

## CHAPTER 9 CHARACTER AND LAND USE

While every component of the Comprehensive Plan is central to implementation of the City's vision and policies, it is this chapter that is most influential in terms of everyday decision-making. The land use element is most often (and properly) cited in support or denial of zoning and other land use changes. The most important graphics of the Comprehensive Plan are the Character Area Map and the Future Land Use Plan Map, which are presented in this chapter. Those maps will continue to be cited as an overall expression of the City's land use policy, though care must be taken to interpret those maps with due regard to the City's overall vision statement, the quality community objectives, character area visions and policies, and other local policies provided in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda.

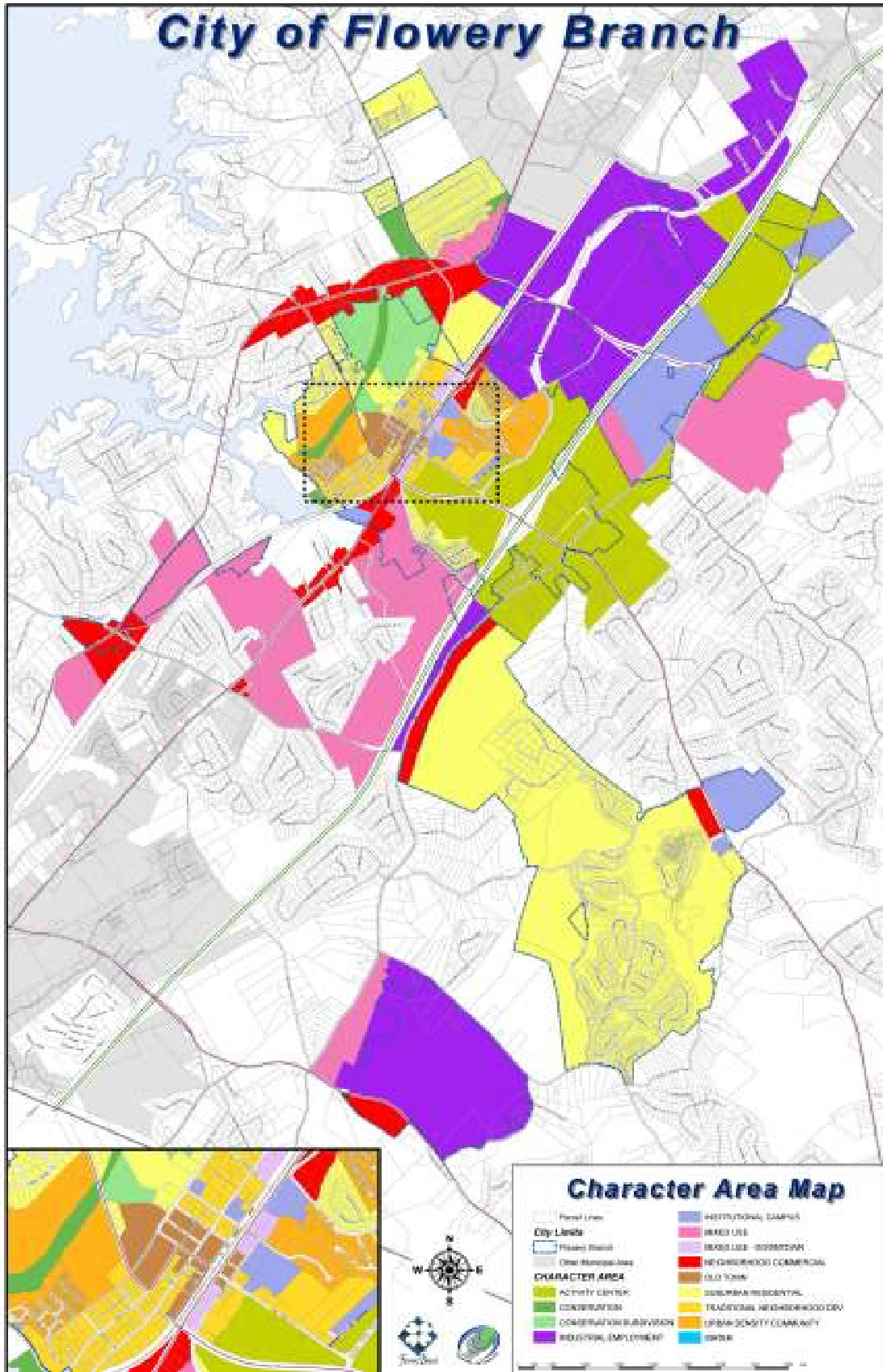
### **CHARACTER AREAS**

#### **Character Area Map**

A preliminary character area map was prepared as part of the community assessment in 2005 and a revised character area map was prepared and adopted as part of the community agenda in 2006. After a detailed review in 2010, it was determined that the character area typology and its designations applied to property inside and adjacent to the city (as adopted in the 2006 community agenda) are still appropriate at this time, with some exceptions summarized in the next subsection. A revised character area map is presented on the following page. The character area categories are described following the summary of changes made in 2010.

#### **Changes to the Character Area Map and Typology in 2010**

- Areas not located close to the Old Town area but which were designated as a "Mixed Use" character area were originally found not to be viable for mixed use. However, further evaluation was given and several areas along McEver Road and Hog Mountain Road have been redesignated as "Mixed Use." Previously unconsidered (still unincorporated) areas along Atlanta Highway, Mulberry Street, I-985 and the southern portion of Hog Mountain Road adjacent to Lafarge Quarry have been added as "Mixed Use."
- The areas primarily located adjacent to Old Town and previously identified as "Mixed Use" have further been redefined as "Mixed Use Downtown." These areas were further defined to provide consistency between the City's redevelopment area and other surrounding properties.
- As a result of recent annexations and an expansion of sewer service, properties surrounding the intersection of McEver Road and Gaines Ferry Road, portions of Hog Mountain Road at Atlanta Highway and along Thurmond Tanner Parkway have been included in the Character Area Map and identified as Mixed Use, Activity Center, and Industrial/Employment respectively. In addition, other currently unincorporated areas east of I-985 near the Atlanta Falcons Training and Headquarters facility were designated as appropriate for Mixed Use.



- The intensities of non-residential development included in the Character Area descriptions were critically re-evaluated and modified slightly based on an empirical assessment of prevailing and anticipated development intensities.
- Illustrations accompanying the character area descriptions were modified as appropriate.

### **Character Area Descriptions**

The character areas originally included in the community agenda adopted in 2005 are included on the following pages, with relatively minor revisions to those descriptions as described in the preceding subsection.

**Old Town**

**VISION:** Old Town will be an area corresponding generally with the city's redevelopment area boundary. Old Town will incorporate redevelopment, revitalization and historic preservation objectives of a compact, attractive, pedestrian-friendly downtown with historic fabric. It will become "The Gem of South Hall." (See also description for "Mixed Use Downtown" character area).

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Predominantly mixed use and main street-style commercial, including retail and service establishments, restaurants, offices, civic buildings and uses, institutional, and residential, and pocket parks and civic green spaces. Intensities are governed by different Floor-Area Ratios (FARs) established in Chapter 10 of this Community Agenda.

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Rectangular or square block, lot, and street pattern of skinny city streets, retained but with improvements where required, including new sidewalks, pedestrian plazas, street trees, and other distinctive streetscape features.

**REGULATIONS:** To be implemented by a redevelopment plan (Chapter 10), Central Business District CBD zoning, TND zoning, and historic district overlay.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Appropriate business, heritage preservation, open space preservation, transportation alternatives, housing opportunities, infill development, sense of place.



**Pedestrian Retail District/Streetscape**



**Example of Pedestrian Plaza**



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**Representative Land Uses and Scale**

### **OLD TOWN CHARACTER AREA POLICIES**

1. Old Town should be maintained as the focal point of the city as a whole. Old Town should be an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly place where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
2. Ensure that as additional development and redevelopment occur in Old Town, appropriate attention is paid to ensuring existing infrastructure is adequate and that new infrastructure as appropriate is provided concurrent with development and redevelopment. This includes drainage facilities, roads, sidewalks, bike paths, and streetscape improvements as called for in this Community Agenda, as appropriate.
3. Development in Old Town may consist of greater lot coverages, building heights, and building intensities and little or no front and side building setbacks when compared with other character areas.
4. Development that is adequately served by public parking or on-street parking, or which qualifies for exemptions, should have reduced or exempted minimum off-street parking requirements.
5. Automobile-related facilities and services are not appropriate in Old Town because they do not facilitate pedestrian friendly design, and thus, new highway business uses are not permitted in Old Town (and its implementing Central Business District zoning).
6. Pocket parks, or greenspace amounting should be provided as a part of mixed-use developments and redevelopments in Old Town.
7. Redevelopment should occur in a manner consistent with the community's expectations for superior design and development characteristics that promote quality of place. Redevelopment must be sensitive to, and extend design principles characteristic of, historic properties in the city. Refer to guidelines in Chapter 10 for more detailed policy and design guidance.
8. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
9. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

**Mixed Use (Downtown)**

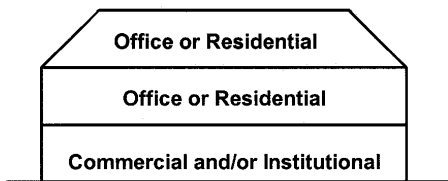
**VISION:** Areas that will be developed with a combination of different land uses. Well-connected pedestrian-friendly diverse places with unique architecture. In some cases the conversion of existing historic homes for commercial and office purposes. New development should be sensitive to the city's existing historic core (Old Town).

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Acceptable uses include residential uses vertically or horizontally mixed with other uses in the same building, offices, retail and services, restaurants, civic/institutional, and open space/recreation. Commercial building intensities should be within a range of approximately 15,000 to 38,000 square feet of building space per acre (a Floor-Area Ratio of 0.34 to 0.85).

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Grid block pattern, skinny streets with inter-parcel access where possible, sidewalks and street trees, distinctive materials (e.g., stamped concrete) with variable widths. Developments are at a pedestrian-friendly scale and include open space. Open space is typically provided in the form of landscaping. There is a high level of connectedness among uses.

**REGULATIONS:** To be implemented primarily with applicable commercial zoning districts. Developments will be required to complete design review and comply with all aesthetic requirements.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Appropriate business, employment options, adaptive reuse of historic structures, transportation connectivity, housing opportunities, sense of place.



**Illustrative Vertical Mixed Use Desirable**



**Appropriate Scale**



**Illustrative Example of Converted Historic Home Being Used as an Office**



**Walkable Streets**

### **Mixed Use (Downtown) Character Area Policies**

1. This character area should extend the general character and development pattern of Old Town but at a lower intensity that appropriately transitions to the traditional neighborhoods character area. The mixed use downtown character area should promote an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly place that complements and extends Old Town.
2. Encourage a land use distribution pattern that emphasizes land use compatibility; safe, efficient and sustainable development, and preservation of the integrity of existing land uses. Ensure appropriate transitions between incompatible land uses.
3. Encourage redevelopment to occur in a manner consistent with the community's expectations for superior design and development characteristics that promote quality of place. Redevelopment must be sensitive to, and extend design principles characteristic of, historic properties in the city. Refer to guidelines in Chapter 10 for more detailed policy and design guidance.
4. Ensure that as additional development and redevelopment occurs in the mixed use downtown area, appropriate attention is paid to ensuring existing infrastructure is adequate and that new infrastructure as appropriate is provided concurrent with development and redevelopment. This includes drainage facilities, roads, sidewalks, bike paths, and streetscape improvements as called for in this Community Agenda, as appropriate.
5. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
6. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

### Mixed Use

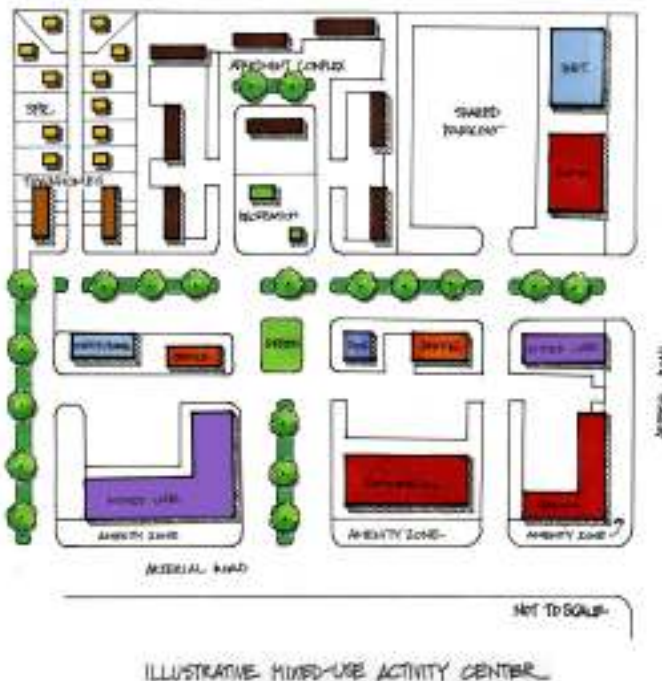
**VISION:** Areas that will be developed with a combination of different land uses intended to create an environment where compatible land uses can be located in close proximity to each other. Diverse places with unique architecture contributing to the economic base of the city.

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Acceptable uses include business/office parks, light industrial, smaller scale retail, neighborhood commercial and a limited amount of residential uses. Commercial/ industrial building intensities should be within a range of approximately 15,000 to 38,000 square feet of building space per acre (a Floor-Area Ratio of 0.5 to 0.85).

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Automobile traffic is frequent, and individual developments are not necessarily connected with one another. Driveways and curb radii are designed to accommodate smaller delivery trucks. Pedestrian accessibility is generally not anticipated, though pedestrian access is required along road frontages. Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying identification signs. Residential developments are located behind any commercial or business uses.

**REGULATIONS:** This character area will be primarily implemented with the light industrial or commercial zoning districts. Developments will be required to complete design review and comply with all aesthetic requirements.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Appropriate business and employment options, transition between more intense uses and compatibility between uses, housing opportunities are subordinate to the other uses.



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Illustrative Example of Mixed Use with Focus on Commercial/Residential Design



ILLUSTRATIVE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

**Mixed Use Character Area Policies**

1. Encourage a land use distribution pattern that emphasizes land use compatibility; safe, efficient and sustainable development, and preservation of the integrity of existing land uses. Ensure appropriate transitions between incompatible land uses.
2. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
3. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

**Traditional Neighborhoods**

**VISION:** Mostly residential neighborhoods in a rectangular or square block, lot, and street pattern in the originally settled neighborhoods of Flowery Branch.

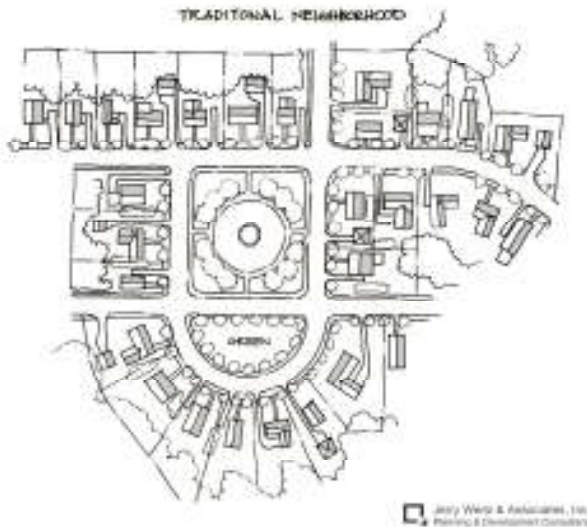
**USES AND DENSITIES:** Acceptable uses are primarily single-family residences. Duplexes, townhouses, and accessory apartments may be permitted. Greens, plazas, and pocket parks incorporated into development plans. Little if any setback from city streets. Densities are in the range of 3-6 dwelling units per acre.

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Rectangular or square block, lot, and street pattern of skinny city streets, retained but with careful improvements where required, including new sidewalks, street trees, and other pedestrian-friendly streetscape features.

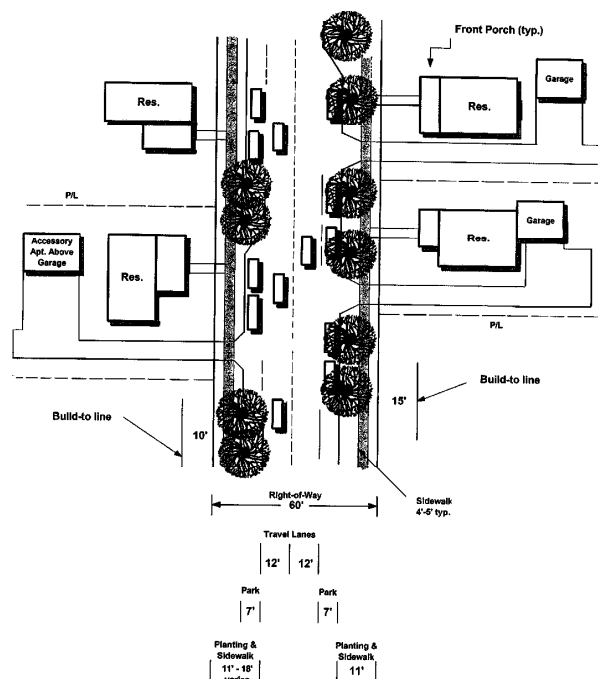
**REGULATIONS:** To be implemented with a new traditional neighborhood development zoning district with design guidelines. Design review required for compatibility with existing residences.



**Residence in Traditional Neighborhood**



**Grid Pattern of Streets and Blocks**



**Traditional Neighborhoods typically have on-street parking, street trees, dwellings with front porches located close to the street**

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES**

**IMPLEMENTED:** Historic preservation, open space preservation, transportation alternatives, housing opportunities, traditional neighborhood, infill development, sense of place.

### **Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area Policies**

1. Traditional neighborhoods should be predominantly, though not necessarily exclusively, comprised of detached single-family neighborhoods.
2. Traditional neighborhoods should be designed in a grid-like pattern of blocks and interconnecting streets. Block lengths should not exceed 800 feet without intervening (mid-block) pedestrian footpaths.
3. If access from traditional neighborhood street to off-street parking must be provided, the garage should be located to the rear or at least to the side where visibility of the garage is reduced. If off-street parking must be directly accessed from the street and directly facing the street, the garage should at minimum be recessed back behind the front wall of the dwelling so that it is subordinate rather than dominant. In no event should dwellings be designed so that garages dominate the street scene.
4. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
5. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

### Suburban Neighborhoods

**VISION:** Conventional suburban subdivisions with larger lots (1/3 to 1 acre) that may have cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets. Houses are set back from the road. Streets are built to relatively wide standard when compared with traditional neighborhoods.

**USES AND DENSITIES:** Acceptable uses are almost exclusively single-family residences, though some civic and recreational uses integrated into subdivision plans are acceptable. Duplexes, townhouses, multi-family, and accessory apartments are not permitted. Densities are in the range of 1-3 dwelling units per acre.

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Houses are setback from city streets. Garages are visible in street scene. Automobile access dominates function but sidewalks are required.

**REGULATIONS:** To be implemented with existing residential zoning districts with limited design guidelines.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Open space preservation, housing opportunities, infill development, suburban sense of place.



Typical Street Scene in a Suburban Neighborhood



Dwelling Setback from Street



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Cars and garages may dominate the scene in suburban residential subdivisions



CONVENTIONAL SUBURBAN SUBDIVISION

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Conventional Suburban Subdivision With Cul de Sacs

### **Suburban Neighborhoods Character Area Policies**

1. Maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of detached, single-family residences in a conventional suburban design and layout at low densities.
2. Applications for conditional uses should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood's residential character.
3. New residential developments should provide for recreational opportunities such as green space and open spaces.
4. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
5. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

**Conservation Subdivisions**

**VISION:** An alternative to conventional suburban subdivisions that protects open space and farmland (ranging from 20% - 40% of the total area in the subdivision, depending on zoning designation).

**USES AND DENSITIES:** Acceptable uses are almost exclusively single-family residences, though some civic and recreational uses integrated into subdivision plans are acceptable. Duplexes, townhouses, multi-family, and accessory apartments are generally not permitted, unless they are part of a larger master planned development and subordinate to traditional single-family homes. Densities are in the range of 1-3 dwelling units per acre.

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Dedicated open space, clustered subdivision lots which are smaller than in conventional subdivisions though the overall gross density is comparable.

**REGULATIONS:** To be implemented with a conservation subdivision development option within single-family residential zoning districts or within a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Design guidelines provided or conditions of zoning will be imposed to ensure compliance with recommended design features.

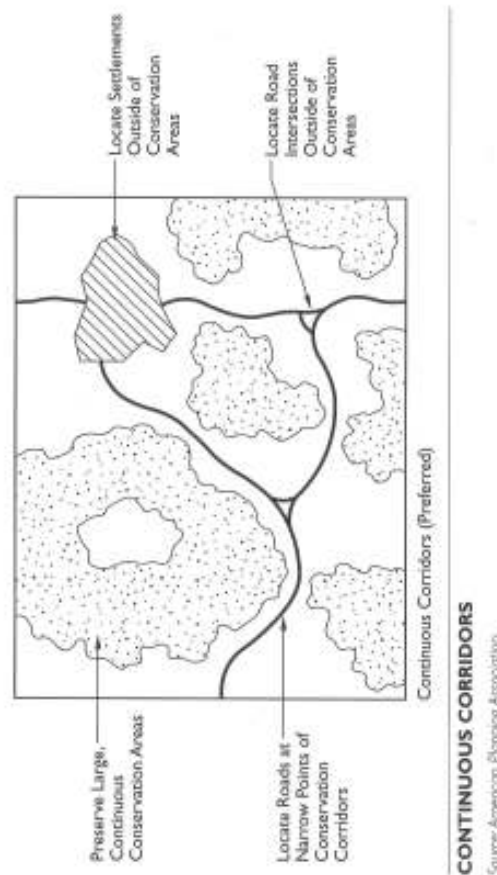
**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Open space preservation, housing opportunities, infill development, sense of place.



**Illustrative Conservation Subdivision**



**Shared Use Paths Desirable**



### **Conservation Subdivisions Character Area Policies**

1. Where possible, barns and other agricultural outbuildings in reasonably good condition and which contribute to the open space character of the area should be retained on the site.
2. Dwellings and driveways should not be prominent visual features within a conservation subdivision. Dwellings and associated outbuildings should have a low visual impact. When a residential dwelling is proposed in an area with an open field or area with agricultural character, it should be sited at the edge of the field if possible to preserve the view of the open field, pasture, or agricultural scene. Conservation Subdivisions should minimize the number of homes sited in open fields, if farmland protection and meadow preservation are principal objectives.
3. Priorities for conserving or developing conservation areas should be based on an understanding of what features of the given property are more special, unique, irreplaceable, environmentally valuable, historic, scenic, or otherwise significant when compared with other similar features and in relationship to neighboring parcels.
4. Scenic views, sites and vistas should be unblocked and uninterrupted. Views can be created or opened up further by pruning limbs and selectively removing trees as opposed to clear-cutting.
5. Each conservation subdivision should provide a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of its total land area as open space.
6. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
7. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

### Urban Density Communities

**VISION:** Higher density, urban living environments that provide primarily rental housing opportunities.

**USES AND DENSITIES:** Acceptable uses include multi-family development (apartment complexes, townhouses, and manufactured home parks). Densities range from 6 to 12 units per acre.



Typical Fee-Simple Townhouses



Manufactured Home Park

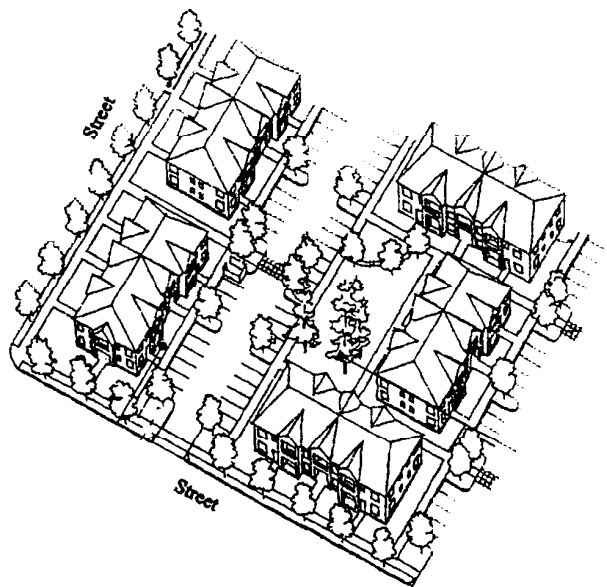


Apartments with Good Articulation of Buildings

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Master planned with high quality architecture, entrance landscaping, and recreational amenities.

**REGULATIONS:** To be implemented with existing multi-family residential zoning districts with design guidelines. Design review required.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Open space preservation, housing opportunities, infill development, suburban sense of place.



Connectivity and Quality Design of Urban Density Communities



APARTMENT BUILDING

**Urban Density Communities Character Area Policies**

1. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
2. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

### Institutional Campus

**VISION:** Large institutional campuses including the Atlanta Falcons Training Facility, Hall County public schools, and large churches.

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Primarily public and institutional. Relatively low intensities, with a Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.22 to 0.34 (10,000 to 15,000 square feet of building space per acre)

**MAJOR FEATURES:** These are mostly single-function land use districts where public access is controlled or limited. Areas are designed for trucks and individual establishments are not connected with one another. In the case of schools, pedestrian accessibility is provided, but other institutions are largely reliant on the automobile for access. Campus-style site planning and generous landscaping.

**REGULATIONS:** This character area will be implemented with an Institutional or Public-Institutional zoning district. Design guidelines will be provided, and design review is required. Three-story height limit. Minimum 20 percent of the lot is private open space or landscaped.

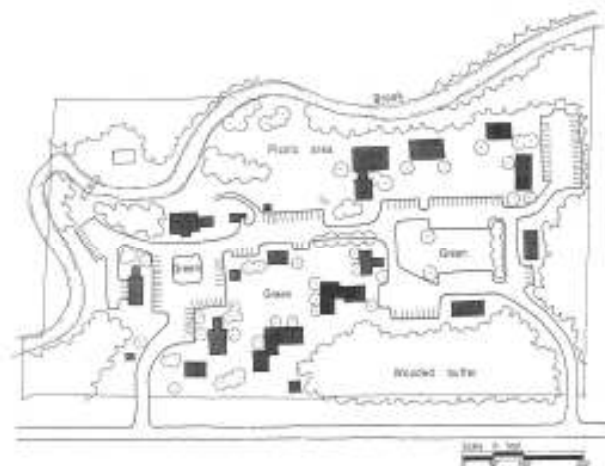
**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Educational opportunities, employment options, open space preservation, sense of place.



Illustrative Quality Design



Illustrative Quality Design



Low Impact Campus Design

**Institutional Campus Character Area Policies**

1. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
2. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.



### **Neighborhood Commercial Character Area Policies**

1. Neighborhood commercial character areas are intended to provide areas for limited, small-scale commercial uses of a convenience nature serving nearby residential neighborhoods as opposed to a regional market.
2. With the exception of convenience stores with gasoline pumps, neighborhood commercial character areas are not intended to permit or accommodate automotive uses or other types of more intensive highway business activities, or those uses that generate excessive traffic, noise, odors, pollution, safety hazards, or other adverse impacts which would detract from the desirability of adjacent properties for residential use.
3. Uses within neighborhood commercial character areas generally occur within enclosed buildings with no outside storage and limited outdoor display of goods and merchandise.
4. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
5. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

### Activity Center

**VISION:** Centered at the interchange of Spout Springs Road/Phil Neikro Boulevard and I-985, and also extending north and south along Hog Mountain Road, this character area will be an accessible center of retail businesses, services, and complementary uses. While some allowance for mixed-use developments is provided, they contribute extensively to the economic base of the city.

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Dominated by commercial uses but also intended to accommodate business/office parks and mixed-use developments. A wide range of uses is contemplated in this character area, except for heavy industry and residential. This character area is the proper place for big box retail, shopping centers, lodging and auto-related uses. Commercial intensities are within a range of approximately 15,000 to 38,000 square feet of building space per acre (a Floor-Area Ratio of 0.34 to 0.85). Five story height limit.

**MAJOR FEATURES:** Developments are served by network of collector and arterial roads. Pedestrian accessibility is promoted, although most activity is via the automobile for access. Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying monument signs. Open space for large developments is provided via plazas and greens. A minimum of 15 percent of the lot is open space or landscaped.

**REGULATIONS:** This character area will be implemented primarily with a commercial zoning district but may allow for upscale business parks as an addition to primary retail development. Design guidelines will be provided, and activity center projects will be required to complete design review.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Appropriate business, employment options, use of larger transportation network, sense of place.



Well Articulated Buildings with Pitched Roofs and Canopies or Awnings



Conventional Shopping Center Layout



Monument Signage

### **Activity Center Character Area Policies**

1. Within an activity center, a logical hierarchy of building forms should be created. Building heights and masses should be greatest in the focus area and inner portion of the support area (the part closest to the focus area), and should transition to lower heights and less mass outward from the focus area to the outer edge of the support area. Building massing should be varied to create a logical hierarchy of building forms, to break up long expanses of façade, and to create shade and shadow. Buildings at the outer edge of an activity center's support area should be comparable in height and mass with the surrounding neighborhood beyond the support area.
2. As far as practicable, buildings in activity centers should not be separated from fronting streets by large parking lots. At a minimum, placement of outparcel buildings between a large parking lot and the street should be used to help define the streetscape, and lessen the visual impact of the parking lot from the street.
3. Auto service facilities should not have their service bays facing the street, and parking for all uses should be located to the side or rear of the building rather than in the front yard. Regardless, service areas and/or service bays should be screened or sited so they are not visible from the street.
4. Perimeter and security fencing, when needed, should be constructed of attractive materials which are compatible with the design and materials used throughout the project. Razor wire or electric fencing should not be used, and chain link fencing is discouraged but if used should be vinyl coated.
5. Separate structures (canopy, car wash, cashier's booth, etc.) on the site should have consistent architectural detail and design elements to provide a cohesive project site. If a car wash is incorporated into the project, it should be well integrated into the design. The car wash opening should be sited so that it is not directly visible as the primary view from the street into the project site.
6. All areas devoted to the outside storage of vehicles, merchandise, and/or equipment not intended for display for public rent, lease, or sale, should be screened from view from the right-of-way of the highway or public road along the entire property frontage, except in areas where access crossings have been approved.
7. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
8. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

**Employment/Industrial**

**VISION:** Contributing heavily to the blue collar employment base, this character area functions as a concentration of employment and job activity, contributing heavily to the economic base of the city.

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Light and heavy industries are the primary uses contemplated within this Character Area. Building intensities are within a range of approximately 15,000 to 26,136 square feet of building space per acre (a Floor-Area Ratio of 0.34 to 0.6). Five-story or 75 foot height limit.

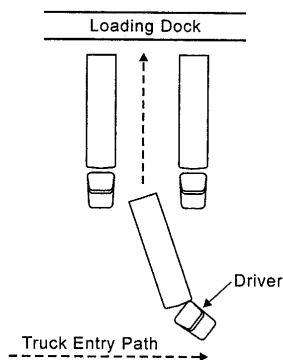
**MAJOR FEATURES:** Truck traffic is frequent, and individual manufacturing establishments are not necessarily connected with one another. Driveways and curb radii are designed to accommodate large trucks. Pedestrian accessibility is generally not anticipated, though pedestrian access is required along road frontages. Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying identification signs.



**All Brick, Articulated Building Façade**



**Landscaping to Soften View of Large Building**



**Loading Areas are Typical In This Character Area**

**REGULATIONS:** This character area will be implemented with light and heavy manufacturing or industrial zoning districts. Design guidelines will be provided, and projects will be required to complete design review.

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED):** Appropriate business, employment options.



**Illustrative Business/Industrial Park Layout with Varying Lot Sizes**

### **Employment/Industrial Character Area Policies**

1. Industrial land uses should be limited to areas with relatively level topography, adequate water and sewerage facilities, and access to arterial roads.
2. New industrial operations should be limited in light industrial areas 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. In heavy industrial areas where such uses may be authorized, such objectionable effects should be mitigated through setbacks, buffers and other site development practices.
3. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies.
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## Conservation

**VISION:** An interconnected system of environmentally sensitive lands and riparian corridors which protect the environment, enhance water quality, and provide passive recreational opportunities.

**USES AND INTENSITIES:** Since these are lands that are or should be set aside for greenspace, uses are limited to preserve natural features. Impervious surface limitations may apply.

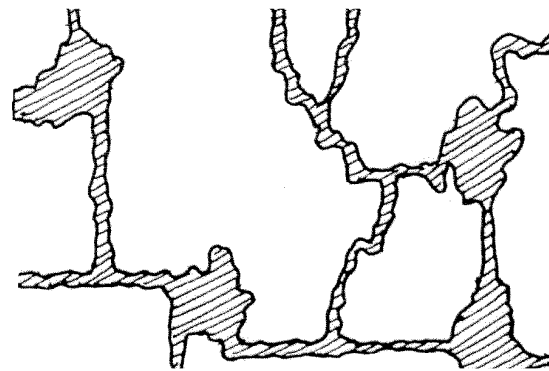
**MAJOR FEATURES:** City parks and open spaces, environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands or riparian corridors, connected to facilitate habitat movement and providing for maximum water quality enhancement. Access is limited to conservation-compatible activities and may include trails, 8-12' wide, in natural areas.

**REGULATIONS:** Implemented by an appropriate zoning district and/or environmental overlay regulations.

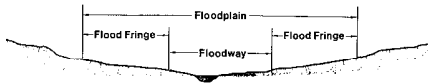
**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTED:** Open space preservation, environmental protection, regional cooperation, transportation alternatives, sense of place.



City Park on Lake Lanier



Connectivity of Open Spaces Desired



Flood Plain, Floodway, and Flood Fringe



Cross-Section, Typical Multi-Use Trail

### **Conservation Character Area Policies**

1. Consult policies in Chapter 11 of this Community Agenda, which will be applied as appropriate in addition to these character area policies. In particular, policies for the environment and natural resources are considered entirely applicable within this character area.
2. If property in this character area is subsequently included within a Special Area Plan as called for in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 9), then any policies and recommendations articulated in such an adopted Special Area Plan shall also apply. In the event of any inconsistencies or discrepancies between this character area description and policies and an adopted Special Area Plan, provisions of the adopted Special Area Plan will supersede these character area descriptions and policies.

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **Future Land Use Plan Map**

A future land use plan map was included in the community agenda adopted in 2006. To reflect changes in the character area map, the future land use plan map has also been revised. The future land use plan map is included on the following page.

### **Future Land Use Plan Map Categories**

The following descriptions of land use categories shown on the future land use plan map are provided:

**Central business:** A compact area of mostly commercial uses within the Old Town character area. Mixes of public-institutional and residential uses are also included within this land use category.

**Commercial:** Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities.

**Industrial, heavy:** Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, and other similar uses.

**Industrial, light:** Land devoted to lower-intensity warehousing and business parks.

**Mixed Use:** Combinations of retail, service, public, institutional, light industrial/business parks, and residential land uses planned and designed at a scale that is friendly to pedestrians.

**Mixed Use, Downtown:** Combinations of retail, service, public, institutional, and residential land uses planned and designed at a scale that is friendly to pedestrians and compatible with the central business district.

**Office-Professional:** Office and limited services

**Park/Recreation/Conservation:** Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses.

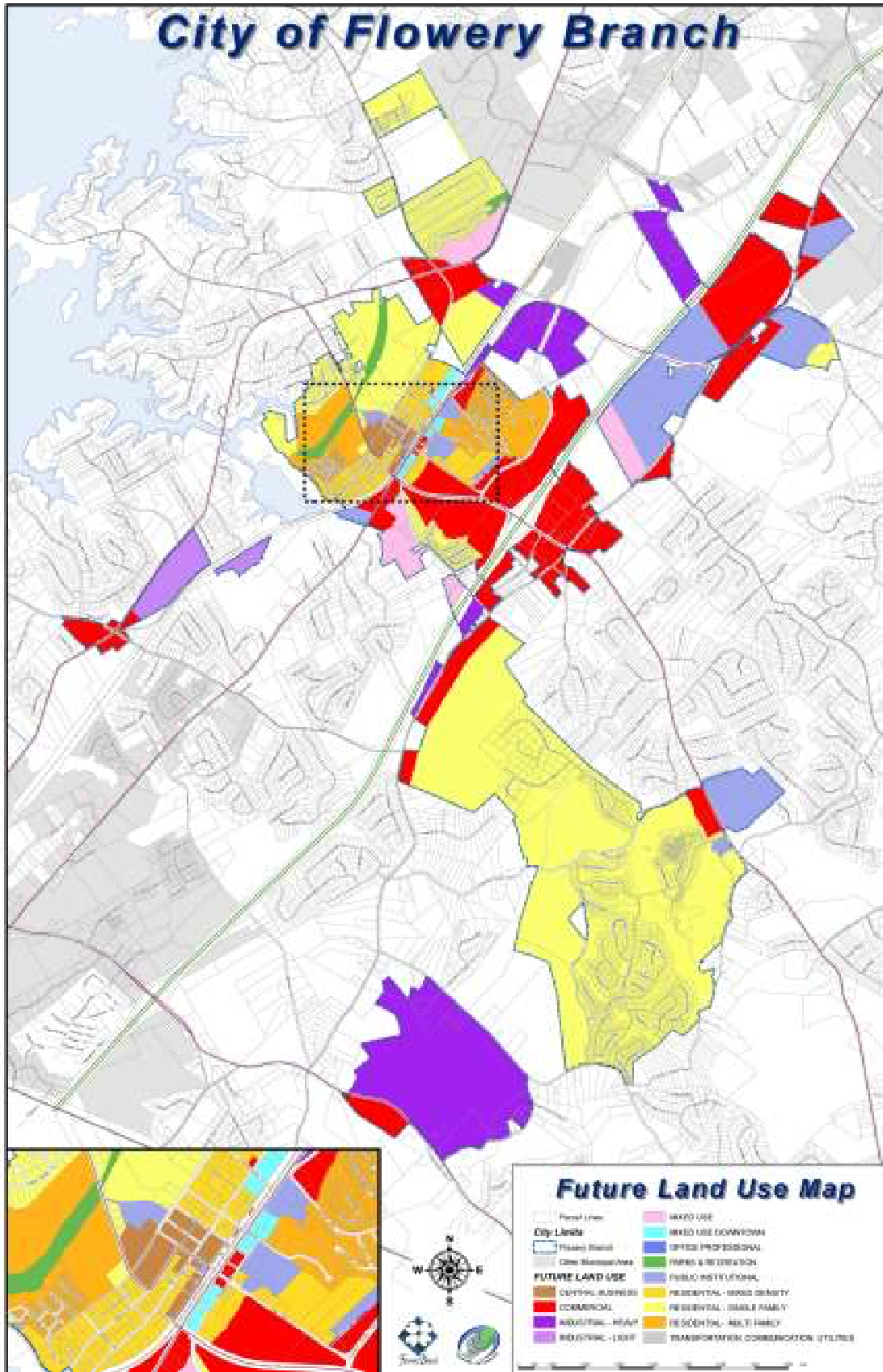
**Public/Institutional:** State, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Institutional uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

**Residential, Mixed Density:** Predominantly single-family dwelling units on individual lots at a variety of densities but with an "in-town" character (traditional neighborhood development); may also potentially include different (attached) housing types like townhouses.

**Residential, Single-Family:** Single-family dwelling units on individual lots.

**Residential, Multi-Family:** Residential buildings containing two or more dwelling units, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and apartments. Mobile home parks are also included within this category.

**Transportation, Communication and Utilities:** Major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.



**IMPLEMENTATION**

**Character Area, Future Land Use, and Zoning District Compatibility**

Table 9.1 provides comparisons among the character areas, future land use categories, and adopted zoning district categories.

**Table 9.1  
 Character Area, Future Land Use and Zoning Comparison**

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Density or Intensity/Description</b>	<b>Future Land Use Category</b>	<b>Zoning Classification</b>
Old Town	Intensities are governed by different Floor-Area Ratios (FARs) established in Chapter 10 of this Community Agenda.	Central Business	Central Business District; Historic District Overlay; Controlling Redevelopment Plan
Mixed Use (Downtown)	Floor-Area Ratio of 0.34 to 0.85	Mixed Use (Downtown)	Traditional Neighborhood Development; Highway Business; Neighborhood Commercial; Historic District Overlay
Mixed Use	Acceptable uses include business/office parks, light industrial, smaller scale retail, neighborhood commercial and a limited amount of residential uses	Mixed Use; Industrial Light	Neighborhood Commercial; Highway Business; Light Industrial; Residential (only as a subordinate use).
Traditional Neighborhoods	3-6 units per acre	Residential – Mixed Density	Traditional Neighborhood Development
Suburban Residential	1-3 units per acre (1/3 to 1 acre lots)	Residential, Single-family	Residential, Single-family (low or moderate density); Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Conservation Subdivision	1-3 units per acre	Residential, Single-family	Residential, Single-family, with special provisions governing conservation subdivisions; Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Urban Density Communities	6 to 12 units per acre	Residential, Multi-family	Residential, Multi-family
Institutional Campus	Floor-Area Ratio of 0.22 to 0.34	Public-Institutional	Public-Institutional; Office-Professional
Neighborhood Commercial	Floor-Area Ratio of 0.22 to 0.34; Generally no more than 25,000 square feet in any one tenant space	Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial; Highway Business; Office-Professional
Activity Center	Floor-Area Ratio of 0.34 to 0.85	Commercial	Highway Business
Industrial/Employment	Floor-Area Ratio of 0.34 to 0.6	Industrial, Heavy	Heavy and Light Industrial
Conservation	Not applicable	Parks, Recreation and Conservation	Residential, Single-family; Conservation Subdivision; Planned Unit Development (PUD); Other

## **SPECIAL AREA PLANNING**

Local planning requirements of the state suggest that communities consider whether more detailed plans are needed for certain areas of the jurisdiction, in order to fully implement the character area map. To fully assess those needs, this update of the comprehensive plan divided the city into several potential planning subareas (see the 2010 addendum to the Community Assessment under separate cover). After delineating and assessing those subareas, the planning staff and planning consultant determined that three special areas stood out as needing more detailed guidance.

Special Planning Area 1 includes the area of northeast Flowery Branch along Interstate 985 at Martin Road, where a new interchange is planned. Area 2 includes mostly vacant land between Interstate 985 and downtown Flowery Branch. Area 3 includes an area west of Old Town, south of McEver Road, and east of Lights Ferry Road. The three special planning areas are shown on a composite map, and aerial views of the three areas are also shown on maps which follow. The short-term work program indicates that Special Planning Area 3 should be the highest priority.

The work scope for each special area plan should be developed based on the unique needs of each area. However, the contents of each special area plan are expected to include the following, which can be used as a framework for developing area-specific work programs:

- Additional analyses and recommendations regarding the unique characteristics of the area.
- Public participation efforts involving property owners, businesses, and residents of the area.
- Refinements to the citywide character area and future land use maps, as appropriate, as applied to properties in the area.
- Recommendations for context-sensitive designs for existing and future roads, landscape and streetscape improvements along corridors, and installation of gateway improvements in the area.
- Policies and work programs specific to the area, as appropriate.

