

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040 SUMMARY

GARDEN CITY
2020 UPDATE



Adopted by Garden City City Council
October 18, 2021



**ADVANCING TOGETHER.
REDEFINING TOMORROW.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Garden City 2040

Garden City's Comprehensive Plan is the community's principal guiding or "vision" document—designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program to maintain and enhance the health and viability of the jurisdiction. The Comprehensive Plan lays out the desired future for Garden City, and relates how that future is to be achieved. The plan serves as a resource to both the public and private sector by projecting how land will develop, how housing will be made available, how jobs will be attracted and retained, how open space and the environment will be protected, how public services and facilities will be provided, and how transportation facilities will be improved. In short, Garden City's Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide for consistent policy direction.

Garden City's City Council and local community leaders will use the Garden City 2040 Comprehensive Plan in the following ways:

The Future Land Use Map shall be referenced in making rezoning and capital investment decisions:

It provides a representation of the community's vision helping to guide development based on community preferences and also indicates character areas where various types of land uses should be permitted.

The Comprehensive Plan provides policies that help guide day-to-day decisions:

These policies are reflections of community values identified through public outreach efforts. These policies will be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions and other capital investment decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan includes an Implementation Program that will direct public investment and private initiative:

Plan implementation is carried out through the adoption and revision of regulations, including zoning and development codes, and through the completion of projects and programs outlined in the Community Goals and Community Strategic Plan and Work Program. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document and should be updated regularly as conditions change and shifts occur in public policy.

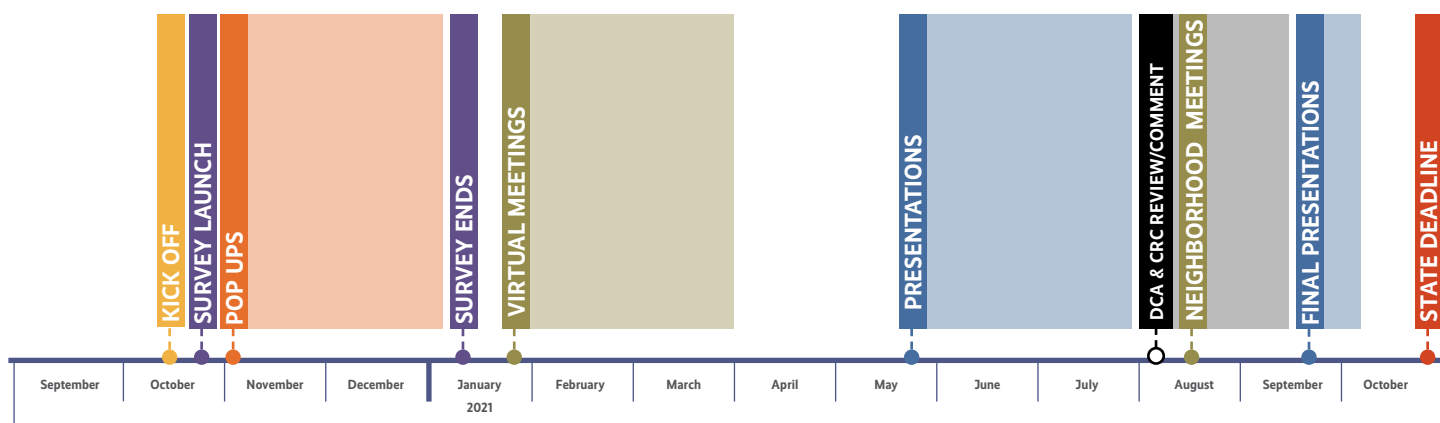
The following pages describe the results of public participation that informed and guided the development of this planning document.

PLAN SCHEDULE

The comprehensive planning process required approximately eighteen months to complete. From March 2020 to October 2021, the MPC worked closely with city planning staff, the City Council, and citizens of Garden City to identify issues, share strengths and develop visions, goals, and strategies for Garden City 2040.

City Council along with various stakeholders regularly reviewed planning concepts and provided feedback on critical issues.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE



UNDERSTAND & EXPLORE

- Project Launch & Work Plan
- Background Review & Research
- Survey Launch
- Comment Mapper Launch
- Pop-ups Begin

ENGAGE & DEVELOP

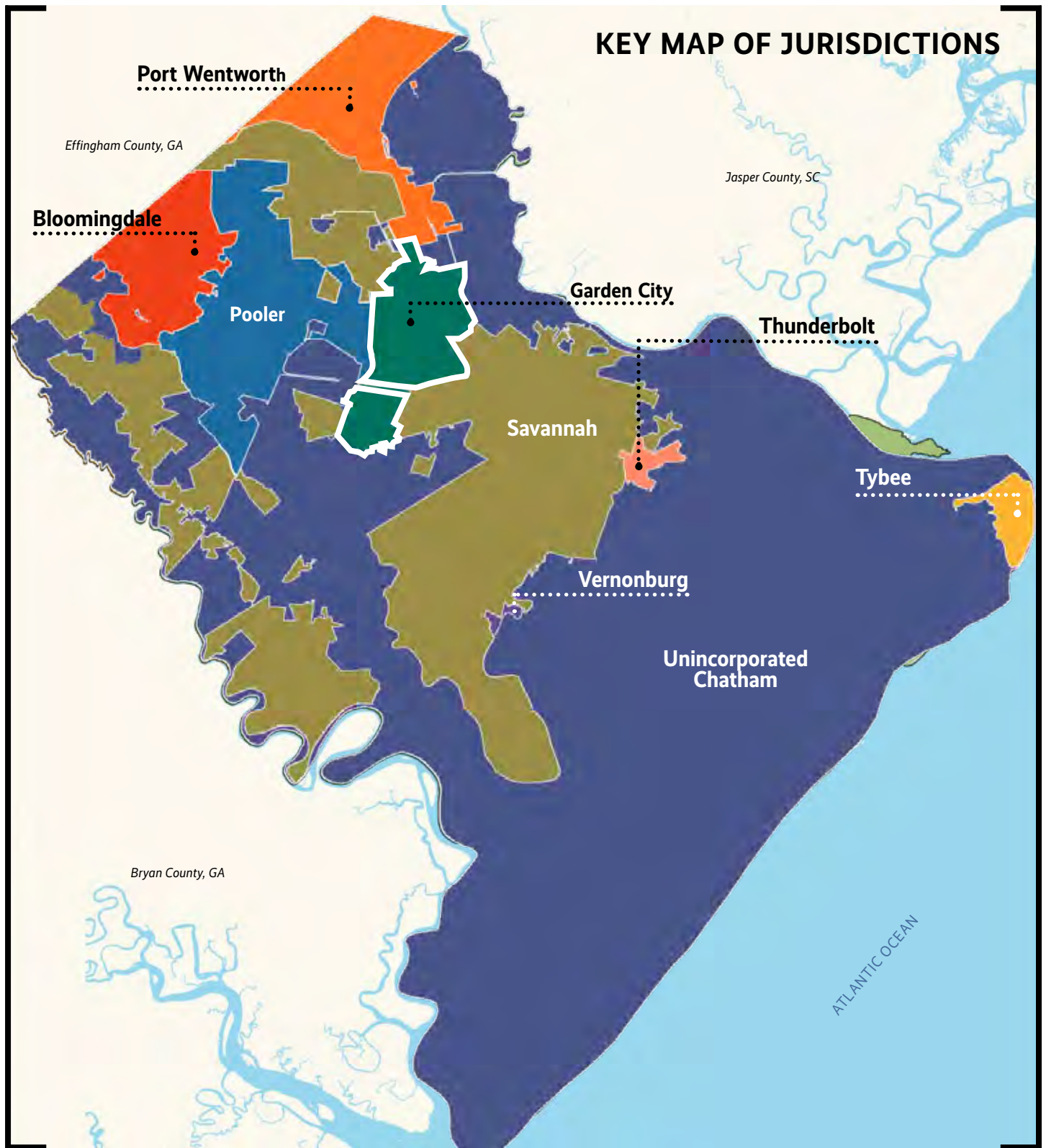
- Draft Element Visions & Goals
- Draft Short Term Work Programs
- Public Engagement Evaluation
- Virtual Meetings
- Subcommittee Meetings

REFINE & FINALIZE

- Draft Plan Development
- Plan Refinement
- Draft Presentations
- DCA & CRC Review
- Final Presentation & Adoption

FINAL PLAN

PLANNING PHASES



WHY DO WE PLAN?

The Georgia Planning Act requires that cities and counties maintain comprehensive plans that help shape future growth. These plans generally recognize the physical, economic, social, political, and aesthetic factors of a community and are developed in a process that includes thoughtful analysis and robust public engagement.

Garden City 2040 serves as the comprehensive plan for Garden City. The plan follows the minimum standards and procedures for local government planning set out in O.C.G.A. 50-8-7.1(b), reflecting the principles of partnership and the unique needs, conditions, and aspirations of the community.

To ensure that public participation in the planning process will result in meaningful implementation through zoning and other administrative mechanisms, a policy of "consistency" was discussed at public meetings. This proposed policy was strongly endorsed by the public. Garden City 2040 will be reviewed and amended prior to amending zoning or other implementing ordinances. In other words, official policy established in Garden City 2040 will become the basis for zoning amendments.

The six planning elements shown below are highlights of Garden City 2040.

- Quality of Life
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Natural Resources



COMPONENTS OF GARDEN CITY 2040

Garden City 2040 is to be a tool used in evaluating future proposals and policy changes to ensure consistent decisions are made. Each element is comprised of a vision statement, goals, objectives and strategies to accomplish the vision. These terms, often used to describe policy recommendations are described below:

ELEMENT:

These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's Comprehensive Plan

VISION:

Each element contains a vision statement that is supported by multiple goals. A vision statement can become a compass, pointing the way to a common direction.

GOAL:

General overarching, broad statements describing the direction that a community wants to go.

OBJECTIVES:

Express the kinds of action that are necessary to achieve the stated goals without assigning responsibility to any specific action.

STRATEGIES:

Statements of specific actions that should be taken, identifying the responsible party/parties, the time frame within which the action should occur, and other details for implementation to occur.



HOUSING

In 2040...

Garden City is a Safe, Family-Oriented and Business Friendly Community.

GOAL:

1. Improve neighborhood stability where all residents, regardless of income, can occupy, maintain and improve their homes without undue financial hardship

Objectives:

- A. Assist households annually avoid eviction, foreclosure, property loss or homelessness

Strategy:

- i. Survey and designate historically significant industrial buildings, complexes, and other at-risk infrastructure.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following words shall have the meaning as contained herein unless the context does not permit such meaning.

	Definitions
Character Areas	<p>A specific geographic area or district within the community that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced, • Has Potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development, • Requires special attention due to unique development issues. <p>Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the Community Goals</p>
Community	Local jurisdiction (county or municipality) or group of local jurisdictions (in the case of a joint plan) that are preparing a local plan
Comprehensive Plan	<p>A plan meeting the Minimum Standards and Procedures.</p> <p>The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the Minimum Standards and Procedures for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of comprehensive plans, established by the Department in accordance with O.C.G.A. 50–8–71(b) and 50–8–72</p>
Comprehensive Planning Process	Planning by counties or municipalities in accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures in O.C.G.A. 50–8–71(b) and 50–8–72
Conflict	<p>Any conflict, dispute, or inconsistency arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between or among plans, or components thereof, for any counties or municipalities, as proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented • Between or among plans for any regions, as proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented • Between or among plans, or components thereof, for any counties or municipalities and plans for the region which include such counties or municipalities, as such plan are proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented

Terms not defined in these rules but defined in O.C.G.A. 50–8–1, et seq, shall have the meanings contained therein.

	Definitions
Core Elements	Community, Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and Community Work Program. These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's comprehensive plan
County	Any county of this state
Days	Meaning calendar days, unless otherwise specified
Density	An objective measurement of the number of people or residential units allowed per unit of land, such as dwelling units per acre
Department	Department of Community Affairs established under O.C.G.A.50–8–1
Governing Body	Board of Commissioners of a county, sole commissioner or a county, council, commissioners, or other governing authority of a county or municipality
Infrastructure	Man-made structures which serve the common needs of the population, such as: sewage disposal systems; potable water systems; potable water wells serving a system; solid waste disposal sites or retention areas; stormwater systems; utilities; piers; docks; navigation channels; bridges; roadways
Qualified Local Government	Any county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization, a federally designated agency created in urban areas containing more than 50,000 people that are charged with conducting comprehensive, coordinated planning processes to determine the transportation needs of their respective constituencies, and prioritizing and programming projects (bicycle and pedestrian projects) for federal funding
Minimum Standards and Procedures	Minimum Standards and Procedures, including the minimum elements which shall be addressed and included, for preparation of comprehensive plans, for implementation of comprehensive plans, for updates of comprehensive plans including update schedules, and for participation in the coordinated and comprehensive planning process



Facts

	Definitions
Mediation	The process to be employed by the Department and Regional Commissions for resolving conflicts which may arise from time to time in the comprehensive planning process. Procedures and guidelines to govern mediation are as established by the Department pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-7. I(d)
Municipality	Any municipal corporation of the state and any consolidated government of the state
Plan	The comprehensive plan for any county or municipality
Plan Amendment	A change to the adopted plan that occurs between plan updates. Amendments of the adopted plan are appropriate when the conditions, policies, etc., on which the plan is based, have significantly changed so as to materially detract from the usefulness of the plan as a guide to local decision making, or when required by the Department as a result of changes to the Minimum Standards and Procedures
Plan Update	A more or less complete re-write of the plan, which shall occur approximately every five years, in accordance with the recertification schedule maintained by the Department
Planning	The process of determining actions which state agencies, Regional Commissions, and local governments propose to take
Qualified Local Government	A county or municipality that adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan as defined in the Minimum Standards and Procedures.
Regional Commission	A Regional Commission established under O.C.G.A 50-8-32
Regional Plan	The comprehensive plan for a region prepared by the Regional Commission in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the Department

	Definitions
Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria	Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.
Service Delivery Strategy	The intergovernmental arrangement among municipal governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy law. To ensure consistency between the plan and the agreed upon strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy The service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy As provided in Code Section 36-70-28 (b)(1), Service Delivery Strategies must be reviewed, and revised if necessary, in conjunction with county and municipal comprehensive plan updates
Supplemental Planning Recommendation	The supplemental recommendations provided by the Department to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The plan preparers and the community are encouraged to review these recommended best practices where referenced in the Minimum Standards and Procedures and choose those that have applicability or helpfulness to the community and its planning process.
Update Schedule	The schedule or schedules for updating comprehensive plans on an annual or five-year basis as provided for in paragraph (2)(b) of Section 110-12-1-.04. The term "Update Schedule" also means an additional schedule for the review of Service Delivery Strategy agreements by counties and affected municipalities on a ten-year basis in conjunction with comprehensive plan updates



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Introduction

Originally founded in 1939, Garden City features a blend of industry and small business, and boasts a rich history, friendly neighborhoods, a vibrant economy, and quality services for its residents. As a full-service municipality, the city provides multiple services from police and fire protection to water/sewer service, solid waste collection, street and drainage maintenance, recreational programs and facilities, code enforcement, and more.

Garden City is defined by responsive, visionary leadership through its seven member City Council. From its founding in 1939 until 2009, it operated under a mayor-council form of government. The City has since adopted a council-manager form of government, with the mayor, one at-large council member and five district-elected council members. The City operates and funds its municipal services via a combination of property taxes, sales taxes, user fees and other sources.

GARDEN CITY

Population

As of 2018, Garden City had an estimated population of 8,936 with a population density of 616 people per square mile. U.S. Census records show the population increased rapidly from 1970–1980 and continued to grow until reaching its peak of 9,962 in 2000. By 2010, the population had decreased slightly and has remained at approximately the same level until today.

With the exception of the population snapshot found in Figure 1.3, the population data presented throughout is from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) multiyear estimates covering the 2014–2018 period and was the most current publicly available ACS multiyear data at the time of reporting.

Population Growth, 1970–2018

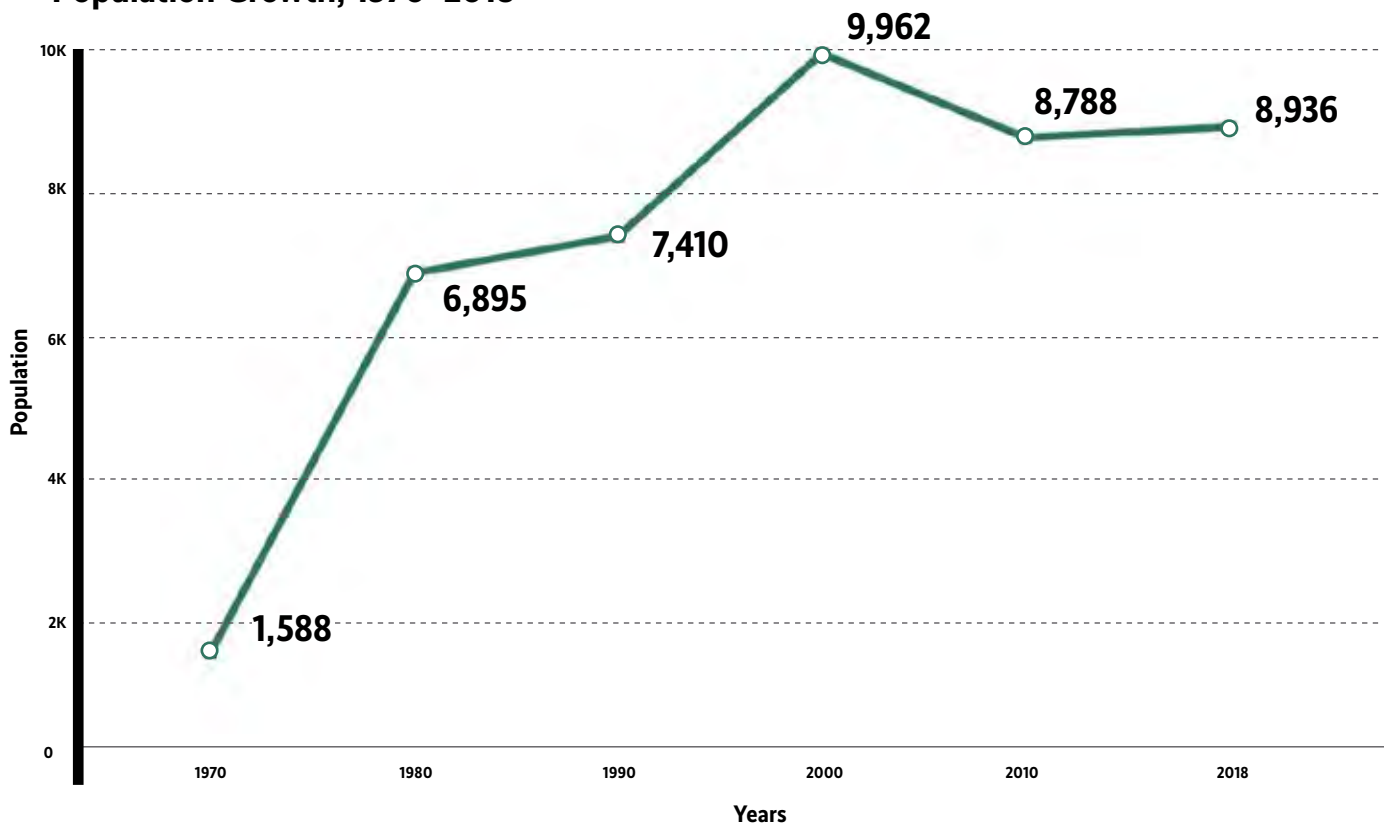


Figure 1.1–Population Growth, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

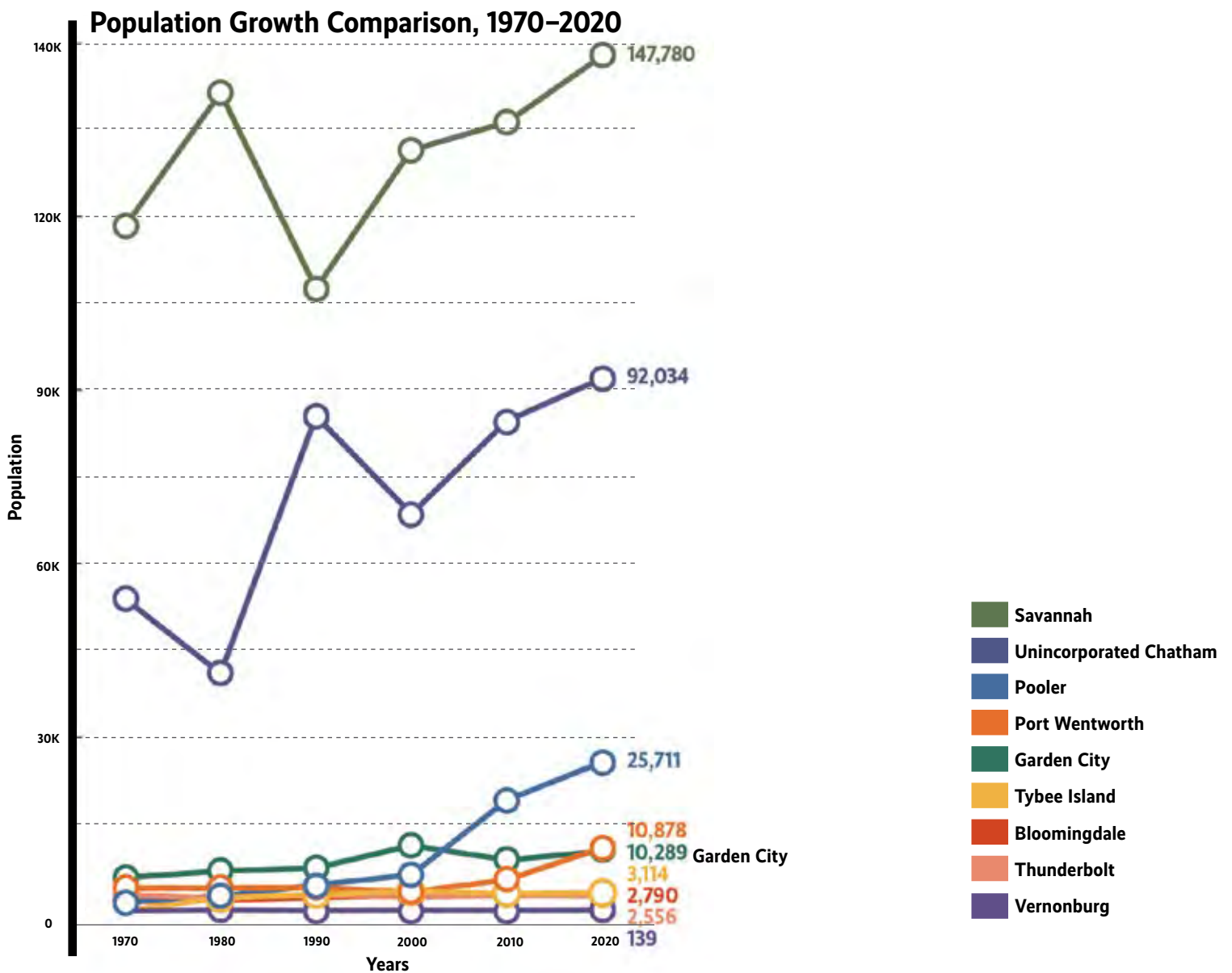


Figure 1.2–Population Comparison, 1970–2020, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

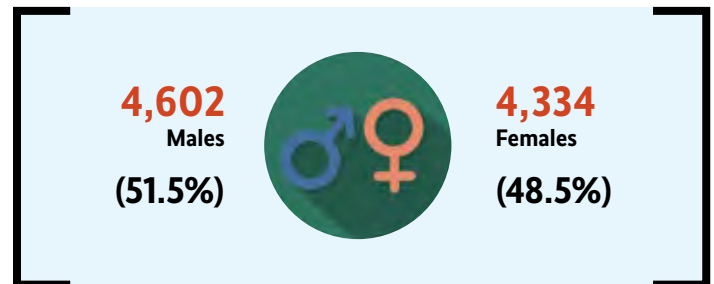
Gender & Age

Of the 8,936 people living in Garden City in 2014–2018, 48.5% were female, and 51.5% were male. Residents of Garden City had the youngest median age of any municipality in Chatham County at 31.1 years, which is nearly seven years younger than the national median (37.9 years).

The population of Garden City has gotten younger since 2010, when the median age was 35.3 years. Possible reasons for this could be that younger people are moving into the city, older residents are moving away from the city, and/or that existing residents are having more children. In particular, the number of 25–34 year olds increased nearly 10% in the years since 2013–by 2018, this cohort made up more than one-fifth of the total population of Garden City.

That same year, children under the age of 18 made up 28.2% of the population, while nearly one in eight residents were over age 65 (12.8%).

Gender Characteristics, 2014–2018



Median Age Characteristics, 2014–2018

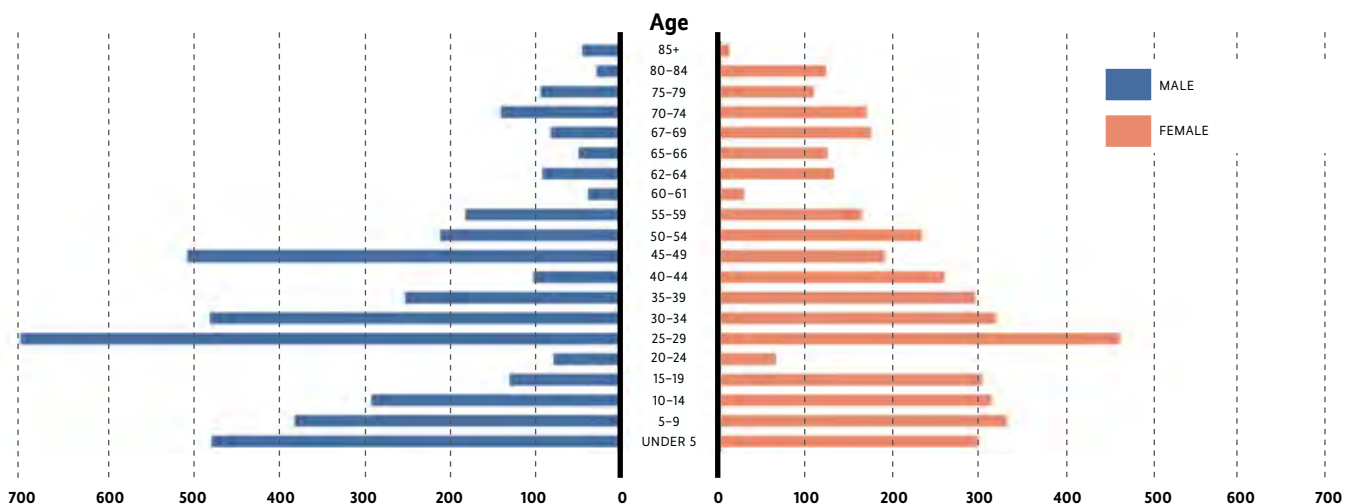
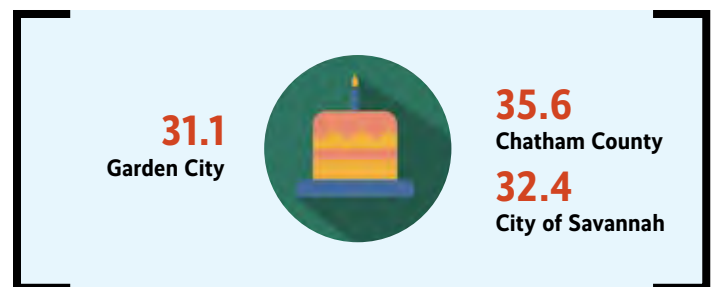


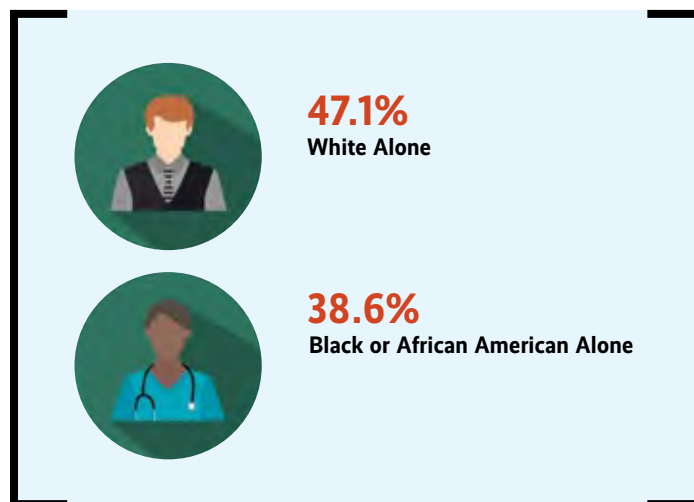
Figure 1.3–Population Pyramid, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population Diversity & Ethnicity

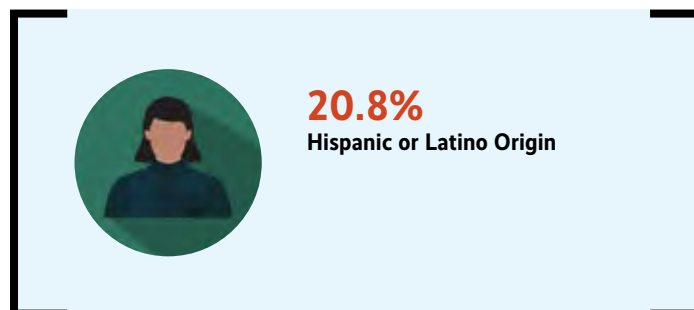
In 2014–2018, Garden City was one of the more diverse municipalities in Chatham County. While the largest racial group was white (47.1%), 38.6% of residents identified as black or African American and 5.8% identified as being of two or more races. These racial breakdowns represent people who reported only one race (aside from the "two or more races" category). One in five residents in Garden City identified as Hispanic or Latino (20.8%). Those who identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race(s), which is the largest proportion of Hispanic or Latino residents in the county.

Garden City's population has been growing more diverse since the 1970's. In the past 50 years, the non-white share of Garden City's population has doubled from roughly 25% in 1970 to 52.9% 2018.

Racial Majority Characteristics, 2014–2018



Ethnicity, 2014–2018



Population by Race, 2014–2018

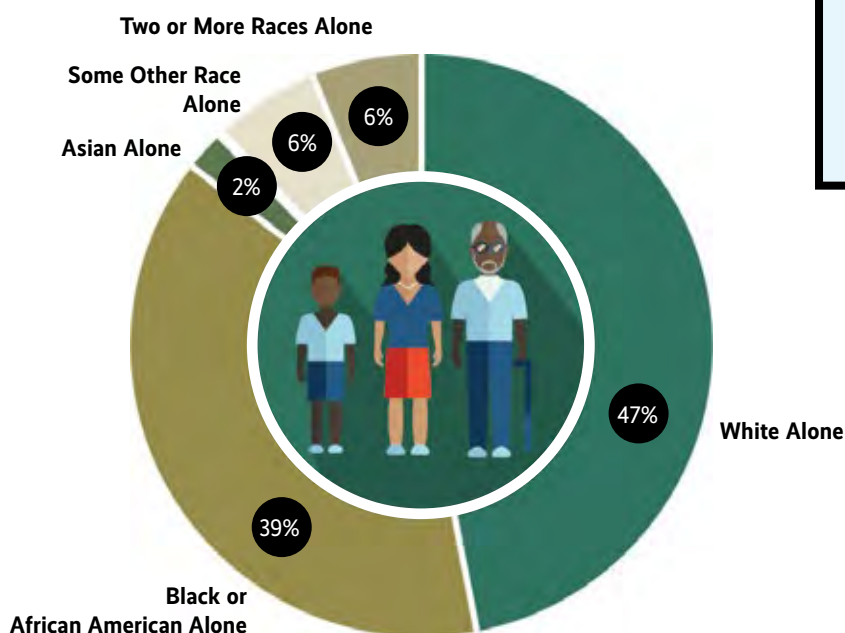


Figure 1.4–Population by Race, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Diversity Index

The diversity index determines the likelihood that two people chosen at random from a given area will be from different racial or ethnic groups. Higher values indicate more diversity in an area and lower values indicate less diversity.

On Map 1.1, block groups with high racial and ethnic diversity index scores are shown in blue. These calculations are based on the methodology described in “Mapping the USA’s diversity from 1960 to 2060” in USA TODAY.

Philip Meyer, Shawn McIntosh, THE USA TODAY INDEX OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY, International Journal of Public Opinion Research, Volume 4, Issue 1, SPRING 1992, Pages 51–58

Race & Ethnicity Changes, 1970–2010

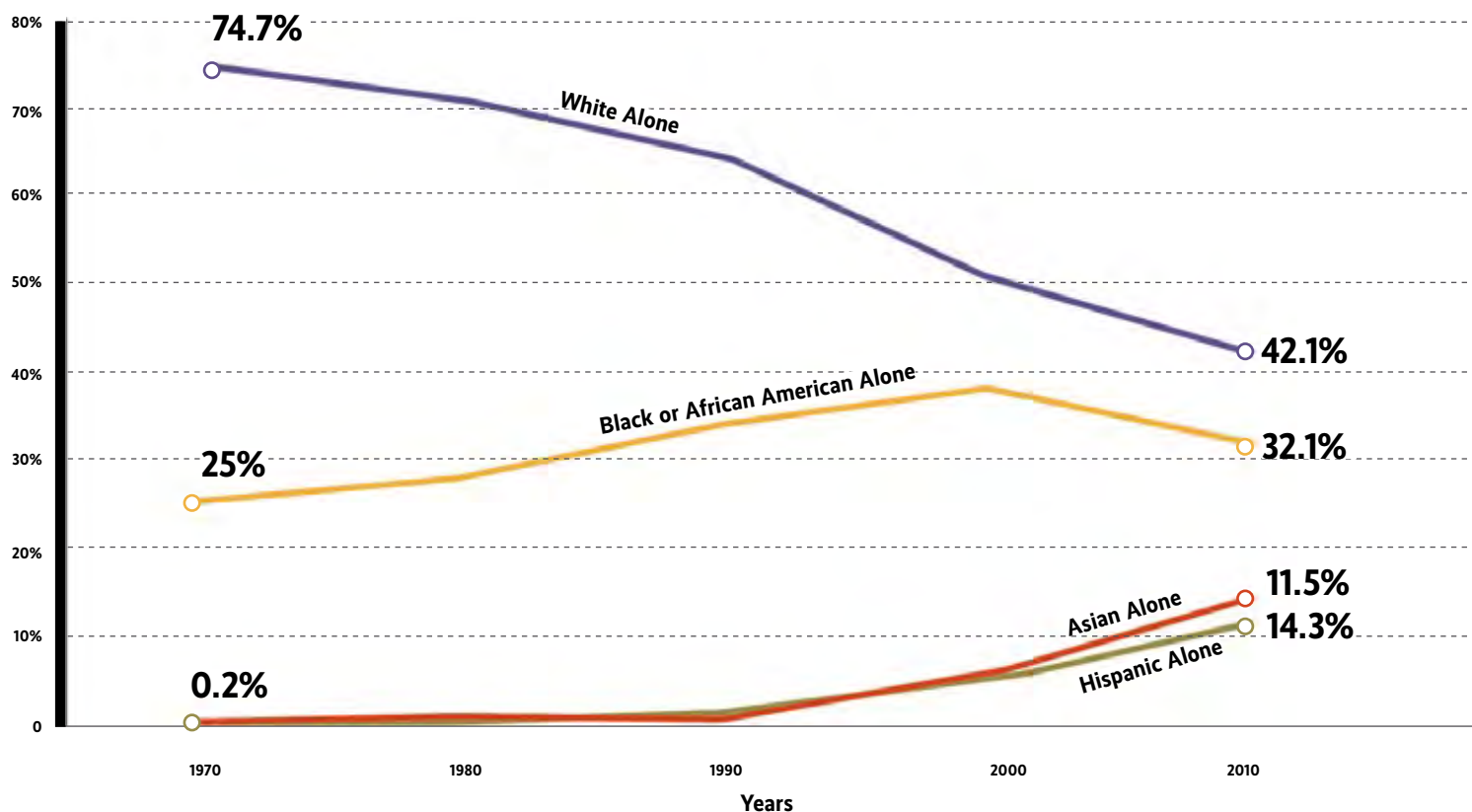
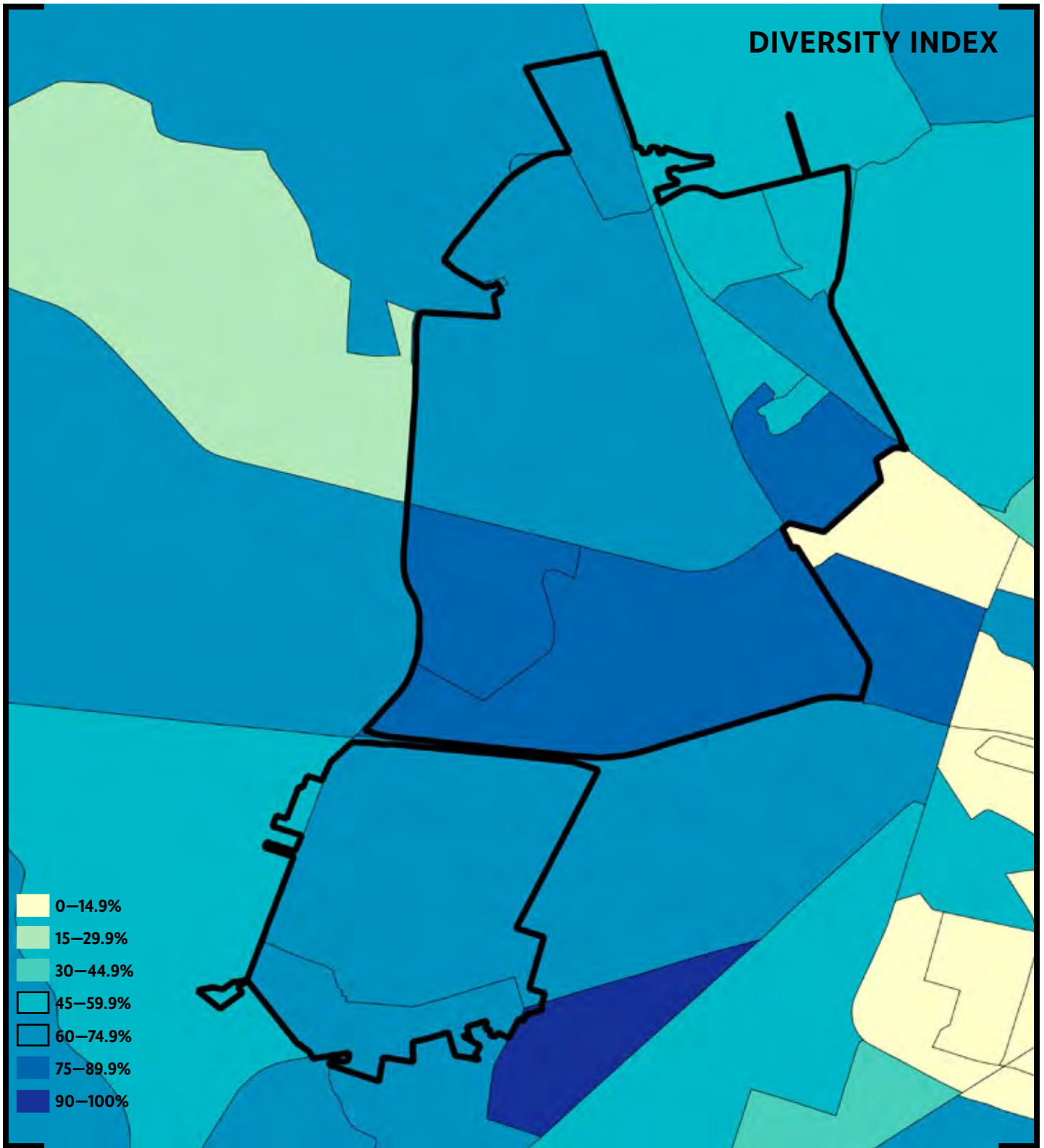


Figure 1.5–Race & Ethnicity Over Time, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.1—Diversity Index by Block Group, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment

In 2014–2018, 66.0% of people 16 years and older were employed in the civilian labor force and 3.4% were unemployed; 30.7% of residents over 16 were not in the labor force. This is significant progress over the 2009–2013 period, when just 52.8% of residents were employed in the labor force. An estimated 81.0% of employed people in Garden City were private wage and salary workers in 2018; 10.2% worked in federal, state, or local government; and 8.8% were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business.

The unemployment rate in Chatham County had been declining steadily from mid-2011 until March 2020, when the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt across the country. In April 2020, the monthly unemployment rate skyrocketed to 16.5%, higher than the rates of both Georgia (12.2%) and the United States (14.8%).

Unemployment Rate, 1992–2019

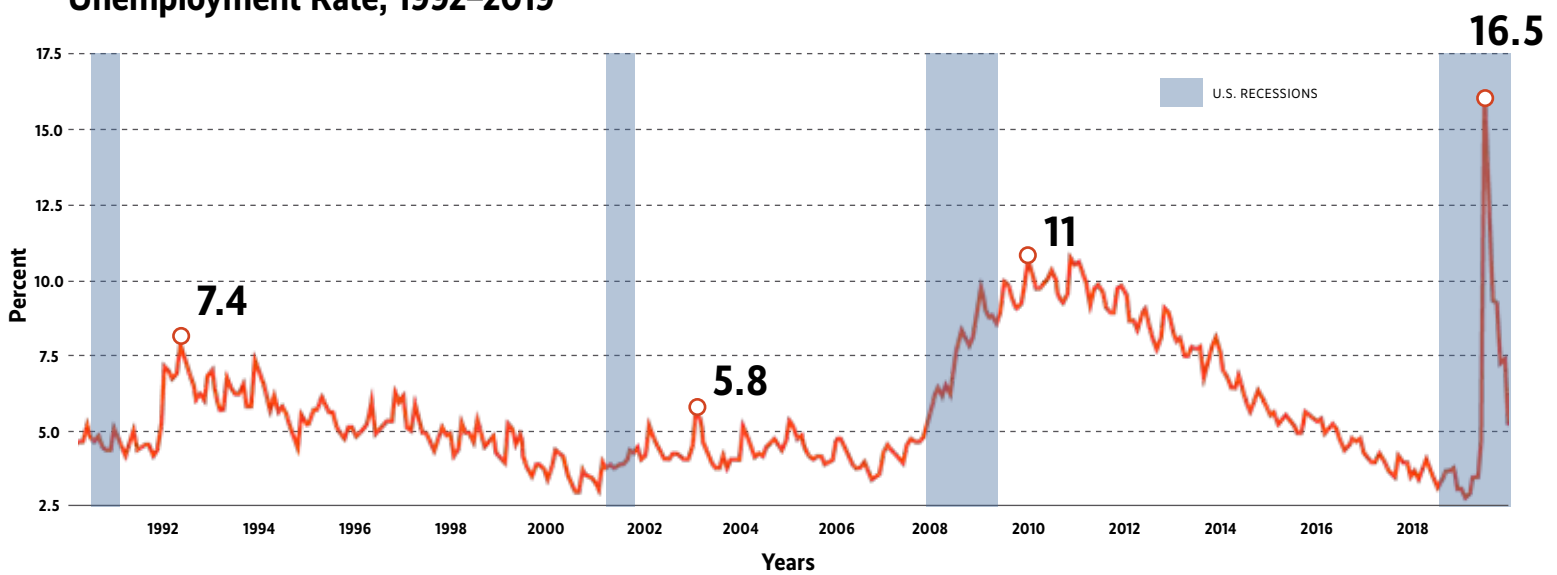


Figure 1.6–Unemployment Rate in Chatham County
Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED)

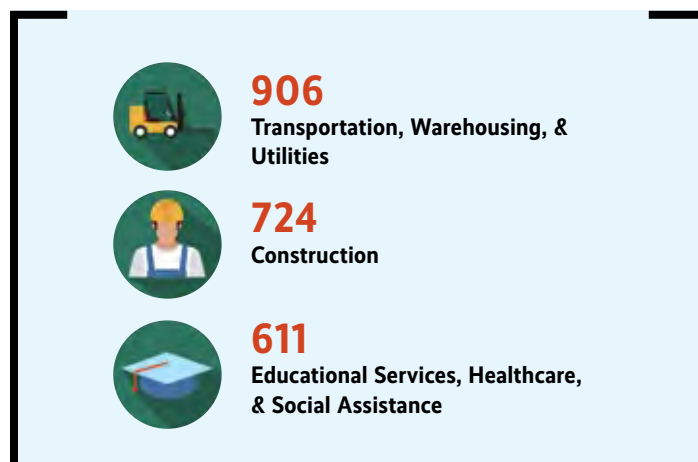
Industry

In Garden City, the three largest industries by employment in 2018 were transportation, warehousing, and utilities (906 employees); construction (724); and educational services, health care and social assistance (611). Collectively, these industries added nearly 1,000 jobs over the 2009–2013 period, more than half of which were in the transportation, warehousing, and utilities industry. This industry also saw the greatest growth in employment during that time, increasing by 10.8 percentage points.

Location quotient (LQ) is a measurement of how concentrated a particular industry is in an area relative to the nation as a whole. It compares the industry's share of local employment to the U.S. average. A LQ of 1 indicates an industry is providing the same share of jobs locally as it is nationally, a LQ above 1 indicates a higher-than-average concentration locally, and a LQ below 1 indicates jobs in that industry are less concentrated locally than the national average. The LQ for industries in Garden City is shown in Figure 1.7.

The transportation, warehousing, and utilities industry was nearly four times more concentrated than the national average in 2018. As discussed above, this industry made up the largest share of Garden City's workforce—one in five residents were employed in it in 2018—and experienced the most growth between 2014–2018. The construction industry was also nearly 2.5 times more concentrated in Garden City than the country as a whole.

Largest Industries by Employment, 2014–2018



Industry Sector Concentration, 2014–2018

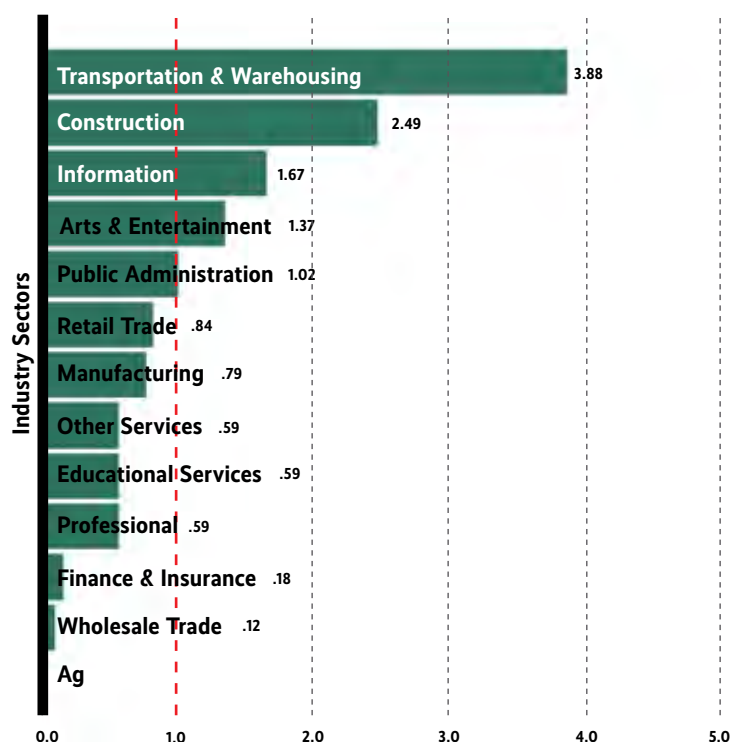


Figure 1.7—Industry Sector, Garden City

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

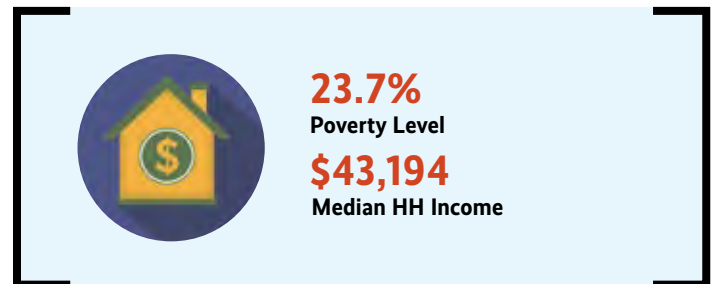
Income & Poverty

In general, household incomes in Garden City have increased significantly in recent years. In 2014–2018, the median income of households was \$43,194, an increase of more than \$10,000 over the 2009–2013 period. The distribution of household incomes in 2009–2013 and 2014–2018 is shown in Figure 1.8.

The recent rise in median household income was driven by both a decrease in the share of households making less than \$35,000 and an increase in households making \$35,000 to \$150,000. Households making \$50,000 to \$150,000 annually saw the greatest growth between the two periods of time, and by 2018, one in four households fell into this income category.

An estimated 23.7% of people in Garden City lived below poverty level in 2018. Nearly four in ten children under 18 lived in poverty (39.2%), compared with adults aged 18–64 (18.3%) and seniors aged 65 and older (13.9%).

Poverty & Income Characteristics, 2014–2018



Likewise, females were overrepresented in the population living below poverty level: while females made up only 48.4% of the total population, they made up 57.0% of the population living in poverty.

Median Household Income Change

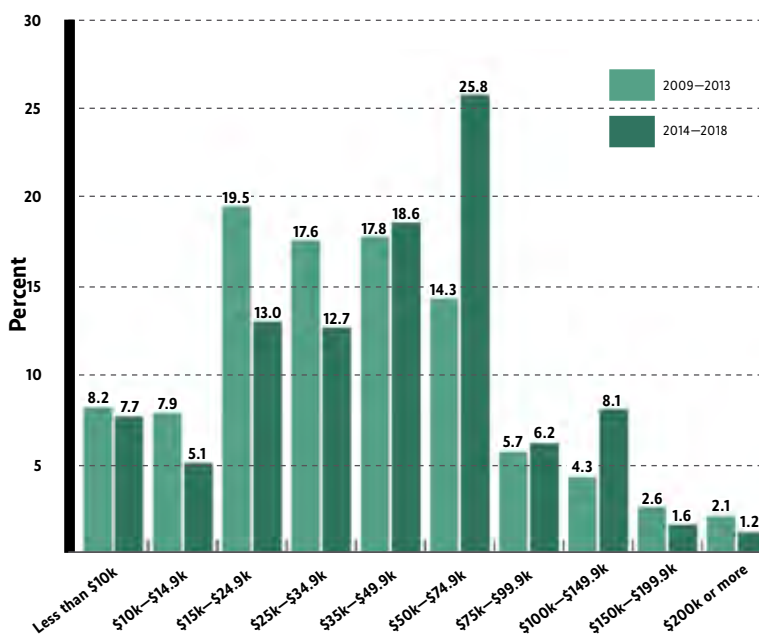


Figure 1.8–Median Household Income Change, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Status of Poverty by Age, 2014–2018

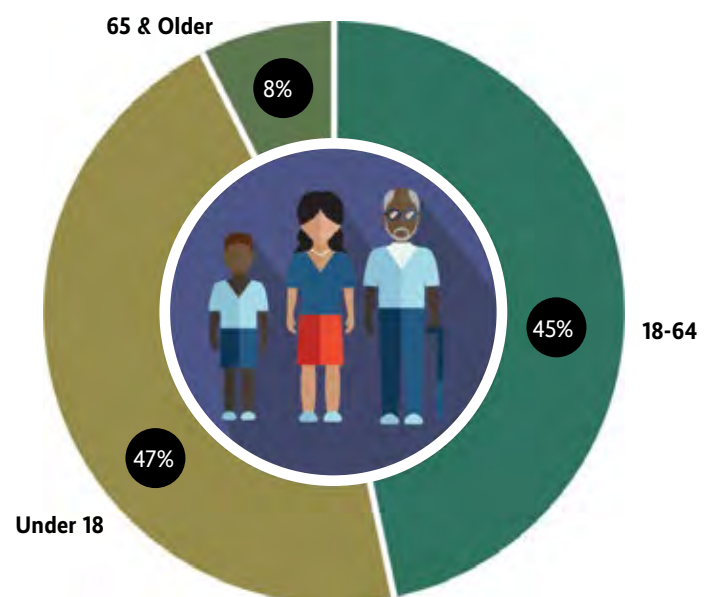
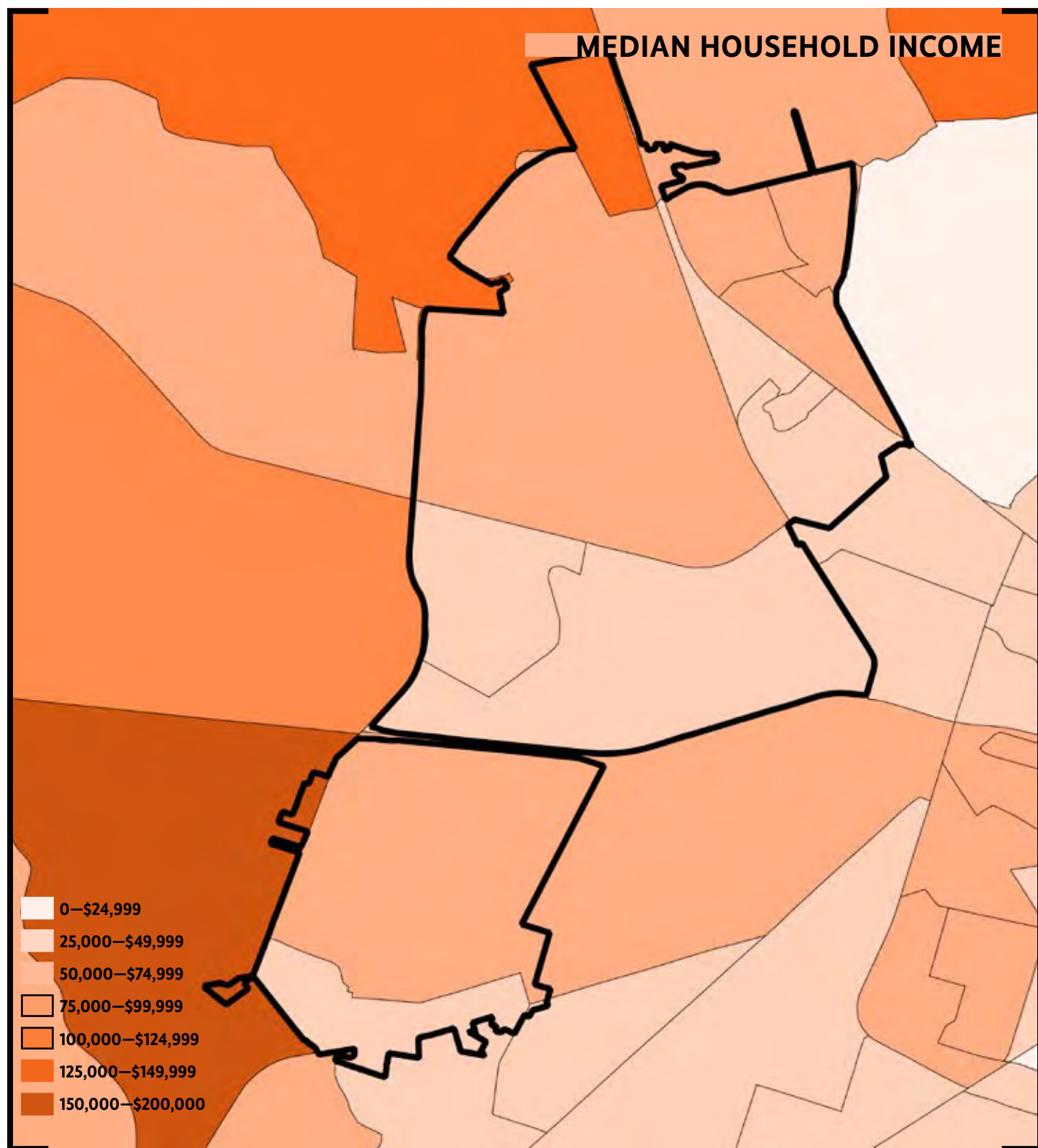


Figure 1.9–Poverty Age Status, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



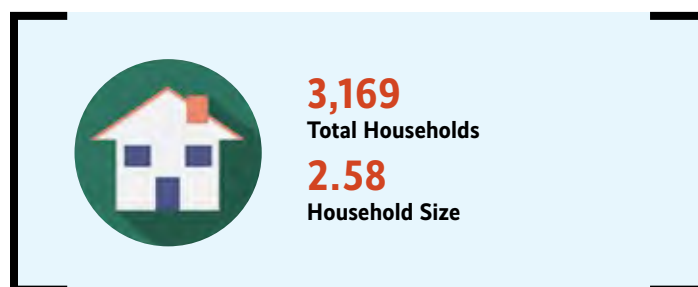
Map 1.2—Median Household Income by Block Group, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Households & Families

National trends throughout the 20th Century that saw a long-term decline in household size as families had fewer and fewer children began to reverse in the 21st Century. This is mirrored in the change in average household size in Garden City from 2000 to 2010, growing slightly from 2.56 to 2.58 people. In 2014–2018, the average household size had increased to 2.88 people. This rise is likely driven by changes in household composition in recent years; although families are postponing childbearing and having fewer children overall, the share of young adults living with their parents has increased at a greater pace, as has the share of multigenerational households.

In 2014–2018, there were an estimated 3,169 households in Garden City. Families made up 58.7% of households, while 41.3% were people living alone or with other nonfamily members.

Household & Size Characteristics, 2014–2018



Household by Type, 2014–2018

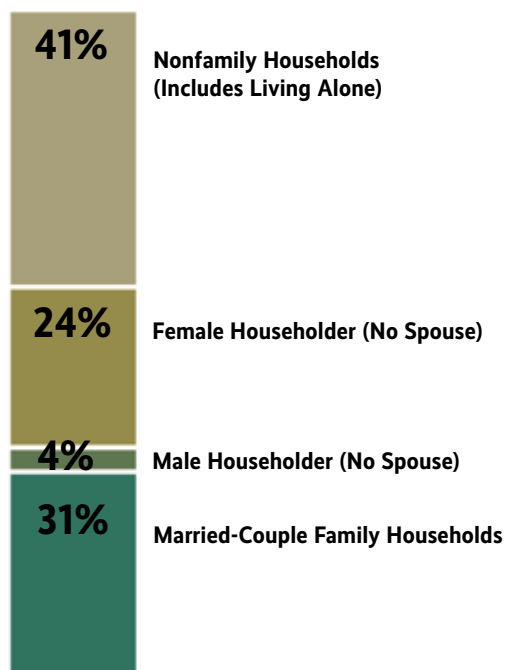


Figure 1.10–Household by Type, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Marital Status, 2014–2018

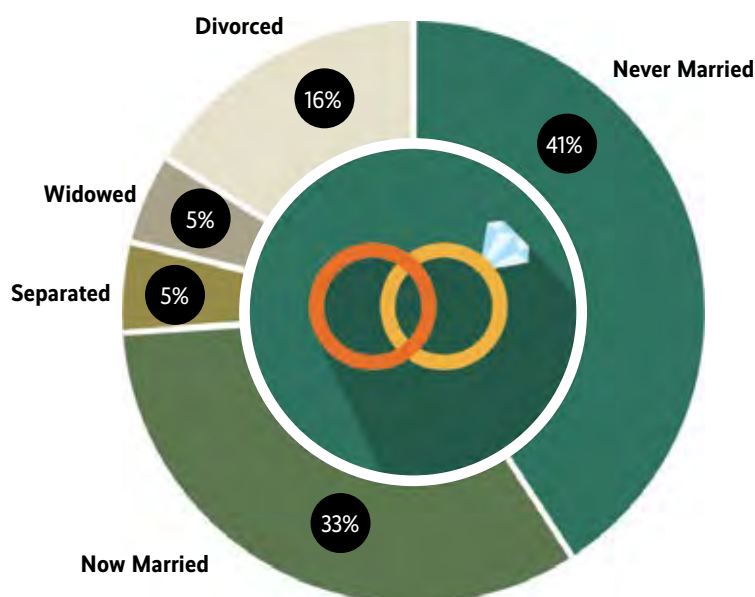


Figure 1.11–Marital Status Population 15 Years and Over, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Units, Ownership & Tenure

There were an estimated 3,552 housing units in Garden City in 2014–2018, roughly half of which were single-unit structures, which includes both detached and attached residences (i.e., townhomes). Nearly 90% of units were occupied, primarily by renters (65.3%), with homeowners inhabiting roughly one out of every three occupied housing units (34.7%).

The estimated rental vacancy rate, or amount of rental stock that is vacant for rent, was just 2.7% while the homeowner vacancy rate was 7.6%. For comparison, the national rental and homeowner vacancy rates for the same year were 6.0% and 1.7%, respectively.

Housing Characteristics, 2014–2018



Housing Types, 2014–2018

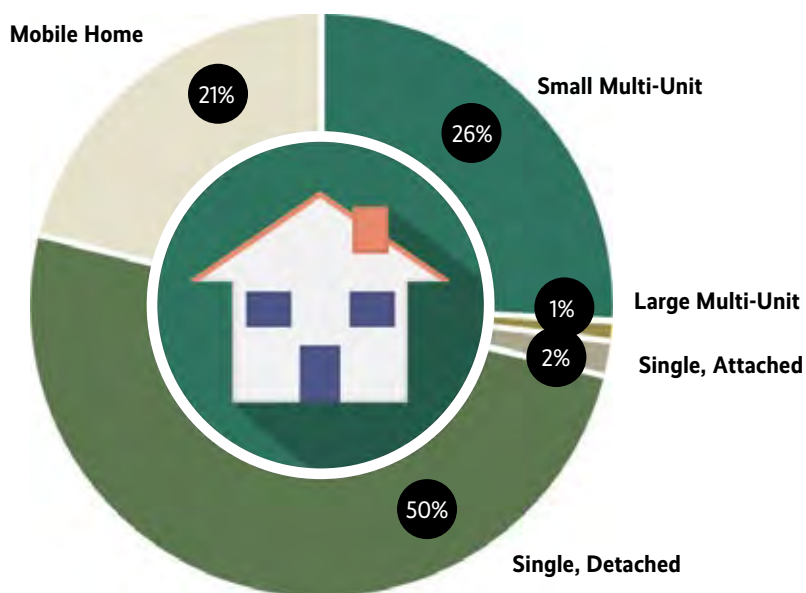
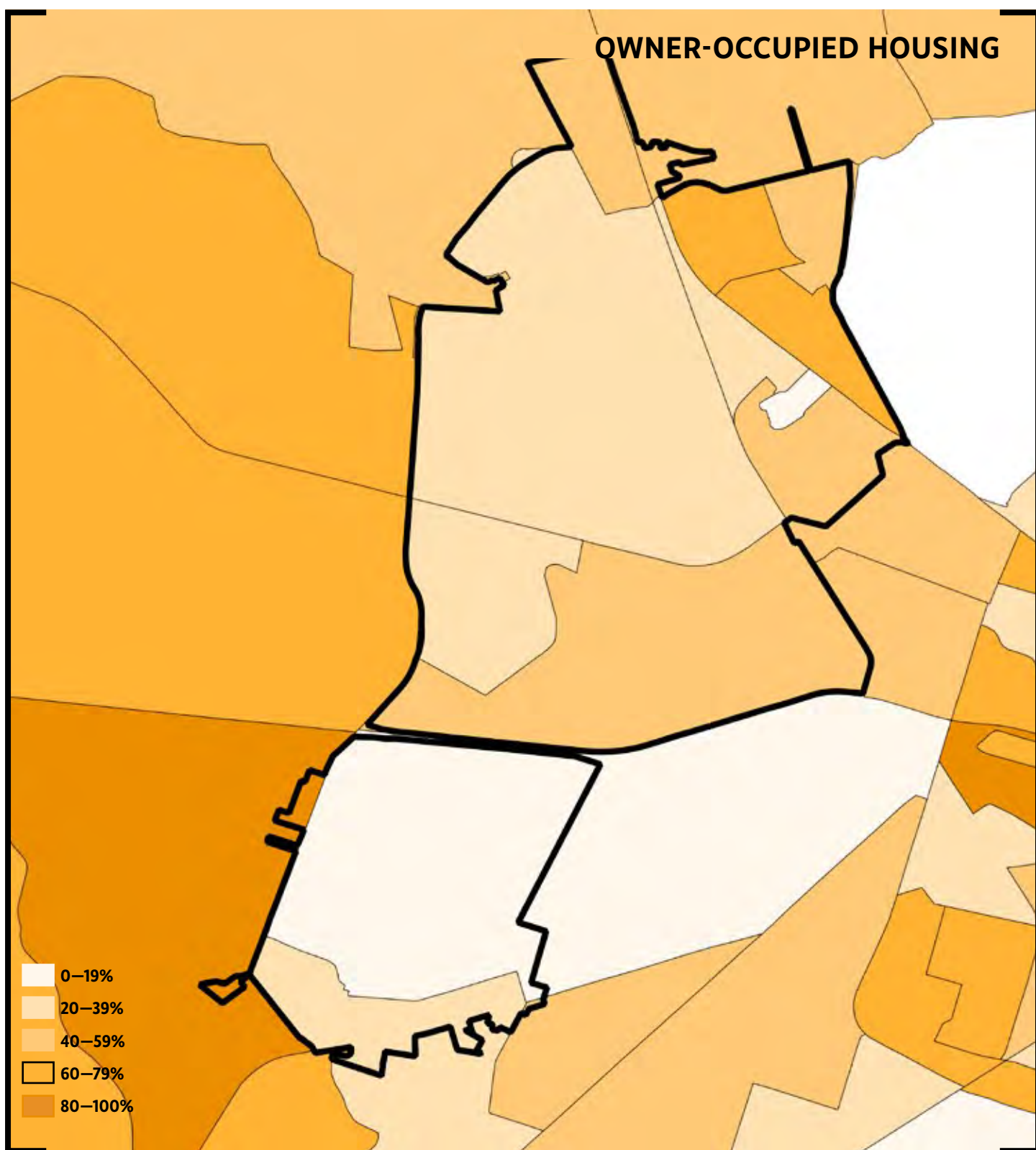
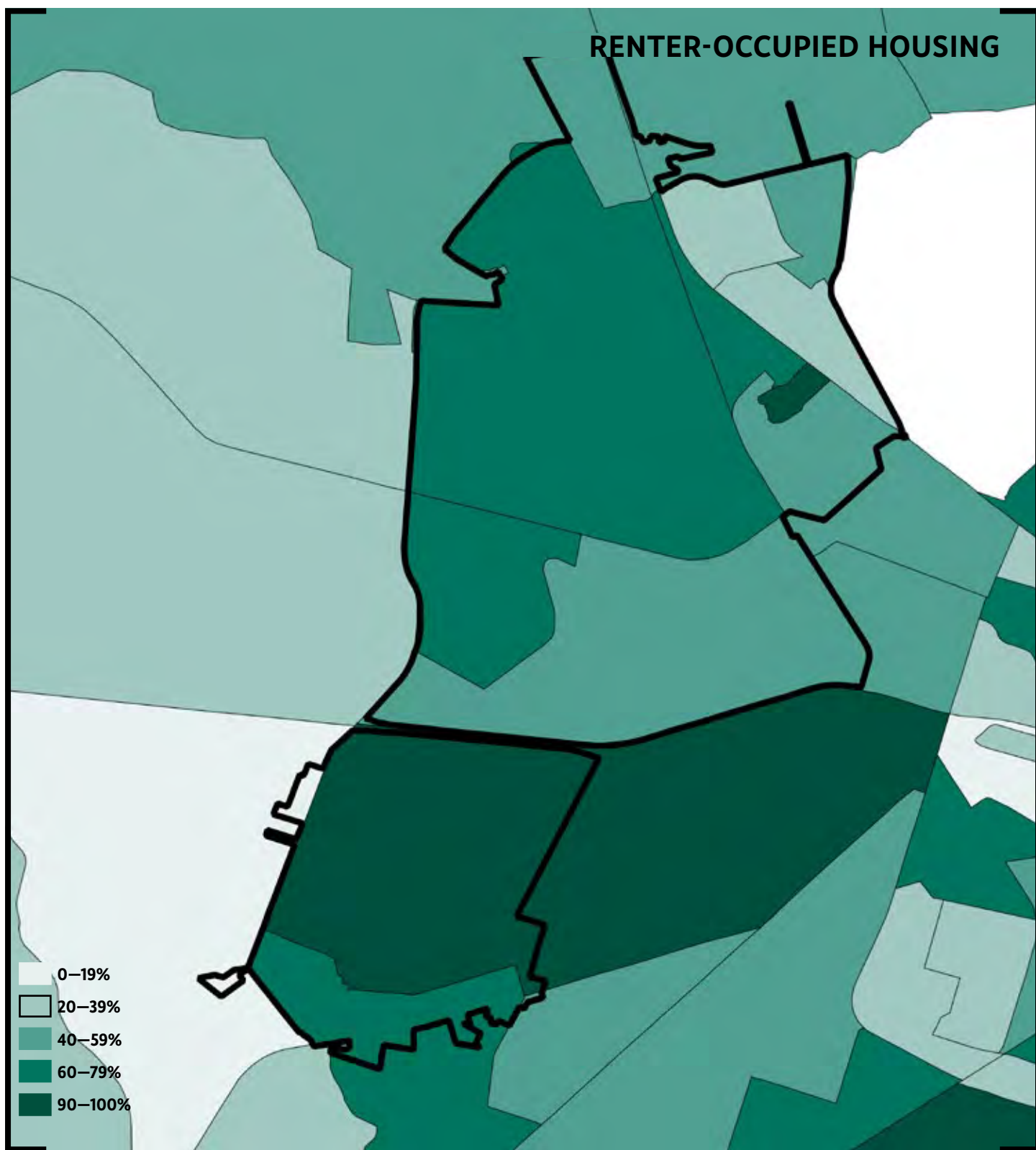


Figure 1.12–Housing Type, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.3—Percent Owner-Occupied Housing by Block Group, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



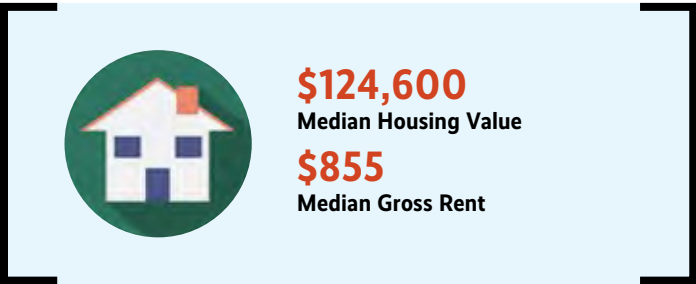
Map 1.4—Percent Renter-Occupied Housing by Block Group, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Value & Costs

In 2014–2018, the median property value of owner-occupied residences in Garden City was \$124,600. The 45.5% of owner-occupied units that had a mortgage typically spent an estimated \$1,119 per month on housing costs, while those without a mortgage (54.5%) spent an estimated \$430 per month. Of households with a mortgage, 24.6% were considered cost-burdened, paying at least 30% of their monthly income toward housing expenses.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, cost-burdened households “may have difficulty affording [other] necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” This is a notable increase from 2006–2010, when 18.9% of households with a mortgage were cost-burdened.

Housing Characteristics, 2014–2018



For renters in Garden City, the median gross rent was \$855 in 2018 and 37.3% of rental households were cost-burdened, down 7.5 percentage points from the share of cost-burdened renters in 2006–2010.

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 2014–2018

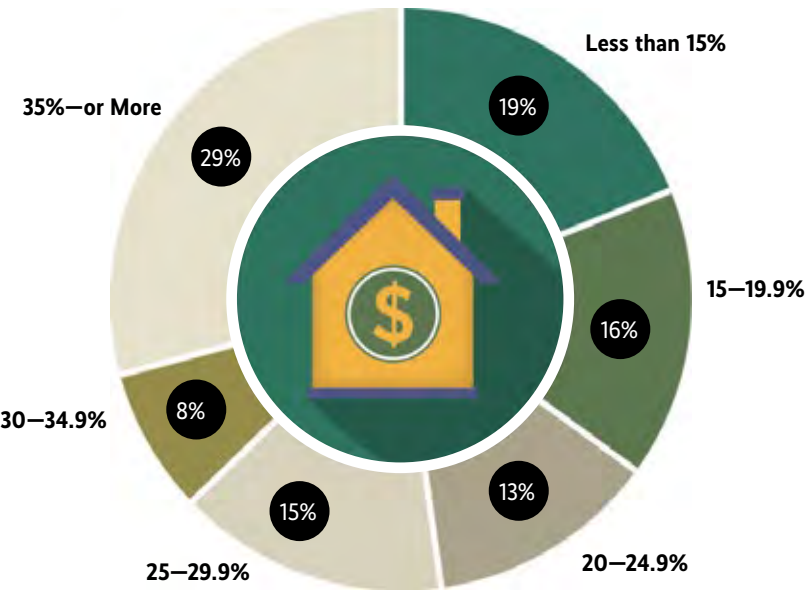
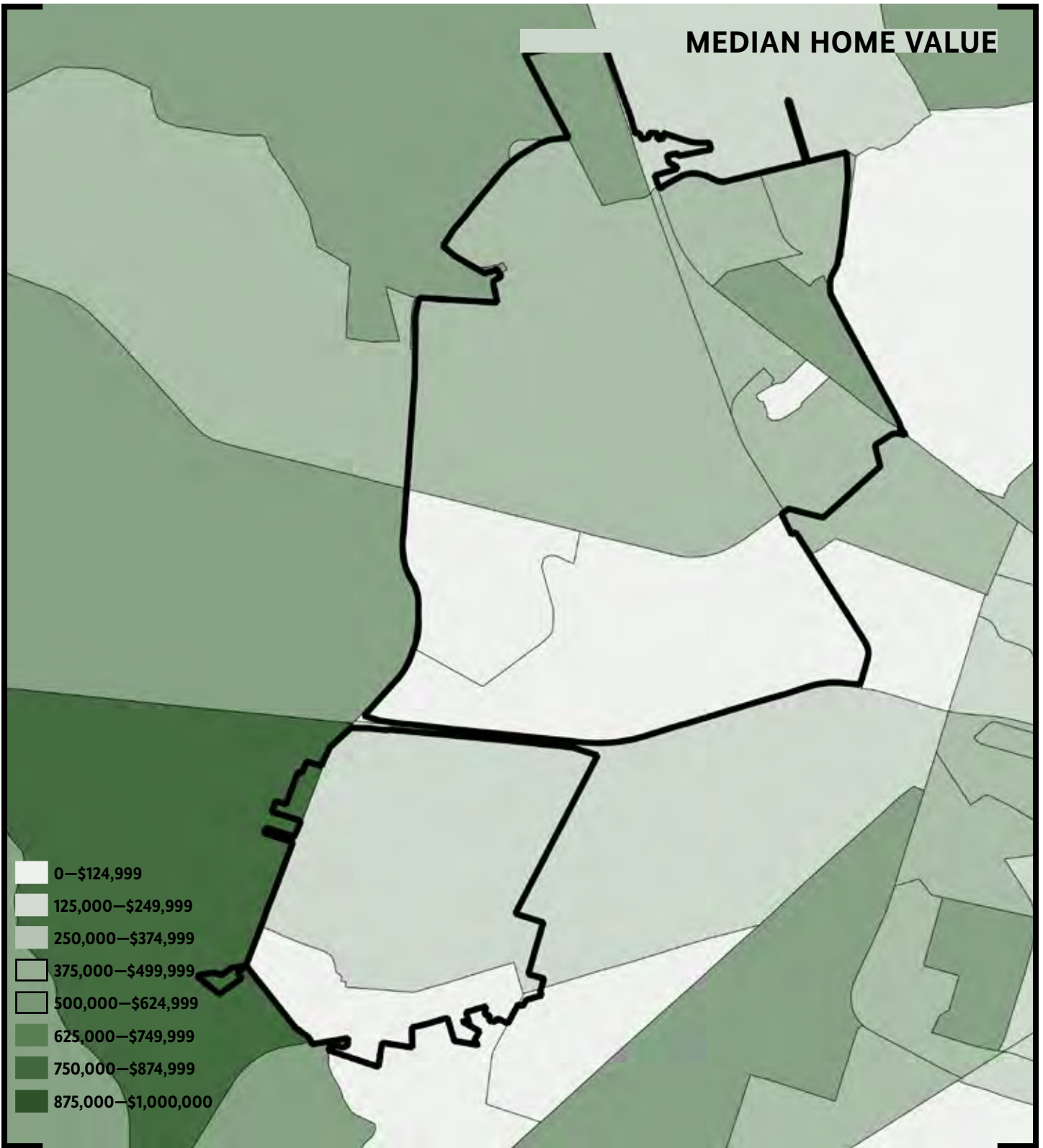


Figure 1.13–Cost Burdened Renter, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

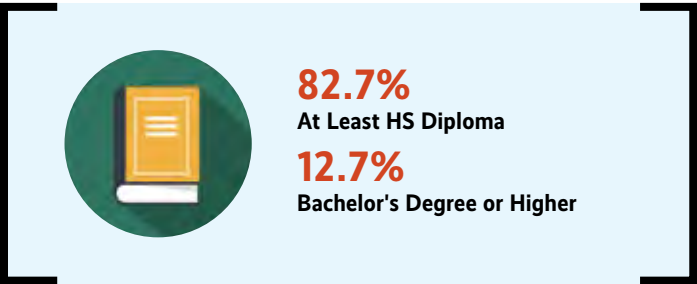


Map 1.5—Median Home Value by Block Group, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

In Garden City, most people over age 25 held a high school diploma (including high school equivalency degree) or higher in 2018 (82.7%), while 12.7% held a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree. These are roughly the same proportions as 2009–2013. Of note, however, is the increase in the share of residents who had some college experience but did not obtain a degree, which rose from 19.4% in 2013 to 26.6% in 2018. Figure 1.14 illustrates the breakdown of educational attainment in Garden City.

Educational Characteristics, 2014–2018



Educational Attainment, 2014–2018

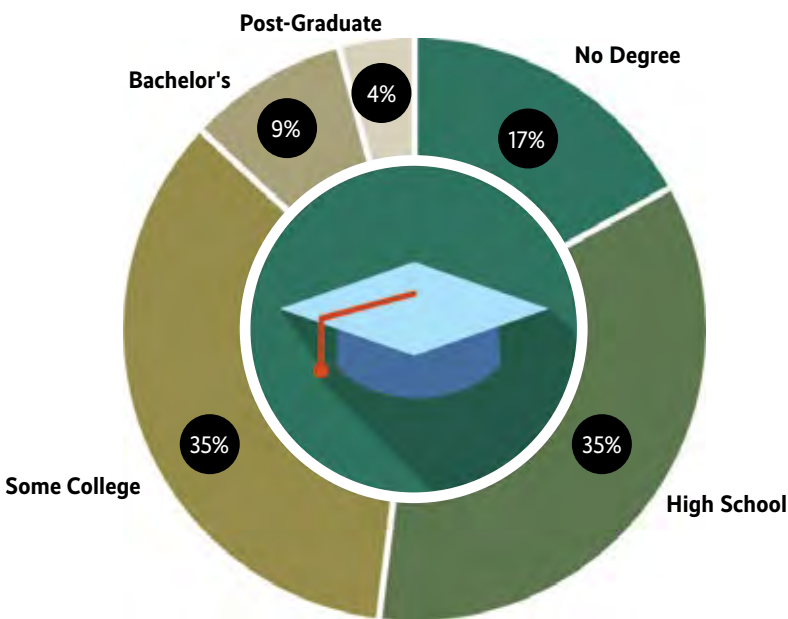
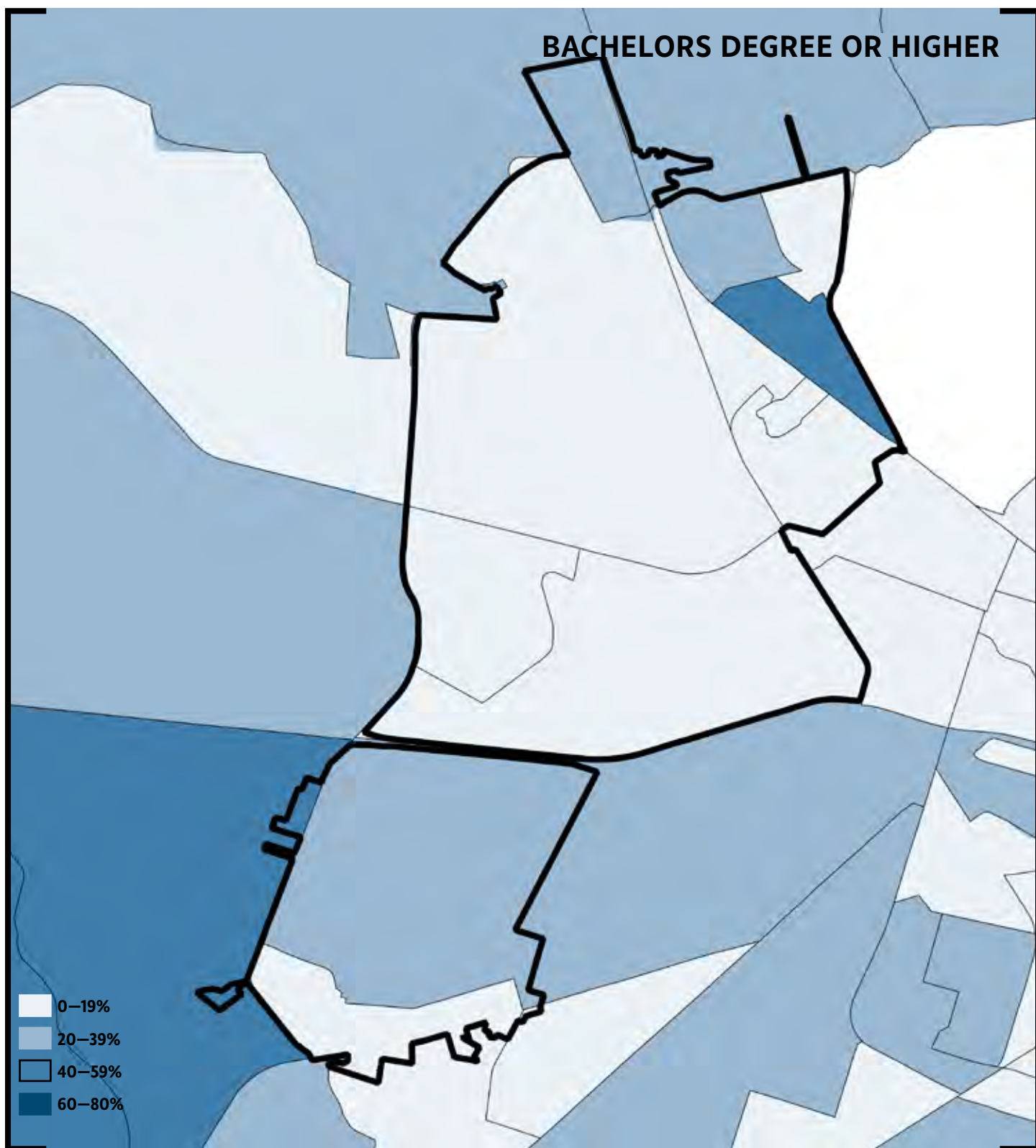


Figure 1.14–Educational Attainment, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER



Map 1.6—Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher by Block Group, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Nativity

In 2014–2018, 85.5% of the population in Garden City were U.S. natives and 14.5% were foreign-born. This is the highest percentage of foreign-born residents of all of the municipalities in Chatham County, and is a significant increase of 6.2 percentage points from the 2009–2013 period. Of those residents born outside the United States, nearly 90% came from Latin America (including the Caribbean, Central America, and South America). While the foreign-born population has increased in recent years, the percentage of residents from Latin America has remained approximately the same since 2013.

In 2018, nearly one in four people over the age of five spoke a language other than English at home, with Spanish (18.3%) being most prevalent among non-English speaking households.

Languages Spoken at Home, 2014–2018

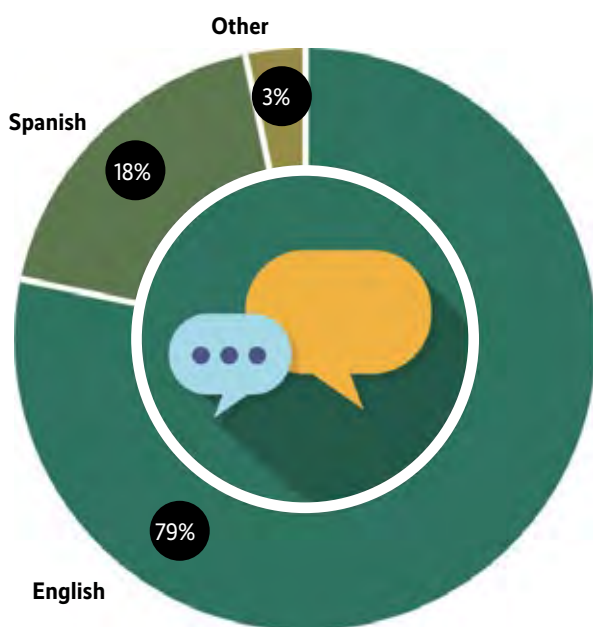


Figure 1.15–Language Spoken at Home, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Veteran Status

In 2014–2018, approximately 9.6% of adults living in Garden City were veterans, which is a slightly higher percentage than the state of Georgia (8.2%) and the country as a whole (7.5%). The period of military service for veterans living in Garden City is shown below. Please note that some veterans may have served in more than one of the periods listed, so percentages in the graph may not sum to 100%.

Veteran Characteristics, 2014–2018



Military Service for Adult Veterans

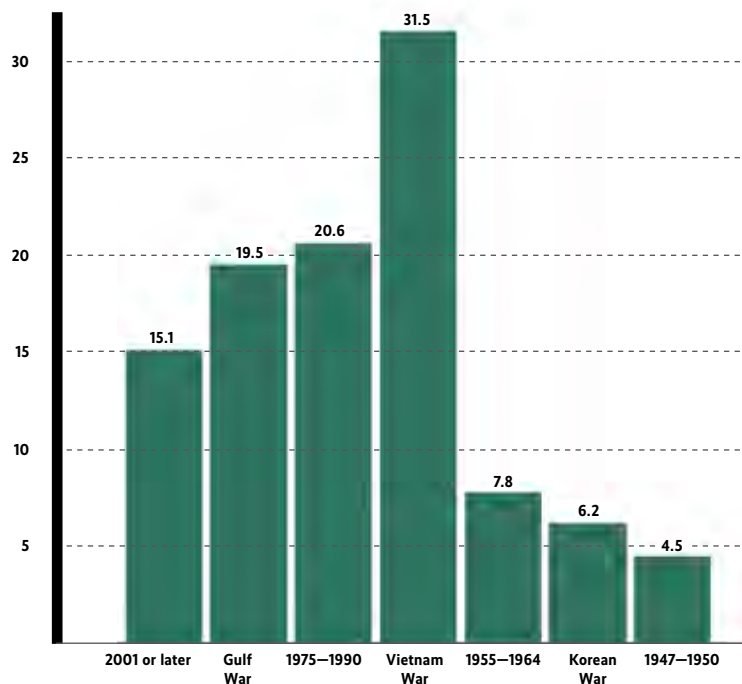


Figure 1.16–Period of Military Service for Adult Veterans, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Construction

The construction of residential buildings can be a good indicator of a community's growth. Figure 1.17 shows the residential construction trend in Garden City from 2010 to 2018. Estimating the population based on the number of building permits is useful in planning for roads and utilities because a residential dwelling unit represents the potential for population regardless of the occupant's official residence.

High demand for industrial and commercial uses in the northern part of the city along with the lack of water and sewer infrastructure in the southern portion of the city has led to minimal residential growth in since 2010.

Construction Permits, 2010–2018

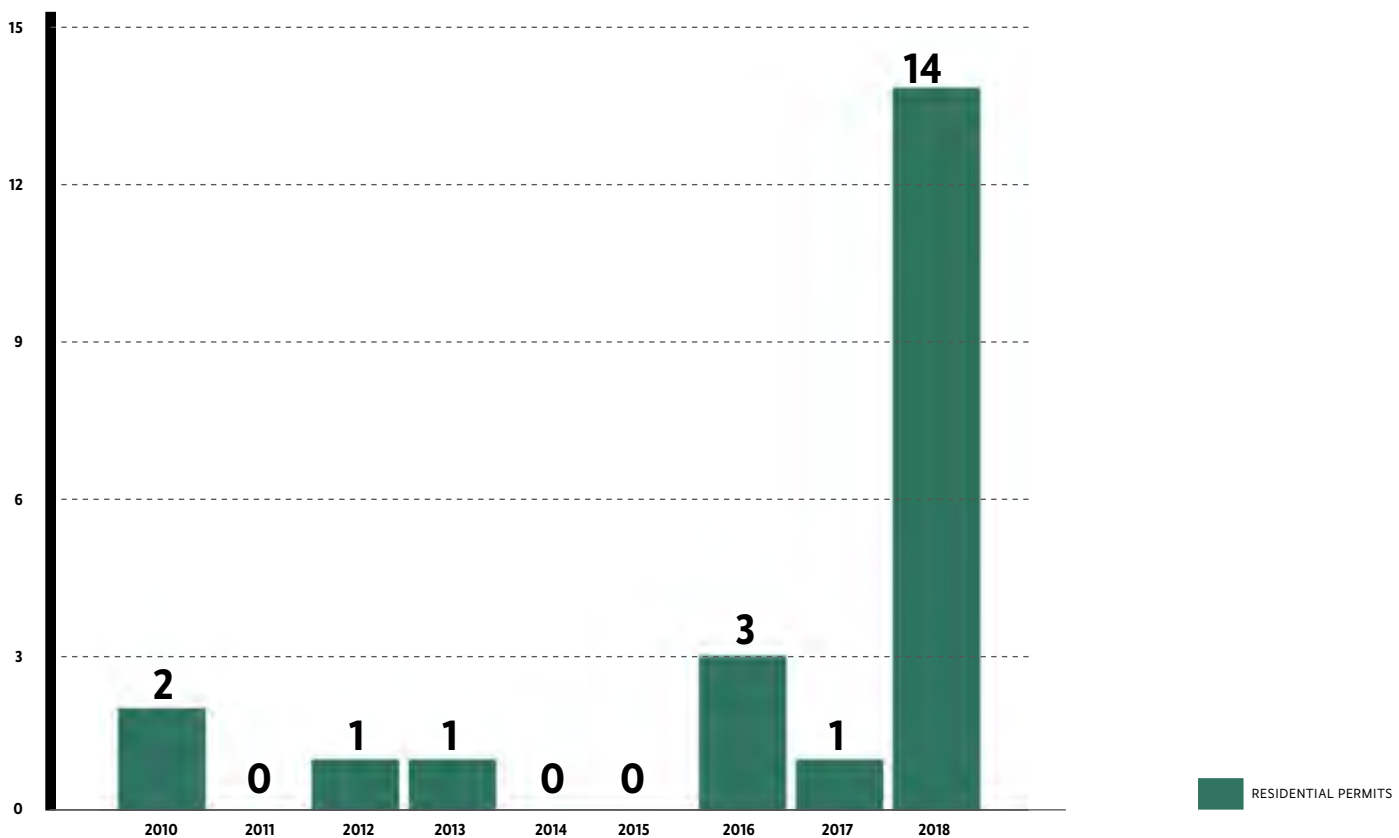


Figure 1.17–Construction Permits, Garden City
Chatham County Building Safety & Regulatory Services

COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has touched nearly every aspect of our community and our lives in the past year. Chatham County, like every county in the country, suffered the economic, social, educational, and health consequences of the pandemic that, at the time of writing, has killed over 569,000 Americans. As of April 5, 2021, Chatham County had a total of 19,608 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 394 confirmed deaths, and 1,561 hospitalizations due to COVID-19. At the time these data were acquired, there were an additional 24 probable deaths due to COVID-19 in Chatham County as well.

At the time of writing, the world is still seeing the impacts of COVID-19. Although Garden City-specific data is unavailable, limited data is available at the county level and is represented here. As of February 2021, the employment rate in the county had decreased 5.8% compared with January 2020. These job losses have been concentrated primarily in low and middle wage jobs; in fact, the employment rate among workers in the top wage quartile has been above January 2020 levels since statewide stay at home orders were lifted on April 30, 2020. Workers in the bottom wage quartile, however, have remained hardest hit since last March, when the employment rate for low wage jobs dropped nearly 45% by mid-April 2020.

Unemployment claims in the county reached their peak the first full week of April 2020, when roughly 14,500 people filed an initial claim for unemployment benefits. This corresponds to a rate of 10.4 claims per 100 people in the labor force. The number of unemployment claims has generally been decreasing since then-as of the week ending October 31, 2020, there were 0.88 unemployment claims per 100 people in the county's labor force.

Small businesses have also been negatively impacted. As of February 2021, 33% fewer small businesses were open in Chatham County compared to January 2020 and total small business revenue had decreased by 38.5%. By mid-March 2021, however, total consumer spending in Chatham County had nearly rebounded back to January 2020 levels.

Overall, Chatham County residents spent 5% less time away from home in April 2021 compared to the start of last year when the pandemic began. When people did leave their residence during this time, the average amount of time spent elsewhere varied significantly depending on their destination.

- The total time spent at grocery stores in Chatham increased 2.9%
- Total time spent in parks increased 64.7%
- Total time spent at retail and restaurant locations increased 1.6%
- Total time spent at transit locations decreased 24%
- Total time spent in the workplace decreased 29.6%



Percent Change in Employment

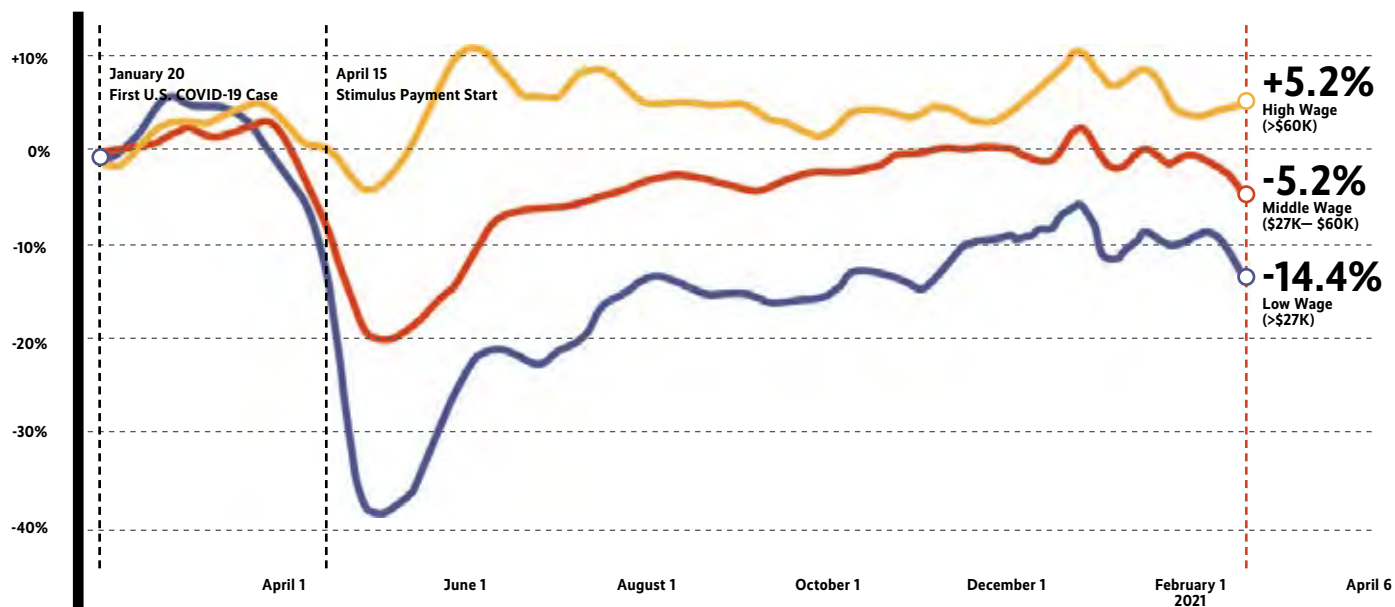


Figure 1.18–Percent Change in Employment, Chatham County

Time Spent Outside Home Chatham County

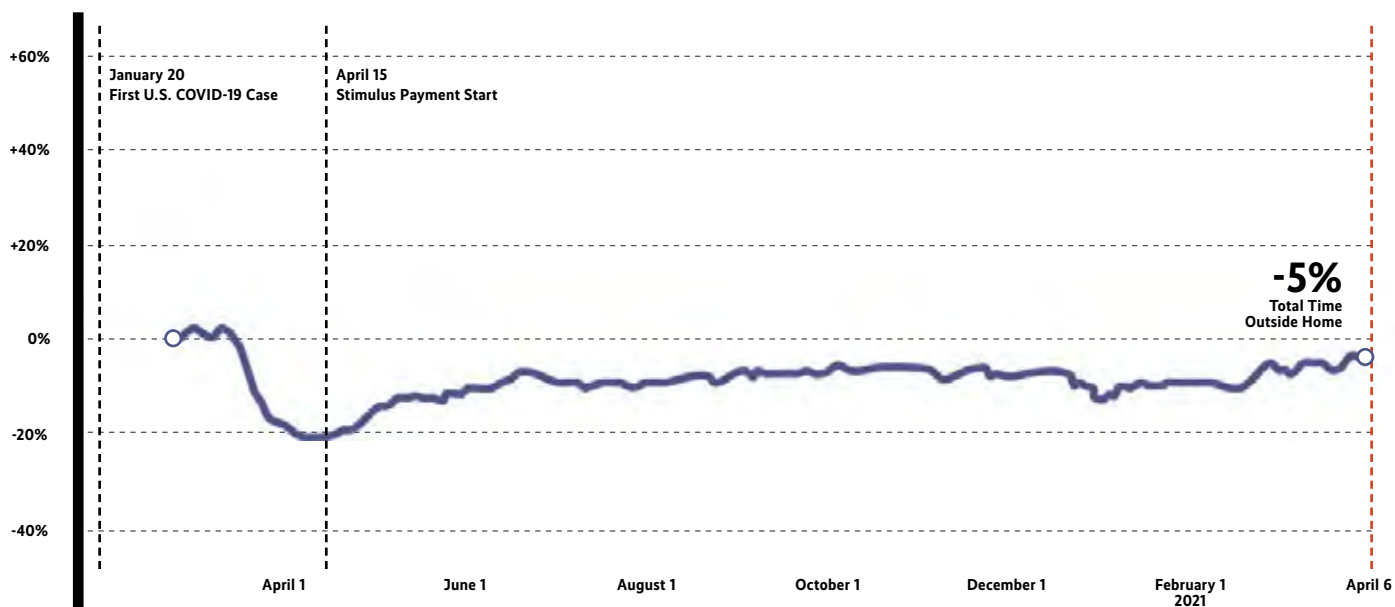


Figure 1.19–Percent Change in Time Spent Outside Home, Chatham County



COMMUNITY GOALS

Introduction

The visions and goals that emerged through the Garden City 2040 comprehensive planning process represent the voices of the community as expressed in virtual meetings, pop-up events, and a survey conducted during 2020 and 2021.

The following results describe our community vision, goals and objectives for the next twenty years.

GARDEN CITY 2040 VISION & GOALS

Introduction

The Vision and Goals identify Garden City's direction for the future and are intended to serve as a guide to Garden City officials in day-to-day decision making. They are the product of public involvement and the following components:

- The Vision
- Goals
- Objectives

Each of these components was previously established in the city's prior Comprehensive Plan. Through the Garden City Plan update process community members were given opportunity to revisit and update each component.

The Vision

The Vision paints a picture of what Garden City desires to become. The Vision statement offered below was refined through discussion with the City Council, steering committee, and participants. The Vision is supported by the goals created to help shape Garden City's future development.

*Garden City is a Safe, Family-Oriented and
Business Friendly Community*



Goals

Priorities are long-term outcomes the city hopes to achieve by implementing the Comprehensive Plan. They are aspirational, expressing Garden City's collective desires and values.

The community identified a number of goals to achieve in order to make Garden City's Vision a continuing reality. The following goals represent the recurring themes, and like the Vision Statement, were derived from a review process involving city staff, the steering committee, and members of the public.





Promote Retail & Diversity of Housing Types

Throughout the planning process, increasing commercial and retail opportunities and providing a destination attraction for Garden City was a goal expressed by participants. Participants believed that opportunities have been lost by the business choosing to develop in surrounding areas instead.

At the heart of this goal is economic development and building long-term prosperity for all residents. It involves actively engaging the city and its economic development partners in business attraction and retention. The benefits of this goal include a strong tax base, a stable job market, and ready access to services and goods. The city seeks to promote the "blue collar aspect" of the economy and diversify with more retail and light commercial.

Efforts to provide a comprehensive management approach to retail and commercial development include at a minimum, a market analysis, market trends, and real estate selection which is particularly important to Garden City.

Objectives:

- The City will develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan that takes into consideration a market analysis, market trends, and real estate selection
- The City will approve retail and commercial proposals, subject to other policies, if: they are appropriate to the scale and function of the area; are compatible with land use character within the zone; are consistent with adopted strategic framework including urban design themes, traffic management arrangements; and provide for convenient pedestrian and vehicle access and linkages to adjoining commercial centers



Implement the City's Adopted Redevelopment Plan

Over the past twenty years, Garden City has experienced a significant shift from residential to industrial development, attributed to the growth of the Georgia Ports Authority. This changing dynamic in development led to disinvestment in some of the older neighborhoods, encroachment of industrial uses, and declining pockets of commercial and deteriorating buildings. The city is meeting the challenges related to housing, economic development and future development through the implementation of its Urban Redevelopment Plan.

The plan identifies three target areas, each with a unique development characteristic and varying needs as it relates to a redevelopment strategy. Garden City has established goals for housing within the redevelopment area which include eliminating substandard housing; encouraging quality infill development within established neighborhoods; creating affordable housing opportunities within the community; and creating a diverse housing stock in terms of housing types and densities. Additionally, the mix of commercial uses that serve a regional market is proposed for the commercial targeted redevelopment areas.

Garden City identified three target areas for redevelopment including the Garden City South Target Area; West Highway 21; and West Highway 21 Residential Area.

Objectives:

- Approve quality infill development within established neighborhoods within the Urban Redevelopment boundaries that are consistent with the neighborhood in terms of architecture and design
- The City will identify and protect historic resources within the Urban Redevelopment boundaries



Update City Codes & Ordinances

Garden City desires to manage growth and build a liveable city with successful neighborhoods and districts. The goal of auditing and updating ordinances is to ensure residents have the opportunity to live in a safe and continually healthy community with access to affordable homes, amenities and services, making good use of natural resources and transportation options for all forms of travel.

The current zoning ordinance gives the City the authority to control a number of items related to development, but does not currently identify or directly address “safe growth” objectives.

Objectives:

- The City will update its ordinances to be user-friendly and easy to understand
- The City’s ordinances will be illustrated with graphics, diagrams and concise tables
- The City’s ordinances will allow for a streamlined development review process
- The City’s code update will be created so as to foster the desired type of redevelopment and future development with design standards and specific building material to change the aesthetics of the corridor
- The City will consider accounting for sea level rise trends when updating City policies



Protect Neighborhoods from Industrial Impacts

Throughout the planning process, preservation of Garden City's neighborhoods was a dominant goal expressed by participants. The main purpose of this goal focuses on including a balanced approach to the city's transportation system that serves to protect the neighborhood development areas from adverse impacts from port related traffic and encouraging connectivity.

Objectives:

- The City shall protect and improve the character and integrity of neighborhoods from negative impacts resulting from traffic related to the GPA
- The City shall coordinate with GDOT and other relevant agencies in planning mitigation strategies where impacts are expected within Garden City
- Garden City will explore a "complete streets policy"
- Garden City will improve connectivity throughout the city
- Garden City will address safety and mobility issues that may arise for all road uses and users of multi-modal



Create Design Guidelines for Commercial & Residential Development

Thoughtful design components play an important role defining a community and can distinguish it as a desirable destination. Participants in the planning process recognize that design guidelines can reinforce the positive identity of a community's commercial core and contribute to neighborhood character.

Design guidelines are intended to address some of the most common, overarching challenges in planning commercial developments within Garden City.

The prime areas of opportunity for attaining high quality design in commercial projects include: enhancing the quality of the pedestrian experience along commercial corridors; nurturing an overall active street presence; protecting and conserving the neighborhood architectural character; establishing height and massing transitions between residential and commercial uses; maintaining visual and spatial relationships with adjacent buildings; and optimizing opportunities for high quality infill development that strengthens the visual and functional quality of the commercial environment within the context of Garden City.

Objectives:

- The City will create and adopt design guidelines for commercial corridors that define key elements and determine patterns and standards that should be adhered to when developing site or building projects
- The City will create and adopt design guidelines for commercial corridors that address issues of building size and massing, definition of open spaces, site character and quality as well as access and circulations



Branding the City through Marketing

Garden City takes seriously its responsibility towards building a positive image to support its vision both internally and externally and to provide a favorable experience.

The goal of branding Garden City is to define its culture and speak to its uniqueness. During the planning process, participants shared the need to positively change the perception and create a consistent context for marketing.

Producing a positive image promotes that the city embraces its vision for a safe, family-oriented and business friendly community.

Objectives:

- Garden City will develop a brand that creates an image that represents Garden City's essential identity
- Garden City will create a consistent message for the city's economic development efforts
- Garden City will set forth approved usage of the City's brand for communications in print, web, and electronic form



Expand Passive & Active Recreation Opportunities

Garden City desires to expand and manage passive and active recreation opportunities to provide additional outdoor and equitable access opportunities for its citizens.

While the expansion of parks and open space is one opportunity, creating trails, bike lanes and multi-use paths for connectivity is a vital advancement for the community.

This goal ensures that the focused investments on a multimodal network is an equitable opportunity since it serves all users in Garden City.

Objectives:

- The City shall provide parks, trails, bike lanes, and multi-use paths to meet the community's growing needs
- The City will ensure design allows access to each type of experience for people of all abilities to the maximum extent possible
- The City will develop parks, trails, and bike lanes, and multi-use paths in an environmentally sensitive manner
- The City shall create a trail network and where feasible, develop interconnected trails and multi-use paths with bike lanes



SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM

Introduction

The Short Term Work Program (STWP) is comprised of projects that are ongoing or should be launched over the next five years to further the goals of Garden City 2040. The STWP is organized by element and lists the timeline, lead partner, funding source, and cost estimates for each strategy.

Progress on the activities and goals established in this section will be tracked and reported on an annual basis.

TRANSPORTATION

	STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
T.1	Implement a road asset management and maintenance system to prioritize improvements	2022-2023	Executive	General Fund	\$70,000
T.2	Implement impact fees for infrastructure installation program	2022-2023	Executive; Planning & Zoning	Staff Time	Staff Time
T.3	Apply for funding for streetscape projects along major roadways (Highway 17, 21, 25, 80, 307)	2024-2026	Executive	Staff Time; Grants	Project Dependent
T.4	Set Council priorities for local transportation investment & expansion to include public transportation via CAT	2022-2023	Executive; CAT	Staff Time	GC Staff; CAT Staff Time
T.5	Improve and/or install sidewalk connections on Highway 17, 21, 80, 307 and Traffic Circle to create safer areas for pedestrian connectivity citywide	2024-2026	Executive	Staff Time; Grants	Project Dependent
T.6	Establish a community-wide pedestrian network through sidewalks to adjacent and nearby residential and commercial districts	2024-2026	Executive; Bike/Walk Savannah	General Fund; Grants	Project Dependent
T.7	Work with Chatham Area Transit (CAT) to expand services to targeted areas of the city	2025-2026	Executive; CAT	Staff Time	GC Staff; CAT Staff Time



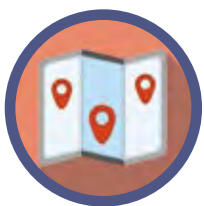
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
E.1	Expand relationships with the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to promote Garden City	2022-2023	Executive	General Fund; CVB	Staff Time
E.2	Adopt incentives for desirable redevelopment & infill projects to include both commercial & affordable housing efforts	2024-2026	Executive; Habitat for Humanity	Staff Time	Staff Time
E.3	Complete an economic development plan to Include a targeted marketing strategy for desirable retail & commercial development	2024-2026	Executive	General Fund; CVB	\$45,000



LAND USE

	STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
LU.1	Adopt design guidelines for commercial and industrial areas where higher cost, long-term business investment is anticipated	2024–2026	Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Grants	\$75,000
LU.2	Pursue funding opportunities for an infrastructure capital improvement project to extend water on to Highway 17 to encourage new residential development	2024–2026	Planning & Zoning	GEFA; Water/ Sewer Fund; Grants	\$5 Million
LU.3	Identify areas of blight and determine activities and funding to address blight	2024–2026	Executive	General Fund; Grants; Staff Time	Staff Time
LU.4	Demolish abandoned structures	2024–2026	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$25,000/ Annually
LU.5	Review and implement the recommendations of the Safe Growth Audit	2024–2026	Executive; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Grants; Staff Time	Staff Time; Project Based Cost
LU.6	Develop an intergovernmental coordination plan/strategy with Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SHHIA) to ensure that the near term and long-term development plans of both Garden City and the SHHIA are compatible	2022–2023	Executive; SHHIA Staff	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.7	Implement activities proposed in the Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP)	2022–2026	Executive; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Grants; Staff Time	Staff Time; Project Based Cost
LU.8	Develop overlay districts with design guidelines for the commercial target areas defined in the Urban Redevelopment Plan	2022–2026	Executive; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Grants; Staff Time	Staff Time; Project Based Cost



HOUSING

STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
H.1 Complete a housing study to determine which types and styles of affordable housing options are most needed to allow and accommodate local housing needs	2022–2023	Executive; Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$50,000
H.2 Review codes related to vacant structures again to streamline process for enforcement, acquisition, or demolition	2022–2023	Planning & Zoning	Staff Time; Consultant	\$20,000
H.3 Implement mechanisms that will assist in rehabilitating older homes	2024–2026	Garden City Housing Team	Staff Time; Grants	\$100,000/ Annually
H.4 Expand senior housing and affordable housing	2022–2023	Private Developers	General Fund	Project Driven/ Private Dollar
H.5 Participate in the Chatham County/Savannah Land Bank Authority	2024–2026	Planning & Zoning	Staff Time	Staff Time



NATURAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY		PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
NR.1	Evaluate water quality BMPs around Salt Creek & Pipemakers Canal watersheds	2022-2023	Executive; Drainage	Stormwater Utility	\$10,000
NR.2	Improve greenspace, parks, and public facilities to maintain the high desirability of the areas	2024-2026	Executive	Stormwater Utility	\$20,000/ Annually
NR.3	Perform a tree inventory in public ROW and city parks	2025-2026	Executive	General Fund	\$20,000
NR.4	Update stormwater ordinances and local design manual to incorporate basin specific designs into the regulations	2025-2026	Executive	Stormwater Utility	\$20,000



QUALITY OF LIFE

	STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
Q.1	Complete a historic resources survey for Garden City to include a list & accompanying maps of proposed areas	2022–2023	Executive; MPC	General Fund	\$4,000
Q.2	Create a Historic Preservation Commission (Bylaws, Manuals, Training, etc.)	2024–2026	Executive; MPC	General Fund	\$18,000
Q.3	Create a Local Historic Preservation Ordinance (Including Neighborhood Meetings, etc.)	2024–2026	Executive; MPC	General Fund	\$12,000
Q.4	Apply for and Achieve Certified Local Government (CLG) Status	2024–2026	Executive; MPC	General Fund	\$6,000
Q.5	Apply for grants for remaining portions of city not previously surveyed through CLG Program	2024–2026	Executive; MPC	General Fund; Grants	\$3,500
Q.6	Create a plan to market the City's historic resources	2022–2023	Executive	General Fund; Grants; CVB	\$20,000



CAPITAL PROJECTS

General Government Services

STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
GG.1 Expand and improve communication with general public & residents to include mechanisms such as Town Hall Meetings & State of the City Address	2022–2023	Executive; Mayor & Council	Staff Time	Staff Time
GG.2 Maintain partnership with County to expand & enhance fiber throughout the city	2022–2023	Executive; IT	Staff Time	Staff Time
GG.3 Improve quality of existing broadband service for residents & businesses	2024–2026	Executive; IT	Staff Time; General Fund; Grants	Staff Time
GG.4 Plan & implement solar powered lighting opportunities for main roadways	2024–2026	Executive; Public Works	Staff Time; General Fund; Grants	\$10,000/ Annually
GG.5 Install more street lighting throughout city	2024–2026	Executive; Public Works; GA Power	Staff Time; General Fund; Grants	\$10,000/ Annually
GG.6 Update noise ordinance	2024–2026	Executive; GC Police	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time
GG.7 Complete a staff compensation evaluation every 3 years	2024–2026	Executive; Human Resources	General Fund	\$20,000
GG.8 Complete a residential customer service survey	2022–2023	Executive; Water/ Sewer Billing	Staff Time	Staff Time
GG.9 Review and implement the recommendations from the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory to reduce government ops impacts	2022–2026	Executive; Public Works	Staff Time; General Fund; Grants	Project Based

Public Safety

STRATEGY		PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PS.1	Increase neighborhood police patrols	2022-2023	Police	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time
PS.2	Increase police traffic enforcement	2022-2023	Police	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time
PS.3	Apply for grants to install police surveillance cameras	2022-2023	Police	General Fund; Grants	Staff Time
PS.4	Install police school zone cameras	2024-2026	Police	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time
PS.5	Update and enhance public safety staff recruitment program	2022-2023	Police; Human Resources	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time
PS.6	Implement citizen engagement programs and enhance public safety staff interaction to communicate with public	2022-2023	Police	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time
PS.7	Update and enhance police crime prevention programs	2022-2023	Police	Staff Time; General Fund	Staff Time

Public Works

STRATEGY		PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PW.1	Develop plan to improve ditch & right-of-way maintenance	2022-2023	Public Works	Stormwater Utility	Staff Time
PW.2	Conduct a utility rate study to ensure affordable rates are maintained	2024-2026	Executive; Water/ Sewer/Stormwater	Water/Sewer Fund; Stormwater Utility	\$5,000/ Annually
PW.3	Complete citywide water & wastewater system modeling	2024-2026	Executive; Water/Sewer	Water/Sewer Fund	\$200,000
PW.4	Improve water system where needed throughout city based on studies	2024-2026	Executive; Water/Sewer	Water/Sewer Fund	\$1 Million
PW.5	Purchase new street sweeper	2024-2026	Public Works	Stormwater Utility	\$350,000
PW.6	Complete an update to the Stormwater Drainage Basin Master Plan	2024-2026	Executive	Stormwater Utility	\$50,000
PW.7	Review latest data and models to determine the impacts of sea level rise on the city's infrastructure & population	2024-2026	Executive	Stormwater Utility	\$20,000
PW.8	Develop a citywide pavement management system to prioritize city streets for future work	2022-2023	Executive; Public Works	General Fund	\$70,000
PW.9	Continue to expand water/wastewater south of I-16 in association with the Town Center development and the South GC URA	2025-2026	Executive; Public Works	Water/Sewer Fund; SPLOST	TBD

Recreation

	STRATEGY	PROJECT TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
REC.1	Update the existing Parks and Recreation Master Plan to include proposed areas for expansion & improvements	2022-2023	Executive; Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund; Grants	\$100,000
REC.2	Expand and improve recreational facilities in neighborhoods to specifically include Silk Hope and Rossignol Hill	2024-2026	Executive; Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund	TBD; Final Project Scope
REC.3	Construct new recreation complex	2022-2023	Executive; Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund	\$3.5 Million
REC.4	Increase recreation staffing	2022-2023	Executive; Recreation	General Fund	\$100,000/Year
REC.5	Implement after school programs	2022-2023	Recreation	General Fund	Staff Time
REC.6	Identify property for acquisition as community and pocket parks	2022-2023	Executive; Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund	\$50,000
REC.7	Implement senior citizen Pick-up/Drop-off service	2022-2023	Recreation	General Fund	Staff Time
REC.8	Construct additional parking at Bazemore Park	2022-2023	Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund	\$250,000
REC.9	Rehab Garden City gym & stadium	2024-2026	Executive; Parks & Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund	\$500,000

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

LAND USE STRATEGY		ANNUAL TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
OG.1	Deter development within the regulated high risk flood zones	Ongoing	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY		ANNUAL TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
OG.2	Improve pedestrian safety and mobility around city arterials and state routes	Ongoing	Executive	General Fund; SPLOST	Project Based
OG.3	Implement the city's comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	Ongoing	Executive	General Fund; Water/Sewer Utility; Stormwater Utility	Project Based
HOUSING STRATEGY		ANNUAL TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
OG.4	Coordinate with the Garden City Community Housing Team to restore, revitalize, and rehabilitate city neighborhoods	Ongoing	GC Housing Team; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Grants	Project Based
NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGY		ANNUAL TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
OG.5	Educate residents regarding the need to protect designated flood zones or high risk flood areas	Ongoing	Planning & Zoning	Stormwater Utility	~\$10,000 Annually
PUBLIC WORKS-PUBLIC SAFETY		ANNUAL TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
OG.6	Participate in disaster preparedness exercises with CEMA and other neighboring jurisdictions	Ongoing	Public Safety	General Fund	Staff Time
OG.7	Improve citywide fire service to maintain/improve ISO rating	Ongoing	Fire Department	General Fund; Fire Fee	Project Based
OG.8	Proactively maintain the MS4 as required by the Phase 1 NPDES permit to mitigate the impacts of flooding	Ongoing	Public Works	Stormwater Utility	Project Based

