



# From THE DESK of

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## A Better Buford Highway is Finally **(FINALLY)** Here



In metro Atlanta, Buford Highway has long been the poster child for lack of walkability, with critics using it as a prime example of the challenges of being a pedestrian in metro Atlanta. In more developed areas, the thoroughfare is a wide multi-lane highway often with no sidewalks and intense auto-oriented development: intimidating for pedestrians to use as a transportation corridor and virtually impossible to cross. In Suwanee, it was a rural two-lane highway with a foreseeable future as a four-lane divided highway, similar to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.

With Buford Highway running through Suwanee's historic downtown and Town Center, it soon became clear that if the city's residents wanted to **maintain the walkability of our downtown**, and we would need to plan for a different future for Buford Highway. The city envisioned a downtown street that welcomed walkers, cyclists, and drivers alike.

And so, in 2008, the City of Suwanee included the goal of redesigning Buford Highway in its comprehensive plan, beginning the city's journey to make Buford Highway a more complete street, designed to accommodate walkers, bikers, and vehicles. This type of street would **encourage development consistent with Town Center** to extend south on Buford Highway towards Russell Street, better connecting our historic Old Town area to our vibrant new Town Center.

In 2009 and 2010, the city developed a concept that clarified our vision for Buford Highway as a low speed, two-lane city street with a center turn lane interspersed with medians, instead of a high speed four-lane highway. The street would include:

- A roundabout at the southern end of downtown to announce your arrival into downtown and encourage vehicles to slow down,
- Wide comfortable sidewalks,
- Street trees to provide shade and separation from the vehicles,
- Street lights for a safe nighttime experience,
- On-street parking to help support downtown businesses and slow down drivers, and
- Bike lanes to separate cyclists from vehicles and walkers.

