	LU23		Addition of public art installations			Future TSPLOST		