



## Comprehensive Plan Update



**CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH  
COUNTY OF HALL  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**RESOLUTION #21-007**

**ADOPTING THE CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2041**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Flowery Branch, Georgia has prepared an updated comprehensive plan, *Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan 2041*; and

**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective October 1, 2018 and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Flowery Branch's Comprehensive Plan update has been reviewed by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and found to be in compliance with the minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

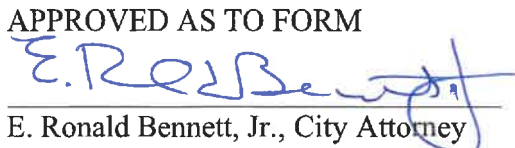
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Flowery Branch, through the Mayor and City Council, does hereby adopt *Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan 2041*.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this Resolution and the final Comprehensive Plan document will be forwarded to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission within seven (7) days of the adoption of this Resolution.

**ADOPTED AND APPROVED**, THIS THE 17th DAY OF JUNE 2021.

  
James M. Miller, Mayor

ATTEST  
  
Vickie Short, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
  
E. Ronald Bennett, Jr., City Attorney



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### *FLOWERY BRANCH CITY COUNCIL*

- Mike Miller, Mayor
- Chris Mundy, Post 1
- Ed Asbridge, Post 2
- Leslie Jarchow, Post 3
- Joe Anglin, Post 4
- Amy Farah, Post 5

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- Bill Andrew, City Manager
- Joe Anglin, City Council Member
- Ed Asbridge, City Council Member
- Rich Atkinson, Director of Planning and Community Development
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- Chris Hill, HillWood Realty
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....5
  - Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan .....5
  - Scope .....5
  - Community Involvement.....6
  - Plan Organization .....6
- CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY CONTEXT .....7
  - A History of Progress .....7
  - A Future of Growth.....7
  - Capacity to Grow .....8
  - By the Numbers .....8
    - Future Growth .....8
  - Current Development Capacity in the City.....9
    - Residential Capacity .....9
    - Nonresidential Capacity ..... 11
- CHAPTER 3. NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES..... 12
  - Natural Resources ..... 12
    - Natural Resource Action Items..... 14
  - Historic Resources ..... 14
    - Historic Resource Action Items ..... 16
  - Housing..... 16
    - Housing Action Items..... 17
  - Economic Development ..... 17
    - Economic Development Action Items ..... 19
  - Community Facilities and Services (includes Transportation) ..... 20
    - Community Facilities and Services Action Items ..... 24
- CHAPTER 4. COMMUNITY VISION ..... 25
  - Vision Statement ..... 25
  - Future Development Map ..... 26
  - Character Areas ..... 26
    - Conservation..... 28



Suburban Residential..... 29

Traditional Neighborhood ..... 30

Urban Density Community ..... 31

Old Town ..... 32

Mixed Use - Downtown ..... 33

Mixed Use - Neighborhood ..... 34

Neighborhood Commercial ..... 35

Activity Center ..... 36

Activity Center - Retail..... 37

Industrial Employment ..... 38

Institutional Campus..... 39

CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM ..... 40

    Community Work Program..... 40

APPENDICES..... 44

    Appendix A. Growth Area Policy Map

    Appendix B. 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

    Appendix C. Public Involvement Documentation

    Appendix D. Flowery Branch Historic District Design Guidelines

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The *Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan* is the City's policy guide for growth and development, as expressed by a vision statement, Future Development Map, character area policies, and supporting implementation strategies. The plan is most commonly used in the review and decision-making process by staff and City Council for rezoning requests, when proposals are evaluated for consistency with the Future Development Map and supporting text in this document.

The Comprehensive Plan also outlines the overall strategy for achieving the City's vision for future development by identifying a 5-year Community Work Program (CWP) with a prioritized 'to-do' list. The CWP should be consulted by staff and City Council on an annual basis when developing annual department-level work programs and the City budget.

In addition, this plan serves the purpose of meeting the intent and requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as amended on October 1, 2018. Preparation of a comprehensive plan in accordance with these standards is an essential requirement for maintaining status as a Qualified Local Government (QLG). QLG status allows Georgia cities and counties to be eligible for financial incentives from DCA, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), and the OneGeorgia Authority. This plan update allows the City of Flowery Branch to retain its QLG status.

The City's first comprehensive plan was adopted in 2006 and was amended in 2011 and 2016 in accordance with DCA's "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" that were in effect at the time. This 2021 plan updates the 2016 plan that was prepared by Jerry Weitz & Associates and has been prepared to comply with the current standards, which require plans be updated every five years and address specific topics identified below.

## Scope

The *Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan* is required to address the following topics, which are presented using the terminology in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' planning standards:

- Needs and Opportunities (see Chapter 3 of this plan)
- Land Use (see Chapter 4)
- Transportation (per DCA's planning standards, the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization's [GHMPO] Regional Transportation Plan [adopted May 12, 2020] and South Hall Trail Study [2019] are substituted for the required Transportation element and are incorporated by reference in this plan; however, more detailed local needs are also addressed in Chapter 3 of this plan)
- Broadband Services (see Chapter 3)
- Community Goals (see Chapter 4)
- Community Work Program (see Chapter 5)

This plan update also considered both the **Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District’s Water Resource Management Plan** and the **Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria** (established and administered by the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12- 2-8), as required by DCA (see Chapter 3 of this plan).

Although Economic Development and Housing are not required to be addressed as planning topics by DCA’s planning standards, they are discussed in Chapter 3. In addition, *the City of Flowery Branch Old Town Redevelopment Plan* and the *City of Flowery Branch Redevelopment Plan for Tax Allocation District #1: Old Town and Commercial Gateways* are incorporated by reference in this plan.

## Community Involvement

The process of updating the Comprehensive Plan included informational activities and opportunities for public input, as summarized below (see also Appendix C for details):

- Interactive project website
- Online survey
- Design and production of yard signs and a banner to promote the survey
- Interactive online input map
- Postings on City website
- 11 posts on City’s social media pages
- 7 notifications to project outreach list
- 2 virtual meetings
- 3 meetings with an appointed Steering Committee
- 2 public hearings



## Plan Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Community Context

Chapter 3: Needs and Opportunities

Chapter 4: Community Vision

Chapter 5: Implementation Program

Appendix A: Growth Area Policy Map

Appendix B: 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

Appendix C: Public Involvement Documentation

Appendix D: Flowery Branch Historic District Design Guidelines

## CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Flowery Branch enjoys location advantages due to its easy access to Interstate 985 which connect to Atlanta and the North Georgia Mountains. It is part of the Gainesville-Hall County metropolitan area and lies just north of Gwinnett County, south of Gainesville, and east of Lake Lanier. The city is home to the Atlanta Falcons football team's headquarters and training facility.

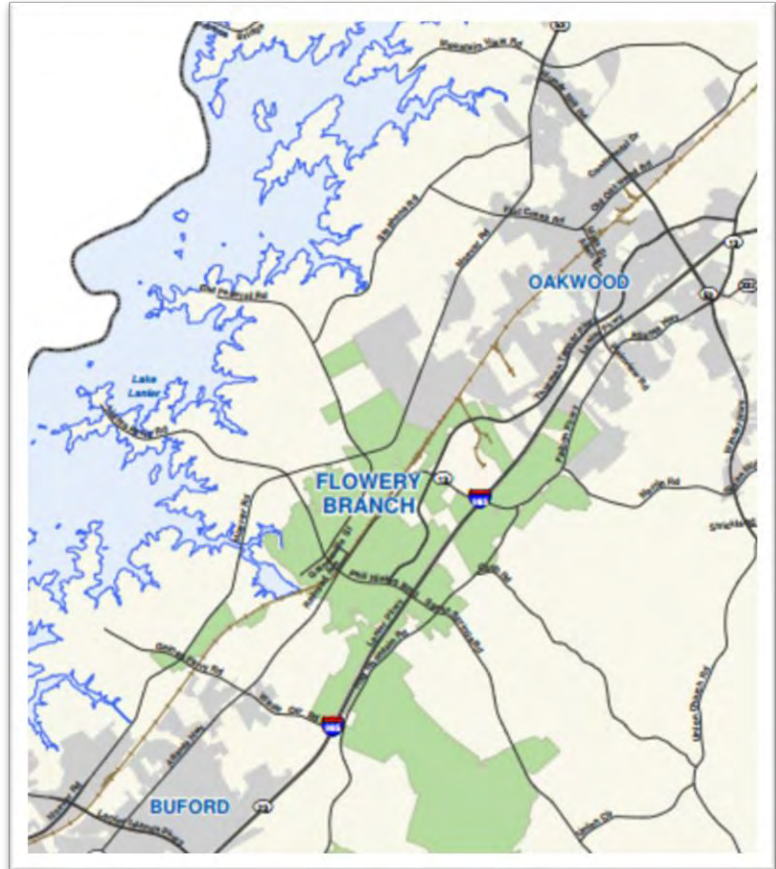
### A History of Progress

According to available population estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, Flowery Branch has seen its population explode from 2,071 in 2000 to 8,325 by 2019. By latest count, 6,254 (75%) of the population was not living in the city in 2000. In other words, three out of every four people living in the city in 2019 represent new growth. Continuation of this growth is expected to be verified by the results of the 2020 Census (when released). This population increase has been generated by new housing construction as the city has grown both internally and -- to a lesser extent -- through annexations over the past 19 years.

### A Future of Growth

The pace set in the past is expected to continue in the coming two decades. Shaking off the last lingering effects of the Great Recession, building permits issued for new single-family house construction have increased (almost year-over-year) from 174 issued in 2016 to 477 in 2020, plus 34 new townhouse units authorized, as well as 300 new multi-family units that just opened.

Newly prepared population forecasts reflect the continuation of a trend recognized in the City's previous Comprehensive Plan update but at an accelerated pace. In that 2016 plan update, population growth was forecast only to 2035. Under the new forecasts prepared for this 2021 update, the city's population is expected to reach 16,115 by that year. This is well above the 2035 forecast in the previous plan of 13,100. Rezoning, particularly for multi-use Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), have increased the development capacity for new growth well beyond what was expected five years ago.



## Capacity to Grow

A close look at the land available for additional growth in the city, along with approved plans for a number of development projects already in place and ready to go, shows significant capacity to handle new growth in the coming years.

For those projects that have development plans already approved by the City, an additional 2,170 housing units and 2,417 new employees in commercial and warehousing construction are expected. Existing but vacant properties zoned for residential development could accommodate 911 housing units which, together with those units in approved development plans, results in a current maximum capacity of 3,081 homes, townhouses and apartments. This falls short of the 4,980 new units projected to 2040.

For those vacant properties zoned for nonresidential development, the NS and M-1 zoned properties could accommodate 7,132 new employees, while the HB zoning district could, at maximum capacity, be home to almost 11,000 employees. The HB figure is based on the maximum 50% lot coverage that is allowed, applied to the 9.4 million square feet of property already zoned, and an employee-to-floor area ratio of .0002331.

## By the Numbers

### Future Growth

The growth in the city's population reflects a continuation of trends established during the past decade, based on annual estimates provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. This is an "upward" trend as population growth has accelerated year-by-year, which is also reflected in the city's increase in annual number of building permits being issued and annual home sales reported by Zillow.com.

Population growth goes along with an anticipated increase in the number of housing units available, which reflect the city's average household size and the city's normal vacancy rate. In addition, an increasing proportion of multi-family units is anticipated, based on the number of townhouses and apartments already approved for future development, as discussed in the next section regarding Current Development Capacity.

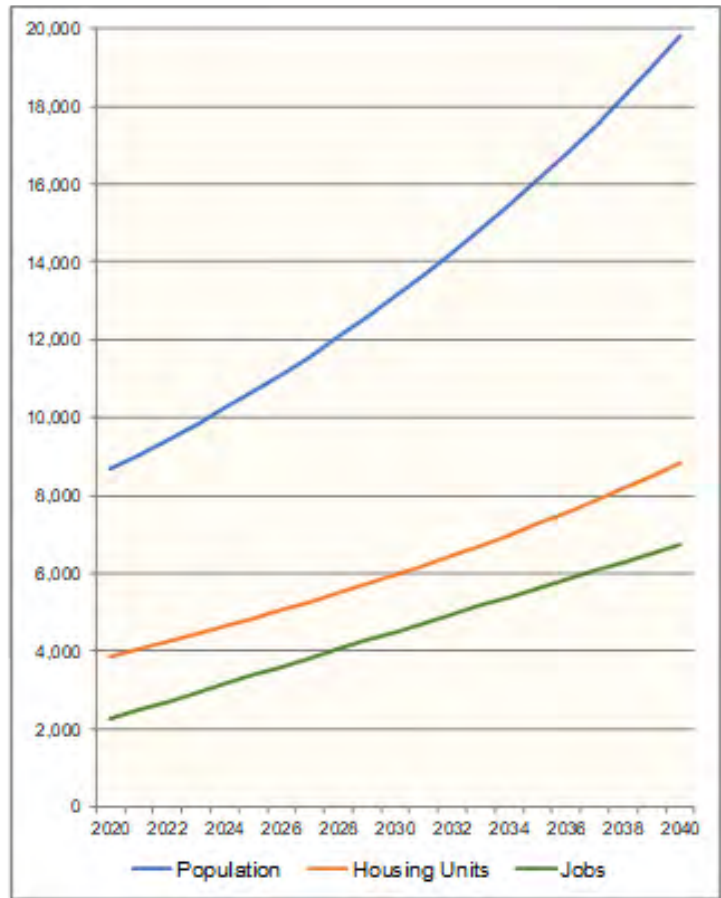
A future increase in the number of people working in private sector jobs in the city is also expected to rise, somewhat more dramatically than the resident population increase (198% increase vs. 128% for residents) but at much lower total numbers. Currently, the number of people working in the city (based on current business license counts) comprises only about 2% of Hall County's total private sector employment base.

Considering the city's current capacity for additional nonresidential growth (which is comparatively quite large, as discussed in the next section) and given a growing population of local consumers coupled with increasing locational and competition opportunities, a doubling of employment in the city is expected (to about 4% of countywide private sector employment in 2040 as projected by Woods & Poole Economics).

It must be remembered, however, that these forecasts are based on the city as it is currently comprised. Annexations would, of course, increase future growth prospects depending on the types of development, both existing and potential, that each annexation area might provide.

### Forecasts of Future Growth

	Population	Housing Units	Jobs
2020	8,676	3,868	2,256
2021	9,041	4,053	2,480
2022	9,423	4,241	2,703
2023	9,820	4,435	2,927
2024	10,233	4,632	3,151
2025	10,665	4,835	3,374
2026	11,114	5,044	3,598
2027	11,583	5,260	3,822
2028	12,071	5,484	4,046
2029	12,579	5,713	4,269
2030	13,110	5,951	4,493
2031	13,662	6,196	4,717
2032	14,238	6,449	4,940
2033	14,838	6,711	5,164
2034	15,463	6,983	5,388
2035	16,115	7,265	5,611
2036	16,794	7,558	5,835
2037	17,502	7,861	6,059
2038	18,239	8,177	6,283
2039	19,008	8,505	6,506
2040	19,809	8,848	6,730
2020	8,676	3,868	2,256
2040	19,809	8,848	6,730
Increase	11,133	4,980	4,474
Growth	128.3%	128.7%	198.3%



### Current Development Capacity in the City

The approach to capacity is to look at the commitments that the City has made through development approvals in place along with the amount of additional vacant land currently zoned and physically capable for further development (i.e., dry land). This analysis assumes no additional rezonings or separate development approvals.

#### Residential Capacity

With regard to further residential development, the amount of developable vacant but uncommitted land by zoning district is tallied and multiplied by the gross density. First, the gross density for R-1 and R-2 subdivisions begins with the minimum lot size required and increases that to accommodate streets and minimal “wastage” (to account for cul-de-sac lots, corner lots and other odd shapes). This results in a best-case scenario of how many lots could be expected under optimum conditions. For TND zoning, the maximum gross density allowed is used. Together, these zoning districts could accommodate a total of 911 new housing units.

Next, the number of housing units approved or under construction as part of planned projects, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments, were totaled. (The table below right groups these by location, and



not necessarily by specific names.) This shows that 2,170 housing units are at least approved for construction among these development projects.

Together, the potential for new housing unit construction on zoned but vacant land, plus the units included in approved development projects, would embrace a total of 3,081 units added to the city’s housing supply.

**Maximum Dwelling Units on Vacant Land**

	R-1	R-2	TND
Minimum Lot Size	20,000	15,000	5,000
Minimum Lot Width	90	75	
Allocation for street	2,250	1,875	
Efficiency Loss @ 10%	2,225	1,688	
Gross Lot size	24,475	18,563	
Density	1.78	2.35	6.5
Total Acres	474.09	20.87	3.07
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>19</b>

**Dwelling Units Approved or Under Construction**

	Zoning Varies
McEver Road West	199 SFD 24 TH
McEver Road East	67 SFD 325 SFD 73 TH
Phil Neikro	324 Apts
Hog Mtn	334 Apts
Downtown	15 Apts
Downtown	20 TH
Mulberry	199 SFD 140 TH
Sterling	450 SFD
<b>Total Housing Units Approved or UC</b>	<b>2,170</b>
<b>Total Housing Units on Vacant Land</b>	<b>911</b>
<b>Total - All Housing Units</b>	<b>3,081</b>

Next, the latest American Community Survey, published annually by the Census Bureau, was consulted to identify the average number of people living in households in the city.

**American Community Survey - 2019**

Total Dwelling Units	3,363
Occupied Dwelling Units	2,976
Percent Occupied	88.49%
Total Population	7,497
Population per Occupied DU	2.5192

In 2019 (the latest year available), 88.49% of the units were occupied and had an average household size of almost 2.52 people. Of the total number of “new” units currently zoned or planned (3,081), 2,726 would probably be occupied. This, multiplied by the average household size, suggests that the city has a potential at capacity (by the year 2034) to house 6,867 more people.

**Potential "New Construction" Population**

Total "New" Housing Units	3,081
Assumed to be Occupied	2,726
<b>Times Pop per Occupied DU =</b>	<b>6,867</b>

This would not be enough to accommodate the full projected population increase to 2040 of 11,133 more residents in the city. As pressures mount on the housing market to meet the demand, it could be anticipated that additional land currently zoned for commercial and industrial development could come under pressure to down-zone for residential purposes, probably as PUDs.

## Nonresidential Capacity

As noted above, the city’s employment base is projected to realistically increase, but only by almost 4,500 new workers. The city’s capacity to accommodate the projected future private sector employees far exceeds this projection.

**Maximum Employees on Vacant Land**

	NS	HB	M-1
Acres	11.40	216.32	186.49
Square Feet of Land	496,636	9,423,025	8,123,681
Maximum Coverage*	0.45	0.50	0.63
Building Floor Area	223,486	4,711,513	5,107,512
Employees per Sq Ft**	0.002265	0.002331	0.001302
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>10,982</b>	<b>6,648</b>

\*M-1 assumes remainder of an acre net of yard and landscape strip minimum widths.

\*\* Average number taken from employee data by land use type published in Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 9th edition.

**Maximum Employees Approved or Under Construction**

	Commercial	Warehousing
McEver Road West	302	
McEver Road East	211	
Hog Mtn	138	
Falcon Parkway	143	1,381
Downtown	14	
Downtown	51	
Sterling	178	
Employees Approved or UC	1,036	1,381
Employees on Vacant Land	11,488	6,648
<b>Total - All New Employees</b>	<b>12,524</b>	<b>8,029</b>

Numerically, this is due in large part to the maximum number of new employees that could be accommodated by development of currently zoned HB properties, followed by the employment potential presented by the M-1 zoned properties.

Development of the projects that are already approved (or under construction) for new commercial or warehousing development could accommodate 2,417 employees (or 54%) of the projected increase in the city’s employment base to 2040. This leaves only 2,057 to be located on vacant but zoned land. This suggests an overage of acres zoned for nonresidential development beyond projections on the order of more than 16,000 potential employees, if the properties are developed to their maximum allowed building coverage and without knowing site-specific constraints that could limit extent of development.



## CHAPTER 3. NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Flowery Branch is a growing community with unique needs and opportunities related to its growth and development. This chapter summarizes in narrative format the primary local needs and opportunities that are addressed in this plan by recommended action items. These actions, or implementation strategies, are presented in this chapter by a variety of planning topics and are also consolidated into the overall 5-Year Community Work Program in Chapter 5. The topic of land use is addressed in detail in Chapter 4.

Identification of needs and opportunities was informed by an assessment of existing conditions as well as public input. In particular, community surveys proved particularly effective for gauging local priorities and issues. A brief survey was developed for the comprehensive plan update, and its findings – combined with those from a previous City-administered survey that focused on the downtown – and additional input received via online interactive tools that were developed for this project were especially useful.

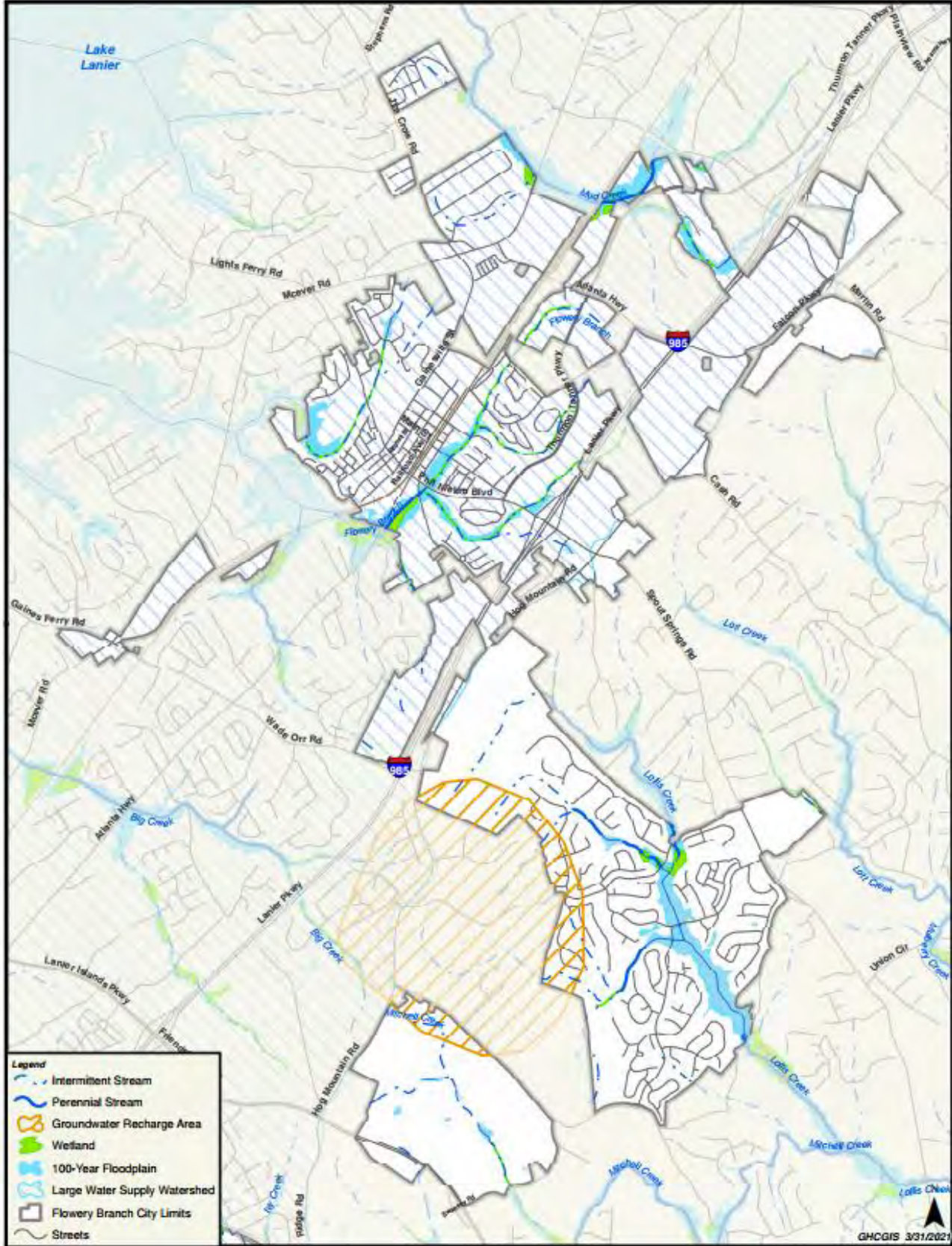
### Natural Resources

To protect the state’s natural resources and environment, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) developed *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* (Chapter 391-3-16). The Georgia Department of Community Affairs’ (DCA) Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-2-1) require local governments to review DNR’s rules during the development of comprehensive plans to determine if there is need to adopt development regulations to address **protection of** the following natural resources: **water supply watershed, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands**, protected rivers, protected mountains.

Protected rivers and mountains, as defined by the State, are not found in Flowery Branch. As shown on the Natural Resources Map on the next page there are, however, scattered wetlands, a small groundwater recharge area of low pollution susceptibility (as delineated by the DNR in Hydrologic Atlas 18, 1989) in the southern portion of the city, and a large water supply watershed that generally falls west of I-985 within the boundary of the Upper Chattahoochee River Basin. Wetlands protection is currently addressed in the City’s adopted local ordinances, but protection of groundwater recharge areas and water supply watershed areas is not specifically addressed among the City’s 11 ordinances that relate to the environment.

DCA requirements also specify that local governments **review** their **regional water plan** to determine whether additional or modified actions are needed. The City of Flowery Branch is a member of the 15-county / 95-city Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, which adopted a regional *Water Resource Management Plan* in 2017 (amended in 2020). The plan recommends specific measures for the use and management of the region’s water over the next 35 years to address: water resource management, water supply planning and conservation, wastewater, and watershed management. Flowery Branch provides water and wastewater (sewer) service and is working toward implementation of applicable management techniques identified in the Regional Water Plan.

Natural Resources Map



The **preservation of the city's tree canopy** and **greenspace** was cited often by community survey respondents as being important, from both an environmental protection standpoint as well as contributing to the character of the Flowery Branch and quality of life. The City has a Buffer, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance with tree retention guidelines and tree planting requirements, and the Zoning Ordinance includes **minimum open space requirements** by zoning district as well as clearing and grading standards. Upon completion of this Comprehensive Plan update, the City will be updating its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance to facilitate implementation of this plan; in doing so, tree protection and open space requirements can be strengthened to address local concerns.

An updated Buffer, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance can also strengthen the City's **application package to Tree City USA**, which would further demonstrate its commitment to tree protection. Such a designation would require the appointment of a Tree Board, which would allow interested residents to participate in overseeing the planting and care of trees on City-owned properties.

Updated open space requirements can also assist with the local efforts to integrate multi-use trails into the City by allowing new developments to satisfy these requirements by granting a **conservation and trail easement** where a planned segment traverses the property. This has previously been achieved as a condition of zoning to help the City in the future to construct portions of trails that were identified in the 2019 South Hall Trail Study.

## Natural Resource Action Items

- Adopt DNR's model Water Supply Watershed Protection Ordinance, which will enhance buffer requirements along two small segments of Mud Creek and Flowery Branch (see map on previous page)
- Adopt DNR's Groundwater Recharge Protection Area Ordinance, which will increase minimum lot size requirements for any property not on the City's sewer system in the southeast part of the city (see map)
- Amend Buffers, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance to strengthen tree retention (including specimen trees) and planting requirements
- Submit Tree City USA application in concert with Buffer, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance amendments
- Evaluate effectiveness of minimum open space requirements in all zoning districts; code updates will also address use of conservation and trail easements to meet open space requirements in private developments where a proposed trail alignment (as identified in local plans) is located
- Amend local clearing and grading standards to clearly delineate requirements and address mass grading
- Continue to implement Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Water Resource Management Plan, including 5-year updates to local Water Master Plan (underway) and Wastewater Master Plan (2023/24)

## Historic Resources

**Preservation of historic resources** was identified by survey respondents as an important factor in preserving the city's unique character. As shown on the Historic Resources Map on the next page, the Flowery Branch Historic District encompasses properties in the downtown area as well as a smaller area that is listed on the National

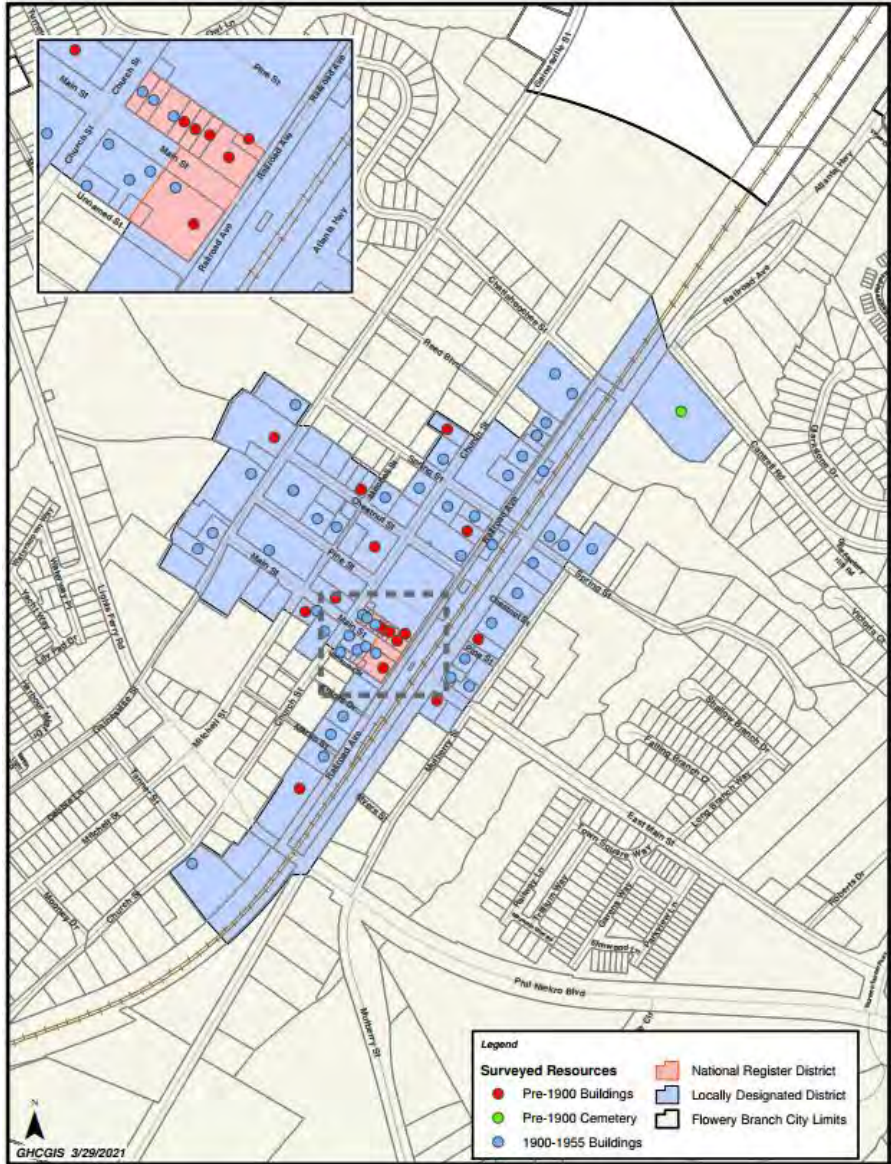


Register of Historic Places. The National Register District confers honorary status on an area or buildings and has no automatic restrictions on private development. It does allow property owners the potential to qualify for state and federal building rehabilitation tax credits.

The locally-designated Flowery Branch Historic District requires review and approval of proposed new construction, exterior building alternations and additions, and demolition of existing buildings by a Council-appointed Historic Preservation Commission to ensure consistency with the architectural character of Old Town. Proposed changes are reviewed against a fairly general set of design guidelines that were included in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and are provided in this document as an Appendix item. Proposed signs in the historic district must also be reviewed; these are regulated by a detailed Historic District Sign Ordinance.

The Historic Resources Map also indicates the relative age of buildings that were re-surveyed in 2008 after a 2003 “historic resources survey” was conducted.

*Historic Resources Map*



An **update to the citywide historic resources survey** would allow the City to better assess the age and condition of its structures, which in turn would help with the identification of appropriate measures for building stabilization or rehabilitation or for property redevelopment. Such measures might include an application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Home Investment Program (CHIP), which awards grants to local governments, nonprofits, and public housing authorities to assist with the rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes.

As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the City is also eligible to apply to the federal **Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Grant Program** to assist with rehabilitation projects such as roof, plaster, or window repair or structural/foundation stabilization for buildings, structures or monuments. The CLG Program is administered by the National Park Service and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and includes communities that have a local Historic Preservation Ordinance and active Historic Preservation Commission in place.

HPF matching grants could assist with the maintenance of City-owned historic resources, similar to recent repairs that were made to the downtown Caboose (painting) and Depot (new windows). The funds can also be used for a variety of other uses, including the development of a tailored set of building and site design guidelines – which is needed for the Flowery Branch Historic District – and heritage tourism materials.

In order to qualify for the full array of HPF grant assistance, however, the City must update its historic resources survey, which is required of CLG communities with surveys that pre-date 2005. Until that occurs, the City may apply for grant assistance only toward the completion of the survey. Upon its completion, Flowery Branch is eligible to apply for additional financial assistance covering a variety of project types.

## Historic Resource Action Items

- Update citywide Historic Resources Survey, seeking Historic Preservation Fund grants to do so
- Codify general “Historic District Design Guidelines” from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan (to be used in conjunction with the Historic District Sign Guidelines) as a temporary measure
- Prepare tailored, stand-alone Historic District Design Guidelines to replace the guidelines currently in effect (also seeking Historic Preservation Fund grants to complete the task)

## Housing

Survey comments related to housing can be categorized into two main themes: a **desire to maintain the city’s single-family character** and also **slow residential development, especially** the construction of **apartments**. Expressed concerns included a change in the city’s small-town character as well as impacts on local services and facilities such as roads and schools. A third, but slightly less common, theme was the **need for quality development** in terms of newly built construction as well as the maintenance of existing dwellings.

As described in Chapter 2, residential building has increased in recent years. Approved developments reflect a variety of housing types to meet varying needs or demands, from in-town apartments to senior-oriented housing. Over 600 multi-family units are approved or under construction compared to almost 800 single-family dwellings and approximately 350 townhomes. In the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, a carry-over housing policy from a previous plan update was included, which established an appropriate mix of dwelling types across the city as 60% single-family/20% apartments/15% townhomes/5% manufactured homes. These ratios are referenced when rezoning applications are evaluated, and City Council has expressed support for keeping ratios

as a guide but increasing the percentage of single-family dwellings. The Future Development Map (FDM) and character area policies in Chapter 4 describe appropriate locations for single-family residential development, consistent with the prevailing character of the city. The FDM also identifies opportunities for future higher density uses in the downtown area and in targeted areas where neighborhood-oriented commercial uses are currently concentrated or can be supported in the future.

To better understand the City's specific housing needs, a **citywide housing study** could be prepared. Such a study analyzes demographics, housing supply, market trends, and local input to develop a projection of future residential that may prove a more useful resource when assessing proposed rezonings.

Recent zoning approvals have included conditions of zoning that require **design review** by Council and/or other specific requirements intended to improve the quality of a project in terms of building and site design. Currently, the City's Architectural Design Standards in the Zoning Ordinance only apply to non-residential buildings. Amending these standards to address exterior building materials and other design-related facets for all residential dwelling types can establish a minimum standard that every development must meet.

To maintain the quality of existing housing, the City can enforce the locally adopted Property Maintenance Code. In addition, discussion presented under the Historic Resource section above has relevance here.

## Housing Action Items

- Amend City's Architectural Design Standards to address residential uses
- Track citywide housing ratios with rezoning applications against updated 'housing mix policy' of 70% single-family/15% townhomes/15% multi-family
- Prepare a citywide Housing Study that analyzes demographics, housing supply, market trends, and local input to develop a projection of future residential needs
- Expand code enforcement ability by increasing full-time personnel

## Economic Development

Numerous survey responses indicated a need for an increase in, and **variety of, local restaurants and businesses** as well as the **revitalization of the downtown** area. The City has actively been revitalizing Old Town in accordance with the recommendations from the 2014 Old Town Redevelopment Plan and with funding support for redevelopment activities<sup>1</sup> through the adopted Old Town and Commercial Gateways Tax Allocation District (TAD).

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include downtown streetscaping, Farmer's Market pavilion with additional parking, ½ acre park featuring an amphitheater (proposed Pine Street Park), and development of an Old Town bike-pedestrian path connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the downtown area.



The Old Town Redevelopment Plan’s recommendations (see Concept Plan below) are intended to identify specific projects that City can initiate and lead to spur development and economic activity in the downtown. Examples of significant projects that have been implemented to date include construction of the new City Hall and Police Department, the roundabout at Snelling/Lights Ferry/Mitchell, and the mixed use Crest building on Main Street (underway).

Additional Redevelopment Plan implementation projects initiated by the City include downtown park projects, the planned addition of more parking spaces off Main Street and Railroad Avenue, public-private ventures to develop additional mixed-use (retail and upper floor residential) space and townhomes, and coordination with Hall County to improve the western portion of Mitchell Street to improve access to Flowery Branch City Park and nearby properties and development opportunities. Based on comments received at a virtual Comprehensive Plan workshop, **many residents are not aware of the progress** being made in Old Town.

To sustain the momentum of redevelopment activity in the downtown, the City would benefit from an **update to the 2014 Redevelopment Plan**. The update would identify additional development and redevelopment opportunities and would help facilitate administration of the CBD - Central Business District Zoning District by identifying acceptable land use types and densities.

To assist with the recruitment of desired businesses in the downtown, the City has a leasing contract with a realtor for the city-owned retail spaces. Outside of the downtown, the Future Development Map (see Chapter 4) identifies locations suitable for additional commercial development, ranging from smaller-scale ‘neighborhood commercial’ uses to larger shopping destinations. In addition, the Gainesville-Hall Chamber of Commerce posts on-line information about available industrial buildings and sites. Stakeholders in the development community have noted that it will be important for the City to have



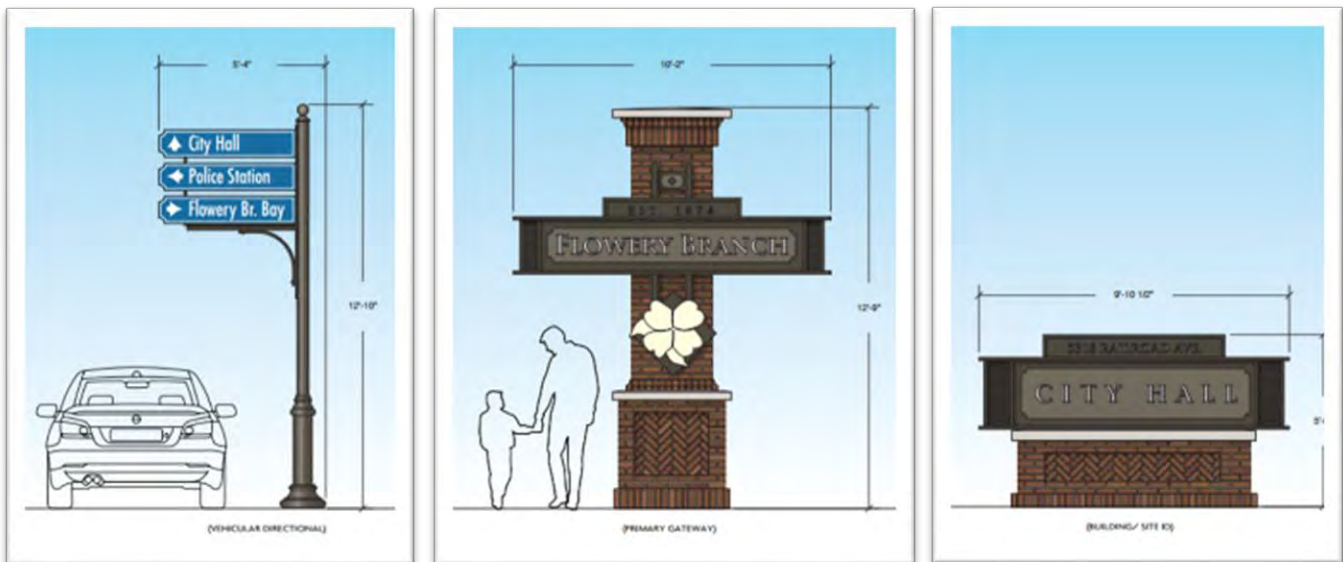
2014 Old Town Redevelopment Plan Recommendations

sufficient Community Development Department staff and processes in place to **efficiently address development plan review and inspections for desired industrial and commercial development**. The City also participates in the Gainesville-Hall Economic Development Council.

To assist with **way-finding and branding**, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update originally recommended “gateway improvements” whereby the following primary corridors that act as gateways to the city be enhanced and maintained:

- Entry into the city of Flowery Branch from I-985 at Spout Springs Road;
- Entry into the city of Flowery Branch from Atlanta Highway into the downtown area;
- Entry into the city of Flowery Branch from the intersection of McEver Road and Gainesville Street;
- Other primary corridors that are identified (such as Exit 14, the new interchange at I-985); and
- Additional suggestions in the Old Town Redevelopment Plan for downtown gateway projects

To that end, the City has prepared designs for citywide signage project to be implemented in phases.



## Economic Development Action Items

- Update 2014 Old Town Redevelopment Plan to guide continued downtown revitalization efforts
- Communicate and promote local initiatives and events via newly created Events and Information Coordinator & Downtown Manager positions
- Conduct “ease of doing business” assessment of development-related processes outlined in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance
- Expand in-house Community Development staff functions to include a code compliance officer and/or soil and erosion control inspector
- Implement Citywide Signage Project



## Community Facilities and Services (includes Transportation)

As mentioned under the Housing section, survey respondents expressed concerns about the **impacts of residential growth on public facilities and services**. These include water, wastewater (sewer), stormwater, park, and transportation facility needs.

In order to meet current and future demands, the City has plans to meet **water and wastewater system needs** over the next five years. In 2020 the City was awarded \$23,300,000 in Georgia Environmental Financing Authority (GEFA) financing to update its water reclamation system to increase wastewater treatment capacity and \$5,710,000 in GEFA financing to purchase a new well system to increase water supply to the city. The wastewater treatment plant expansion will double the plant's capacity to serve approved and future residential, commercial, and industrial development.

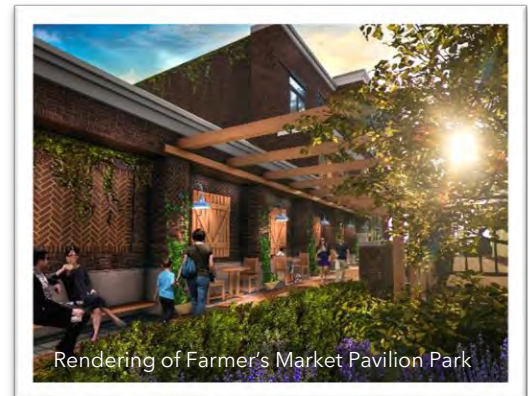
Stormwater infrastructure needs in the downtown area were cited as an issue in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update. The City has undertaken, or is in the process of, stormwater improvement projects downtown and on East Main Street and Lights Ferry Road. However, there is **not a comprehensive stormwater management program** with additional identified project needs and dedicated funding to repair and maintain a stormwater system for the long term.

The **need for additional parks and greenspace** was identified by survey respondents, in particular in the Old Town area. As part of the overall downtown revitalization efforts that have also been identified by the public as an important initiative, the City has been working toward **adding park space to Old Town**. In addition to the Dean Jones Family Park at the downtown roundabout, designs have been prepared for the following new parks:

- *Farmer's Market Pavilion Park* – a covered pavilion behind the Depot between Main Street and Knight Drive, with a 20-space parking lot adjacent to the railroad
- *Pine Street Park* – amphitheater, fountain and picnic pavilion; Church Street (between Main and Pine Streets) would be curbsless to accommodate pedestrian traffic in the style of the Dutch “woonerf” or “living street” (see next page)
- *Chestnut Street Park* – open space, pavilion and play area

As part of an update to the 2014 Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) that is recommended in the Economic Development section above, **improvements to Flowery Branch City Park** can be addressed.

The park's waterfront location and its proximity to downtown and residential areas make it a unique asset; however, the extent of current pedestrian and vehicular accessibility and the fact that it is



Rendering of Farmer's Market Pavilion Park



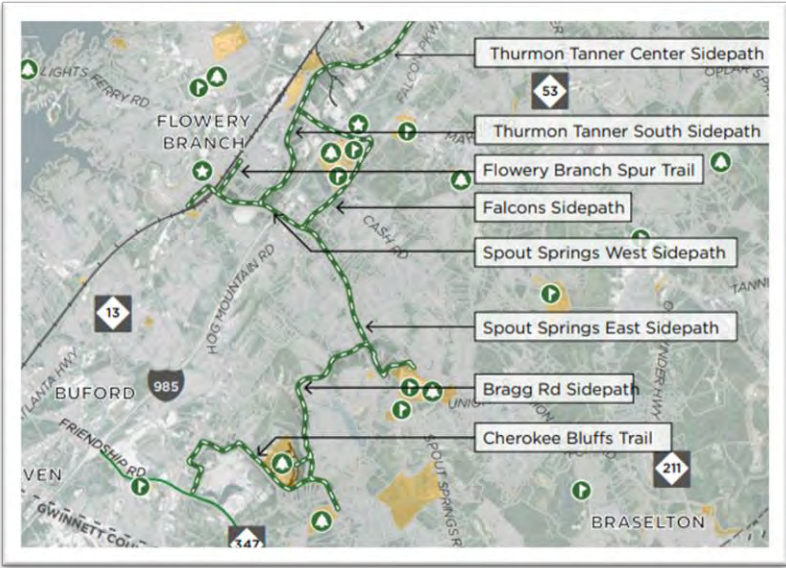
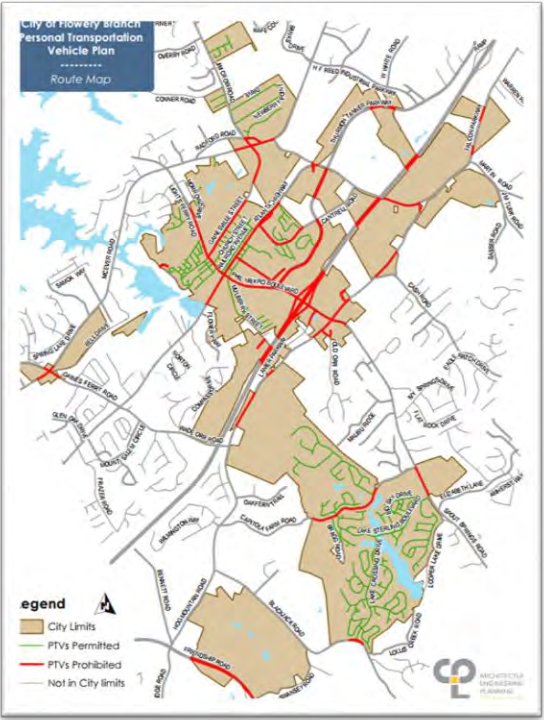
An amphitheater is planned for the new Pine Street Park

not owned by the City prove more challenging for the park to readily realize its full potential. An update to the 2014 URP can provide an opportunity to reevaluate the recommended conceptual enhancement projects relative to existing conditions, including on-going and planned connectivity improvements along Mitchell Street.

In addition to park space, other recreation-related amenities that also can provide needed connectivity are **sidewalks, multi-purpose trails, bike lanes, and golf cart paths**. Survey responses indicated a desire for all of these. Sidewalks are required to be installed with new developments, and sidewalks are being expanded downtown as redevelopment projects continue, but there is no citywide inventory or plan to address gaps or extend new sidewalks.



The City has a Personal Transportation Vehicles (PTV) Plan that shows where PTVs (i.e., golf carts) are allowed in the City. It has recently been amended to include East Main Street.



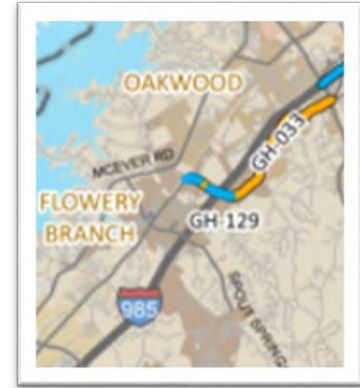
Left: Flowery Branch Personal Transportation Vehicle Plan Route Map (it has been amended to allow PTVs on East Main Street; not shown)

Top: Recommended local trails in the South Hall Trail Study

In 2019 the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) published the South Hall Trail Study. The trail corridor study recommended segments in Flowery Branch that form the framework for a comprehensive citywide multi-use trail system. However, a more detailed, **city-specific plan** is needed to fully address needed connectivity that be provided by both **new trails as well as additional sidewalks**.

In order to fund construction of a trail system in Flowery Branch, the City has the **potential to utilize development impact fees** that it collects for “Parks and Recreation” on behalf of Hall County as part of an almost 20 year intergovernmental agreement. However, the terms of the agreement do not give the City the ability to direct where the funds will be spent, and there is not a current list of City-specific park needs (which could include trails) that is incorporated into the County’s Capital Improvements Element (CIE).

**Road congestion** was cited by numerous survey respondents as a significant issue in the city. As part of the federally-designated Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundaries for long-range transportation planning, the city is addressed in the MPO’s Regional Transportation Plan (TRP), which is updated every five years.



Due to the scope of the RTP, local needs are not addressed in detail. Projects that are included in that plan are long-range (not projected to be constructed for at least 10 years) due to lack of funding: Widening of SR 13/Atlanta Highway/Falcon Parkway from Radford Road to south of SR 53/Winder Highway (*project GH-033 at right*) and operational improvements at SR 13/Atlanta Highway/Falcon Parkway at I-985 & at CR 527/Thurmon Tanner Parkway (*project GH 129 above*). The plan no longer includes improvements at Exit 12 of I-985 that were anticipated with the planned widening of I-985 that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has determined is no longer necessary.

To address **congestion at major intersections** along McEver Road, the MPO recently completed the McEver Road Intersection Report (2021), which includes conceptual plans for roundabouts at the intersections inside the city limits: at Gaines Ferry Road and at Radford Road. Beyond these intersections, a holistic approach to addressing traffic is needed in the city. The MPO commissioned a Citywide Traffic Improvement Study for the City of Oakwood that evaluated conditions at 18 strategic locations in the city’s road network and prepared improvement strategies and planning-level costs. Flowery Branch would benefit from the same type of study.

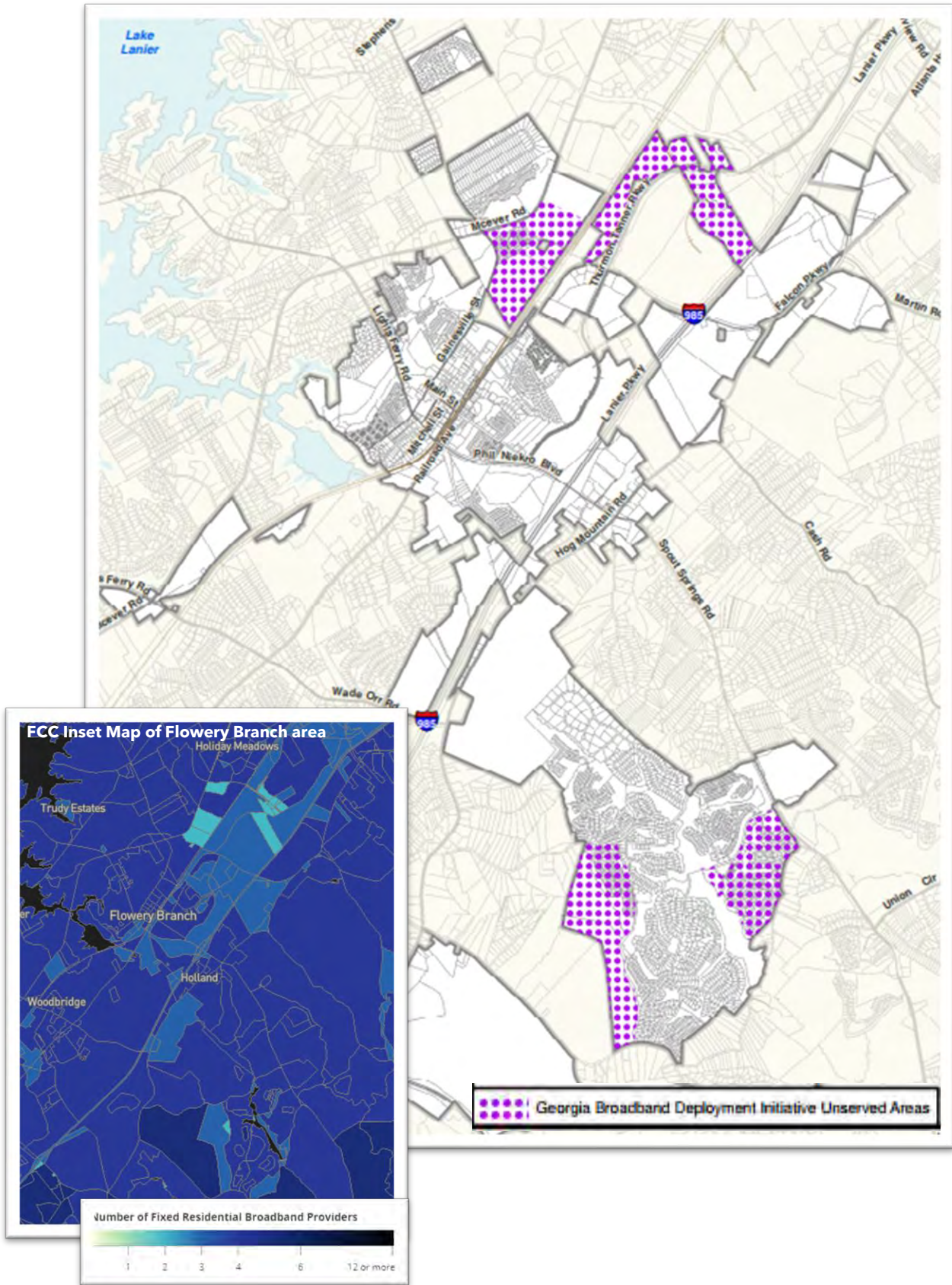
In accordance with DCA’s Minimum Standards and Procedure for Local Comprehensive Planning, local governments must address the **availability of broadband services** and the deployment of broadband services by service providers into unserved areas. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) there are no unserved areas inside the city limits of Flowery Branch, however the criteria utilized by DCA under its Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI) shows unserved pockets (see map on next page). An entire Census block is deemed unserved when 20% of homes and businesses in a Census block do not have broadband access.

Of the areas shown, several are undeveloped parcels, and a large area is a land application system (LAS) that treats wastewater. Another pocket includes a parking lot, the large-scale SKF manufacturing facility that has broadband service, and several abutting undeveloped parcels. The remaining areas are occupied by homes (some of which had not been constructed when the GBDI map data was compiled) in both new and established developments that have broadband access. According to the FCC data, the entire city has access to residential service providers (see next page).

The City will **confirm broadband availability** to these areas and evaluate the steps promoted by the State to achieve certification as a Broadband Ready Community.



Broadband Access (based on June 2020 GBDI data & FCC data)



## Community Facilities and Services Action Items

- Construct Farmer’s Market Pavilion Park, Pine Street Park, Chestnut St. Park
- Conduct a Stormwater Utility Feasibility Study to understand the City’s stormwater needs, the timing of each needed project and associated costs, and the process for establishing a funding mechanism that could allow the City to become more proactive with maintenance and repairs and also free up General Fund and SPLOST funds for other pressing local needs
- Coordinate with Hall County to implement McEver Road roundabouts (@Gaines Ferry and Radford Roads)
- Coordinate with GDOT to evaluate signalization timing at Atlanta Highway/Phil Niekro
- Prepare a Citywide Traffic Improvement Study
- Expand criteria for triggering a Traffic Impact Study with development proposals to better assess impacts of new development on the existing road network
- Construct East Main Street trail (12’ multi-use path from Thurmond Tanner Road to Flowery Branch City Park) that was identified in the Old Town Redevelopment Plan
- Prepare a Citywide Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan to address connectivity by sidewalks, multi-use trails, and bicycle facilities
- Coordinate with Hall County on the use of impact fees for parks and trails projects, and for applicable planning studies (at a minimum, a Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan; consideration can also be given to a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan that can address bicycle and pedestrian facilities, greenspace, and traditional recreation components)
- Confirm city-wide broadband availability and evaluate the steps promoted by the State to achieve certification as a Broadband Ready Community



## CHAPTER 4. COMMUNITY VISION

While every component of the Comprehensive Plan is important, it is this chapter that is most influential in terms of everyday decision-making. The Future Development Map presented in this chapter is most often (and properly) cited in support or denial of zoning and other land use changes. It is preceded by a general vision statement, which is intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become. Both the Future Development Map and the Vision Statement have the 2016 Comprehensive Plan as their foundation and are updated in this 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 3 satisfies both the “Community Goals” element and the “Land Use Element” required by the Georgia of Community Affairs’ Planning Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning.

### Vision Statement

The City of Flowery Branch, located in the Georgia Mountains region bordering Lake Lanier, will remain the proud home of the Atlanta Falcons football team. The City envisions a healthy natural environment including clean water in the Lake Lanier watershed, a significant tree canopy, and a continuation of sustainable environmental practices. The City envisions a revitalized Old Town, which has resulted from the successful balancing of historic preservation goals with redevelopment objectives. Old Town will be a premier destination for residents and visitors with its charm and proximity to Lake Lanier.

The City envisions a balanced property tax base comprised of in-town neighborhoods, master planned communities, varied retail opportunities, a strong Old Town, as well as business parks, industrial employment centers, and retail and mixed use centers in the Interstate 985 corridor. Flowery Branch envisions new, high quality development that it is distinguishable from other places, is designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and that retains the distinctiveness and charm of a small town.

Flowery Branch will be proactive in accommodating broader mobility needs, resulting in residents being able to walk or bike safely from residential neighborhoods to nearby parks, open spaces, civic places, and commercial facilities. The City will accommodate diverse future housing needs that are integrated into well-planned neighborhoods or developments and that contribute to the City’s economic growth. The city government will maintain high level of service standards for existing residents and businesses and will expand municipal services to support job growth within activity centers, neighborhood commercial areas, industrial employment areas, and Old Town.

## Future Development Map

The most important illustrative graphic of the comprehensive plan is the Future Development Map, which is presented in this chapter. This map is intended to guide decision-making related to the physical location of certain land uses and where the most appropriate type and intensity of development should occur. Although the Future Development Map will be cited as an overall expression of the City's land use policy, care must be taken to interpret the map with due regard to the City's overall vision statement, character area policy, and other narratives provided in this comprehensive plan.

## Character Areas

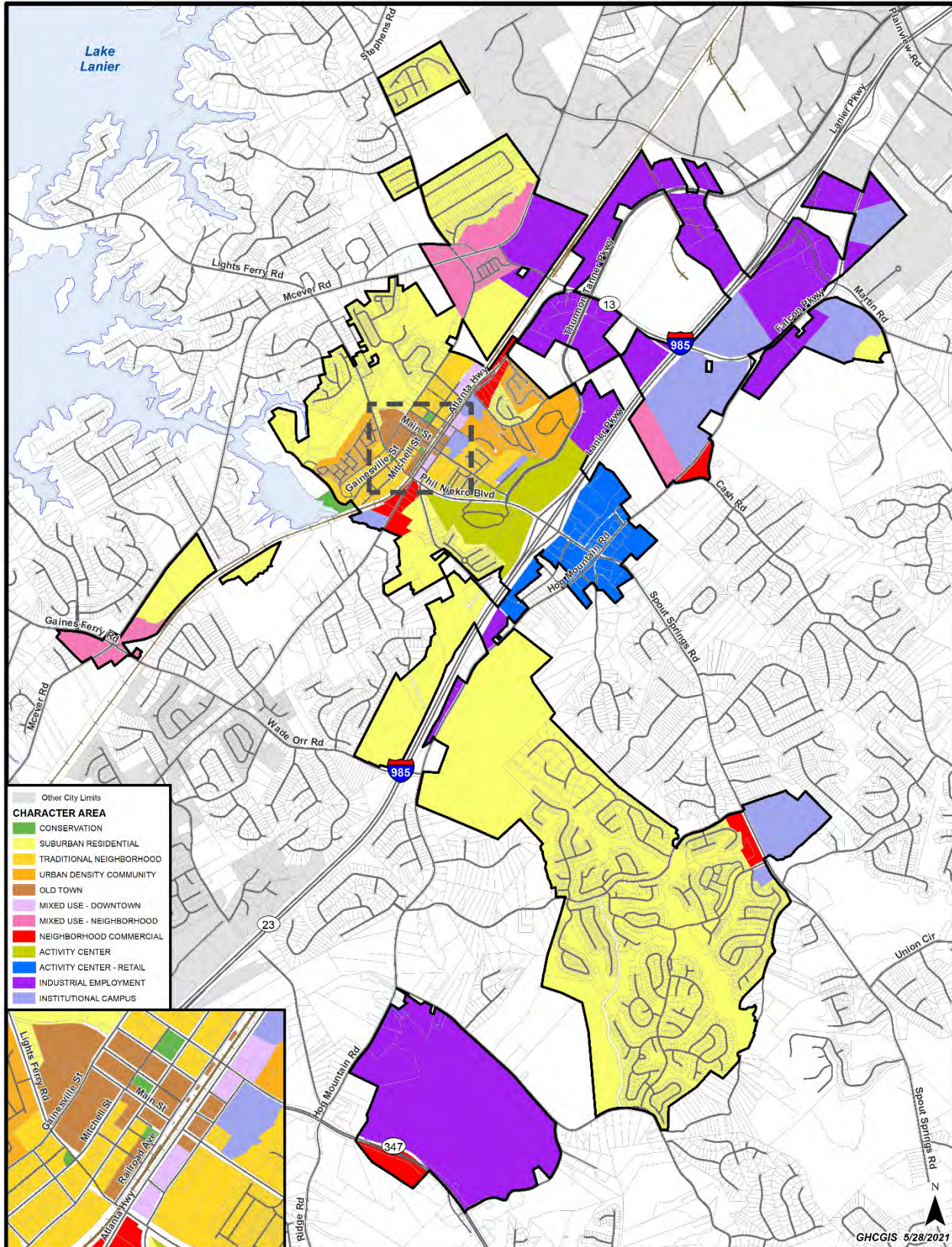
The Future Development Map shows the geographic location of unique character areas that describe the type of development desired for particular areas in a community. Every parcel in the City is included in a character area, and the boundary for each area generally follows parcel and/or street lines. The accompanying description of each character area is presented as a "character area policy" that summarizes the desired vision for each area, including appropriate: land uses, density or intensity of development, aesthetics and zoning districts for each area. When applicable, implementation strategies are also provided, which are also carried over into the 5-Year Community Work Program in Chapter 5.

The following character areas are reflected on the Future Development Map and are described in this chapter:

- Conservation
- Suburban Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Urban Residential Community
- Old Town
- Mixed Use – Downtown
- Mixed Use – Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Activity Center
- Activity Center – Retail
- Industrial Employment
- Institutional Campus



# Future Development Map





## Conservation

Conservation areas include City-owned or maintained parks and open spaces.

### *Vision*

Protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas for recreation and conservation purposes.

### *Design Principles*

- Minimal impervious surface
- Site features, building placement and exterior materials should blend with the surrounding landscape
- Emphasis on pedestrian access and use

### *Land Uses*

- Passive and active recreation
- Undeveloped areas in their natural state

### *Zoning*

No zoning districts implement this character area, with the exception that City parks may be zoned INST, Institutional District. Private properties may be required to provide open space or recreational amenities based on their underlying zoning classification; in addition, properties are subject to environmental protection ordinances that also contribute to how a property may be used and developed.

### *Implementation Strategies*

Actions items focus on adopting or amending local regulations intended to conserve open space and tree cover and to enhance water quality. These are described in the Needs and Opportunities Chapter in the Natural Resources section.

### *Illustrative Photos*



Flowery Branch City Park on Lake Lanier



Flowery Branch City Park



Dean Jones Family Park at Snelling/Lights Ferry/Mitchell roundabout

## Suburban Residential

Suburban Residential areas are located throughout the city and include locations where low- to moderate density single-family development exists or is likely to based on a property's zoning and surrounding uses.

### *Vision*

Protect established single-family neighborhoods and create quality new residential construction at suburban densities.

### *Design Principles*

- Larger lots (1/3 to 1 acre) with houses set back from the road
- Cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets (that are relatively wide when compared to traditional neighborhoods) with sidewalks
- Use of high quality exterior cladding materials (that are consistent on each level of the home)
- Diverse architectural styles are allowed, but there should be compatibility in overall neighborhood design such as roof pitch, building width, and level of ornamentation
- De-emphasized garage (recessed, side or rear entry)
- Opportunities for meaningful open space, including shared areas for the benefit of residents
- In Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), deviations in lot size, building setbacks and street width may be appropriate to maximize open space and improve neighborhood design

### *Land Uses*

- Single-family detached dwellings
- Recreational uses integrated into a neighborhood

### *Zoning*

- R-1 Detached Single-Family, Low-Density District
- R-2 Detached Single-Family, Moderate-Density District
- PUD - Planned Unit Development District

### *Implementation Strategies*

- Amend City's Architectural Design Standards to address residential buildings
- Update PUD requirements to enhance open space and site design requirements
- Expand code enforcement ability by increasing full-time personnel

### *Illustrative Photos*





# Traditional Neighborhood

The Traditional Neighborhood character area includes the in-town residential areas around the downtown core of Old Town.

## Vision

Maintain the character and development pattern of the originally settled neighborhoods of Flowery Branch, with sensitive residential in-fill development and careful improvements where required including new sidewalks, street trees, and other pedestrian-friendly streetscape features.

## Design Principles

- o Little if any building setbacks from city streets
- o Rectangular or square blocks and lots, and block lengths should not exceed 800 feet without intervening (mid-block) pedestrian footpaths
- o Narrow streets in a grid-like pattern with shade trees
- o Building facades emphasize porches
- o Rear entry garage or detached rear garage, with the exception that a garage may be recessed behind the front façade if off-street parking must be directly accessed from the street and directly facing the street
- o Wide sidewalks
- o Smaller lots/higher density than Suburban Residential
- o Provision of public greens or common areas when new neighborhoods are created
- o Design review required for compatibility with existing residences

## Land Uses

- o Primarily single-family detached dwellings
- o Townhouses may be allowed
- o Greens, plazas, and pocket parks incorporated into development plans

## Zoning

- o TND, Traditional Neighborhood Development

## Illustrative Photos



## Urban Density Community

Urban Density Community areas reflect existing townhouse and multi-family developments in the city.

### *Vision*

Maintain higher density, urban living environments that contribute to housing options within the city.

### *Design Principles*

- Densities range from 6 to 12 units per acre
- Master planned with high quality architecture and building materials, entrance landscaping, and recreational amenities (subject to design review and approval)

### *Land Uses*

- Duplex
- Triplex
- Quadplex
- Apartment complexes
- Townhouses
- Retirement community / senior housing
- Manufactured home parks

### *Zoning*

- R-3, Residential Multi-Family District
- PUD, Planned Unit Development District
- MHP, Manufactured Home Park

### *Implementation Strategies*

Amend City's Architectural Design Standards to address residential buildings

## *Illustrative Photos*





# Old Town

Old Town encompasses the historic central business district and includes a significant portion of the Old Town Redevelopment Plan (2014) boundary and the Flowery Branch Historic District.

## Vision

Protect and enhance downtown, making it a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly focal point of the City that integrates new development in a historic framework with a mix of uses, increased density at a comfortable scale, and open spaces and high quality buildings that enhance the public realm.

## Design Principles

- Small blocks; lots on narrow streets
- Pocket parks or greenspace as a part of mixed-use developments
- Architectural style and building materials that complement the historic fabric of the area (design review is required)
- Typically greater lot coverages, building heights, and building intensities and little or no front and side building setbacks when compared with other character areas
- Redevelopment must be consistent with principles and recommendations of the Old Town Redevelopment Plan

## Land Uses

“Main Street”-style commercial and vertical mixed use with retail and restaurants. Residential uses include upper floor dwelling units in mixed use buildings, single-family dwellings, and limited townhome development.

## Zoning

- CBD, Central Business District
- TND, Traditional Neighborhood Development

## Implementation Strategies

Update the 2014 Old Town Redevelopment Plan to identify additional development/redevelopment opportunities (and their acceptable use types and densities) to facilitate administration of the CBD zoning district.

### Illustrative Photos

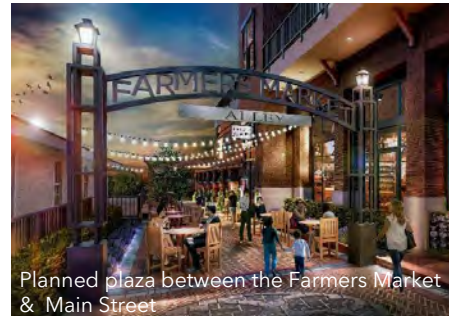
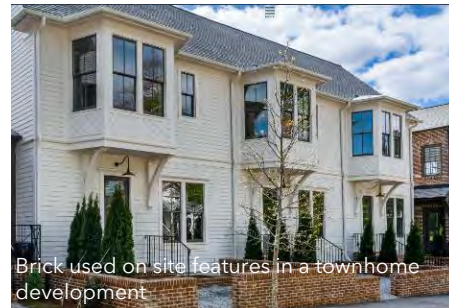
The Crest mixed-use buildings on Main Street will be constructed of traditional brick



Historic brick commercial buildings opposite The Crest



Brick used as a residential accent material, consistent with existing dwellings in the area



Planned plaza between the Farmers Market & Main Street

### Mixed Use - Downtown

The Mixed Use - Downtown area includes parcels along the railroad that are adjacent to the Old Town and Traditional Neighborhood character areas and are not included in the Flowery Branch Historic District.

#### *Vision*

Promote development and adaptive reuse of buildings that support a mix of uses in a manner that complements the historic character and building scale of Old Town and is consistent with the intent of the Old Town Redevelopment Area.

#### *Design Principles*

- Densities range from 6 to 12 units per acre
- Master planned with high quality architecture and building materials, entrance landscaping, and recreational amenities (subject to design review and approval)

#### *Land Uses*

- Retail and service uses
- Residential as part of a mixed use development
- Civic and institutional
- Open space and recreation

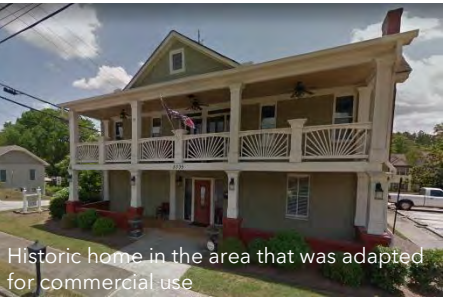
#### *Zoning*

- CBD, Central Business District
- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District

#### *Implementation Strategies*

Assess existing Architectural Guidelines and Pedestrian Retail design standards

#### *Illustrative Photos*



New commercial or mixed-use development should reflect the scale and style found in Old Town (shown is a rendering of The Crest on Main Street)



## Mixed Use - Neighborhood

Mixed Use – Neighborhood areas are located around the McEver Road intersections with Gaines Ferry Road, Gainesville Street and Radford Road.

### Vision

Commercial development at significant intersections that serves surrounding neighborhoods, with consideration given to mixed use developments having commercial uses or open space/recreation (in response to market conditions) that are oriented to existing public streets.

### Design Principles

- Connectivity between uses and developments
- Automobile and pedestrian accessibility
- Enclosed buildings with no outside storage and limited outdoor display of goods and merchandise
- Integration of open space as an attractive design element and functional component in mixed use development
- High quality building materials and site features

### Land Uses

- Small-scale neighborhood commercial uses
- Residential in the context of a mixed use development
- Open space / recreation

### Zoning

- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District
- PUD, Planned Unit Development District

### Implementation Strategies

Assess existing Architectural Guidelines and Pedestrian Retail design standards to ensure desired quality of development can be achieved.

### Illustrative Photos



## Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial areas include the Atlanta Highway corridor beyond the limits of the Old Town and Mixed Use – Downtown character areas, as well as pockets of undeveloped property having the potential to serve nearby residential areas with commercial uses.

### *Vision*

Provide areas for limited, small-scale commercial uses of a convenience nature serving nearby residential neighborhoods as opposed to a regional market.

### *Design Principles*

- Attractive, non-auto related neighborhood businesses and services, with distinctive architectural features
- Buildings and developments are scaled to be compatible with and promote pedestrian activity
- Open space is presented as suburban plazas or small open spaces
- Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying signs
- Buildings are enclosed with no outside storage and limited outdoor display of goods and merchandise
- Intensities are within a range of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 square feet per acre and shall not generally exceed 25,000 square feet in any one tenant space, to keep the bulk and intensity in scale compatible with adjacent neighborhoods

### *Land Uses*

- Small-scale neighborhood commercial uses
- With the exception of convenience stores with gasoline pumps, uses do not include 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

### *Zoning*

- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District

### *Implementation Strategies*

Assess existing Architectural Guidelines to ensure desired quality of development can be achieved.

### *Illustrative Photos*



Examples of smaller-scale neighborhood commercial uses and a monument sign (vs. a taller pole sign) with a brick base that matches the gas station exterior (on Atlanta Hwy)



## Activity Center

The Activity Center character area includes properties oriented around the west side of the interchange of Phil Neikro Boulevard and I-985.

### Vision

Create an accessible, attractive center of retail businesses and services that can also serve as a residential feeder for Old Town.

### Design Principles

- As far as practicable, buildings should not be separated from fronting streets by large parking lots
- 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
- Proper landscape buffers, streetscapes, and parking lot landscaping
- Perimeter and security fencing should be constructed of attractive materials which are compatible with the design and materials used throughout the project; razor wire, chain link fencing, and electric fencing should not be used
- Accessory structures should be designed to provide a cohesive project site and be sited to not be directly visible as the primary view from the street into the project site  
Outside storage of merchandise, and/or equipment not intended for display for public rent, lease, or sale, should be screened from view from the right-of-way along the entire property frontage, except in areas where access crossings have been approved
- Pedestrian accessibility and connectivity

### Land Uses

- Commercial uses
- Residential uses when part of a mixed use development

### Zoning

- HB, Highway Business District
- PUD, Planned Unit Development District (required for mixed use proposals)

### Implementation Strategies

Amend the HB zoning district to limit uses to those that are solely commercial in nature; mixed use proposals should be zoned to PUD to better regulate building and site design.

### Illustrative Photos



Examples of mixed-use developments with accessible commercial uses and higher-density residential uses to the rear

## Activity Center - Retail

The Activity Center-Retail character area includes properties oriented around the east side of the interchange of Spout Springs Road and I-985. The area includes Stonebridge Village and Village Shoppes of Flowery Branch.

### *Vision*

Expand opportunities for varied and larger-scale retail businesses and services in areas that are served by a network of collector and arterial roads.

### *Design Principles*

- As far as practicable, buildings should not be separated from fronting streets by large parking lots
- 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
- Landscape buffers, streetscapes, and parking lot landscaping should enhance the aesthetics of a property, provide shade protection, screen vehicles, and reduce impervious surface through environmental design
- Perimeter and security fencing should be constructed of attractive materials which are compatible with the design and materials used throughout the project; razor wire, chain link fencing, and electric fencing should not be used
- Accessory structures should be designed to provide a cohesive project site and be sited to not be directly visible as the primary view from the street into the project site
- Outside storage of merchandise, and/or equipment not intended for display for public rent, lease, or sale, should be screened from view from the right-of-way along the entire property frontage, except in areas where access crossings have been approved
- Pedestrian accessibility, connectivity, and safety

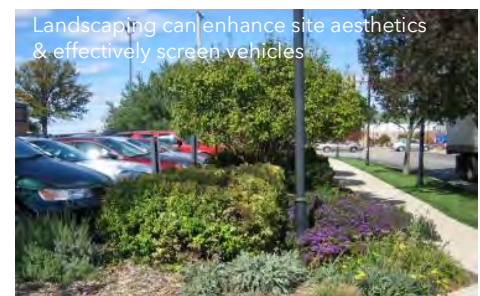
### *Land Uses*

- Commercial uses

### *Zoning*

- HB, Highway Business District

### *Illustrative Photos*



## Industrial Employment

Industrial Employment areas include existing industrial uses, industrial zoned properties, and undeveloped properties situated around Exit 14 of I-985.

### *Vision*

Function as a concentration of employment and job activity, contributing heavily to the employment and economic base of the city.

### *Design Principles*

- Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying signs
- Pedestrian access along road frontages
- High quality building materials and site design
- Adequate buffers adjacent to non-industrial uses or zoned properties
- Limit long uninterrupted wall planes that are visible from the public right-of-way

### *Land Uses*

Light and heavy industries

### *Zoning*

- M-1, Light Industrial District
- M-2, Heavy Industrial District

### *Implementation Strategies*

Evaluate existing Architectural Guidelines to ensure requirements support desired building materials, lighting, landscaping, and buffers.

### *Illustrative Photos*



Landscaping, fenestration (windows), varied rooflines and building materials, and offsets in the façade can help reduce the visual impact of large expansive walls on industrial buildings



## Institutional Campus

The Institutional Campus character area includes the Falcons Training Facility, public schools, large churches, County library, and some City-owned properties.

### *Vision*

Accommodate single-function institutional uses where public access is controlled or limited.

### *Design Principles*

- Campus-style site planning
- Generous landscaping
- Internal pedestrian connectivity
- Relatively low intensities
- Uniform signage
- High quality building materials

### *Land Uses*

- Primarily public and institutional
- Office buildings/parks

### *Zoning*

- INST, Institutional District
- O-P Office Professional District

### *Implementation Strategies*

Strengthen building and site design standards for Office, Institutional, Business Parks, and Industrial Parks and Campus by more clearly delineating requirements vs. guidelines.

### *Illustrative Photos*



## CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

### Community Work Program

The Implementation Program identifies the specific measures to implement the Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan. These measures are identified in a Community Work Program (CWP). The CWP identifies action items to be undertaken in the next five years. The CWP groups actions by type, including: regulations, processes and programs, inventories and assessments, detailed planning studies, and community improvements / infrastructure projects.

For each action, the CWP outlines the following information:

- Type of action or implementation strategy
- Brief description
- Timeframe for undertaking the activity (2021/22, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026)
- Estimated cost
- Responsible party for implementing the activity
- Potential funding source:
  - GF = General Fund
  - SPLOST = Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax
  - LRF = Local Resources Fund
  - TAD = Tax Allocation Revenue Bond Proceeds Fund
  - GEFA = Georgia Environmental Finance Authority Debt Proceeds Fund
  - TAP = Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program

## Flowery Branch Community Work Program

Action/ Implementation Strategy	Time Frame					Cost Est.	Responsible Party	Funding Source
	21/ 22	23	24	25	26			
Regulations								
Prepare a Unified Development Code that updates, consolidates and streamlines land use and development regulations and supports the goals of the Comprehensive Plan	✓					Costs to be determined based upon project needs	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Adopt Water Supply Watershed Protection Ordinance	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Adopt Groundwater Recharge Protection Area Ordinance	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Amend Buffers, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance to strengthen tree retention and planting requirements	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Evaluate the effectiveness of minimum open space requirements in all zoning districts and identify potential amendments, as necessary	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Amend clearing and grading requirements to clearly delineate requirements vs. guidelines	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Amend 'Architectural Design' standards in the Zoning Ordinance to include residential dwelling types	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Codify general 'Historic District Design Guidelines' from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Prepare tailored, stand-alone Flowery Branch Historic District Design Guidelines document		✓				\$20,000	Planning and Community Dev.	Historic Preservation Fund Grant & GF
Assess 'Pedestrian Retail' design standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure desired design is supported and identify potential amendments, as necessary	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Amend HB zoning district to limit uses to those that are solely commercial in nature	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Amend Planning Unit Development (PUD) requirements to enhance open space and site design requirements	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Evaluate zoning buffer standards to ensure they are sufficient where industrial uses abut residential properties and identify potential amendments, as necessary	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Evaluate 'Architectural Design' standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure requirements for industrial buildings include desired building materials, lighting, and landscaping	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Strengthen building and site design standards for 'Office, Institutional, Business Parks, and Industrial Parks and Campus' in the Zoning Ordinance by more clearly delineating requirements vs. guidelines	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Expand criteria for triggering a Traffic Impact Study with development proposals	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Process/Program								
Evaluate development review and permitting processes to assess the ease of doing business in Flowery Branch	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF

## Flowery Branch Community Work Program

Action/ Implementation Strategy	Time Frame					Cost Est.	Responsible Party	Funding Source
	21/ 22	23	24	25	26			
Submit Tree City USA application (in conjunction with updated Buffer, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance)	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Expand local code enforcement capability by increasing full-time personnel	✓					\$60,000	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Enhance community outreach capability /promote local initiatives, events and programs (both citywide and downtown-oriented) by adding dedicated staff positions	✓					\$120,000	City Manager and Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Implement citywide signage project (for gateways, corridors and Old Town)	✓	✓				\$350,000	City Manager	SPLOST / LRF
Continue to implement Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Water Resource Management Plan, including 5-year updates to local Water Master Plan (underway) and Wastewater Master Plan (2023/24)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Staff Time	Public Works	GF
Inventory/Assessment								
Update Citywide Historic Resources Survey		✓				\$15,000	Planning and Community Dev.	Historic Preservation Fund Grant & GF
Track citywide housing ratios with rezoning applications against updated 'housing mix policy' of 70% single-family/15% townhomes/15% multi-family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Evaluate steps promoted by the State to achieve certification as a Broadband Ready Community	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Detailed Planning Study								
Prepare a citywide Housing Market Analysis that analyzes demographics, housing supply, market trends, and local input to develop a projection of future residential needs	✓	✓				\$27,500	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Update the 2014 Old Town Redevelopment Plan		✓				Costs to be determined based upon project needs	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Conduct a Stormwater Utility Feasibility Study	✓					\$35,000	City Manager	LRF / GF
Prepare a citywide Traffic Improvement Study	✓					Costs to be determined based upon project needs	City Manager/Hall-Gainesville MPO	MPO federal funds
Prepare a citywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan		✓				Costs to be determined based upon project needs	City Manager/Hall-Gainesville MPO	GF
Community Improvements / Infrastructure Projects								
Construct Farmer's Market Pavilion Park and Pine Street Park (and related streetscape and parking improvements)	✓					\$5 million	City Manager	TAD
Construct Chestnut Street Park	✓					Costs to be determined based upon project needs	City Manager	TAD
Construct East Main Street Trail from Thurmond Tanner Road to Flowery Branch City Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$5.6 million	City Manager/ Planning and Community Dev.	TAP Grant/TAD/ GF



Flowery Branch Community Work Program

Action/ Implementation Strategy	Time Frame					Cost Est.	Responsible Party	Funding Source
	21/ 22	23	24	25	26			
Construct water and sewer capacity expansion projects, including expansion of the Water Quality Reclamation Facility to double its wastewater treatment capacity	✓	✓				\$28 million	Public Works	GEFA
Coordinate with GDOT to evaluate signalization timing at Atlanta Highway / Phil Niekro Blvd.	✓					Staff Time	Planning and Community Dev.	GF
Coordinate with Hall County on the use of impact fees for local trail and park projects, consistent with the 2004 Intergovernmental Agreement, as well as supporting planning studies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Staff Time	City Manager	GF
Coordinate with Hall County MPO to implement McEver Road roundabouts @ Gaines Ferry and Radford Roads	✓	✓	✓			Costs to be determined based upon project needs	City Manager	SPLOST

## APPENDICES

Appendix A. Growth Area Policy Map

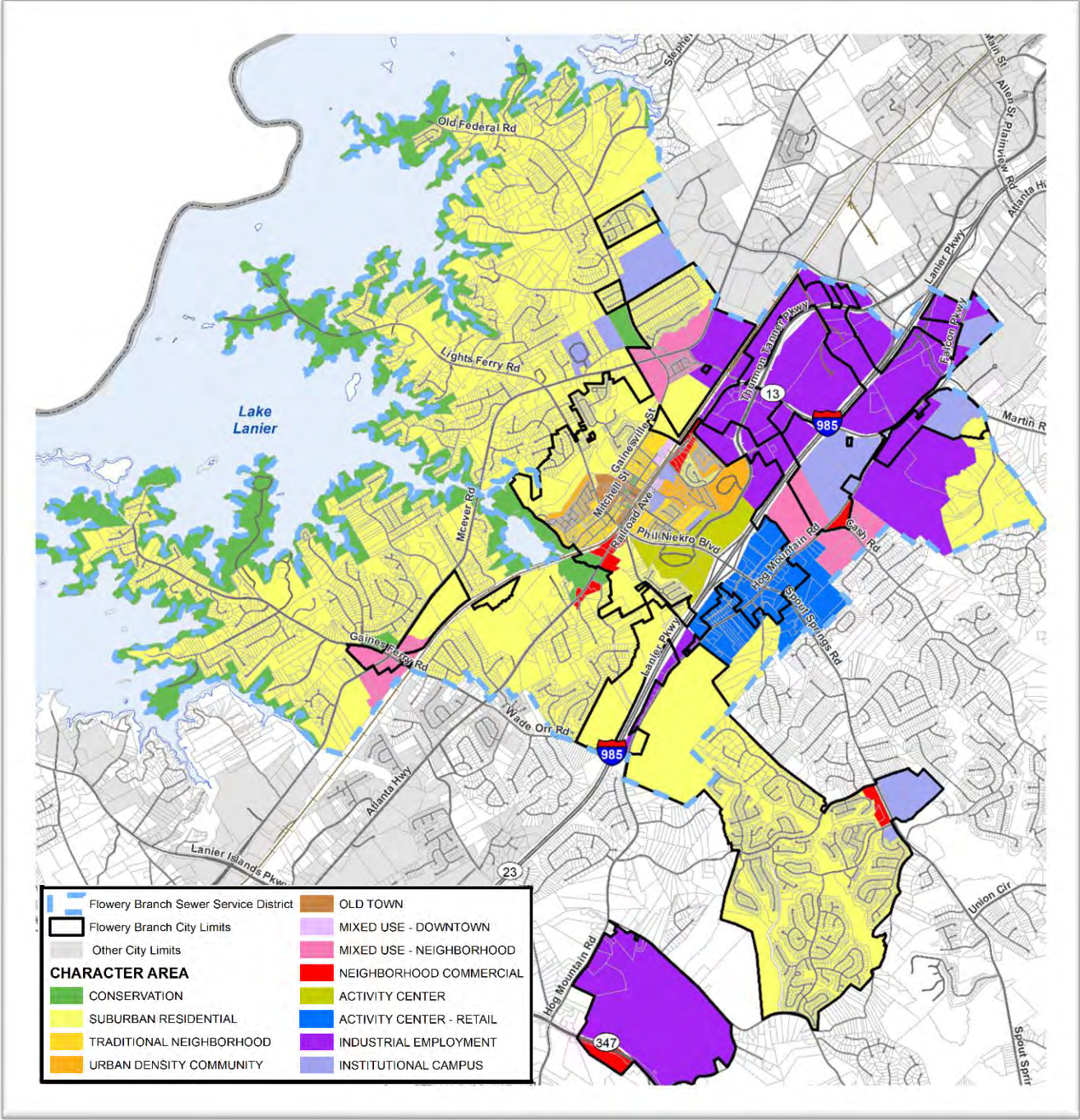
Appendix B. 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

Appendix C. Public Involvement Documentation

Appendix D. Flowery Branch Historic District Design Guidelines

# Appendix A. Growth Area Policy Map

The following map was prepared to assist with the review of annexation requests. It depicts the citywide Future Development Map boundaries (bound in **black**) as well as an expanded area that reflects the portions of unincorporated Hall County that are in the Flowery Branch Sewer Service Area. The character area policies described in Chapter 4 apply to the expanded area.



## Appendix B. 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

The Report of Accomplishments (ROA) provides a status of each work item identified in the 5-year Community Work Program in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

### 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

Activity	Status				Comments
	Complete	Underway	Postponed	Dropped	
<b>Land Use</b>					
Development Management – assess and modify land use regulations		✓			Numerous Zoning Ordinance amendments were adopted in 2018, with additional changes made on an as-needed basis; additional regulatory updates will be made with the 2021/22 preparation of a Unified Development Code (UDC).
Regulatory Summaries – provide better summary guidance on what to expect in developing land		✓			All forms, applications, meeting schedules and fee schedules are posted online; the upcoming 2021/22 UDC project will evaluate processes related to land development to ensure guidance is clear.
Special/Small Area Planning (participate with developers as opportunities arise)		✓			The City is actively implementing the Old Town Redevelopment Plan (2014), which includes mixed-use and residential projects with developers. This item is expressed in the new CWP as a proposed 2023 update to the 2014 plan.
<b>Economic Development</b>					
Economic Development Council (reevaluate and revise intergovernmental agreement)				✓	The City remains a member of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council but recognizes the need for additional in-house staff to support economic development initiatives; the addition of personnel is cited in the new CWP but is considered more specifically in the City's annual budget process.
Market Nonresidential Properties; (compile and disseminate database of developable properties)	✓				The Chamber of Commerce markets industrial properties and the City contracts with a leasing agent to help with marketing downtown commercial properties. Future in-house hire(s) can support these efforts.
Economic/Downtown Development (ongoing; increase personnel/activities)		✓			The Community Development Director acts in this capacity; the new CWP includes recommendations that reflect the City's needs for 2021/22.
<b>Housing</b>					
Old Town Redevelopment (implement projects called for in redevelopment plan)		✓			The City continues to implement projects; the CWP cites a need to update the redevelopment plan in 2023 to identify additional development and redevelopment projects.

## 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

Activity	Status				Comments
	Complete	Underway	Postponed	Dropped	
Senior-friendly Housing (examine options and implement incentives)				✓	There are no apparent regulatory barriers, as senior-friendly housing can develop in any residential zoning district or Planned Unit Development district; The Sterling on the Lake development features a new 55+ neighborhood, for example.
Institutional Residential Living (identify locations and facilitate via regulations)				✓	These uses (e.g. nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities) are allowed in residential zoning districts that allow higher density and in commercial zoning districts.
Housing Code Enforcement (on-going)		✓			The City contracts with a private firm for this function and is seeking to hire in-house personnel to expand its code enforcement ability in 2021/22.
Community Development (pursue grant funds where available)		✓			The new CWP identifies grant funds as potential funding sources for some action items (dates vary).
Natural Resources Protection					
Natural Resources Protection (ongoing)		✓			The City administers and enforces numerous ordinances for the protection of natural resources, and the new CWP identifies additional ordinances for adoption as part of the Unified Development Code project in 2021/22.
Historic Resources					
Historic Preservation Commission (ongoing and special projects)	✓				The City has an active Historic Preservation Commission that reviews design proposals in the locally designated Flowery Branch Historic District.
National Register of Historic Places (prepare application; consultant)				✓	The larger locally-designed Flowery Branch Historic District affords greater protections to historic resources; however, the smaller National Register District located within the local Historic District can be promoted by the City upon hire of downtown-focused personnel, and the benefits of expanding its boundaries can be explored when the Historic Resources Survey is updated.
Beautification and Aesthetics					
Gateway Improvements (identify, design, construct/install per program)		✓			This is being implemented in phases; the new CWP describes this as a "citywide signage project" for 2021/22 and 2023.
Screening of Public Works Facility (design and installation)				✓	The Public Works facility is intended to be relocated to a site better suited for it, as part of the vision for Old Town; in the near term, a planned park and small townhome development are being constructed in front of the site, which will provide some screening.
Code Enforcement (ongoing)		✓			The City contracts with a private firm for this function and is seeking to hire in-house personnel to expand its code enforcement ability in 2021/22.



## 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

Activity	Status				Comments
	Complete	Underway	Postponed	Dropped	
<b>Community Facilities</b>					
New City Hall and Police HQ (design, construct), plaza, and Pine Street Extension	✓				
Drainage Improvements in Old Town (engineer and install)	✓				Improvements made for new City Hall/Police HQ, City-owned properties on Main Street, and residential construction on Mitchell St.
Police Substation East (land acquisition, design, construct)				✓	There is not a present need for a secondary location in addition to the new Police Headquarters.
Water Master Plan (required by Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District )	✓				Completed, with a 5-year update currently underway.
Sanitary Sewer Plan (required by Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District )	✓				Completed; next 5-year update slated for 2023.
Stormwater Management (ongoing regulatory plus infrastructure), including completion of Old Town Stormwater Study completion and implementation		✓			Subdivisions Ordinance addresses stormwater management requirements; Infrastructure improvements were made to support redevelopment projects on downtown City-owned properties (buildings, streetscapes and parks) and SPLOST funds are being used to construct culverts on E. Main and Lights Ferry. However, a comprehensive approach to improvements and maintenance is needed, and the new CWP recommends a Stormwater Utility Feasibility Study for 2021/22.
Parks and Recreation (identify, design, and install improvements)		✓			Park projects are oriented to downtown, to date, as the City implements the Old Town Redevelopment Plan: Dean Jones Family Park constructed and the forthcoming Farmers Market Pavilion Park, Pine Street Park, and Chestnut Street Park are identified in the new CWP for implementation in 2021/22.
<b>Transportation</b>					
Gainesville-Hall MPO Participation (ongoing)	✓				The City is a member of the MPO and participates in the regular updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan and supporting studies such as the South Hall Trail Study. This is a routine item and is not being carried forward in the updated CWP.
Old Town Transportation Improvements (including Mitchell St, and design and construct specific projects, including signage)	✓				The roundabout was constructed at Mitchell/Snelling/Lights Ferry, and additional Mitchell St. improvements are under construction; additional parking opportunities have been identified and are being accommodated as redevelopment projects are constructed (buildings and parks)

## 2016-2021 Report of Accomplishments

Activity	Status				Comments
	Complete	Underway	Postponed	Dropped	
Trails and Pedestrian Improvements (identify, design, construct)		✓			The survey for the East Main 12' multi-use trail is complete, and construction is identified in the new CWP as an annual activity to complete all segments. The South Hall Trail Study (2019) was completed with MPO, and its incremental implementation is facilitated by conservation and trail easements being granted as private properties are developed.
Sidewalk Installation Requirements (code amendment as needed)	✓				Sidewalk requirements are addressed in the Subdivisions Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance, and the Unified Development Code project will consolidate all in one place and address any inconsistencies. The City adopted a Complete Streets Policy to encourage integration of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
Railroad Right-of-Way Improvements (identify, design, construct)	✓				Agreement is in place with Norfolk Southern Railroad for expanding and paving parking across from Depot; the parking has been designed and is being implemented with the Farmers Market park project.
Local Street Cross-Sections (revise and adopt)	✓				The Urban Redevelopment Plan includes local cross-sections that guide downtown enhancements; these may be updated upon the plan's update.
Connectivity Across I-985	✓				Addressed by construction of Exit 14.
Pavement Management (local street system maintenance)	✓				There is a paving program with annual funding from GDOT's Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program. This is a routine activity and is not being carried forward in the new CWP.
Intergovernmental Coordination					
Countywide Service Delivery Strategy (participate in update)	✓				This is a routine activity / requirement and is not being carried forward in the new CWP.
Participate in Countywide Emergency Management Planning	✓				This is a routine activity / requirement and is not being carried forward in the new CWP.
Participate in Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Planning with Hall County				✓	No longer applicable.
Periodically Review and Revise Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) as Necessary	✓				This is a routine activity / requirement and is not being carried forward in the new CWP, with the exception that the use of park & recreation impact fees collected by the City on behalf of the County via IGA is addressed.
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (local mandate compliance)		✓			This is reflected in the new CWP as an annual activity.

## Appendix C. Community Involvement Documentation

### *Public Engagement Plan*

A Public Engagement Plan (see attached) was prepared to that highlights the proposed public information and outreach methods, as well as project milestones.

### *Stakeholders*

People who live, work, and play in the City of Flowery Branch were the main constituents targeted by the public outreach portion of this project. Efforts were made to ensure that all citizens were informed of the plan, updated on the progress, and allowed an opportunity to provide feedback throughout the life of the project. The Comprehensive Plan outreach focused on collecting input from a representative mix of community members, including:

- City residents
- City business owners
- City leadership (including elected officials)
- Area developers and
- Representatives from the economic development community

### *Steering Committee Members*

A Steering Committee met three times over the course of the Comprehensive Plan development to inform and guide the process, and each member was also individually interviewed.

- Bill Andrew, City Manager
- Joe Anglin, City Council Member
- Ed Asbridge, City Council Member
- Rich Atkinson, Director of Planning and Community Development
- Missy Brooks, Business owner and resident
- Tim Evans, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce (economic development specialist)
- Chris Hill, HillWood Realty
- Bill Ogles, Historic Preservation Commission





## Public Meetings

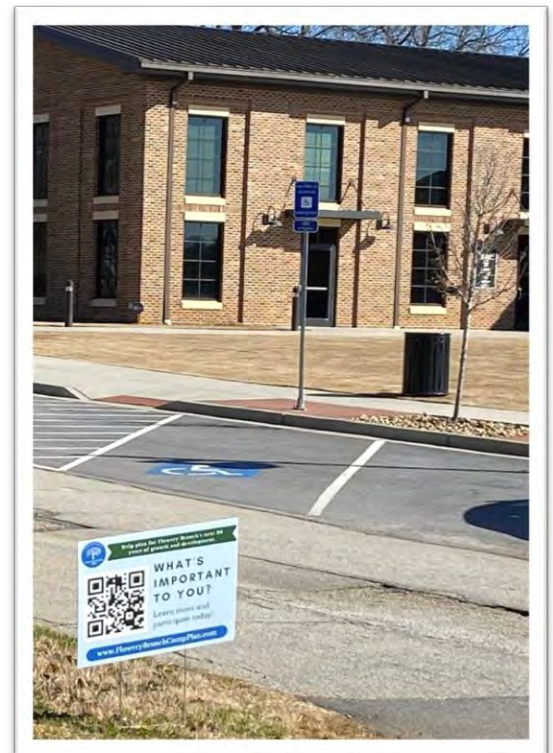
As required by DCA's Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, two public hearings were conducted. One was at the outset of project and the second was held prior to transmittal of the draft document for regional and state review. The meeting agendas and presentations are enclosed.

In addition, two virtual public meetings were held to solicit public input on local issues and concerns as well as draft recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Copies of these presentations are enclosed.

## Web-based Outreach

Outreach can be summarized as follows:

- An interactive website has been active since October 2020, when the Comprehensive Plan Update officially kicked-off
- 193 people signed up for the outreach list
- Seven project updates were emailed to the outreach list – these eblasts promoted online input channels, the January virtual public meeting, community survey, the April virtual information session, and the project website
- Over 60 individual responses were provided on the interactive online input map
- The online survey, hosted at site, had 472 participants (summarized responses are attached)
- The project has been promoted at the City's website and via its social media pages (11 unique social media posts)  
<https://www.flowerybranchga.org/cd/page/city-flowery-branch-comprehensive-plan-2041>  
<https://www.facebook.com/FloweryBranchGovernment>





# City of Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan Update Public Engagement Plan

*November 20, 2020*

## 1. Introduction

This Public Engagement Plan (PEP) outlines opportunities for the Flowery Branch community to actively contribute to the process of updating the City of Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan. The City of Flowery Branch acknowledges that the engagement of the general public is paramount to the project's success and is committed to meaningful public engagement throughout the planning process. A high priority will be placed on coordination, collaboration, and communication with the public in an effort to ensure that the plan reflects the full range of community needs and values now and into the future.

### 1.1 What's Inside

This document establishes a strategic approach to public engagement by highlighting project background information, identifying principles that will guide engagement activities, and providing details regarding the specific engagement and outreach activities that will be conducted throughout the life of the project. A tentative timeline of public engagement milestones is provided at the end of the document in Section 6.

### 1.2 Project Background and Overview

The City of Flowery Branch has a long history of comprehensive planning. The last update to its Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2016, identified an overall vision for the city, which highlighted a high-quality natural environment with a balanced property tax base and new development that it is distinguishable yet retains the distinctiveness and charm of a small town.

The City is carrying out this five-year update of its comprehensive plan in keeping with the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The update of the plan affords the community an opportunity to revisit its overall vision, goals, priorities and to account for any shifts in those areas due to contextual changes.

Key outcomes of the plan update include the following:

- (1) Updated needs and opportunities
- (2) Updated goals and strategies
- (3) An updated land use element
- (4) A five-year community work program

## Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan Update Public Engagement Plan

The major focus of this update will be on the land use element and will result in an updated Future Development Map, which is integral to the city's land use policy. The update process will also consider needs and opportunities related to housing, economic development, broadband services, and natural and cultural resources.

## 2. Engagement Approach

People who live, work, and play in the City of Flowery Branch are the main constituents targeted by the public outreach portion of this project. Efforts will be made to ensure that all citizens, including traditionally underserved communities (minority and low-income populations) will be informed of the plan, updated on the progress, and allowed a chance to provide feedback throughout the life of the project.

A three-pronged engagement approach will be used to engage as much of the community as possible.

1. Coordinated communications (Section 3)
2. General public input opportunities (Section 4)
3. Targeted stakeholder engagement (Section 5)

A virtual community engagement hub, Social Pinpoint, will be used for project engagement and communications throughout the project. The most current U.S. Census estimates for the City of Flowery Branch indicate that 96.1% of the population have a computer in the home and 93.3% have a broadband internet subscription. These numbers as well as the current need for social distancing supported the project team's decision to use a virtual platform. Please refer to **Section 4.2** for a more detailed explanation of online engagement hub and how it will be used in the project.

As a part of the general public outreach process, the planning team will coordinate with Flowery Branch community groups to facilitate participation by the different voices of the community. Such groups may include Hall County Schools (Flowery Branch High School), Spout Springs Library, religious organizations, and neighborhood groups. The project Steering Committee (see Section 5.2) will help identify groups that the planning team should reach out to.

## 3. Coordinated Communications

### 3.1 Project Landing Page

The online engagement hub (see Section 4.2) also doubles as the central communications point for the project. It serves as the definitive location for accurate and up-to-date project information and houses the various web-based input tools as well as project updates, links, and meeting announcements throughout the life of the project. Included in this information are frequently asked questions and project documents. The site offers a direct sign-up for the project outreach list. (*See Section 3.3.*) The online engagement hub will provide two-way communications by both disseminating information as well as gathering information utilizing surveys and a variety of other input tools. (*See Section 4.2 for more information about the Online Engagement Hub as a centralized input gathering tool.*)



## 3.2 Project Branding and Outreach Materials

A project logo as well as a color scheme and fonts have been established for the update process. This branding will be used on materials created for the project. Coordinated project branding will ensure cohesive and recognizable materials that the community can quickly associate with the Comprehensive Plan update process.

**Figure 1: Project Logo**



The following additional activities will help ensure the project is represented in a similar manner to the public by all those involved:

- Creation of a 30-second “elevator speech” that explains the project. This project overview will be created by the project outreach team, in coordination with the City, to facilitate clear communications about the project.
- The official hashtag for the planning effort, #FloweryBranchCompPlan, will be coupled with social media posts making project related posts more discoverable.
- Creation of outreach materials using the branding and project explanation, including project flyers (as determined appropriate) and all meeting materials.

## 3.3 Community Outreach List & Email Campaign

The team has created a preliminary “interested parties” listserv, including members of the Steering Committee, City leaders, and participants in previous comprehensive plan updates. The planning team will send occasional project updates to this “outreach list” at important milestones in the planning process, highlighting opportunities for public input and feedback. Community members may join this outreach list at any time during the planning process via a link at the project website.

## 3.4 Social Media Campaign

A social media campaign will be used to raise awareness of the project and to gather survey feedback. The campaign will run on the City’s Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts and consist of posts that promote input opportunities and provide updates on other key milestones in the planning process.

## 4. Public Involvement Opportunities

The project team will utilize both online engagement and in-person activities, where deemed safe and appropriate given the ongoing pandemic, to involve the broader Flowery Branch community in the planning process. This will include multiple opportunities and methods for community feedback. Outreach activities will consist of a robust, interactive online engagement hub, link on the City of Flowery Branch website that connects to the external project portal, social media campaign on the City's social media account, an online survey, and public meeting(s).

### 4.1 Public Hearings

As required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Minimum Standards for Comprehensive Planning, two public hearings before Flowery Branch City Council will be held in correspondence with updating the Comprehensive Plan. The first hearing, held October 1, 2020, provided an overview of the planning process and ways the community can contribute to the update. The second hearing will provide an overview of the draft plan prior to its transmittal to the Department of Community Affairs for review. Both hearings will allow for public comment on the process and content of the plan update.

### 4.2 Online Engagement Hub

The project team established an interactive, project-specific website as the central hub for community members to provide input to shape the plan's development. The project portal will be updated throughout the life of the project. The following tools/widgets may be incorporated into the project portal to gather input at important project milestones.

1. Web-based Survey – to include one longer survey with the possibility of incorporating shorter, topic specific surveys as determined appropriate by the project team
2. Discussion Forum – provides a moderated and interactive place for the community to discuss specific issues in a multi thread format
3. Interactive Mapping – allows for community members to provide placed-based input, tying back to the update of the future land use plan
4. Idea Wall – offers the ability to brainstorm on items like vision, goals, needs and opportunities

The project team will determine which tool provides the best means to gather input for different aspects of the plan, including overall vision and goals, land use policy and character area definition, and the action items/work program.

### 4.3 Web-Based Survey

The project team will create and conduct an online survey to gather feedback from the people who live, work, and play in the City of Flowery Branch. The survey will provide targeted questions related to overall vision and community goals, as well as needs and priorities related to land use, housing, and other community needs. It will be created and made available through the project's online engagement hub, which will allow respondents to provide responses to multiple choice or open-ended questions as well as the ability to map points on an interactive map that will also show the city limits for clarity.

## 4.4 Informal Virtual Input Sessions

Up to two additional virtual public engagement opportunities may be incorporated, via an interactive web-conferencing tool such as Zoom, to allow for small group interactions with the project team and to give community members the ability to have a more robust discussion with the planning team at important junctures in the planning process. Opportunities include the following:

- **Roundtable Discussion (sign up online)** – A focused discussion around a set of pre-defined topics. This tactic could be employed for the broader public or oriented towards a specific community group that may be underrepresented in the planning process.
- **Virtual Coffee Break or Chat with an Expert** – These online gatherings would provide the planning team an opportunity to present information in a live meeting format, answer questions, and direct participants to the online engagement hub to provide additional input.
- **Virtual Plan Overview and Visioning Discussion** – This option offers a more typical public meeting open to all community members and held over Zoom. The project team will provide a brief presentation, then organize a couple interactive activities to gather input from participants and answer questions.

## 4.4 In-Person, No Contact Input Opportunities

In-person engagement opportunities should be considered in order to reach members of the community that do not have internet access and may include the following social distancing methods due to the current pandemic.

- Survey/comment drop-offs at City Hall, the local library, and/or select local grocery stores
- Partnerships with local churches, Meals on Wheels, or school lunch (or other) programs providing project information and mechanism for gathering feedback

# 5. Targeted Stakeholder Engagement

## 5.1 Stakeholder Interviews

A limited number of stakeholder interviews will be held with individuals and/or groups that can provide expertise or insight on local development issues or needs. The project team will coordinate with the locally appointed project Steering Committee (see below) to identify these stakeholders.

## 5.2 Steering Committee

The City will select key stakeholders to serve on the project Steering Committee. This committee, as required by DCA's Minimum Standards for Comprehensive Planning, will comprise City staff, elected officials, an economic development professional, and other local stakeholders.

The Steering Committee will play a lead role in overseeing and participating in the development of the comprehensive plan update. Three committee meetings will take place throughout the life of the project and will be used to guide and inform the planning process. The Project Team will meet virtually with the Steering Committee for three working sessions which may contain both PowerPoint presentations and

**Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan Update  
Public Engagement Plan**

interactive exercises. It is anticipated that the sessions will be held at approximately the following times, and will cover the following topics:

Meeting 1 – Project Kick Off & Visioning (November 16, 2020)

- Project overview
- Role of Steering Committee
- Public involvement process and opportunities

Meeting 2 – Land Use Planning & Overall Priorities (Date TBD)

- Project update - technical/background data review
- Community engagement update - summary of community survey results
- Future Development Map and priority definition (needs & opportunities) activity

Meeting 3 – Draft Recommendations (Date TBD)

- Project update
- Community engagement update
- Draft plan recommendations
- 5-Year Community Work Plan discussion/prioritization

## 6. Project Milestones

**Figure 2: Comprehensive Plan Update Target Milestones and Timeline\***

MONTHS	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public kick-off Hearing (Held 10/01)</li> <li>• Debut Virtual Engagement Hub, including               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Map input tool</li> <li>○ Outreach list &amp; web-based sign-up tool</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate social media campaign</li> <li>• Steering Committee Meeting #1 (11/16)</li> </ul>
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Community Survey</li> <li>• Stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>
January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Community Survey</li> <li>• Informal virtual input session #1 – early to mid-January</li> <li>• Steering Committee Meeting #2 – Week of 01/18 (tentative)</li> <li>• In-person, no contact engagement campaign</li> <li>• Launch round 2 of online input tools</li> </ul>
February & March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Committee Meeting #3 – Week of 02/22 (tentative)</li> <li>• Informal virtual input session #2 – Week of 03/08 (tentative)</li> </ul>
April through June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Hearing #2 (Transmit document to DCA) – April 1 or 15</li> <li>• Comprehensive Plan Adoption Council Meeting – June</li> </ul>

\*Timeline is tentative. Please visit [www.flowerybranchcompplan.com](http://www.flowerybranchcompplan.com) for up-to-date milestones and engagement activities.





**City of Flowerly Branch  
City Council Meeting  
Thursday, October 01, 2020, 6:00 PM  
City of Flowerly Branch City Hall  
5410 West Pine Street, Flowerly Branch GA, 30542**



**CALL PUBLIC HEARING TO ORDER:**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

- Consider Ordinance #20-611 a request to annex a 15.6 +/- tract of land known as 4020 Falcon Parkway.  
[4020 Falcon Parkway Annexation .pdf](#)  
[Staff report .pdf](#)
- Consider Ordinance # 20-610 a request to annex a 10+/- acre property known as 3990 Falcon Parkway.  
[3990 Falcon Parkway Annexation.pdf](#)  
[Staff report .pdf](#)
- Consider Ordinance #20-614 a request to rezone a piece of property known as 4044 Falcon Parkway from Agricultural (A) to Light Industrial (M1).  
[4044 Falcon Parkway Rezoning.pdf](#)  
[Staff report .pdf](#)
- Consider Ordinance #20-613 a request to rezone a 15.6 +/- tract of land known as 4020 Falcon Parkway from Hall County Agricultural Residential (A III) to Flowerly Branch Light Industrial (M1).  
[4020 Falcon Parkway Rezoning.pdf](#)  
[Staff report .pdf](#)
- Consider Ordinance# 20-612 a request to rezone a 10+/- acre tract of land known as 3990 Falcon Parkway from Hall County Highway Business (HB) to Flowerly Branch Light Industrial (M1).  
[3990 Falcon Parkway Rezoning.pdf](#)  
[Staff report .pdf](#)
- City of Flowerly Branch Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Kick Off Meeting

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS - WORK SESSION:**

- Downtown City-Owned Property Leasing Contract with Oakhurst Realty Partners  
[Oakhurst Realty Flowerly\\_Branch\\_Leasing\\_Agreement.pdf](#)

**NEW BUSINESS -WORK SESSION:**

- Consider Ordinance #20-611 a request to annex a 15.6 +/- tract of land known as 4020 Falcon Parkway.



**City of Flowery Branch  
City Council Meeting  
Thursday, April 15, 2021, 6:00 PM  
City of Flowery Branch City Hall  
5410 West Pine Street, Flowery Branch GA, 30542**



**CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER:**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**GREATER HALL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUDGET UPDATE: -**  
TIM EVANS, VICE PRESIDENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**LAKE LANIER CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU UPDATE: -**  
STACEY B. DICKSON, PRESIDENT

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

- [Second Public Hearing for the Comprehensive Plan](#)  
[FB Comp Plan Update\\_DRAFT.pdf](#)

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS - WORK SESSION:**

- Consider a rezoning request submitted by Mr. Bill Stark. Request is to rezone six parcels totaling 118 +/- acres from M-1 (Light Industrial) to R-3 (Multi-Family) with the intention to construct a residential community consisting of single family detached homes and townhomes. The request includes six (6) parcels and therefore requires six (6) corresponding ordinances. The ordinances are 625, 626, 627, 628 (encompassing phase one), and 629, 630 (encompassing phase two).  
[Scanned complete rezoning application packet.pdf](#)  
[Combined pdf.pdf](#)  
[original layout & TSW suggestions.pdf](#)  
[AIM Potential M1 Layout by Rochester.pdf](#)  
[Staff Report .pdf](#)  
[March 18 Buffer Plan.pdf](#)  
[Mulberry Street Site Plan - including access RW \(markup\).pdf](#)  
[Combined 625-630 Incomplete for FIRST READ.pdf](#)

**NEW BUSINESS -WORK SESSION:**

- Request Award of Contract for City-Wide Sign Project  
[Executive Summary - Signs Project Award of Contract 4-15-2021.pdf](#)  
[Contract Award Recommendation - Signs Etc.pdf](#)  
[FB City-Wide Sign Package CDs 11-9-2020.pdf](#)
- Consider Bell Drive sewer easement for Mayor's signature.  
[Commercial Easement-City of Flowery Branch pump station.pdf](#)  
[Combined Signed Ordinances.pdf](#)  
[575 A.pdf](#)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC  
HEARING  
CITY OF FLOWERY  
B R A N C H  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
UPDATE

Please take notice that the City of Flowery Branch will conduct a public hearing regarding the 2021 update to the comprehensive plan. October 1, 2020, at 6:00 P.M in the Flowery Branch City Hall Council Chambers located at 5410 Pine Street. This is the City's initial "kick-off" meeting to introduce the update and what the update entails.

Rich@flowerybranchga.org

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Flowery Branch is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for a person with a disability. Please contact Vickie Short at (770) 967-6371 if special program accommodations are necessary and/or if program information is needed in an alternative format. Special requests must be made in a reasonable amount

Notice of Public Hearing  
Notice is hereby given that a public hearing shall be held in the Flowery Branch City Hall at 5410 Pine Street on Thursday, April 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. before the Mayor and City Council regarding the draft City of Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan 2041. The purpose of the hearing is to brief the community on the contents of the plan, provide an opportunity for residents to provide comments on the draft, and notify the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for review.  
97478 3/31



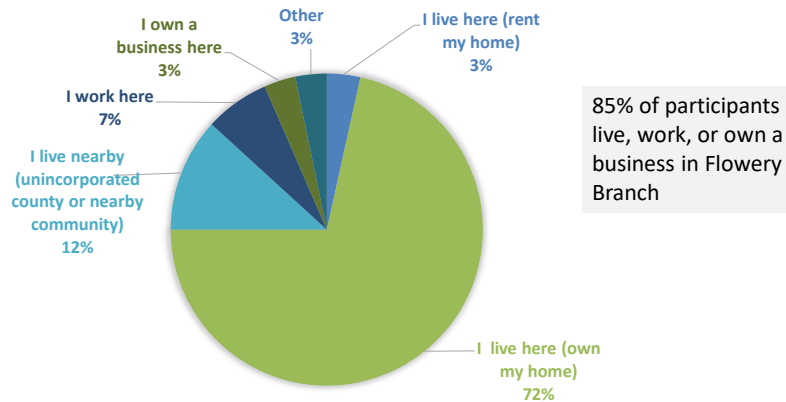
# City of Flowery Branch Visioning Survey Highlights

1

## Survey Stats

472 participants = (roughly) 5.7% of city's population

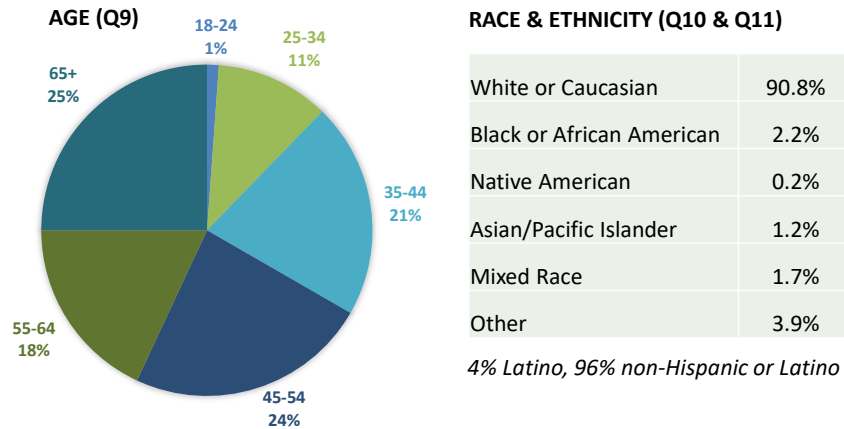
### RELATIONSHIP TO STUDY AREA (Q8)



2



## Participants Demographics



3

## Q1, Q2, Q3: 2016 Comp Plan Goals

**Historic Resources:** Protect historic resources and promote cultural resources in the city.

**Natural Resources:** Protect and enhance the natural environment and resources.

**Housing:** Protect neighborhoods and promote diverse and affordable housing that meets the needs of existing and future city residents.

**Economic Development:** Grow the economy, increase local employment, increase personal incomes, and reduce poverty.

**Infrastructure:** Accommodate existing and anticipated population and employment with public facilities, including parks, roads, water, sewer, public safety, that meet local level of service standards.

**Transportation:** Provide mobility, safety, and connectivity via a multi-modal transportation system, with emphasis on improving the pedestrian network and developing multi-use trails.

**Land Use:** Promote and ensure efficient, functional, and compatible land use patterns as the city expands, develops, and redevelops.

**Aesthetics:** Improve the functionality and attractiveness of downtown, gateway corridors, and neighborhoods in the city.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation:** Cooperate with all other levels of government in the pursuit of shared goals, policies, and objectives.

4

## Q1, Q2, Q3: 2016 CP Goals Applicability, Progress, Refinement

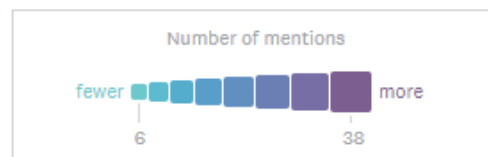
	Q1 Still Applicable?	Q2 Not Achieved	Q2 Achieved	Q2 Making Progress	Q3 Yes, further discuss!
Historic Resources	71%	24%	10%	44%	52%
Natural Resources	86%	30%	7%	45%	65%
Housing	48%	21%	21%	42%	58%
Economic Development	69%	14%	13%	57%	62%
Infrastructure	82%	28%	7%	53%	72%
Transportation	59%	39%	5%	37%	59%
Land Use	75%	32%	6%	49%	71%
Aesthetics	82%	18%	10%	66%	66%
Intergovernmental Cooperation	68%	10%	10%	43%	41%

5

## Q4: Are We Missing Any Goals?

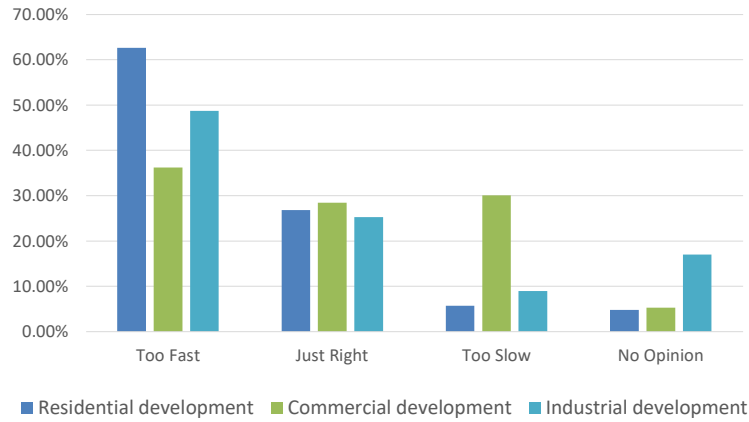
42% of participants responded to this question. Most comments related to goal areas but spoke to specific needs or concerns.

infrastructure housing developments people restaurants traffic parks  
 housing neighborhoods development sidewalks  
 MF apartments businesses roads small town feel  
 Downtown Area schools Affordable Housing Devt homes  
 community warehouses



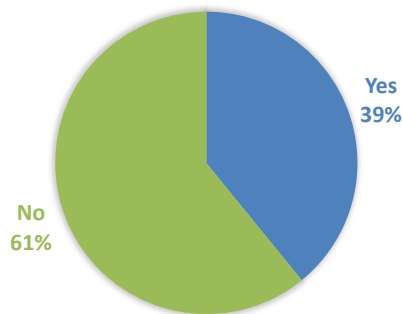
6

### Q5: Pace of Development Residential, Commercial, Industrial



7

### Q6: Current development patterns and land use decisions are enabling Flowery Branch to become the type of place you would like it to be



**MOST REPEATED WORDS**

**NEED** – road improvements, green space, development restrictions, better infrastructure prior to growth, more amenities

**TOO MANY** – warehouses, industrial buildings, apartments

**MOVED [to Flowery Branch]** – to enjoy the small-town feel, it’s going away

**DEVELOPMENT** – too much, too fast

**TRAFFIC** – needs to be addressed, tied to too much development and lack of pedestrian facilities, address capacity and traffic patterns

8

## Q7. Top 3 Initiatives Next 5 Years

### Control Growth

- Slow residential development, esp. apartments
- Limit industrial growth and apartments
- Revitalize downtown
- Facilitate quality development
- Grow local restaurants, shops, & businesses

### Preserve Character

- Maintain single-family character
- Preserve historic resources
- Preserve tree canopy
- Improve downtown

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Improve roads
- Widen roads
- Address water/sewer improvements
- Add bike lanes, golf cart paths

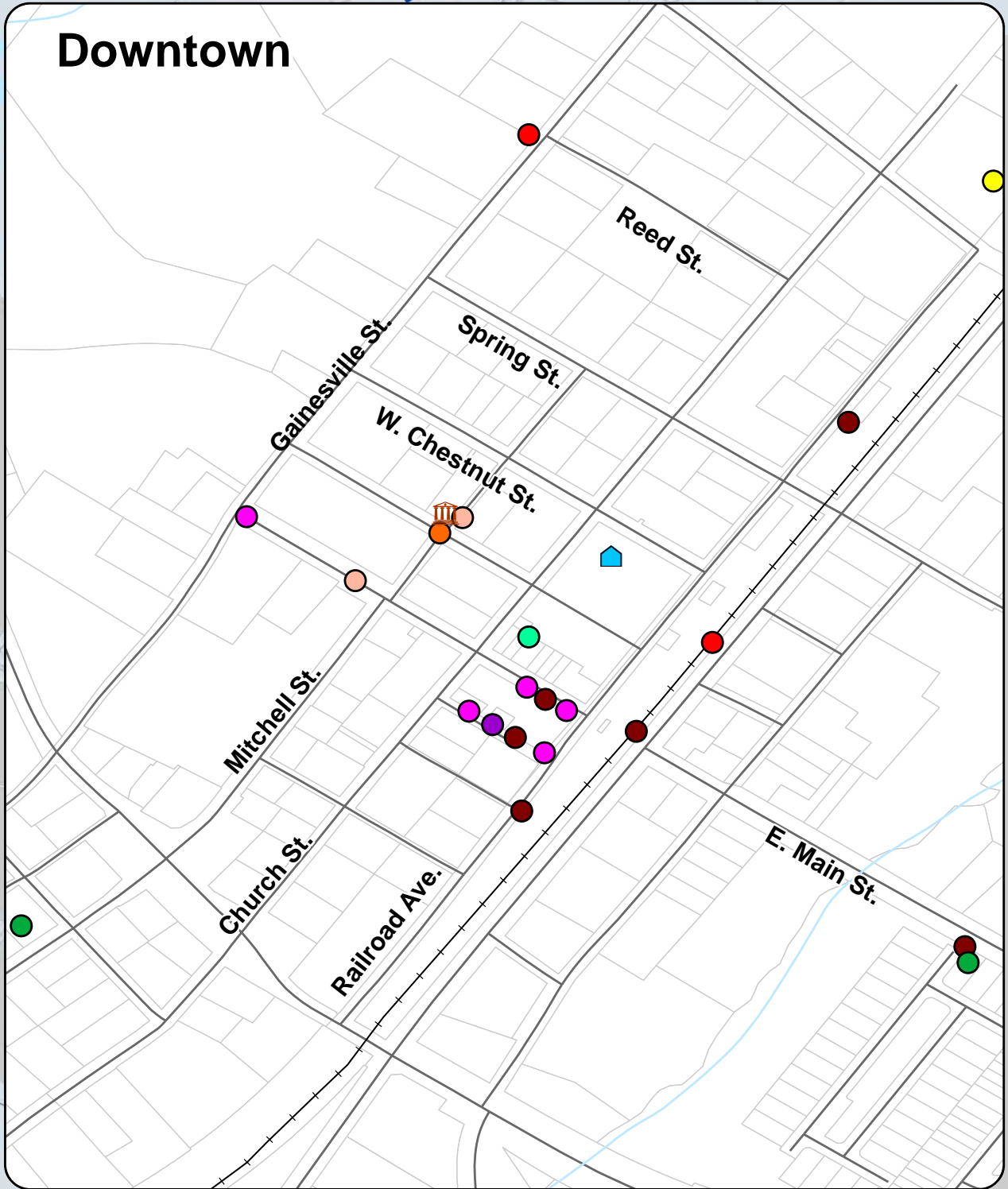
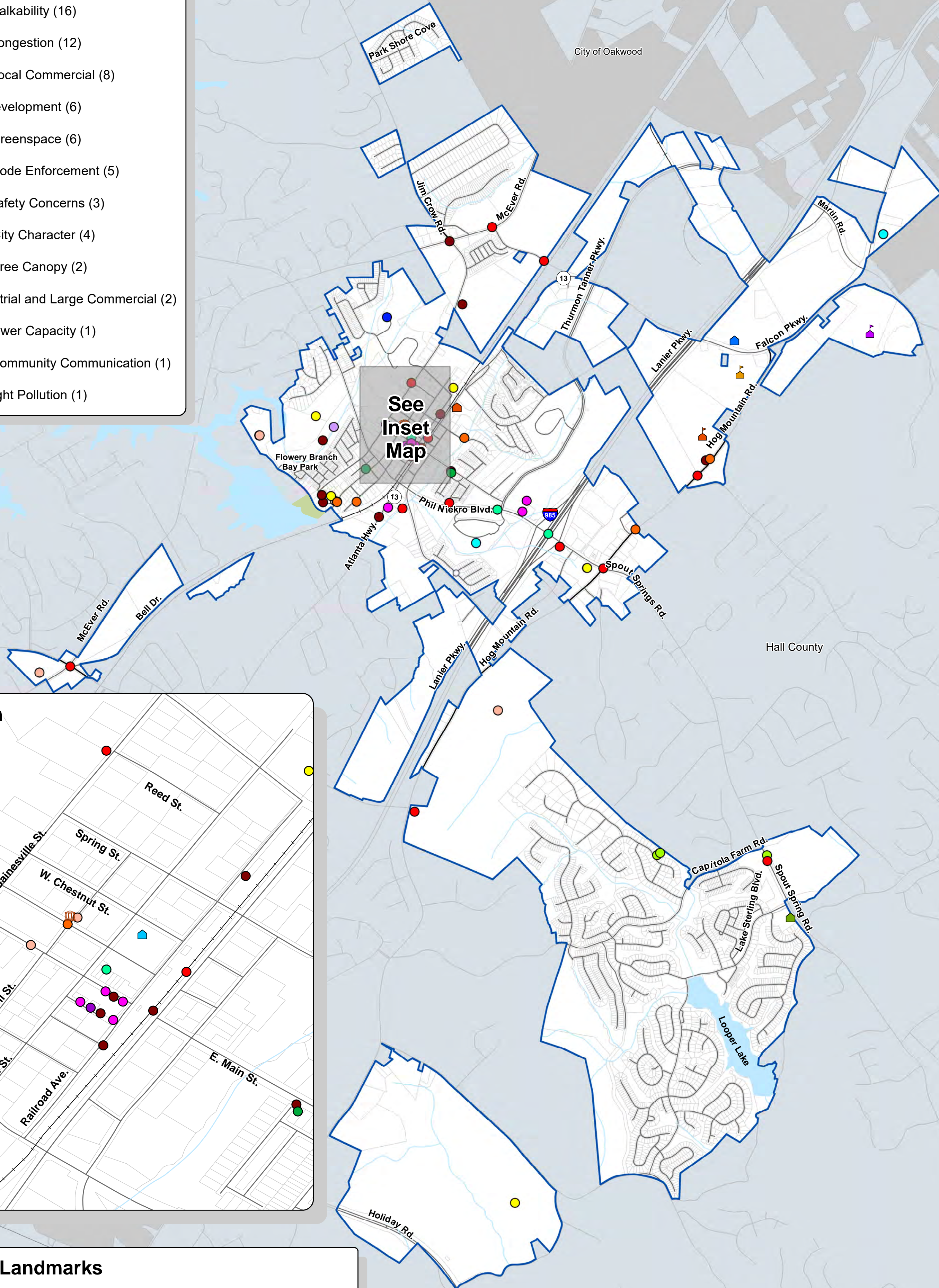
### Enhance Quality of Life

- Add greenspace and parks
- Expand restaurants, shops
- Install sidewalks, paths, trails
- Update and add schools



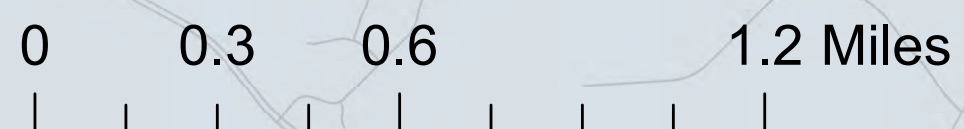
### Comment Themes

- Improve Walkability (16)
- Address Congestion (12)
- Increase Local Commercial (8)
- Restrict Development (6)
- Increase Greenspace (6)
- Increase Code Enforcement (5)
- Address Safety Concerns (3)
- Enhance City Character (4)
- Preserve Tree Canopy (2)
- Limit Industrial and Large Commercial (2)
- Expand Sewer Capacity (1)
- Increase Community Communication (1)
- Reduce Light Pollution (1)



### Community Landmarks

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <span style="color: brown;">🏛️</span> Flowery Branch City Hall   | <span style="color: blue;">🏠</span> Atlanta Falcons Training Center |
| <span style="color: cyan;">👮</span> Flowery Branch Police        | <span style="color: magenta;">🎓</span> Martin Elementary School     |
| <span style="color: orange;">📮</span> Flowery Branch Post Office | <span style="color: yellow;">🎓</span> CW Davis Middle School        |
| <span style="color: green;">📖</span> Hall County Library         | <span style="color: purple;">🎓</span> Flowery Branch High School    |







# Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan Update

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1.8.21 Community Visioning Meeting

# What is a Comp Plan?

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A policy document that:

- Establishes a **community vision** for growth over the 20 years
- **Guides decisions** related to development of Flowery Branch
- Fulfills State of **Georgia requirement**
  - 5-year updates
  - Due June 30, 2021

## CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2016 TO 2035

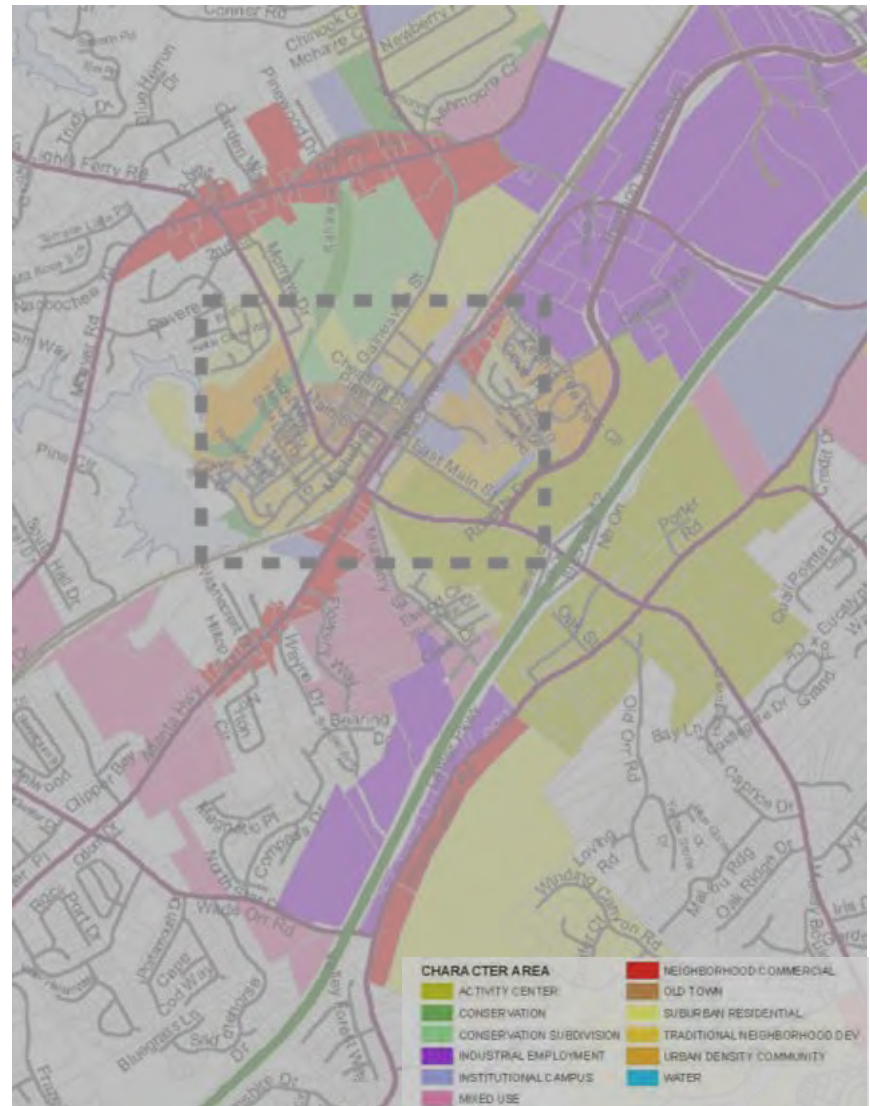
Adopted June 16, 2016



# What is a Comp Plan?

A policy document that:

- Establishes a **community vision** for growth over the next decades
- **Guides decisions** related to development of Flowery Branch
- Fulfills State of **Georgia requirement**
  - 5-year updates
  - Due June 30, 2021





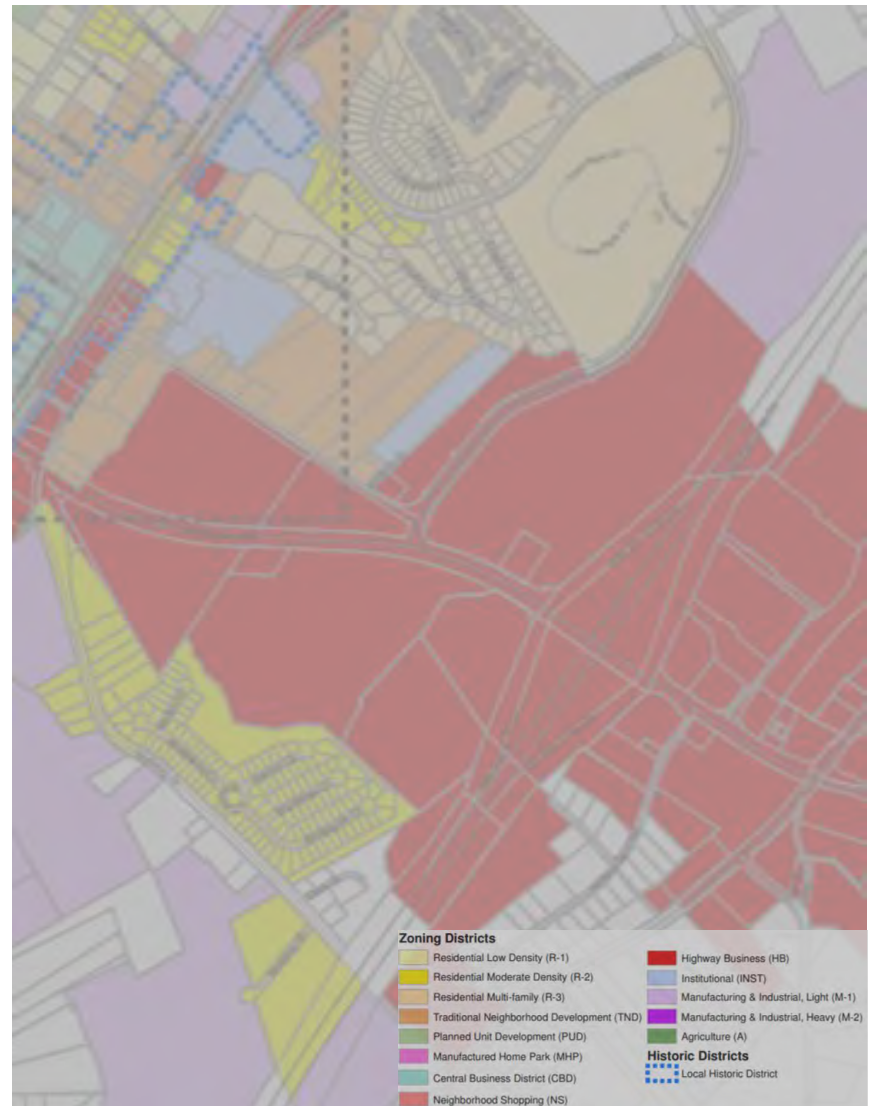
# What is a Comp Plan?

A comprehensive plan **is not**:

- A regulation or ordinance
- Zoning

A comprehensive plan, upon adoption, **does not**:

- Create new regulations
- Change existing zoning
- Alter the development rights allowed by each property's existing zoning



# DCA\* Planning Requirements

---

- Needs & Opportunities
- Community Goals
- 5-Year Community Work Program
- Land Use Element
- Transportation Element (MPO\*\* plans)
- Broadband Services Element
- Consideration of Regional Water Plan & Environmental Planning Criteria
- Community Involvement



**Comprehensive Plan Update**  
June 30, 2021



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ENVISION OUR FUTURE

\* Georgia Department of Community Affairs

\*\* Gainesville-Hall County Metropolitan Planning Organization

# Other Considerations

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Historic & Natural Resources



**HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO DOWNTOWN FLOWERY BRANCH!**

The **City of Flowery Branch** is about to invest in the redevelopment of the **Downtown Business District!**

The City wants your opinions and ideas about what should be developed. Please take the time to complete our short **public opinion survey** on the subject.

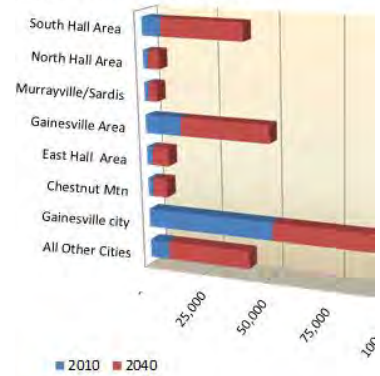
- 1 **\$100** Gift Card to **Antebellum Restaurant**
- 2 **\$50** Gift Card to **Crossroads Bar and Grille**
- 3 **\$25** Gift Card to **Liberty Candy**

Visit [www.projectsurveys.com/flowery-branch](http://www.projectsurveys.com/flowery-branch) to take the survey or scan the QR code with your smartphone!






Employment Forecasts



Rendering of the Crest at Flowery Branch Phil Niekró apartments.





# Community Involvement

- 2 Public Hearings (required)
- Project Listserv
- Public Outreach Materials
- Virtual Input Sessions
- Community Survey
- Social Media
- Project Website



Help plan for Flowerly Branch's next 20 years of growth and development!

## What does our future look like?



Learn more and participate today!



Stay tuned for details on upcoming activities!

[www.FloweryBranchCompPlan.com](http://www.FloweryBranchCompPlan.com)

 **CityofFlowerlyBranch** @CityoffB · Dec 30, 2020  
Join us on Friday, January 8th, 11:45am - 1pm, for a Virtual Community Visioning Meeting to help shape the City's long-term plan for future growth and development. The Zoom meeting will open at 11:45am with formal start at noon. Join on January 8 at [flowerlybranchcompplan.com](http://flowerlybranchcompplan.com).

**JOIN US JANUARY 8TH**

Flowerly Branch  
Virtual Community Visioning  
Meeting

11:45am - 1pm

Help us identify what to Preserve,  
Change, and Create



## Help Shape the Vision

What should drive Flowerly Branch's future growth and development? Help identify top goals and initiatives and share your thoughts on current growth.

START 1 Dec

END 15 Jan

[Take the Visioning Survey](#)

[News](#)

[City of Flowerly Branch Comprehensive Plan 2041 Kick-Off Meeting](#)



# Breakout Group Discussion

Tell us what you want to:

- Preserve
- Change
- Create

Using:

- Icons
- Sticky notes
- Illustrative photos

## GROUP A

facilitators:  
Paige Hatley, Sarah Beddington

### YOUR TOOLS

PRESERVE ●●●●●●●●



CHANGE >>>>>>>>



CREATE <img alt="A 2x4 grid of purple squares representing the 'Create' tool."/>

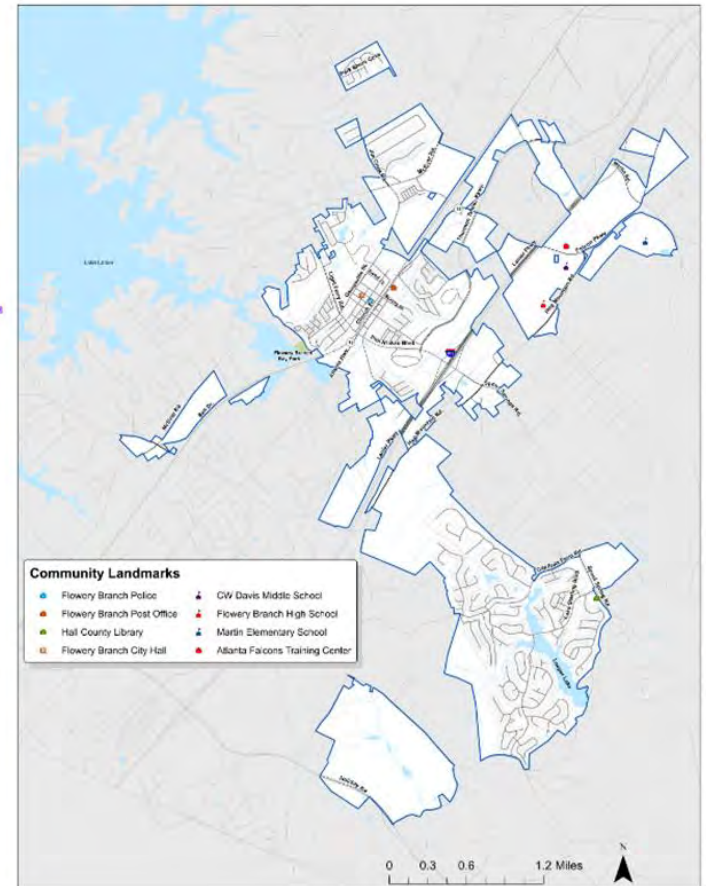


Legend: <img alt="Icons for various landmarks and features."/>

Flowery Branch Post Office <img alt="Post office icon."/>

Flowery Branch City Hall <img alt="City hall icon."/>

Flowery Branch Police <img alt="Police icon."/>



- Community Landmarks**
- Flowery Branch Police
  - Flowery Branch Post Office
  - Hall County Library
  - Flowery Branch City Hall
  - CW Davis Middle School
  - Flowery Branch High School
  - Martin Elementary School
  - Atlanta Falcons Training Center

# GROUP A

Facilitators:  
Paige Hatley, Sarah Beddington

## YOUR TOOLS

**PRESERVE** ○○○○○○○○○○



**CHANGE** ↗↗↗↗↗↗↗↗



**CREATE** 🏠🏠🏠🏠🏠🏠🏠🏠

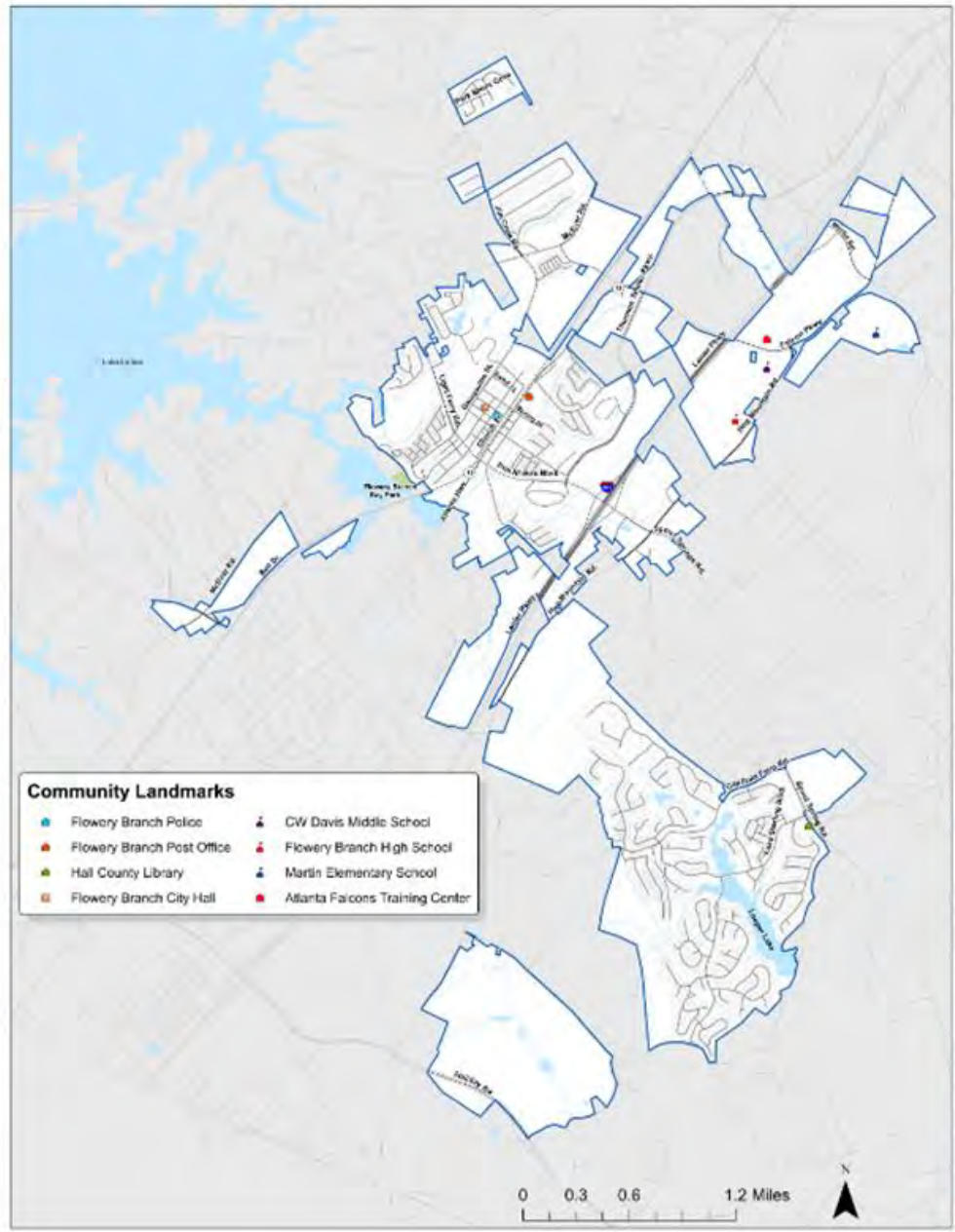


👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍

👎👎👎👎👎👎👎👎

👉👉👉👉👉👉👉👉

❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️



**Community Landmarks**

- 📍 Flowery Branch Police
- 📍 Flowery Branch Post Office
- 📍 Hall County Library
- 📍 Flowery Branch City Hall
- 📍 CW Davis Middle School
- 📍 Flowery Branch High School
- 📍 Martin Elementary School
- 📍 Atlanta Falcons Training Center

**GROUP A NOTES**

**Preserve**

**Change**

**Create**

**Other**

**Legend**

- City of Flowery Branch
- Interstate
- Minor Road
- Major Road
- Railroad
- Stream
- Parcels
- Body of Water

# Next Steps

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- Promote Survey (open through **Jan. 15**)
- [www.FloweryBranchCompPlan.com](http://www.FloweryBranchCompPlan.com)
- Meet again before April
- Submit Plan to DCA for review & adopt by June 30, 2021





# Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan Update

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4.1.21 Information Session



# Information Session FAQ

Two parts to the presentation:

1. Recommended **action items** to implement the plan over the next five years, covering a variety of topics: *historic and natural resource protection, housing, economic development, community facilities and services, and transportation*

✓ = Action that was previously completed or is underway

→ = Proposed new action

2. Land use will be addressed in the draft **Future Development Map** and character area descriptions; the FDM is used on a day-to-day basis

These are the core components of the plan, with a complete draft document that fully describes the “vision” for growth and development being finalized soon.



**Comprehensive Plan Update**

April 15, 2021 **DRAFT**

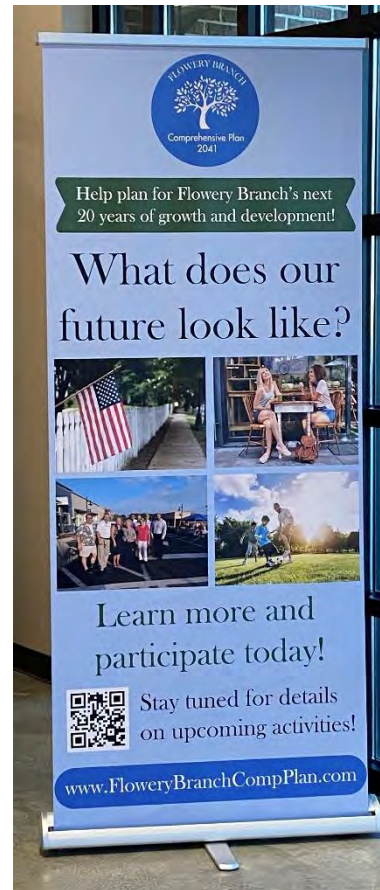


ENVISION OUR FUTURE

# Information Session FAQ

The basis for the plan's recommendations includes public input...

- Interactive website
- Online survey
- City's website
- City's social media pages
- Virtual Meeting 1
- Today's Virtual Meeting 2
- Public Hearing



Zoom meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85090682868>

Zoom meeting ID: 850 9068 2868

Dial in number (if joining by phone): +1 301 715 8592

[Join Here!](#)

[www.flowerybranchcompplan.com](http://www.flowerybranchcompplan.com)



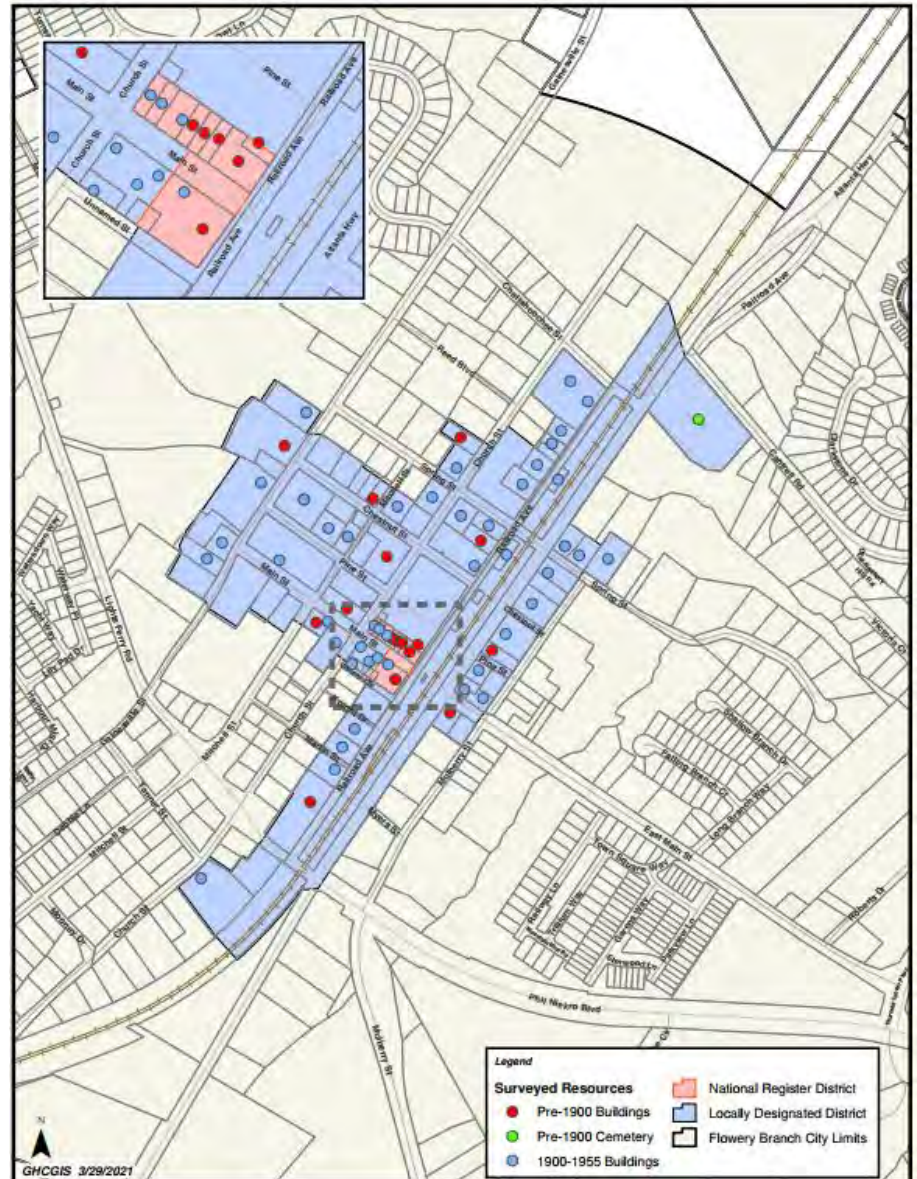
infrastructure housing developments people restaurants traffic parks  
 housing neighborhoods development sidewalks  
 MF apartments businesses roads small town feel  
 Downtown Area schools Affordable Housing Devt homes  
 community warehouses



# Proposed Action Items

## Historic Preservation

- ✓ Flowery Branch Historic District
- ✓ Historic Preservation Commission
- ✓ Repairs to Caboose (painting) and Depot (new windows) buildings
- ✓ Repairs to City-owned Main Street buildings
- *Update citywide Historic Resources Survey (2003)*
- *Codify general “Historic District Design Guidelines” from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan (to be used in conjunction with Historic District Sign Guidelines)*
- *Prepare tailored, stand-alone Historic District Design Guidelines*

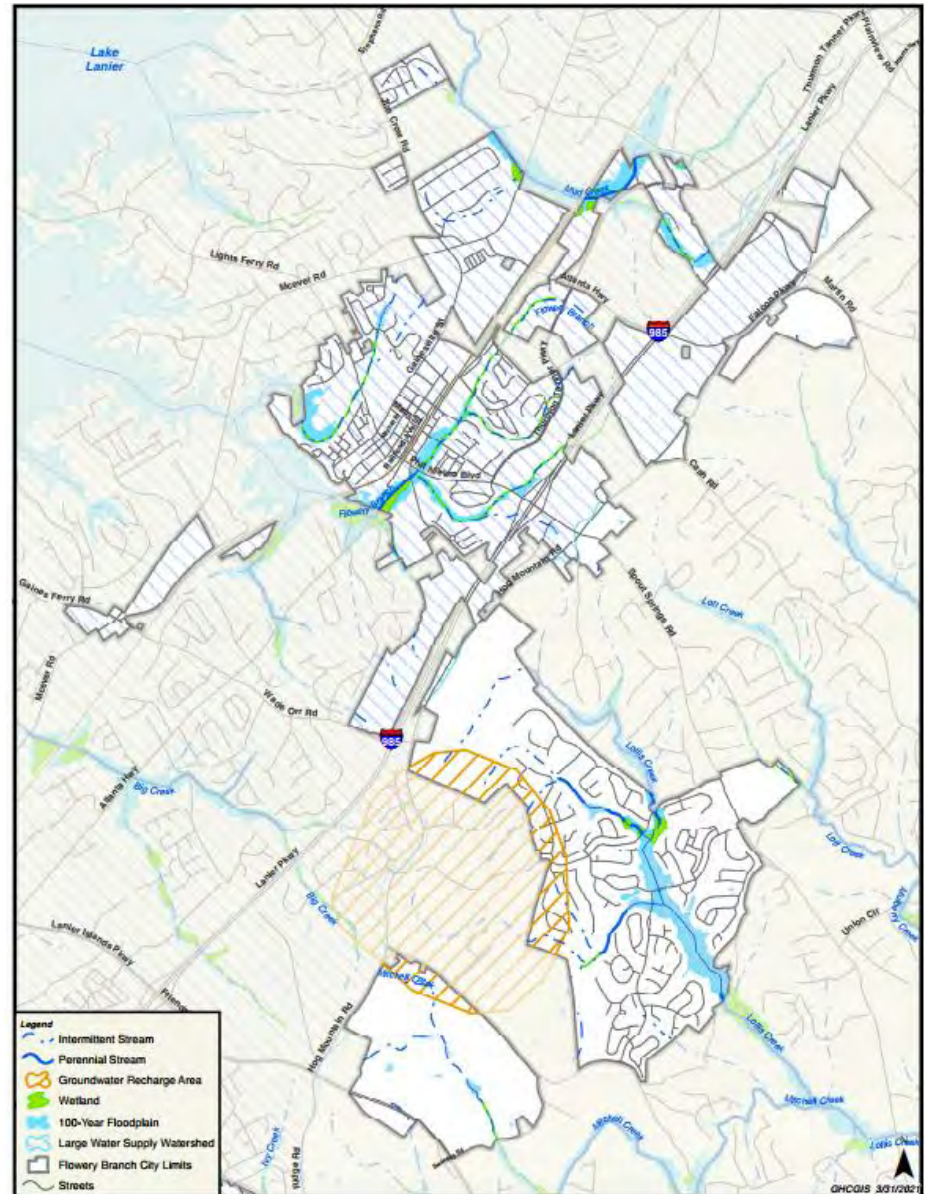




# Proposed Action Items

## Natural Resources

- ✓ Soil Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Ordinance
- ✓ Groundwater Use Ord.
- ✓ Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection Ord.
- ✓ Litter Control Ord.
- ✓ Outdoor Watering of Landscape Ord.
- ✓ Stormwater Management Ord.
- ✓ Development on Steep Slopes Ord.
- ✓ Stream Buffer Protection Ord.
- ✓ Floodplain Management Ord.
- ✓ Conservation Subdivisions Ord.
- ✓ Buffers, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ord.
- *Adopt Water Supply Watershed Protection Ordinance*
- *Adopt Groundwater Recharge Protection Area Ordinance*
- *Amend Buffers, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance to strengthen tree retention (including specimen trees) & planting requirements*
- *Submit Tree City USA application in concert with Buffer, Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance amendments*
- *Evaluate effectiveness of minimum open space requirements in all zoning districts; updates to also address incorporation of trail segments identified in adopted plans*
- *Amend clearing and grading standards to clearly delineate requirements and address mass grading*





# Proposed Action Items

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## Housing

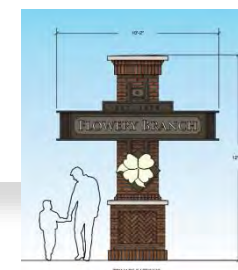
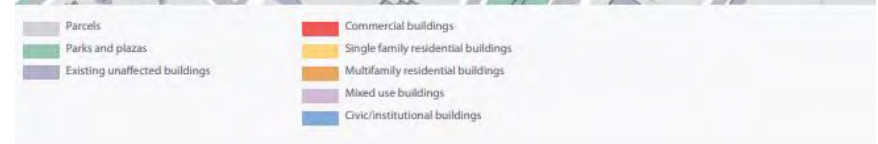
- ✓ Varied housing types allowed by zoning
- ✓ Property Maintenance Code adopted
- *Amend City's Architectural Design Standards to address residential uses*
- *Update housing mix policy to 70% single-family / 15% townhomes / 15% apartments*
- *Prepare a citywide Housing Study that analyzes demographics, housing supply, market trends, and local input to develop a projection of future residential needs*
- *Expand code enforcement ability by increasing full-time personnel*



# Proposed Action Items

## Economic Development

- ✓ Old Town and Commercial Gateways Tax Allocation District
- ✓ Old Town Redevelopment Plan & implementation
- ✓ Leasing contract with realtor for city-owned downtown retail spaces
- ✓ Downtown Dining Overlay District
- ✓ Participation in Gainesville-Hall Economic Development Council
- *Update 2014 Old Town Redevelopment Plan*
- *Promote local initiatives and events via newly created Events and Information Coordinator & Downtown Manager positions*
- *Conduct “ease of doing business” assessment of development-related processes*
- *Implement City-Wide Signage Project*



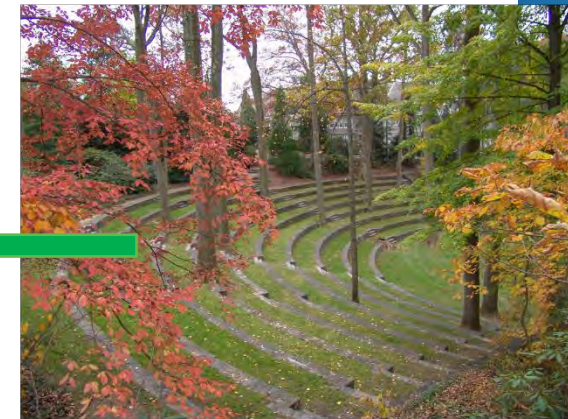
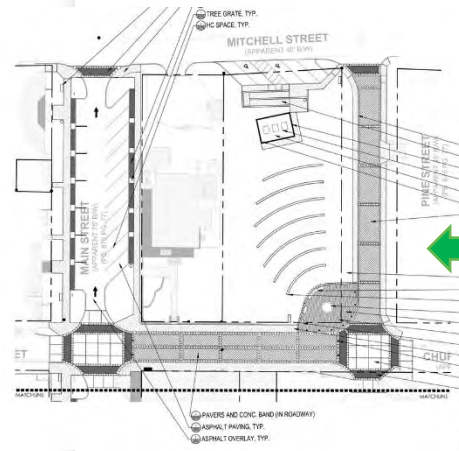


# Proposed Action Items

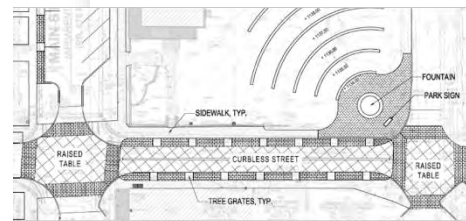


## Community Facilities & Services

- ✓ Approved GEFA loan applications for major sewer and water improvement projects, including expansion of wastewater treatment plant to increase capacity needed to serve future growth
- ✓ Stormwater improvements (downtown and East Main & Lights Ferry)
- ✓ New City Hall and Police Department
- ✓ Pocket park at Lights Ferry/Mitchell St. round-about
- Construct Farmer's Market Pavilion Park, Pine Street Park, Chestnut St. Park
- Conduct Stormwater Utility Feasibility Study
- Coordinate with Hall County on the use of impact fees for parks and trails projects



Future Pine Street Park with amphitheater, pavilion, and curbless street between Main & Pine

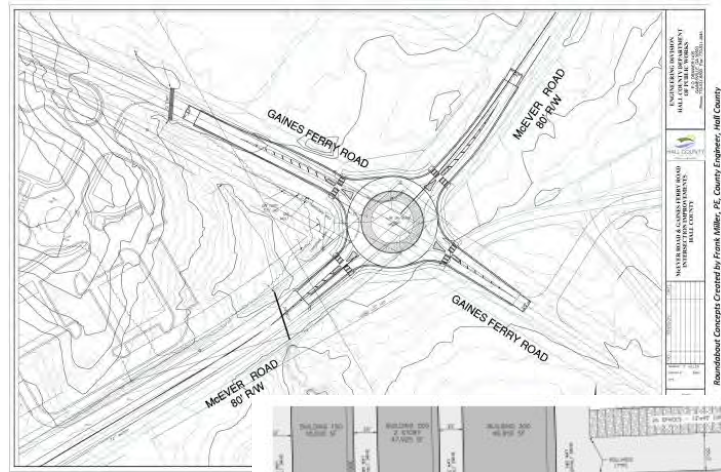


# Proposed Action Items

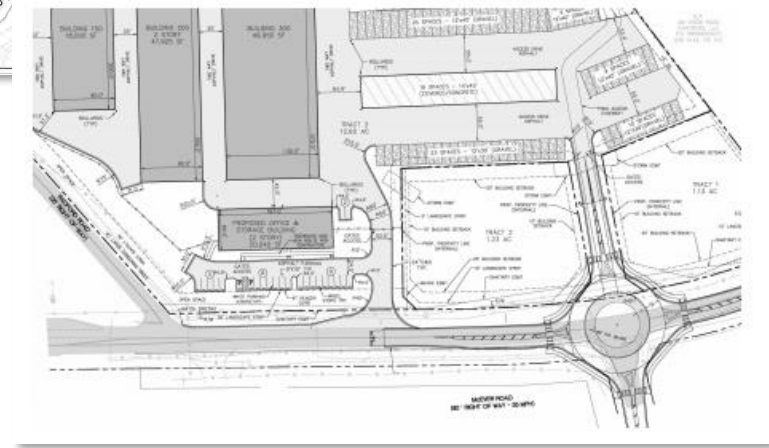
## Transportation

- ✓ Annual road paving program
- ✓ Participation in Gainesville-Hall MPO
- ✓ McEver Road Intersection Report (2021)
- ✓ South Hall Trail Study
- ✓ Sidewalks required in new developments
- ✓ East Main St. speed limit reduced to 25 MPH, which can accommodate golf carts
- ✓ Installation of multi-use trail segments facilitated by conditions of zoning (Gainesville Street and Woodfield Apartments; see at right)

- Coordinate with Hall County to implement McEver Road roundabouts (@Gaines Ferry and Radford Roads)
- Coordinate with GDOT to evaluate signalization timing at Atlanta Highway/Phil Niekro
- Prepare Citywide Traffic Improvement Study
- Expand criteria for triggering a Traffic Impact Study with development proposals
- Construct East Main Street trail (12' multi-use path from Thurmond Tanner Road to Flowery Branch City Park)
- Prepare Citywide Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan



Conceptual plans for roundabouts at McEver and Gainesville Ferry and Radford Roads



A conservation and trail easement granted to the City will allow construction of a segment of a planned City multi-use trail



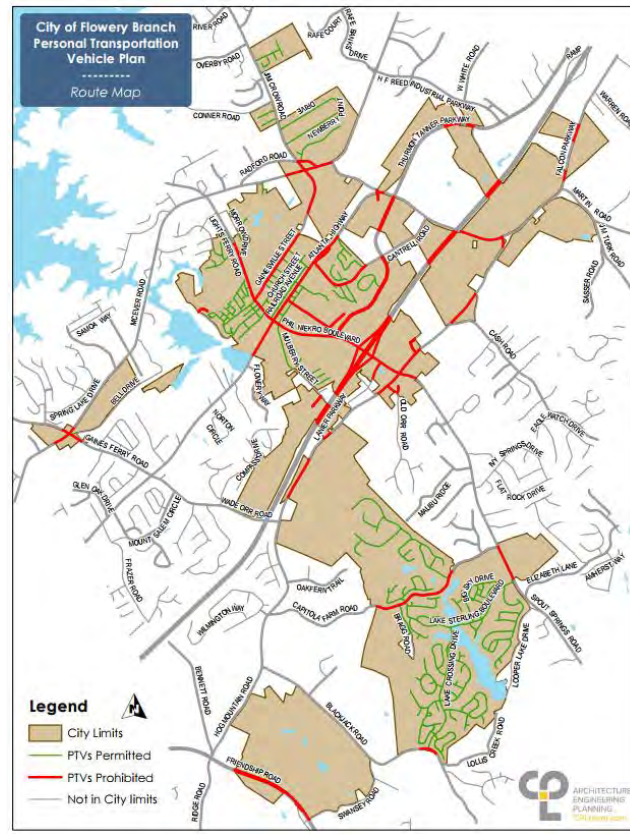


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The City's Personal Transportation Vehicle Plan has been amended to allow PTVs (golf carts) on East Main St.

The proposed Old Town Trail Network will connect Thurmond Tanner Road to Flowery Branch City Park via a 10' – 12' multi-use path.



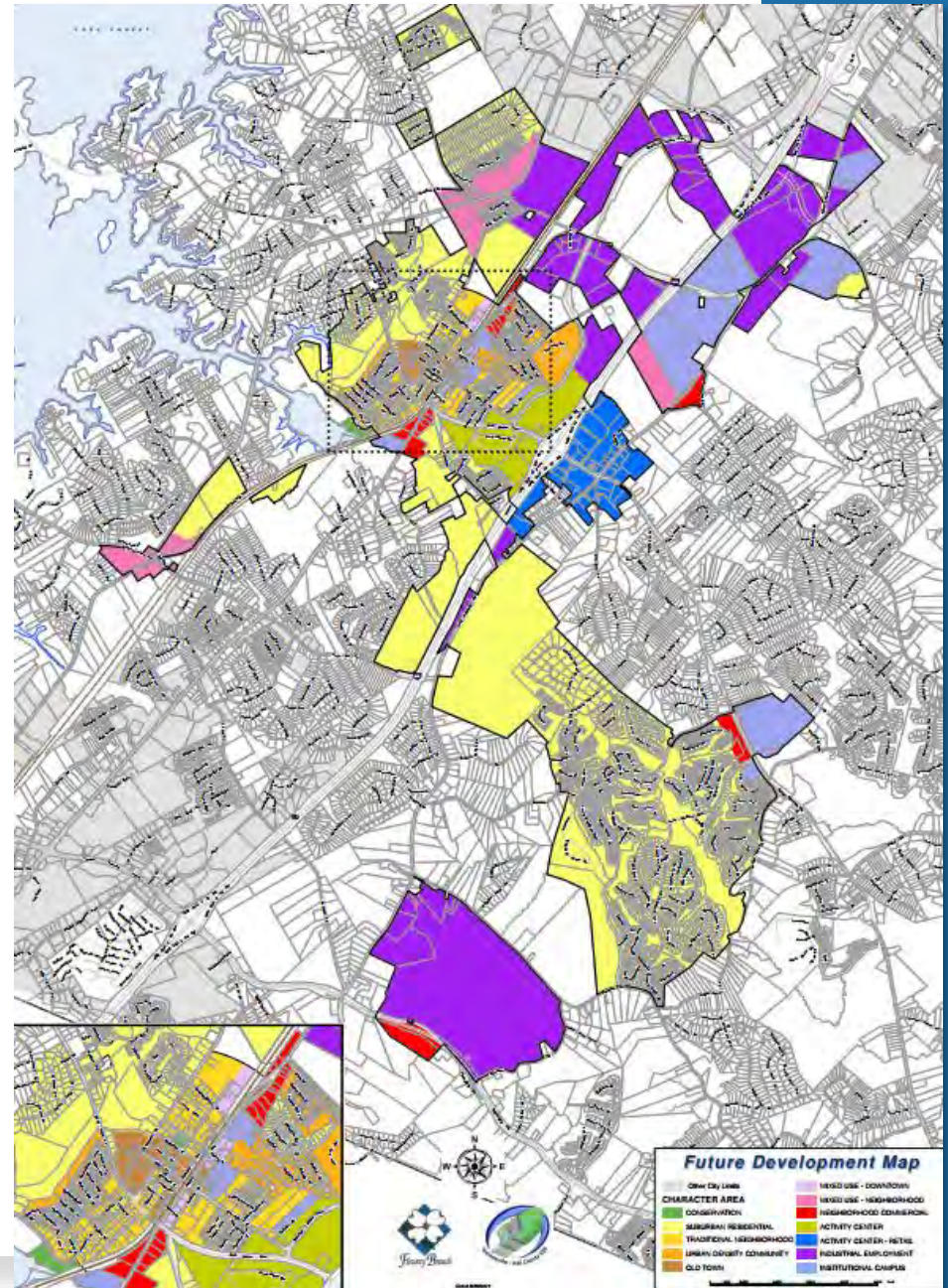


# Future Development Map

(2021 draft; updates the 2016 map)

- CONSERVATION
- SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL
- TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
- URBAN DENSITY COMMUNITY
- OLD TOWN
- MIXED USE - DOWNTOWN
- MIXED USE - NEIGHBORHOOD \*
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- ACTIVITY CENTER
- ACTIVITY CENTER - RETAIL \*
- INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT
- INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

\* Change in name (from 2016 plan)

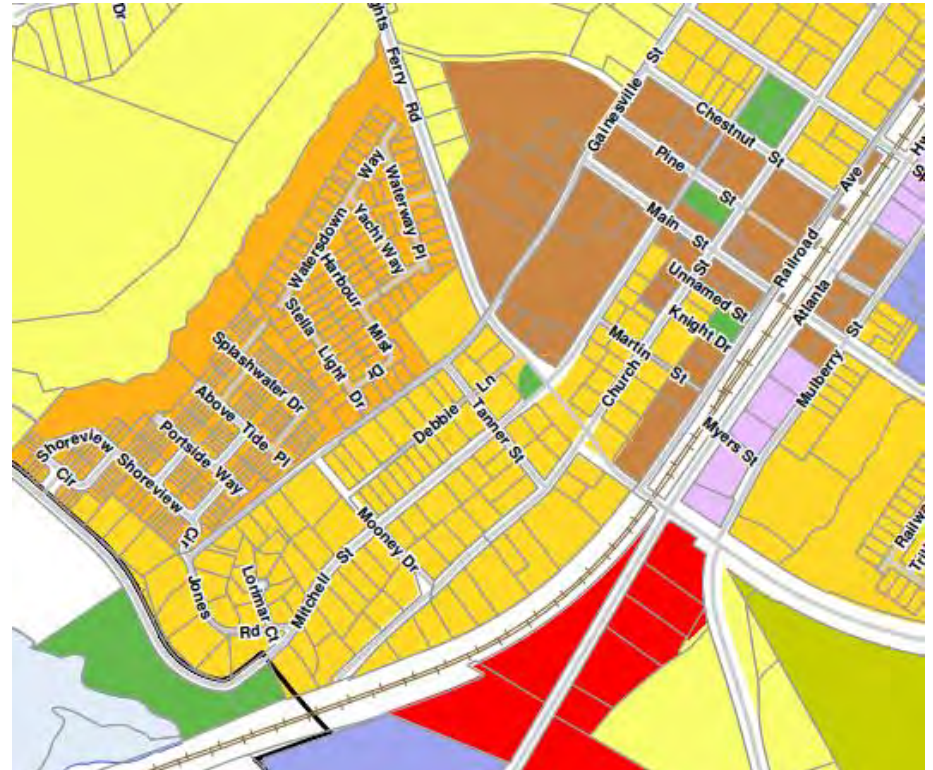




# Character Areas

## CONSERVATION

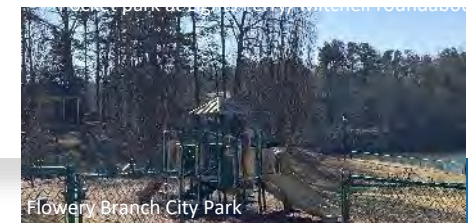
- Intent is to protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas for recreation and conservation purposes; also, enhance water quality through environmental protection ordinances (see also Natural Resources Map on a previous slide)
- Includes City parks / open spaces
- No zoning districts, per se, support this character area; for all properties, the underlying zoning districts and applicable environmental protection ordinances will guide use and development



Planned Chestnut Street park in Old Town



Pocket park at Lights Ferry/ Mitchell roundabout



Flowerly Branch City Park

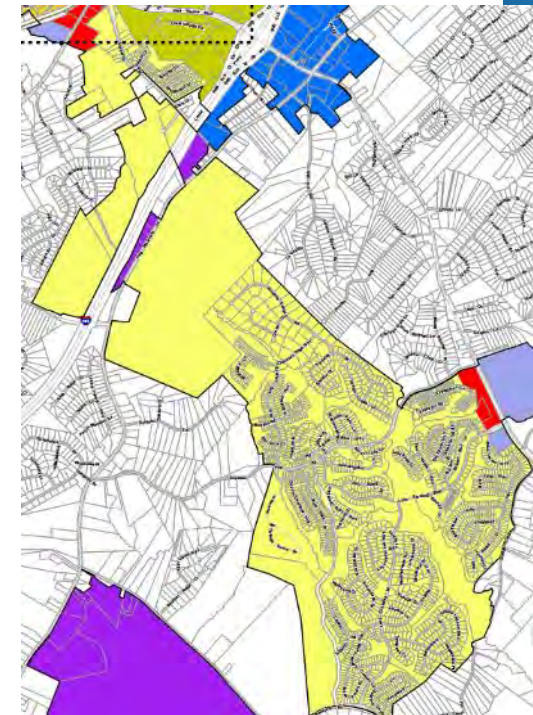
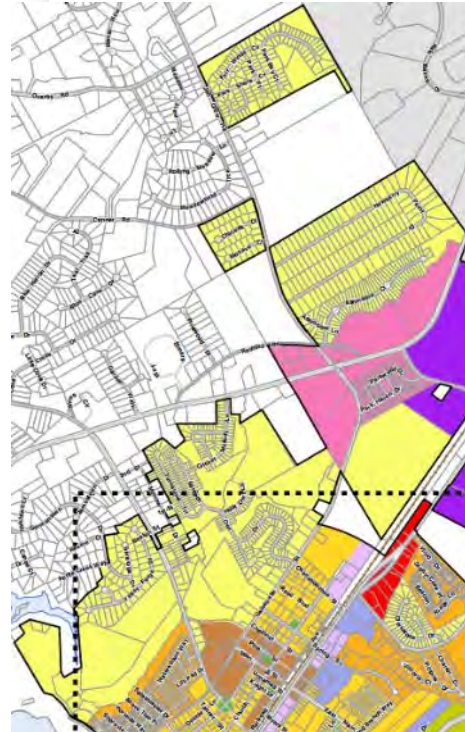


# Character Areas



## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

- Includes established neighborhoods and the potential for quality new residential construction at suburban densities
- Map reflects re-zonings to residential and new development since 2016
- Lowest density residential classification (1 to 3 du/ac \*), consistent with /supported by the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts for single-family dwellings
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district is appropriate for a single-family development (with potential flexibility in lot sizes and/or density for single-family dwellings upon meeting enhanced open space and design requirements)
- *Update PUD requirements to enhance open space and site design requirements*
- *Amend City's Architectural Design Standards to address residential buildings*



\* Dwelling units per acre



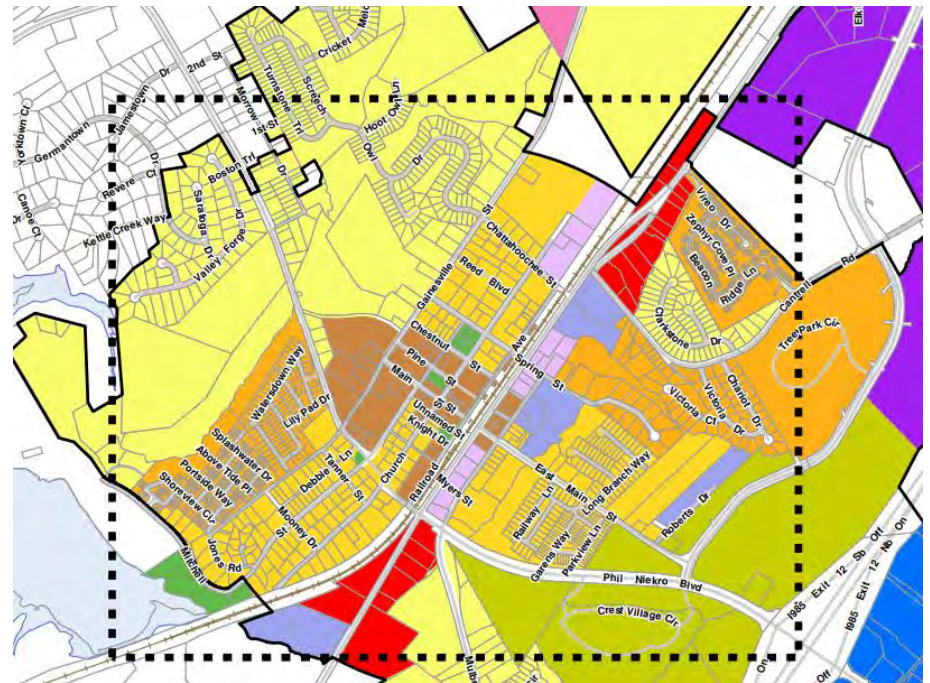
# Character Areas

## TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

- “In-town” residential that is primarily adjacent to the downtown core (Old Town), following traditional development patterns; includes in-fill development opportunities
- Single-family homes and townhouses (up to 6.5 du/ac) allowed
- TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development) zoning district implements this character area

## URBAN DENSITY COMMUNITY

- The map reflects existing multi-family and townhouse developments
- Apartments, townhouses, and manufactured home parks (6 to 12 du/ac) are allowed if the appropriate zoning is in place
- Zoning districts appropriate for this character area are R-3 Residential Multi-Family, PUD (which could allow a mix of dwelling types) and MHP Manufactured Home Park



*For both character areas, there is a need to amend the City's existing Architectural Design Standards to address residential buildings*

# Character Areas

## TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

- “In-town” residential that is primarily adjacent to the downtown core (Old Town), following traditional development patterns; includes in-fill development opportunities *(see top and far right photos of Mitchell and Pine Streets)*
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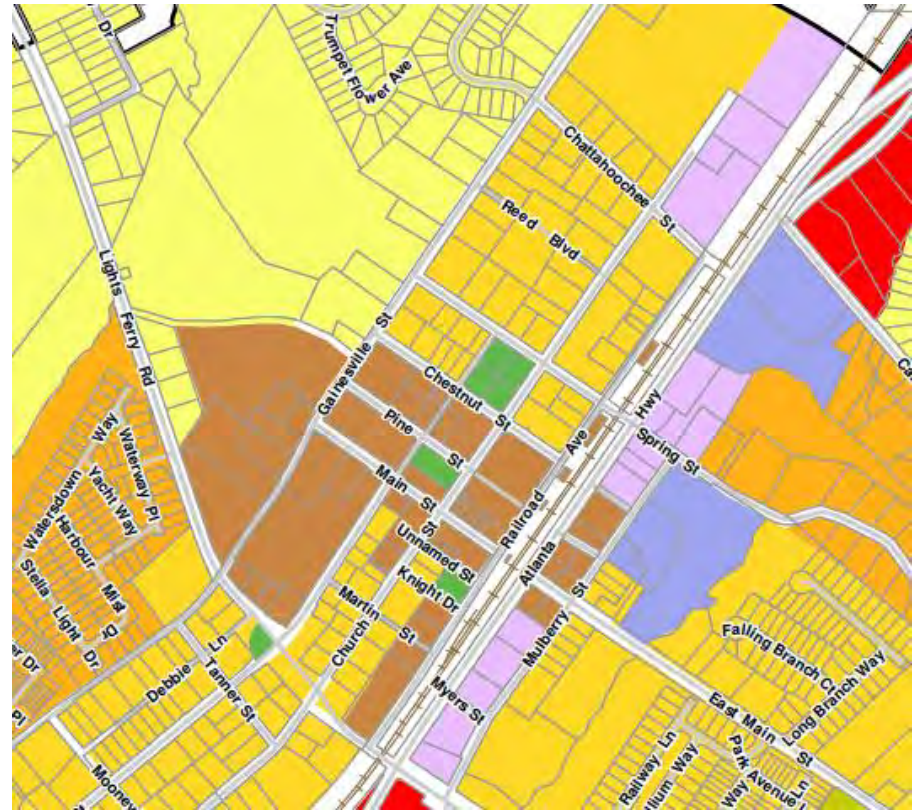
# Character Areas

## OLD TOWN

- Historic central business district, includes a significant portion of the Old Town Redevelopment Plan (2014) boundary and the locally-designated Flowery Branch Historic District
- CBD Central Business District and TND zoning districts implement this character area
- *Update to Old Town Redevelopment Plan facilitates administration of the CBD District; the plan identifies acceptable use types/densities*

## MIXED USE - DOWNTOWN

- Development and adaptive reuse of buildings that support a mix of commercial uses in a manner that complements the historic character and building scale of Old Town
- Predominantly parcels along the RR not included in the Flowery Branch Historic District
- CBD, NS
- *Assess Architectural Guidelines and Pedestrian Retail design standards*



*The boundaries of these character areas remain unchanged from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan*



# Character Areas

## OLD TOWN

- Historic central business district, includes a significant portion of the Old Town Redevelopment Plan (2014) boundary and the locally-designated Flowery Branch Historic District
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- *Assess Architectural Guidelines and Pedestrian Retail design standards*



Mixed-use buildings on Main Street in Old Town with space for ground floor retail and second floor apartments



View from Main Street: buildings in the Mixed Use – Downtown character area include residence converted to commercial uses



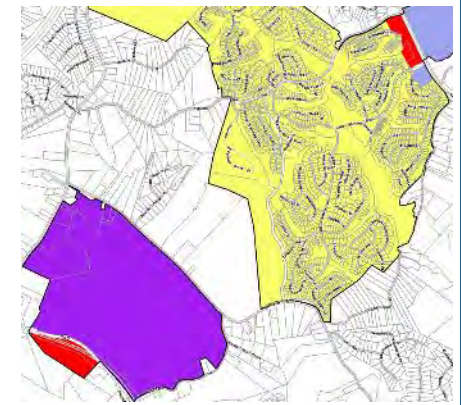
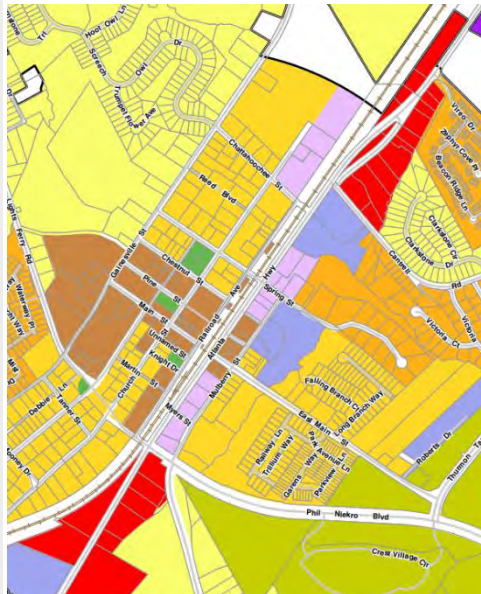
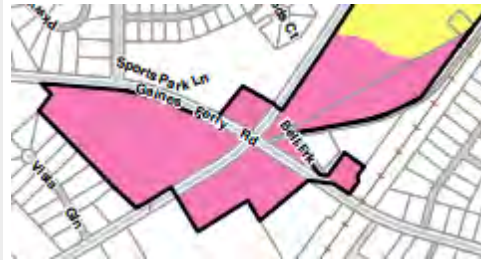
# Character Areas

## MIXED USE - NEIGHBORHOOD

- Formerly “Mixed Use” on the 2016 map
- Locations are appropriate for commercial development at significant intersections that is intended to serve surrounding neighborhoods
- Consideration also given to mixed use developments with commercial uses or open space/ recreation oriented to existing public streets (via proposed PUD zoning district)
- NS Neighborhood Shopping and PUD zoning districts are appropriate
- *Assess existing Architectural Guidelines and Pedestrian Retail design standards to ensure desired quality of development can be achieved*

## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

- Smaller-scale commercial uses to serve the local area are appropriate (vs. regional / “big box” commercial)
- NS zoning district is appropriate
- *Assess existing Architectural Guidelines*





# Character Areas

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- Smaller-scale commercial uses to serve the local area are appropriate (vs. regional / “big box” commercial)
- NS zoning district is appropriate
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Future “The Farm” mixed-use development at McEver/Gaines Ferry



1. Emphasis on open space in a mixed-use development concept



Brick, small monument sign, and landscaping in a local gas station



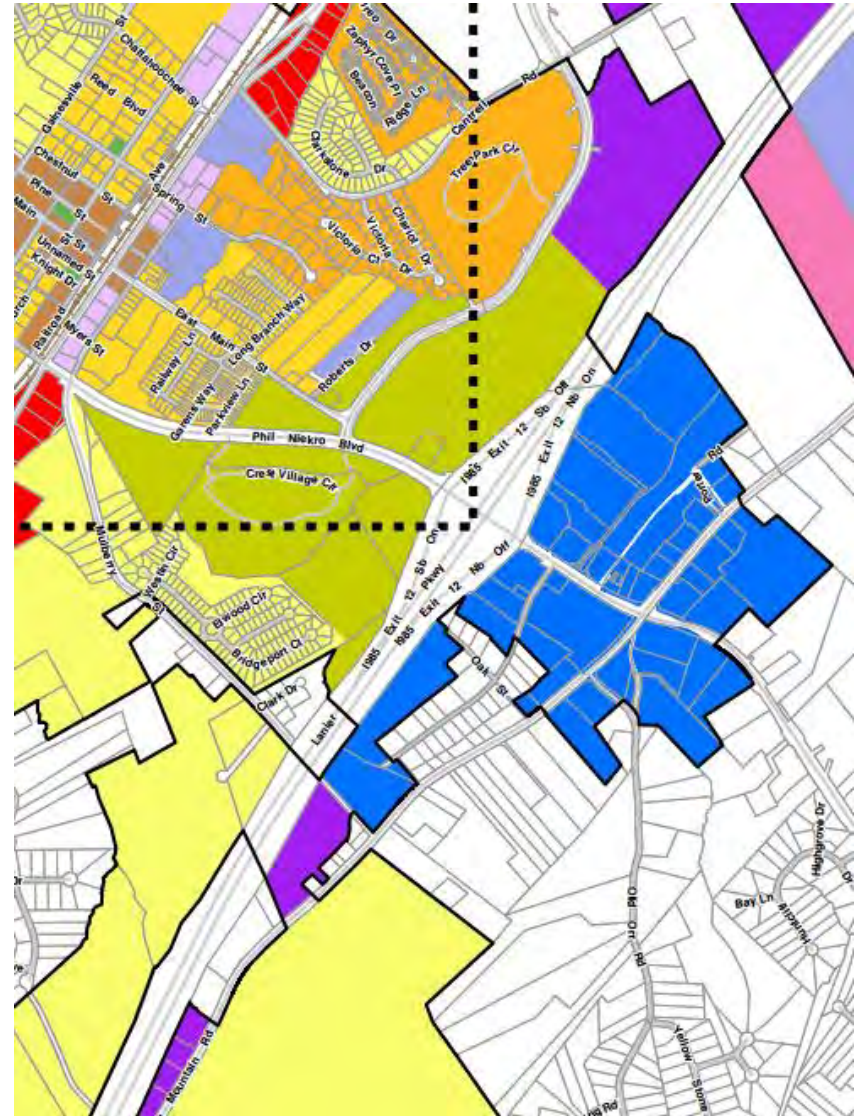
# Character Areas

## ACTIVITY CENTER

- Emphasis on commercial uses, with the opportunity for residential in a mixed-use setting where there is the potential for pedestrian access to Old Town via East Main
- Highway Business HB and PUD zoning districts implement this character area
- *Amend HB zoning district to limit uses to those that are solely commercial in nature; mixed-use proposals should be zoned to PUD to better regulate building and site design*

## ACTIVITY CENTER - RETAIL

- “New” classification (formerly part of “Activity Center” above)
- Commercial uses, continuing development around Stonebridge Village and Village Shoppes
- HB zoning district is appropriate



The combined boundaries of the two character areas generally comprise the “Activity Center” character area boundary in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan

# Character Areas

## ACTIVITY CENTER

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Examples of mixed-use developments with accessible commercial uses and higher-density residential uses to the rear



Stonebridge Village shopping center





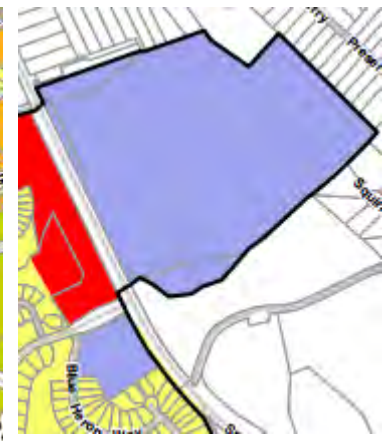
# Character Areas

## INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT

- The map includes existing industrial uses and zoned properties (west side of 985) and industrial properties under development (east side of 985), as well as some additional parcels in close proximity to Exit 14
- M-1 Light Industrial and M-2 Heavy Industrial zoning districts support this character area
- *Evaluate existing Architectural Guidelines to ensure requirements support desired building materials, lighting, landscaping, and buffers*

## INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

- Like the 2016 map, the 2021 map reflects the Falcons Training Facility, public schools, large churches, County library, and some City-owned properties
- Supports campus-style development, including office parks
- INST Institutional and O-P Office Professional zoning districts are appropriate for this character area
- *Strengthen building and site design standards for Office, Institutional, Business Parks, and Industrial Parks and Campus by more clearly delineating requirements vs. guidelines*





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# Next Steps

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- Finalize Preliminary Draft
- April 15 Public Hearing (in-person City Council meeting)
- April Transmittal to Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for required review process
- June Adoption of Comp Plan



# Appendix D. Flowery Branch Historic District Guidelines

The following map and guidelines are carried forward from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.



 <p>THE EDGAR COMPANY 114 HUNTERS BLVD., SUITE 100 FLOWERY BRANCH, GA 30805</p>	 <p>CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH 207 S. MAIN ST. FLOWERY BRANCH, GA 30805</p>	<p>Date: 02/10/18 Revised: _____ Project#: 2018 Scale: _____ Drawn: EM Checked: JR</p>	<p><b>CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH</b> FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA</p>		<p><b>FLOWERY BRANCH PROPOSED LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT</b></p>
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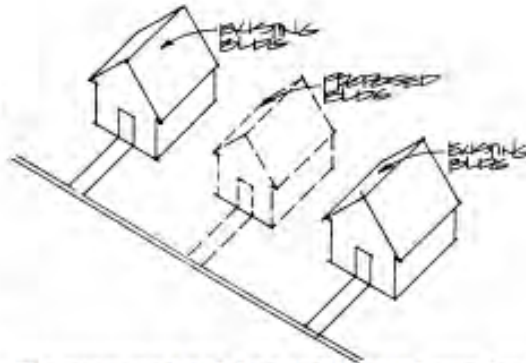


### Local Historic District Design Guidelines

1. **Block Size and Width.** Some of the blocks in the redevelopment area boundary are short and narrow, with some block widths are less than 200 feet while others average approximately 300 feet. As redevelopment of blocks in the area occurs, the development should take place on subdivided blocks of land that are no more than 300 feet in block width, unless it can be shown that a larger block configuration is needed to facilitate the redevelopment proposal. To the extent possible, the pattern of small city blocks should be retained as redevelopment occurs.

2. **Building Frontage.** New building construction needs to front on the existing street. The main entrance of new construction should not be located on a side elevation or rear elevation.

3. **Building Placement and Setbacks.** Building setbacks for redevelopment should maintain the existing setback established by existing historic buildings. All redevelopment should follow the prevailing setbacks of the adjacent blocks.



The proposed building (middle) follows the prevailing setback established by adjacent structures.

4. **Building Elevations.** New construction should follow the established patterns of existing buildings, including roof pitch, fenestration, materials, scale, and texture. The elevations of buildings should be embellished with architectural features so that a blank elevation (defined as horizontal or vertical distance on an elevation exceeding 15 feet without an architectural feature) is not presented to the residences and passersby along streets. Architectural details that do not belong to the period or style of the district are not appropriate for detailing on new construction. Architectural details should be determined from the project's area of influence, as well as those found within the district, and must promote architectural interest. These features must be balanced and not create a cluttered appearance. Exterior materials for one- to two-story building construction may be of wood siding or masonry, or a combination of the two. Exterior materials for infill construction in excess of two stories should be masonry construction.
5. **Adaptive Use of Residential Structures.** Proposed new uses for residential buildings in the historic district should be compatible with the historic property so that minimal changes are necessary. When adaptive reuse is complete, the property should still be recognizable as a residential property.
6. **Building Additions.** Additions should be designed to have the least effect possible on historic materials or character-defining elements of the historic building or landscape. Additions should be placed on the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the historic building, and they must be compatible with the original building materials, relationships of solids to voids, and color.

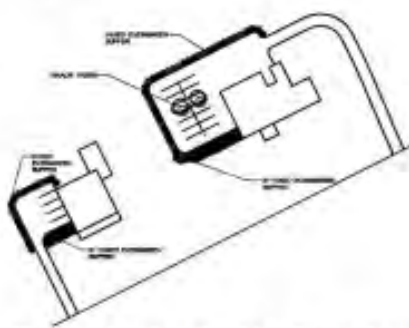
The size and scale of the addition should be limited in relationship to the historic building. Additional stories, when required for a new use, should be set back from the wall plane and should be as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street. Additions to the side of a historic building should not be flush with the front facade. Appropriately-designed side additions to historic buildings will be stepped back from the front facade, as far back as possible. Design of a new addition must be clearly differentiated so that the addition is not mistaken for part of the original building and also does not damage the historic fabric of the existing building. Additions that could be easily removed, at a later date, are encouraged by the construction of breezeways, open or enclosed.



The proposed addition to this building is placed on the rear elevation, is clearly differentiated from the original structure, and is appropriately scaled.

- 7. **Porches.** Historic porches located on a primary elevation should not be enclosed. Historic porches located on the side, or rear may be enclosed when establishing a new use. The enclosure of the porch must be carefully designed in a manner that preserves the historic character and form of the original building. This can include using large sheets of glass and recessing the enclosure wall behind existing scrollwork, posts, and balustrades.
- 8. **On-street Parking.** On-street parking should be provided where permissible by zoning and other regulations as a supplement to off-street parking.

- 9. **Off-street Parking Lots.** Off-street parking should not front on a road right-of-way, but rather, it should be placed to the rear (preferred) or side of buildings. Parking lots should be divided into smaller parking areas and "softened" by planted tree islands or other landscape treatments. Trees planted within and on the periphery of parking lots should be of sufficient canopy to provide shade to pedestrians and vehicles at maturity.



The parking lots in this illustration are appropriately located to preserve the prevailing setbacks of the structures.

