

Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee Meeting
Meeting #2 – 04-18-2026
Meeting Notes

Attendees:

- Lisa Gibson
- Paul Gibson
- Jonathan Cunningham
- Tessa Cunningham
- Laurie Searle
- Greg Ramsey

The Economic Development and Housing subcommittee met for the second time on Saturday, April 18, 2026, from 1:00 – 2:00pm. The subcommittee discussed housing in the City, particularly as it relates to attainable, senior, and life-cycle housing.

1. Regional Housing Context and Demographic Trends Overview

- The consultant team provided an overview of metro-area housing trends that was provided to the group, with emphasis on implications for Chattahoochee Hills.
 - Chattahoochee Hills was described as an older and aging community.
 - Many cities lack sufficient senior housing options once residents can no longer remain in their homes.
 - Housing needs vary widely and cannot be addressed with a single solution.
 - According to the Atlanta Regional Housing Strategy, Chattahoochee Hills is primarily comprised of “higher-priced rural” with a median home sale price of approximately \$600,000 in 2025.
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2. Senior Housing Needs and Preferences

- Participants noted that there are currently no dedicated senior housing options in Chattahoochee Hills.
- Participants said that many seniors expressed a strong desire to remain in a rural setting rather than relocate elsewhere.
- Cottage court–style development was discussed as a potential option for seniors that would maintain the rural feel, featuring smaller homes arranged around a shared community space.
- Questions were raised about economic feasibility, including whether cottage court models can be built affordably and sustained over time.

- Examples were cited where bungalow-style developments have become expensive despite initial goals of affordability.
 - While Serenbe is focusing on multigenerational living, participants noted that these are higher-priced and that some seniors would prefer an age-restricted retirement community in a smaller, rural setting.
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3. Affordable Housing and Planning Tools

- Participants raised questions about how the planning process can be used proactively to create affordable and senior housing opportunities while maintaining community character.
 - There was concern about avoiding large-scale clearing and high-density development that would conflict with rural and scenic values.
 - Creating affordable housing by encouraging or requiring it within hamlets was viewed as a potential strategy.
 - Community land trusts were identified as one tool for achieving long-term affordability.
 - Participants generally assumed that affordable and senior housing would be most appropriate within village or hamlet areas.
 - Ideas discussed included:
 - Creating a special-use hamlet for senior or affordable housing, similar to special-purpose hamlets proposed for arts or institutional uses.
 - Exploring lower-density models than typical affordable or retirement developments.
 - Considering whether a “micro-hamlet” could serve as an appropriate middle-ground approach.
 - Participants discussed whether flexibility under the 20-acre rule could enable these models for affordable or senior housing, potentially tied to requirements such as agriculture, community facilities, or shared amenities.
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4. Micro-Hamlet Concepts

- Several potential micro-hamlet types were discussed as ways to address lifecycle housing needs while preserving community character:
 - Senior-focused housing
 - Agriculture-related housing

- Entry-level or young professional housing
 - Housing for service workers and teachers
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5. Barriers to Housing Development

- Participants identified major barriers to senior and affordable housing, including:
 - High land costs
 - Higher taxes
 - Limited school options, which deter young families
 - Infrastructure constraints
 - Lack of recreational facilities for school-aged children
 - It was noted that the City attracts residents who are willing to trade certain amenities for rural living, which limits the pool of potential newcomers.
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6. Community Buy-In and Implementation Challenges

- Participants were asked how the broader community feels about senior and affordable housing initiatives. Most said they had not really heard many in the community discuss the issue.
 - It was noted that the current artisan-focused hamlet concept may not result in many long-term residents.
 - There was support for engaging current landowners in more site-specific discussions to identify opportunities for implementation.
 - Focus areas included housing for seniors, agricultural workers, artisans, and young professionals.
 - Participants noted a gap between vision for housing and implementation, with limited development interest to date. Other communities were cited as having success by actively recruiting developers experienced with these housing models.
 - Some residents on large lots may not prioritize housing issues until personal circumstances change.
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7. Services, Amenities, and Partnerships

- Participants emphasized that housing discussions are closely tied to services and amenities.

- Participants noted concerns about school quality and opportunities for children.
- There was a call for the City to take a more proactive stance rather than addressing these issues gradually. Suggestions included partnering with major landowners and community leaders to help shape solutions.
- While the City may not be able to fund amenities directly, participants discussed expanding park programming, investing strategically in infrastructure, and exploring community center or shared facility options.
- Participants emphasized partnering with developers to ensure services and amenities are distributed throughout the community rather than concentrated solely within new developments.
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Overall Takeaways

- Chattahoochee Hills has an aging population with limited housing options for seniors.
- There is strong interest in senior and lifecycle housing that maintains rural character. Many residents prefer small-scale, rural-appropriate options over conventional suburban or high-density developments.
- Senior, workforce, agricultural, and entry-level micro-hamlets were seen as potential solutions that balance housing needs with community values.
- High land costs, taxes, and infrastructure constraints raise concerns about whether cottage courts or similar models can remain truly affordable over time.
- Participants emphasized the need for flexible planning tools, developer recruitment, landowner engagement, and coordinated investment in services and community amenities.