2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

City of Hoschton, Georgia

Developed by the ***Planning & Government Services Division***

of the ***Northeast Georgia Regional Commission***

NEGRC
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

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Introduction & Overview

PURPOSE

This comprehensive plan serves as a guide for local government officials and community leaders for making decisions in support of the community's stated vision. Based on input from the public and an advisory committee, the plan identifies needs and opportunities for the community, as well as goals for the city's future, and policies that provide guidance and direction for achieving these goals. The plan also offers insight into what types of land use and development are appropriate in the City of Hoschton. The community work program provides an implementation framework for the plan's key elements.

PROCESS

The comprehensive plan process follows the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), O.C.G.A. Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2014. The DCA rules state that the comprehensive plan consists of the following three distinct components:

Needs & Opportunities

An analysis of the community's needs and opportunities will help determine existing conditions and future demands.

Community Goals

The city's vision, goals, and policies present forward-looking ideas that will serve as the groundwork for the implementation measures found in subsequent sections of the plan.

Community Work Program

The final component of the comprehensive plan, the Community Work Program, outlines steps and strategies for achieving the community's goals and vision.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

NEGRC's Role

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Planning & Government Services Division oversaw the development of this plan, including facilitating public and steering committee meetings.

Public Input & Steering Committee

The planning process began with a public hearing, and was followed by a community input session during which the public was invited to discuss the assets and challenges found in Hoschton, and their hopes for its future. Following the initial public meetings, several work sessions were held with a steering committee, with citizen, staff, and elected official membership. An online questionnaire provided opportunities for more convenient feedback, as did the opportunity (presented at the first public hearing) to contact any steering committee member about the plan's development.

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Needs & Opportunities

The following list of needs and opportunities results from a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted at the first input meeting, as well as professional analysis of relevant data and results of the online questionnaire.

**Italicized entries indicate high priorities*

POPULATION

Needs

- *Although the City's "kind, warm" residents are considered a major asset, their increased involvement in the local government would create a more engaged and effective environment for decision making; along those lines, local leaders cite a lack of interest among citizens in running for elected office*

Opportunities

- Growth is projected to be steady, but with a small population base (1,498 residents in 2015), the City has an opportunity to plan for and attract the kind of quality development laid-out in this plan's Vision

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Needs

- *The city lacks daily amenities/services, restaurants, grocery stores, and jobs*
- *Hoschton needs a way to regulate "big-box" development in favor of local businesses*

Opportunities

- *Hoschton's city limits contain plenty of developable space, for both commercial and employment-based applications*
- *The city's historic downtown is ripe for reinvestment and careful, context-sensitive development*
- A referendum for liquor sales is planned
- Hoschton is situated closely to I-85, which allows easy access to Atlanta, including a major airport, and Greenville, SC
- The Fall Festival is a regional draw; other festivals and events could be positive contributors to the local economy

HOUSING

Needs

- Leadership cites only one section of the community in need of better upkeep; blight is absent from most neighborhoods, with property well kept and maintained

Opportunities

- *Work on several residential developments was abandoned during the recent recession; the city is working with new developers to finish at least one of these projects*
- Additional residential density could be supported by the city's sewerage capacity

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Needs

- *The local government should adopt a tree ordinance to preserve Hoschton's canopy*

Opportunities

- While a downtown development overlay district exists, Hoschton could potentially benefit from a local historic district

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Needs

- *Hoschton has no police department; Jackson County deputies patrol the city, but local leaders would prefer to see increased enforcement of vandalism, traffic violations, and drug-related crimes*
- The city's property tax millage rate is currently zero, limiting revenues for desired and/or necessary services and affecting the local government's ability to assemble matching funds for grant applications; increased revenue should be generated

Opportunities

- *The historic train depot, which is government-owned, could be used to host events of various purposes, both for city use and as a rental, to generate revenue*

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Needs

- Special-Purpose, Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) revenues are critical to the city's capital plans; local leaders should identify projects whose purpose and value are clear to voters
- Hoschton is often compared with its larger, more developed neighbor, Braselton; the local government should work to distinguish the city from Braselton while maintaining close ties to, and an excellent working relationship with, that city's leadership

Opportunities

- Hoschton leaders cite positive coordination within Jackson County, presenting opportunities for shared services and open lines of communication

TRANSPORTATION

Needs

- *Connectivity for bicycling, walking, and use of golf carts is needed*

Opportunities

- *A comprehensive multi-use trail system (paved and unpaved) would provide connectivity, livability, environmental, and economic benefits*
- Jackson County's 5311 rural public transportation system provides coverage within Hoschton
- Georgia's recent passage of a transportation-focused SPLOST affords local governments the opportunity to create new revenue streams

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Community Goals

VISION STATEMENT

Historic Hoschton, Georgia, envisions a highly livable city with mixed-use, walkable centers and neighborhoods; context-sensitive commercial districts and employment opportunities; appropriate development and redevelopment patterns; and a first-class local government.

GOALS & POLICIES

1. Encourage quality commercial and residential **growth** through smart regeneration and land use practices, meeting the City's standards of livability, design, and scale
2. Create a system of multi-use **trails** that provide safe spaces for bicycling, walking, and other forms of healthy recreation, as well as community-building and socializing
3. Generate **tourism** through the creation and promotion of an attractive, pedestrian-friendly downtown, as well as regular festivals and other special events
4. Protect and highlight local **history** through historic preservation and interpretation
5. Increase use of the City's excellent **recreation** facilities to create a healthier, more engaged community
6. Promote **local, eclectic businesses** that will participate in the community, while regulating "big-box" development

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Land Use Element

Pursuant to the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the following Character Areas Map and Defining Narrative provide the physical planning component of the comprehensive plan.

The DCA defines a character area as a specific district or section of the community that:

- *Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, [an] arts district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor);*
- *Has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or*
- *Requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.)*

Character areas typically provide greater flexibility than traditional future land use maps, in which each parcel is assigned a single category such as Residential or Commercial.

The following table provides an overview of each of the character areas, including a brief description, zoning compatibility, and appropriate land uses for each. *(**Note:** not all zoning and land use classifications will necessarily be appropriate in all places within a character area.)*

CHARACTER AREAS COMPATIBILITY INDEX

CHARACTER AREA	DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTER AREA	ZONING COMPATIBILITY	APPROPRIATE LAND USES
Agricultural Area	Cultivated and working farmlands with few residences.	A	Ag/Forestry
Developing Commercial Center	An area planned for a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, and appropriate public and open space to serve surrounding neighborhoods.	C-1, C-2, G, OR	Commercial, Office, Mixed-Use, Park/Rec/Conservation
Developing Traditional Neighborhood	Neighborhood with characteristics such as a high degree of pedestrian orientation, buildings close to or at the front of the property line, and the predominance of alleys.	R-2, R-3, G	Residential, Public Institutional, Park/Rec/Conservation
Downton Hoschton	Traditional central business district and immediately surrounding residential neighborhood, identified for a mix of uses. This will be a highly walkable area.	C-1, C-2, G, OR, R-2	Commercial, Office, Public Institutional, Mixed-Use, Residential, Park/Rec/Conservation
Employment Center	Area characterized by a high degree of vehicular traffic, corridor- and auto-related commercial, and industrial activities. Includes the Hoschton Industrial Park.	C-1, C-2, C- 3, M-1, G	Industrial, Commercial, Public Institutional
Green Space	Predominantly natural or scenic rural areas which may contain historic, cultural, or recreational resources. Greenway corridors with either connectivity or conservation attributes have also been identified.	A, G	Park/Rec/Conservation, Ag/Forestry, Public Institutional
Intown Neighborhood	A neighborhood predominantly planned for and containing denser housing, including some multi-family developments. Some areas may be blighted and in need of rehabilitation.	R-2, R-3, R-4, G, OR, C-1	Residential, Public Institutional, Office, Commercial, Park/Rec/Conservation
Suburban Neighborhood	Area in which typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred or are likely to occur.	R-1, R-2, G	Residential, Public Institutional, Park/Rec/Conservation

CHARACTER AREAS DEFINING NARRATIVE

AGRICULTURAL AREA

These areas comprise working farmland within the City of Hoschton, and, together, are an important component of the rural heritage of the community. In light of farmland losses in recent years, it is crucial that Agricultural Areas be preserved. Primarily consisting of cultivated lands, this character area may also contain homestead residences and farm-related structures.

Compatibility

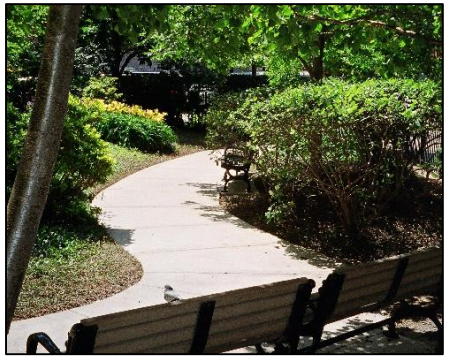
Zoning: A

Land use: Ag/Forestry

Implementation Measures

- Assist local farmers in selling their products through agri-tourism, farmers markets, and similar activities
- Encourage voluntary resource preservation through conservation easements
- Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trail networks
- Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers
- Protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses
- Protect tree canopy
- Develop multi-use paths within greenway buffer zones
- Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trails networks
- Encourage voluntary resource preservation through conservation easements

DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL CENTER



Hoschton's Developing Commercial Center will feature a mixed-use environment that combines office and commercial uses within community-based activity nodes. The area provides limited convenience shopping and services for Hoschton residents and visitors. Inclusion of residential mixed-use development depends on community desires and availability of the necessary supportive infrastructure. Developing Commercial Center offices and commercial establishments will not be reliant on automobile traffic and should be internally linked with bicycle, pedestrian, and golf cart networks; parking should be limited in order to make efficient use of land and to encourage access by other modes than driving. Small public open spaces consisting of plazas, pocket parks, and squares will be integral, as will other spaces that facilitate interaction.

Compatibility

Zoning: C-1, C-2, G, OR

Land use: Commercial, Office, Mixed-Use, Park/Rec/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Recruit desirable businesses
- Assemble a team to market the area
- Address needs and problems of existing businesses to improve retention and encourage expansion
- Protect tree canopy
- Pocket parks
- Create multi-modal connections to nearby residential neighborhoods
- Plan and seek grant funding for sidewalks, streetscaping projects, bicycle facilities, multi-use trails, and other improvements
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety
- Streamline development permitting for proposed developments that reflect the community vision and goals
- Consider form-based concerns when reviewing new development to ensure compatibility
- Compact development – Construct buildings vertically rather than horizontally, and configure them on a block or neighborhood scale that makes efficient use of land and resources
- Require appropriate buffers and landscaping between incompatible uses

DEVELOPING TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

"New urbanist" design guides growth in these predominantly residential areas. Several communities were planned and infrastructure was completed, but housing construction halted during the recent economic recession. Hoschton residents would like to ensure that future construction adheres to the traditional neighborhood patterns created in these areas. Small, neighborhood-scale parks and networks of multi-use paths, extensive sidewalks, and golf cart paths should be developed to connect residents to commercial and civic centers. Street connectivity should be incorporated within and between developments and neighboring character areas. Appropriate, small-scale public or institutional uses are also encouraged.

Compatibility

Zoning: R-2, R-3, G

Land use: Residential, Public Institutional, Park/Rec/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Implement context-sensitive design principles in streetscaping, building situation, traffic management, etc.
- Create multi-modal connections to nearby commercial and civic centers
- Encourage quality, creative design of higher-density residential developments
- Protect tree canopy
- Pocket parks
- Ensure that new residential infill development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety
- Compact Development – develop land in a compact way, and configure buildings on a block scale to make efficient use of land and resources
- Develop design guidelines to ensure that the physical appearance of new residences complements existing structures
- Establish maximum (rather than minimum) setback requirements to bring buildings closer to the street for the purpose of increasing walkability and ensuring a more traditional neighborhood feel

DOWNTOWN HOSCHTON

Much of the community's vision for this area focuses on preserving existing historic buildings and encouraging new developments to complement the original fabric of the City. Mature hardwoods and structures provide both aesthetic and historical interest, and are in need of protection. Residents would like to integrate elements such as specialty retail shops, B&Bs, and live-work, two- to three-story mixed-use office or commercial development that directly serves community members. While a variety of architectural styles may be appropriate, the intent is that new construction be scaled and massed similarly to what currently exists. Modifications and development in Downtown Hoschton must be mindful of potential effects on both historic character and future experience. While a mixture of uses within the Downtown Hoschton area is appropriate, land use patterns, streetscapes, and natural environments should remain largely unaltered. Private and public infrastructure investments should encourage walking, bicycling, and other transportation choices.

Compatibility

Zoning: C-1, C-2, G, OR, R-2

Land use: Commercial, Office, Public Institutional, Mixed-Use, Residential, Park/Rec/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Recruit desirable businesses
- Rehabilitate and revitalize downtown buildings, streetscapes, and parking
- Provide information to interested property owners regarding state and federal incentives and other funding opportunities for historic rehabilitation
- Protect tree canopy
- Pocket parks
- Ensure that new residential infill development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood
- Plan and seek grant funding for sidewalks, streetscaping projects, bicycle facilities, multi-use trails, and other improvements
- Conduct a walkability/bikeability audit
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety

EMPLOYMENT CENTER

This character area is primarily intended for light industrial and manufacturing enterprises with many employees. The Hoschton Business Park is located here, containing several larger-scale establishments. As a major gateway into the city, this area experiences high automobile traffic. Within and between developments, pedestrian connections should be established to serve employees, community residents, and visitors. Driveways should be consolidated and shared where appropriate to reduce interruptions of traffic flow and increase the safety of non-motorized road users. General commercial and retail development should be focused along SR53, to best serve residents and visitors and mirror the Developing Commercial Center area across the street. Minimal setbacks with parking to the rear of buildings should be encouraged to ensure visibility. Over time, the reuse and redevelopment of existing strip commercial establishments be encouraged.

Compatibility

Zoning: C-1, C-2, C- 3, M-1, G

Land use: Industrial, Commercial, Public Institutional

Implementation Measures

- Recruit desirable businesses
- Create multi-modal connections to nearby commercial and civic centers
- Address needs and problems of existing businesses to improve retention and encourage expansion
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety
- Match the training needs of the local workforce with available resources
- Encourage shared parking facilities between adjacent property owners
- Cluster Development – set aside a significant portion of new developments as undivided, protected open space
- Sign Regulations – control the aesthetic impact of signage on the community by restricting the location, size, and appearance of advertising signs (DCA model code available)
- Require appropriate buffers and landscaping between incompatible uses

GREEN SPACE

This area is characterized by open, undeveloped spaces as well as historic, cultural, or recreational resources. Conservation of these areas will focus development into denser areas of the central city. Included in this character area are greenways along riparian corridors, selected specifically for their connectivity attributes. These greenways are mainly expressed as 50-foot development buffers. The exceptions to this are the greenway located along the Mulberry River, expressed as a 100-foot buffer to complement the same on the opposite side of the river, in Barrow County; and the buffer between the business park and Joshua Way.

Hoschton residents have indicated a desire to develop multi-use trails within these buffer zones to connect residential areas to the Downtown Hoschton and Developing Commercial Center character areas, access future recreational opportunities in adjacent communities, and improve water quality.

Compatibility

Zoning: A, G

Land use: Park/Rec/Conservation, Ag/Forestry, Public Institutional

Implementation Measures

- Encourage voluntary resource preservation through conservation easements
- Facilitate habitat preservation and active living by greenway and/or trails networks
- Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers
- Intentionally locate public facilities to ensure they contribute to achieving the community's desired development patterns
- Develop multi-use paths within greenway buffer zones
- Protect tree canopy
- Evaluate the potential for creating a Green Space Overlay District to manage development in this area
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety

INTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

The prevailing feature of this character area is multi-family development with moderate residential density, pedestrian orientation, and street connectivity. Bordering the Downtown Hoschton character area, the Intown Neighborhood areas maximize infrastructure efficiency and concentrate development to allow preservation or lower densities in more sensitive and rural spaces. Higher residential densities than typically found in all other character areas are encouraged (where appropriate), and development will occur where supportive infrastructure and potential for infill exist. Neighborhood-appropriate public-institutional activity and mixed-use residential/office developments are also encouraged to facilitate walking, bicycling, and community interaction, provided they are developed within the character and context of the neighborhood. Recreation, education, public administration, and other similar uses will support increased population densities. Small, neighborhood-scale parks and networks of multi-use paths, extensive sidewalks, and golf cart paths should be incorporated to connect residents to commercial and civic centers. Street connectivity should be incorporated within and between developments.

Compatibility

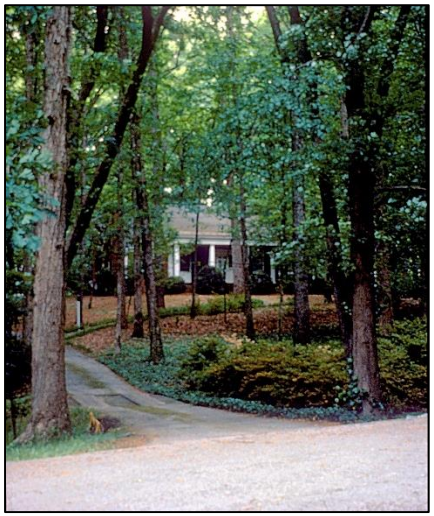
Zoning: R-2, R-3, R-4, G, OR, C-1

Land use: Residential, Public Institutional, Office, Commercial, Park/Rec/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Provide for quality, affordable housing to serve individuals and families with a mix of incomes
- Control nuisances such as abandoned vehicles, accumulation of junk, and tall weeds and grass
- Implement context-sensitive design principles in streetscaping, building situation, traffic management, etc.
- Create multi-modal connections to nearby commercial and civic centers
- Encourage quality, creative design of developments
- Acquire key parcels where redevelopment is desired, as time, feasibility, and funding permit, in order to re-package this land for sale to private developers
- Protect tree canopy
- Pocket parks
- Ensure that new residential infill development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood
- Conduct a walkability/bikeability audit
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD



The character of these areas can be classified as primarily residential, including typical suburban subdivisions. For undeveloped sections of these areas, the City hopes to encourage conservation subdivisions to preserve open space and concentrate residences as near as possible to existing transportation corridors and activity nodes. Small, neighborhood-scale parks and networks of multi-use paths, extensive sidewalks, and golf cart paths should be developed to connect residents to commercial and civic centers. Street connectivity should be incorporated within and between developments and neighboring character areas. Appropriate, small-scale public or institutional uses are also encouraged.

Compatibility

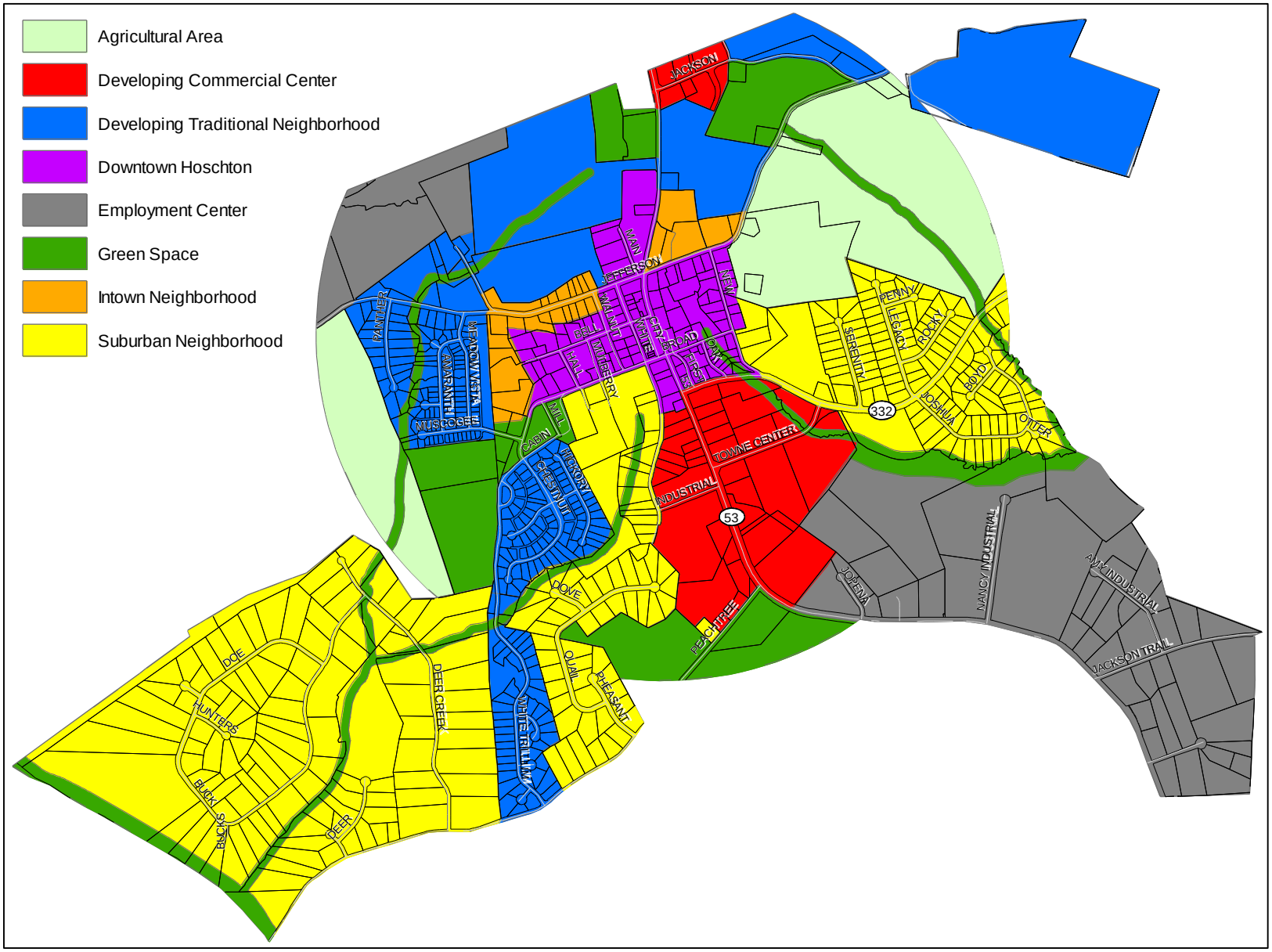
Zoning: R-1, R-2, G

Land use: Residential, Public Institutional, Park/Rec/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Encourage voluntary resource preservation through conservation easements
- Protect critical lands via conservation subdivisions
- Protect riparian areas by enforcing buffers
- Low-Impact Development (LID) – conserve and protect natural resource systems and reduce infrastructure costs
- Retrofit subdivisions to increase livability by providing more connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, open space, and amenities
- Implement context-sensitive design principles in streetscaping, building situation, traffic management, etc.
- Create multi-modal connections to nearby commercial and civic centers
- Protect tree canopy
- Complete streets – develop physical improvements and programmatic methods for overall road safety
- Establish maximum (rather than minimum) setback requirements to bring buildings closer to the street for the purpose of increasing walkability and ensuring a more traditional neighborhood feel
- Cluster Development – set aside a significant portion of new developments as undivided, protected open space

CHARACTER AREAS MAP



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Community Work Program

*The **Community Work Program** (2015-2020), updated every five years, provides a list of specific activities that the community plans to address as short-term priorities. A **Report of Plan Accomplishments**, which provides status commentary on the previous work plan (2010-2015), follows.*

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM, 2015-2020

#	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COST ESTIMATE	FUNDING SOURCE
POPULATION					
1	Designate staff member or elected official to serve as public engagement officer to increase community participation in local government activities (meeting notices, social media, etc.)	2015	City	None	NA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
2	Analyze and, if appropriate, modify local regulations to attract development that will provide opportunities for shopping and employment and generally accomplish this plan's vision	2015-2016	City	None	City (consulting planner)
3	Study and implement mechanism(s) to regulate "big-box" development	2015-2016	City	Minimal	City
4	Inventory developable land for commerce and employment purposes	2016-2017	City	Minimal	City
5	Develop downtown plan for economic development, historic preservation, connectivity, tourism, etc.	2016-2018	City, NEGRC	$5,000-$10,000	City, DCA
6	Develop branding plan to promote city	2016-2018	City	Minimal	City
HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT					
7	Work with developers to ensure completion of previously abandoned subdivisions	2015-2020	City	None	NA
8	Revise/update zoning and subdivision regulations to implement comprehensive plan	2015-2016	City	$6,000	City
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES					
9	Develop and adopt a tree protection ordinance	2015-2017	City	$4,000	City
10	Inventory and evaluate vacant and/or underused buildings for potential reuse as cultural facilities	2017	City, NEGRC	$2,000-$4,000	City

#	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COST ESTIMATE	FUNDING SOURCE
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES					
11	Continue discussions with Jackson County Sherriff's Office to increase patrols within the city	2015-2016	City	None	NA
12	Explore joint programming opportunities with Jackson County at city parks	2016	City, County	None	NA
13	Continue implementing existing strategies to increase use of and revenues from historic depot	2016-2017	City	None	NA
14	MS4 Planning: Phase I	2015-2018	City	$150,000	City
15	MS4 Planning: Phase II	2019-2020	City	$75,000	City
16	Implement planned wastewater treatment plant improvements	2015-2020	City	$500,000	City, grants (GEFA, etc.)
17	Sewerage improvement program for lower-income area of city	2015-2017	City	Unknown	City, grants
18	Conduct water and sewerage master planning	2016-2018	City	$50,000	City, grants (GEFA, etc.)
TRANSPORTATION					
19	Adopt the Northeast Georgia Plan for Bicycling and Walking	2016	City, NEGRC	None	NA
20	Develop a local bicycle and pedestrian plan, to potentially include golf cart usage	2016-2017	City, NEGRC	$1,000	City
21	Work with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to realign Highway 332 (incorporating multi-modal facilities)	2018	City, MPO, GDOT	Unknown	City, MPO, GDOT, etc.
22	Assist Jackson County with local promotion of its coordinated transportation service (rural public transit and human services transportation)	2015-2020	City, County, NEGRC	None	NA
23	Prioritize transportation needs for inclusion in future community and regional plans	2015-2016	City	Minimal	City
24	Sidewalk improvement program	2015-2020	City	$10,000+	City, GDOT, grants

REPORT OF PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2010-2015

ACTIVITY	STATUS	NOTES
POPULATION		
Work with age-based focus groups to determine how to attract and retain young adults and seniors	Abandoned	Lack of staff resources
ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		
Seek focused workforce training opportunities that complement future employment needs within the City	Abandoned	Not needed
Develop programs to encourage residents of all ages to seek higher education or vocation training	Completed	Via Leadership Jackson and literacy program
Assemble a local task force to carry out economic development activities for Downtown Hoschton and the Developing Commercial Center areas	Completed	Via chamber of commerce, industrial development authority, and Hoschton Area Business Alliance
Streamline and publicize the development permitting process	Completed	
HOUSING		
Amend zoning ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units	Completed	
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES		
Develop and adopt a tree protection ordinance	Underway	2017 completion
Develop and adopt a wetlands protection ordinance per Department of Natural Resources standards	Completed	
Pursue designation of historic district(s) at the local, state, and/or national level	Abandoned	No longer a priority
Develop accompanying historic district ordinances to ensure appropriate protections and enhancements of structures	Abandoned	No longer a priority

ACTIVITY	STATUS	NOTES
Inventory and evaluate vacant and/or underused buildings for potential reuse as cultural facilities	Postponed	2017 completion; lack of funds
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES		
Develop and implement a "Keep Hoschton Beautiful" campaign	Completed	
Explore joint programming opportunities with Jackson County at Sells Mill Park	Postponed	2016 completion; lack of funds
Evaluate new ways to utilize the Hoschton Ball Field	Completed	
TRANSPORTATION		
Adopt the Northeast Georgia Plan for Bicycling and Walking	Postponed	2016 completion; under evaluation
Develop a local bicycle and pedestrian plan	Postponed	2017 completion; under evaluation
Develop a plan for separated golf cart facilities	Completed	
Examine a potential partnership with Jackson County Transit to bring public transportation service into the City	Completed	
Work with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to realign Highway 332	Postponed	2018 completion; lower priority than originally estimated
Ensure multi-modal facilities are incorporated into the Highway 332 realignment	Postponed	2018 completion; lower priority than originally estimated
LAND USE, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT		
Update the City's zoning ordinance to reflect the community vision	Underway	2016 completion
Develop and implement a Farmland Protection program	Abandoned	No longer a priority

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Transportation

*In lieu of a transportation element, the City of Hoschton refers the reader to the **Gainesville-Hall MPO's most recent Regional Transportation Plan** (last updated in 2015). Hoschton Mayor Theresa Kenerly is a nonvoting member of the MPO's Policy Committee.*

APPENDIX

Planning and Development Policies

This appendix presents planning and development policies in response to the requirement involving "consideration of the Regional Water Plan and the Environmental Planning Criteria" and, generally, other policies and implementation measures that the city deems important regarding future development.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Adoption and Application of Natural Resource Maps

The natural resources maps provided in the Jackson County 2010 Community Assessment Technical Appendix (see Natural Resources), as may be amended by the county from time to time, may be consulted by the city with respect to the identification of: wetlands; groundwater recharge areas; water supply watersheds; floodplains; steeply sloping soils; areas of prime farmland; scenic views and corridors, and soils unsuitable for septic tanks absorption fields.

2. Wetland Preservation and Mitigation

Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).

3. Wetland Buffers

When a development proposal is located close to a wetland, it should establish and maintain a minimum 25 foot wide protective buffer around the wetland.

4. Wetlands – Review for Development Impacts

Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):

- Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
- Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
- Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
- Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
- Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
- Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as "Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places."
- Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
- Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

5. Water Supply Watersheds

Adopt and maintain zoning and land development regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds (391-3-16-.01, "Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds"). For Hoschton, this includes regulations for the Mulberry River large water supply watershed (Winder intake).

6. Protected Rivers

Adopt regulations that meet and exceed the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for River Corridor Protection (391-3-16-.04, "Criteria for River Corridor Protection") and the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan for the Mulberry River, even though it is not officially classified as a protected river.

7. Supplementary Protection Policies for the Mulberry River

The following policies apply to development proposals on properties fronting the Mulberry River, in addition to protected river requirements:

- No dwelling or building should be constructed within 50 feet of the river bank.
- When a single-family dwelling is proposed in a river corridor, the dwelling should be sited on non-vegetated (open) parts of the required 100 foot buffer.
- For all building uses except for single-family dwellings, when that half of the buffer closest to the river is not fully forested or vegetated, it should be replanted with native vegetation.

8. Floodways and Floodplains

Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters. Consider future conditions floodplain data, where available or can be generated.

9. National Flood Insurance Program
Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

10. Minimize Water Quality Impacts
The location and intensity of development should be arranged so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality, both during and after construction. Major considerations concerning water quality should include: organic pollution from infiltration and surface runoff; erosion and sedimentation; water temperature elevation; nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous; and toxic materials.

11. Stormwater Best Management Practices
Implement best practices for water pollution control and stormwater management, including but not limited to "low impact development" techniques such as biofilters (vegetated swales/strips), wet ponds, and constructed wetlands.

12. Steep Slopes
Steep slopes (25% or more) should be set aside as conservation areas. No lot should be created with more than 50 percent of its area containing steep slopes, and lot subdividers should demonstrate that each lot has a suitable building envelope outside steeply sloping areas. If a building site must be created with steep slopes, all buildings and structures on such building sites should have foundations which have been designed by a civil engineer or other qualified professional. When development must occur within steeply sloping areas, site designers are also encouraged to propose and apply innovative concepts for slope and soil stabilization, and limitations on grading.

13. Landscape Ecology and Habitat Protection
Consider habitat information in the review of land developments, including but not limited to the database of the DNR Natural Heritage Program, USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species, and the DNR Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities. Promote and pursue principles of landscape ecology when reviewing large developments and major subdivisions.

14. Tree Protection
Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments. Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees with trees of like species and value, or apply a canopy replacement strategy in lieu of applying conventional tree replacement regulations.

15. Water Conservation
Promote the conservation of water by residents, businesses, industries, and institutions, to meet local, regional, and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.

16. Stormwater Management
Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and which will serve as amenities for the development. Sites should be designed where possible to drain to the rear or side, where detention ponds are more appropriately located. Fenced detention ponds in front yards are strongly

discouraged if not prohibited altogether. When stormwater detention or drainage is placed adjacent to the right-of-way, slopes should be gentle enough to avoid fencing requirements, and the area should be attractively landscaped. New, major residential subdivisions should be required to ensure that adequate funding is available for maintenance of any non-public on-site stormwater detention facilities.

17. Energy Efficiency

Reduce energy consumption through comprehensive planning and urban design, and promote energy-efficient development. Support programs to increase energy efficiency and reduce life-cycle costs of all construction projects, including public and institutional projects. Develop and encourage appropriate applications of renewable energy.

18. Historic and Cultural Resources

The traditional character of the city should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the city's character.

19. Land Conservation Methods

Preferred methods for the permanent protection of conservation lands as open space include dedication to a public entity (if dedication is acceptable locally) and/or a conservation easement with management by an approved land trust.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Generally

Expand the city's economic base and increase employment opportunities while protecting environmental, historic, and community character.

2. Comprehensiveness

Prepare economic development strategies and plans that are comprehensive in nature, such that all economic activities are addressed, including but not limited to agriculture and agribusiness, tourism, heritage tourism, health care, retail, services, material moving and warehousing, biotechnology, industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and small business/home occupations.

3. Infrastructure readiness

Provide and maintain sanitary sewer capacity and road capacity in order to attract new industry and manufacturing and commercial activities. Reserve such capacity for the types of industries and businesses that need the infrastructure.

4. Business Climate

Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the city.

5. Balance of Interests

Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.

HOUSING

1. Housing Opportunities
Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the city.

2. Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities
Encourage "life cycle" or "mixed generation" communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.

3. Housing for Persons with Disabilities
Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.

4. Design and Location of Senior and Disabled Housing
Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity or with appropriate access to health care services.

5. Substandard Housing
Require that substandard or dilapidated housing be brought up to applicable codes or demolished if code compliance is not feasible.

6. Housing and Property Standards Codes
Allocate appropriate resources to enforce housing and property maintenance codes.

7. State and Federal Housing and Community Development Programs
Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs to improve areas of substandard housing and improve low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Level of Service Standards
Establish and maintain level-of-service and/or performance standards for the major community facilities and services provided by the county. Unless specified by facility-specific master plans and adopted as superseding policy, the city should strive to maintain the minimum level of service standards adopted by Jackson County in its 2015 Comprehensive Plan, adopted and as may be amended.

2. Long-term Water Supply
Continue to investigate the feasibility of additional long-term sources of water supplies, including opportunities during the development review process.

3. Contingency Plans for Water System
Contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding.

4. Sanitary Sewer
Manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment.

Convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant or site without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.

5. Water and Sewer Service Areas

Delineate and adopt, and revise periodically as appropriate as a part of the county's service delivery strategy, water and sewer service areas for the city as a municipal service provider. Revise service area boundaries when necessary to account for municipal annexations.

6. Standard Construction Details and Specifications

Maintain and periodically update standard construction specifications and standard drawings for water and sewer systems.

7. Emergency Preparedness

Periodically conduct, or participate in countywide efforts to complete, community hazard vulnerability analyses to identify the types of environmental extremes (e.g., floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes), technological accidents (e.g., toxic chemical releases,), and deliberate incidents (e.g., sabotage or terrorist attack involving chemical, biological, radiological/ nuclear, or explosive/flammable materials) to which the city may be exposed. Periodically review and revise the disaster preparedness and emergency management plans based on such vulnerability analyses and update them as appropriate.

8. Schools.

Evaluate impacts of residential development on the public school systems. Where impacts are evident, seek a development agreement to provide school site(s) or otherwise mitigate the impact of residential development on the public school system.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Modes

Promote development that serves the long-term cycling and walking needs of residents of the city and that provides an appropriate amount of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Strong consideration will be given to proposals that provide integrated and connected multi-modal transportation facilities, including paths for golf carts and other multi-use or mode-shared facilities.

2. Funding

Secure federal and state funding for transportation, where available, and maximize the use of available financial resources to fund needed transportation improvements.

3. Connectivity

Promote regional and countywide connectivity in the local road network, including intercity travel. All new roadways except low volume, local residential subdivision streets, should connect at both termini with the existing road network. Local streets should be planned where possible with more than one connection to the existing public road network. Street stubs should be provided to ensure connectivity with future subdivisions on abutting lands.

4. Context Sensitivity

Design planned roadway improvements in a way that is context sensitive, preserves, or creates a sense of place for the areas in vicinity of the improvements, and that enhances community aesthetics.

5. Traffic Routing
Ensure that vehicular traffic, especially truck traffic, will not be routed into residential neighborhoods, so as to preserve the peace and quiet of residential neighborhoods.

6. Access Management
Adopt and apply access management standards to control the connections and access points of driveways and roads to public roadways.

7. Encroachment Prevention
Protect existing and future rights-of-way from building encroachment.

8. Speed Limits
Establish posted speed limits for all city roadways and periodically reevaluate and revise speed limits as may be needed based on existing road conditions, such as functional classification, shoulder condition, road grade, adjacent land uses, frequency of driveway accesses, building setbacks, sight distances, geometric features of the roadway, pedestrian activity, and historical crash data.

9. Land Development and Transportation
When development occurs it should be the responsibility of developer to improve facilities along the public street frontages and internal to the development.

10. Sidewalk Installation
New subdivisions need be required to provide sidewalks along streets internal to the subdivision and all subdivisions and land developments should provide sidewalks within the right-of-way of public roadways abutting or fronting the subdivision or land development.

11. On-site Circulation
Adopt and apply standards that ensure the safe and convenient flow of vehicles, pedestrians, and where appropriate bicyclists, on development sites.

12. Commercial Development
New commercial areas need to have public road access at the proper functional classification. Big box businesses should be required to study traffic impacts and prior to land development approval propose mitigation measures that will minimize capacity and safety issues and to reduce conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and trucks. Encourage the installation of grid street patterns in commercial nodes. Require parcel-to-parcel connectivity in non-residential areas (where compatible) using cross-access easements, to ensure that drivers can directly access abutting non-residential uses without having to use the road or street.

LAND USE

1. Residential Neighborhoods
Maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of residences at low (or current) densities. Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods. Protect residential areas (whether rural, suburban, or urban) from nuisances (e.g., excessive noise, odor, traffic and lighting) and from encroachment by incompatible land uses. The consideration of the preservation of

the integrity of residential neighborhoods shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.

2. Compatibility and Transitions in Land Use

Rezonings and planned unit developments, if approved, should result in land development that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property. Development should not adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property. Avoid harsh or abrupt changes of land use, by encouraging a logical and compatible relationship of land use, transitioning from one property development to another. The ideal progression of land use compatibility is from residential to public-institutional (including private office), to commercial, to industrial. If harsh or abrupt changes in land use cannot be avoided, the transition should be better facilitated with special design techniques, step downs in intensity or density, and/or conditions of approval relating to building height, building setbacks, buffers, and limitations on incompatible operating characteristics.

3. Access to Conservation Lands

Subdivisions are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.

4. Conservation Subdivisions

Subdivisions are encouraged but not required, where opportunities exist, to follow principles of conservation subdivision and design.

5. Adequate Public Facilities

Development should not occur or be approved which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, schools, or other publicly-provided facilities and services. As a condition of approval, major subdivisions (6 or more lots) and major land developments should be required to demonstrate availability of public water, fire protection, law enforcement, roads, stormwater management, parks and recreation, and public school facilities. Major subdivisions and major land developments that cannot demonstrate all such facilities are available or planned at the time of development or within a reasonable period of time thereafter may gain approval only if they mitigate the lack of such facilities, through the dedication of land in the subdivision or off-site, on-site and/or off-site improvements, payment of impact fees if imposed by the city, or payment of in-lieu fees or other acceptable arrangements via development agreements.

6. Manufactured Housing

Except in rural and agricultural areas or zoning districts, manufactured home parks, manufactured home subdivisions, and manufactured homes on individual lots are strongly discouraged if not prohibited by city regulation.

7. Sewer

Land development and land subdivisions in urban and suburban parts of the city should be connected to public sanitary sewer as a condition or prerequisite of development approval.

8. Buffers and Screening

Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices. Utilize buffers to separate potentially conflicting or incompatible land uses.

9. Non-residential and Multi-Family Residential Site Plan Review

All non-residential and multi-family residential developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, architectural characteristics of buildings, and signage.

10. Industrial land use

Industrial developments serving more than one industry are strongly encouraged to be developed within planned industrial parks which are designed with campus-style layouts including generous building setbacks from exterior roads and landscaping. New industrial operations should be limited to those that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions. However, in areas designated for industry which are clearly removed from residential areas, heavy manufacturing and heavy industrial uses, including those creating objectionable conditions, may be considered appropriate depending on specific conditions.

11. Mixed Use

Within planned unit developments, the vertical mixing of residential with office and commercial land uses is desirable. Horizontal mixed use is also encouraged.