



GAINESVILLE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community Assessment VOLUME I - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Prepared by URBAN COLLAGE, INC.
The Jaeger Company, Clark Patterson Lee,
Huntley Partners and The Bleakly Advisory Group*

*In partnership with
The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission*

JUNE 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CREDIT

This document was based in part on the research, analysis and observations of the planning director and staff of the Georgia Mountains Regional Center. The supporting data and analysis is included in full in Volume II as a reference for conclusions drawn in this Executive Summary. The planning team is grateful for the Regional Commission's work to situate the City of Gainesville in the context of Northeast Georgia, especially in advance of full 2010 census data.

Detailed large-format versions of the maps and diagrams included in this document are available from the City of Gainesville, Community Development Department.

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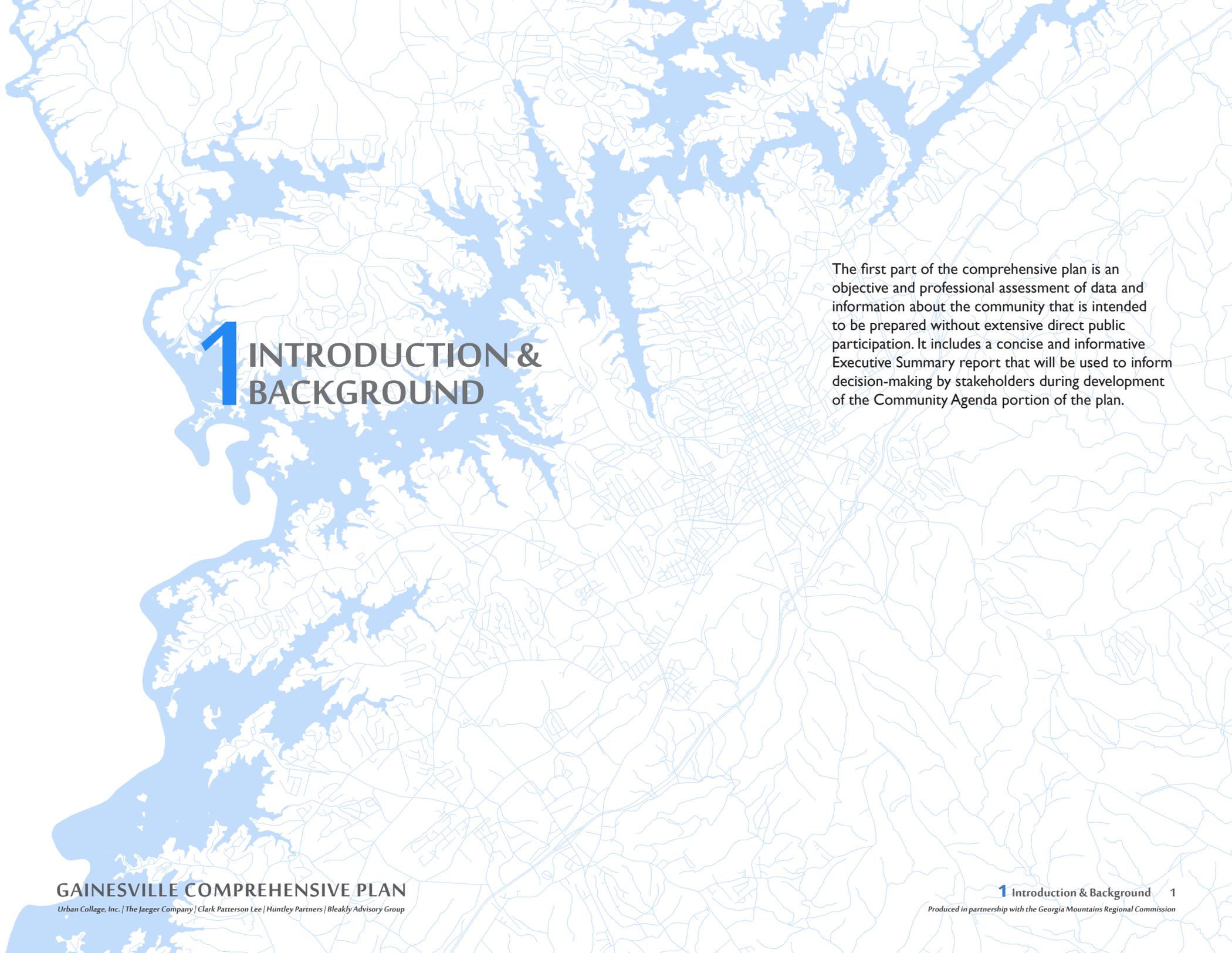
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See Volume II prepared by the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission



1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The first part of the comprehensive plan is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community that is intended to be prepared without extensive direct public participation. It includes a concise and informative Executive Summary report that will be used to inform decision-making by stakeholders during development of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

CITY & CONTEXT

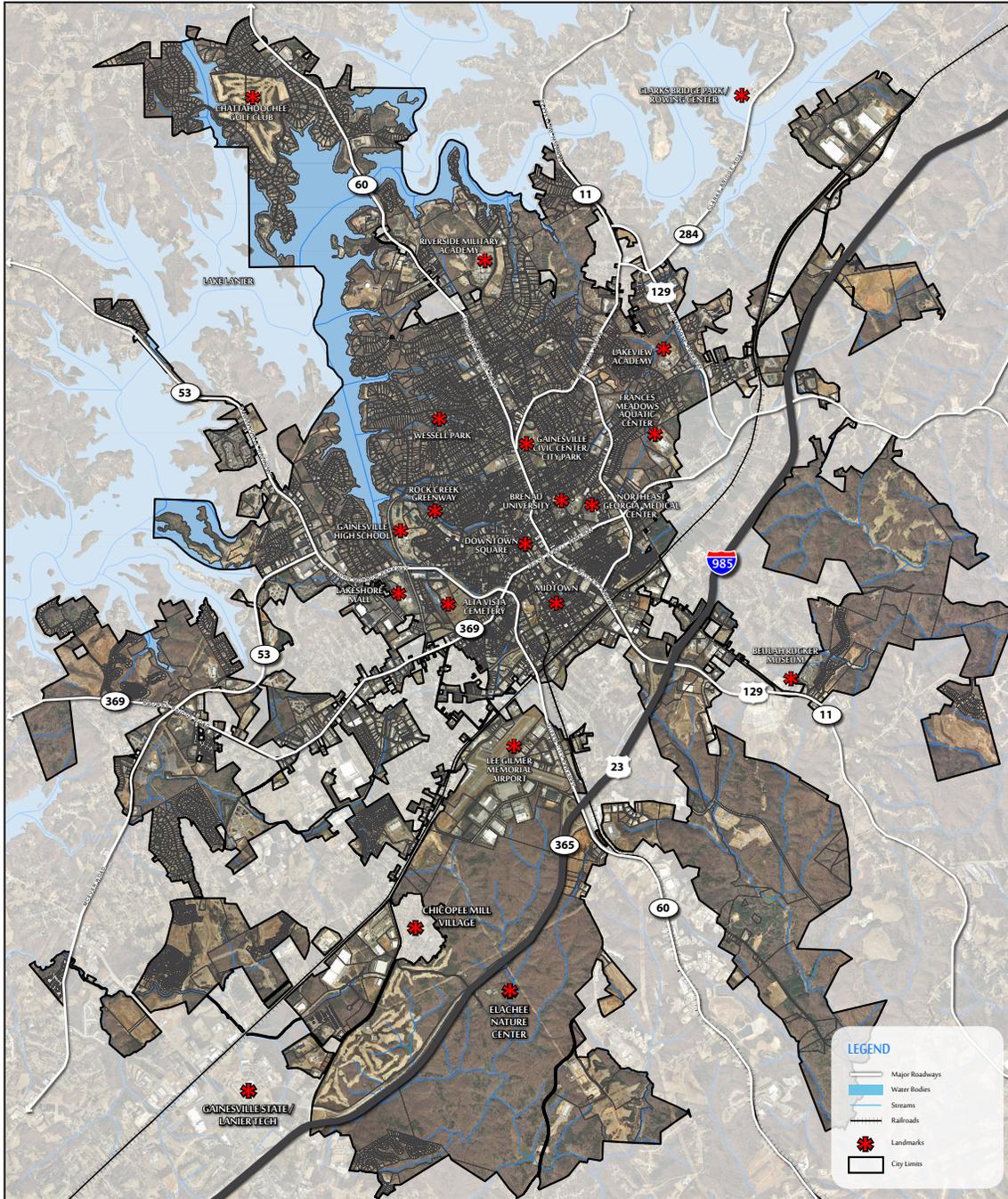
Gainesville, Georgia was established in the 1800s as “Mule Camp Springs” at the intersection of Indian trails followed by rural settlers. The village was eventually chosen to serve as the county seat for Hall County and was chartered by the Georgia Legislature on November 30, 1821. The name “Gainesville” was awarded in honor of General Edmund P. Gaines, a hero of the War of 1812 and a noted military surveyor and road-builder.

Today Gainesville is a growing metropolitan community in popular northeastern Georgia. It is located approximately one hour north of Atlanta, just shy of the Appalachian Mountains and along the shores of the Chattahoochee River and its reservoir, Lake Lanier. It is also within a four-hour drive of the larger, growing metropolitan cities of Chattanooga, TN, Asheville, NC, and Greenville, SC. The location has benefitted the community by attracting travelers, tourists and prospective businesses and residents alike.

As a result of Gainesville’s location the community has evolved from a simple transportation hub to a regional center for commerce and civic and social functions. Gainesville is considered a national hub for the production of processed chicken and has become a national center for poultry processing and related industries. It is also currently home to the preeminent medical facility in the region, a well-regarded university, and regional government operations. This growth has seen current population estimates for Gainesville surpass 35,000 residents in 2009, within a county of almost 190,000 people.



The city is now pursuing an even stronger future that blends 21st century ambitions with continued respect for the history and traditions that define the local culture. Thanks to several recently completed planning processes, such as the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce’s Vision 2030 and the City’s Partial Plan Update in 2009, there is already a strong appreciation for, and a good amount of information available for, developing the update to the city’s Comprehensive Plan. The goal for this particular planning process is to clearly define the singular vision for the community and continue the trend of progress Gainesville has made in evolving towards a stronger, more sustainable urban city.



CITY & CONTEXT

This Community Assessment is the first phase in the preparation of a comprehensive master plan for the City of Gainesville. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan will be built on the foundation of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, as well as the Partial Update completed by city staff in 2009. It covers the entire geography of the city as illustrated to the left – some 21,514 acres including annexations to the east, west and south. It is a diverse city both in social composition and land use, encompassing a bucolic lakeshore environment on the north, a vibrant industrial corridor along Interstate 985, and an international district on the west side.

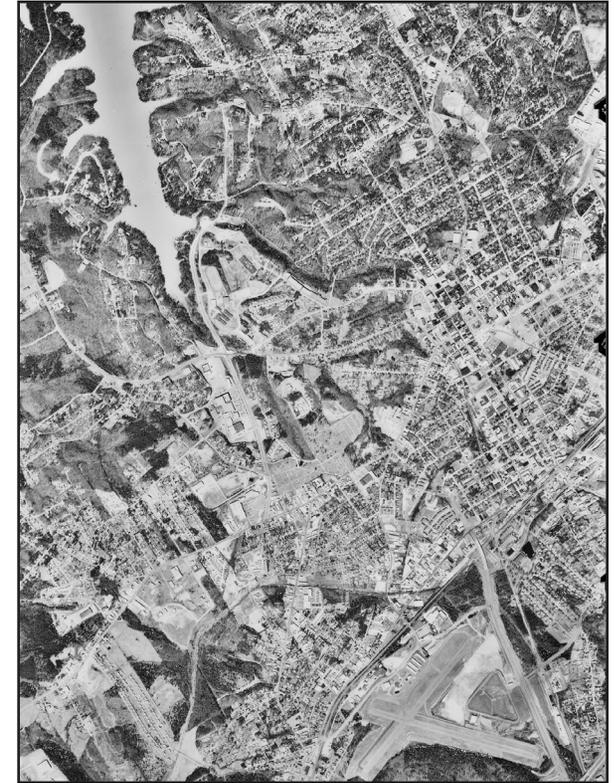
Over the last ten years the city has experienced a significant amount of change – first strong growth and steady population increases up to the Great Recession; then an economic slowdown and some population decline. Still, Gainesville has managed to preserve existing businesses and attract new industry while undertaking projects that continue to enhance the city's high quality of life. Through this process the city hopes to engage the wide spectrum of citizens in creating an exciting but realistic vision for the next ten years of growth and development.



Aerial Photograph from 1951



Aerial Photograph from 1960



Aerial Photograph from 1973

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Though in existence for over 150 years, Gainesville – like other cities - has been radically changed by the evolution of transportation and utility infrastructure. The earliest event was the coming of the railroad which pulled the center of gravity toward the south; but in recent times the major drivers of change have been the creation of Lake Lanier and Interstate 985. The series of historic aerial photographs above show the transition of the central part of the city.

In the 1951 image to the left, the historic core and surrounding neighborhoods are visible but Lake Lanier is notably absent. The valley of Rock Creek shows

signs of agriculture, but the highlands on either side are forested and undeveloped. The airport has been built but the surrounding industrial park has not. Similarly, the Atlanta Highway corridor has some areas of dense development; but Brown's Bridge Road is quite rural.

In the center image Lake Lanier shows clearly, and residential development has begun to occupy both sides of Longwood Cove. Brown's Bridge road has begun to develop as well. The two public housing communities have been built, but industrial growth around the airport is still missing.

Finally, in the 1973 image to the right, Interstate 985 makes its appearance –and so do the major arterial projects of Queen City and Pearl Nix parkways. These two roads are related to development projects - the Airport Industrial Park for the former, and Lakeshore Mall for the latter. Since this image was taken Gainesville has doubled its geographic coverage; but the impetus has been largely the same - development projects tied to major road construction or improvements. Only recently has the focus swung back to the core so evident in 1951, which suggests a more balanced view of growth adopted by the city.

GAINESVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Gainesville is fortunate to have retained its original urban core, the historic downtown square which is oriented along the axes of prominent roads following frontier trade routes and Indian paths. The further from the core, the more the blocks give way to larger forms to accommodate more industrial and commercial activity. Most of the historic neighborhoods remain, though fractured as the arterial roads have grown in size and volume. New development has been relatively limited, with renovations and new infill in the core and new higher-end residential in the Riverside Drive area.

South of downtown, the city has been working since 2000 to redevelop the area known as Midtown. This is an old industrial and commercial district with scattered housing that is declining. The area is planned to remain mixed use as outlined in the 2001 Midtown Redevelopment Plan, which the city hopes will improve the urban evolution of overall Gainesville in tune with population growth.

Additional development has largely been related to significant new residential projects including the 1,000-acre Shawshank property in the southeastern corner of the city; the 604-acre Mundy Mill residential village on the far west; and the Cresswind retirement community on Lake Lanier. New retail development has concentrated at the Dawsonville Highway / McEver Road intersection, though a substantial project is planned for Limestone Parkway.



RECENT PLANNING INITIATIVES



Gainesville is fortunate to have two recent planning documents that can act as points of departure for this effort – the 2030 Vision Plan done in 2006; and the 2009 Partial Plan Update. Recommendations of both processes will be incorporated into this comprehensive plan as much as feasible.

The 2009 Partial Update was done as an intermediate step between this full Character Area - based planning initiative, and the older method of planning around topical elements that structured the 2004 comprehensive plan. The partial update included an assessment of DCA's Quality Community Objectives (development patterns, resource conservation, social & economic development, government relations, issues, and opportunities, and identified Areas Requiring Special Attention) (described on page 47) to be studied further in this planning process. The Partial Update also included a short-term work program that will be a reference for this plan's implementation strategy

Sponsored by the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, Vision 2030 was a broad-based community visioning effort that grew out of a leadership summit in 2005. It was modeled on a similar effort in Greenville, South Carolina and engaged hundreds of individuals in creating a set of themes and 15 "Big Ideas" for long-term growth in Gainesville - Hall County. The themes reflect issues that resonate with stakeholders today:

- Create a culture of community wellness
- Support and sustain life-long learning
- Build an economy around emerging life sciences
- Encourage innovative growth and infrastructure development
- Promote cultural integration



2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community Profile section is a brief summary of the major information contained in the Analysis of Supporting Data and Information (Volume II). It is intended to provide an introduction to the social, economic and physical landscape of the city; to identify ongoing planning efforts that relate to a specific topic; and to support discussion during the remainder of the planning process in evaluating goals and objectives, and creating a consensual vision for future growth and sustainable development.

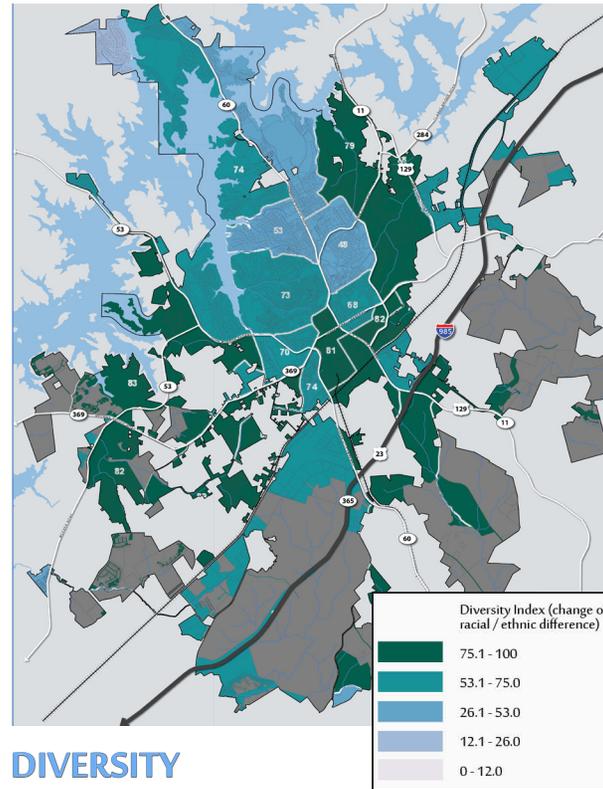
POPULATION / DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic section of this report provides an inventory and analysis of demographic data, defining significant trends and attributes to help determine service needs, public facility needs and employment opportunities necessary to support existing and future populations. Promoting the welfare of existing and future residents and businesses of Gainesville is, in part, determined by the aggregate number and type of population the city has and will have in the future. This information forms the basis for many strategies that involve land use and zoning, economic development and capital improvement planning. The path the city chooses needs to be predicated upon management and encouragement of an appropriate amount and type of development without sacrificing the quality of life and services for the citizens. Additionally, educational attainment and income contribute to the types of service programs the city needs and the type of employment possibilities the community can target. The information may also assist in encouraging development patterns consistent with goals and policies established by the Mayor and Council.

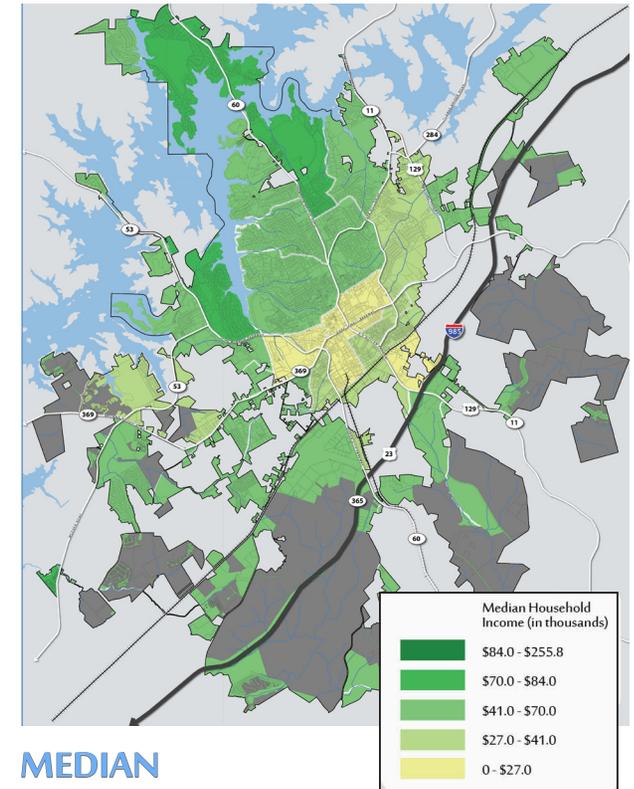
Population Change

Population growth identifies several trends, ranging from the volume of in-migration to death and fertility rates. In 2010, the population of the city stood at 33,409 representing an annual growth rate of 2.71% and a total increase of 23% from 2000. By comparison, the population of Hall County grew annually by 3.23% and by 27% during the same time period. Household size in the city increased 2.3% annually from 2000-2010 and in the county by 2.92% during the same period.

In 2000, persons of Hispanic origin comprised 33.2% of Gainesville's population; in 2010 the percentage of the city's population of persons of Hispanic origin stood at 47.4%, an increase of slightly more than 14%. During the same time period, the percentage of the county's Hispanic (origin) population grew by slightly more than 9%, representing 28.7% of the county's population. Over the same



DIVERSITY INDEX



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Sources: ESRI Business Analyst; Thematic Analyses (2010 Projections)

period the percentage of people reporting their ethnicity as White was 54.2% (a decrease of 12%) and those reporting their ethnicity as African-American was 15.2% (a decrease of .5%).

Income

Measuring income levels provides an indication of the economic health of the population. Just as education levels can offer insight into employment conditions and the quality of the labor pool, per-capita and household income levels measure the financial stability of the population, and how the local economy is responding to the educational climate. Higher income levels suggest a thriving economy, and offer a good indicator as to the success of a community.

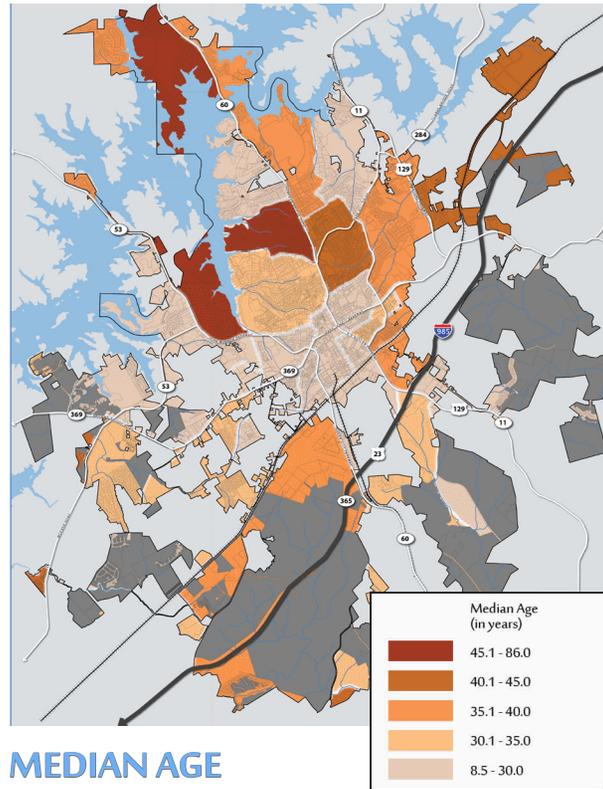
In 2000, median household income stood at \$36,619 and grew 2.78% annually by 2010 reaching \$48,174. By comparison, median household income grew by only 2.28% annually in Hall County, reaching \$56,240 in 2010. Average household income in the city grew by only 1.2% between 2000 and 2010, and grew by only a slightly higher rate in the county (1.5%) during the same time period. Perhaps, a more telling comparison between the city and the county is the percentage of households with incomes greater than \$50,000; in 2010, this percentage was 37% for the City of Gainesville and 58% for Hall County.

POPULATION / DEMOGRAPHICS (continued)

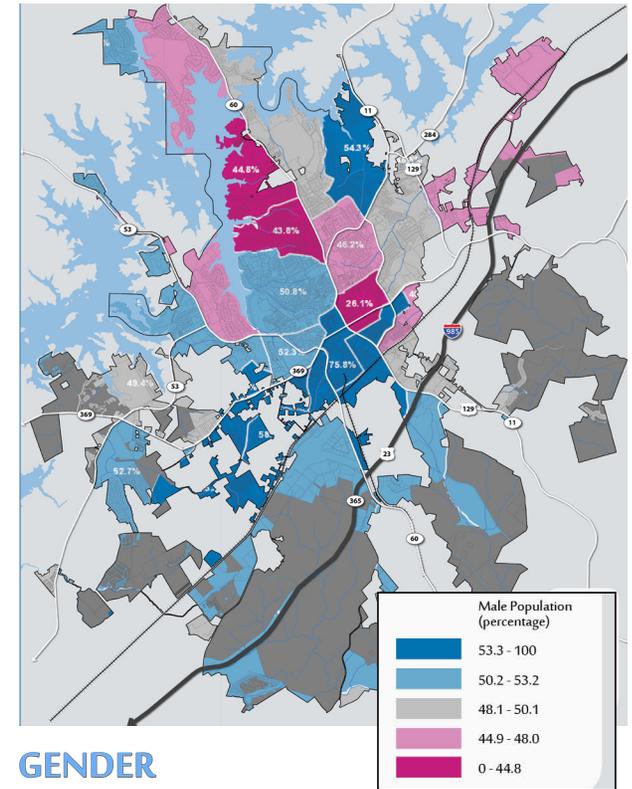
Age

Age is a critical population metric, because it provides a basis for assessing the types of individual needs members of a community may require over time, and the facilities and services to match those needs. For example, a rising infant population may signal future demands on the school system and recreational facilities; while their aging parents may point to a growing need for health care, transit and other senior services to help them age in place. Age is also useful in predicting potential market demand for various types of retail goods and services, which can impact a city's economic development agenda.

While Gainesville's median age has increased slightly (4.3%) since 2000, it is still a relatively youthful community and should remain so for the next several years. It is interesting to note that further out from the city limits the median age increases, which suggests that an older (40+) population may be living in nearby Hall County but benefitting from the cultural and recreational amenities the city has to offer. The geographic pattern of median age shown in the map to the right illustrates how much of the city is occupied by persons under 40 – and conversely where concentrations of older residents (45-86) live.



MEDIAN AGE



GENDER DOMINANCE

Sources: ESRI Business Analyst; Thematic Analyses (2010 Projections)

Educational Attainment

The city's educational attainment refers to the final level of education achieved within the adult population (age 25 and up), as identified by categories representing various levels of education. Ideally, communities would prefer a greater percentage of their populations achieving much higher education levels, surpassing high school and possibly graduating college.

In 2000, almost 23% of the city's population attained a high school degree compared with 26% of the population in 2010; persons with a college degree decreased from 24.5% to 16.8%.

	Median Age				
	Gainesville	0-5 miles	5-10 miles	10-15 miles	Hall Co
2000	29.9	30.3	33.5	34.2	32.3
2010	31.2	31.6	35.9	37.1	34.1
2015	31.7	32.1	36.7	37.9	34.8

	Educational Achievement: 2010				
	Gainesville	0-5 miles	5-10 miles	10-15 miles	Hall Co
HS Graduate	25.8%	27.1%	32.6%	35.3%	31.4%
Bach'lor Degree	16.8%	14.5%	15.0%	14.2%	14.5%
Grad Degree	9.7%	8.5%	8.9%	6.5%	8.7%

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development section of a comprehensive plan identifies the variety of employment categories and through analysis determines a community's assets and liabilities/ strengths and weaknesses, and needs of local businesses. A portrait of Gainesville's economic condition is the foundation for assessing the performance of wages and job skills, employment and industry patterns, and the programs and efforts designed to improve local economies.

Economic Base

Economic base analyses are used to identify the local significance of each industrial sector. Studied are the kinds of industry within a community, the total earnings those industries produce, and the wages distributed to the resident population. Economic base studies can direct recruitment toward businesses that complement existing industry or require the skills of residents currently exporting labor to other regions. This information is basic, but vital, for more effective decisions concerning the health of the local economy.

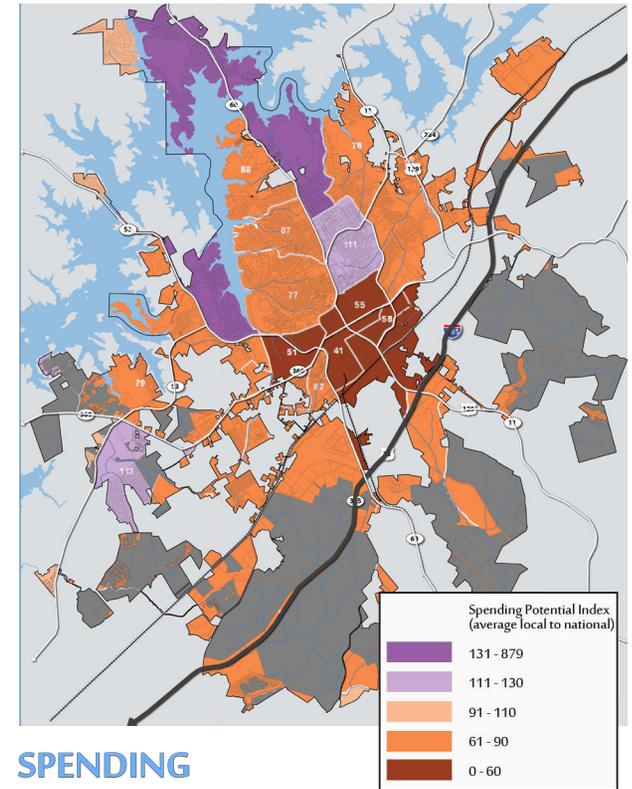
Gainesville and Hall County have the benefit of a growing and diverse economic base. Within the city, many of the stronger blue-collar industries such as Manufacturing and Construction have seen healthy expansion, which cannot be said of many communities. Overall employment has almost doubled within the city since 1990, with the only decreases related to the Hospitality and Food Service industries. However, strong growth in the Manufacturing and Health and Social Services sectors reflect the city's commitment to building the goods production industries and the expansion of the Northeast Georgia Medical Center. The city has worked with local stakeholders and area institutions to foster a bigger role as a regional center for employment, health care, retail and more. This has poised Gainesville for an even stronger future by giving the local economy a greater variety of assets to draw from in pursuing further economic development.

Employment by Economic Sector

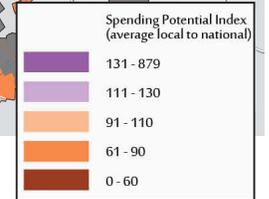
The primary measure of an industry's value to a local economy is the number of people it employs. An economy grows stronger as it increases any form of gainful employment in the local population, balancing wealth and encouraging economic growth.

The tables below highlight employment distribution as well as the three primary types of employment - white collar, services, and blue collar - by percentage. There are 5.5% less white collar jobs in the city than the county, slightly more service jobs, and almost 5% more blue collar jobs in the city than the county.

With respect to particular industries, the decade between 2000 and 2010 saw a decrease in manufacturing jobs of slightly more than 7%, a 2% decrease in transportation, warehousing and utility (TCU) jobs, and less than a 1% increase in retail employment, construction trade, wholesale trade, finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) and government.



SPENDING POTENTIAL INDEX



Sources:
ESRI Business Analyst;
Thematic Analyses
(2010 Projections)

	Employment: 2010				
	Gainesville	0-5 miles	5-10 miles	10-15 miles	Hall Co
White Collar	49.5%	47.9%	58.2%	60.5%	55.0%
Services	16.1%	16.2%	14.7%	14.6%	15.2%
Blue Collar	34.3%	35.9%	27.0%	24.9%	29.7%

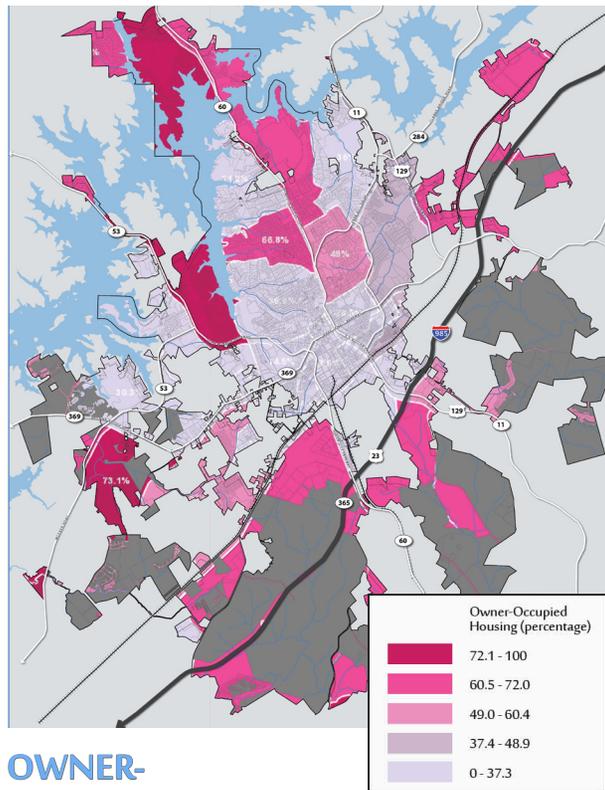
	Employment by Industry: 2010				
	Gainesville	0-5 miles	5-10 miles	10-15 miles	Hall Co
Construction	10.4%	10.3%	9.1%	10.4%	9.3%
Manufacturing	19.8%	20.7%	14.4%	11.7%	16.3%
TCU	4.6%	4.8%	5.8%	7.3%	5.7%
Wholesale	3.4%	3.6%	4.3%	4.5%	4.3%
Retail	10.1%	9.8%	11.3%	13.0%	11.3%
FIRE	5.2%	5.4%	6.9%	6.5%	6.3%
Services	41.6%	40.6%	43.4%	40.5%	41.9%
Government	3.4%	3.2%	3.3%	3.3%	3.2%

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

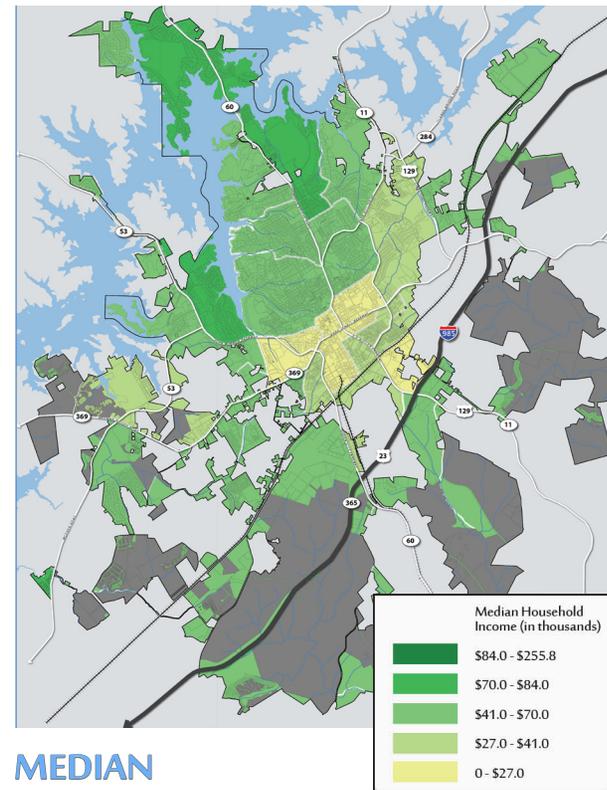
Understanding the physical conditions of housing options within a community is relatively useless without also understanding the market for housing affordability. An assessment of housing costs is critical to understanding the accessibility of the housing supply to the residents, and goes a long way toward explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the housing supply.

As of 2000 Gainesville did exhibit a relatively high ratio of households living in cost-burdened conditions, where housing costs exceeded 30% of household income levels. Some of this can be attributed to households living on fixed incomes (retirees) or students for the local post-secondary institutions. The figure remains higher than State and county levels and, most importantly, increased between 1990 and 2000. Part of this may be symptomatic of the housing crush that contributed to the eventual recession in 2009, whereby residents moving in for the local economy purchased at higher costs assuming continued escalation of wage levels and property values. Should the rates remain high through the 2010 Census counts then the city may need to reflect on development forms allowed and encouraged in order to foster more sustainable housing types.

Similarly, rental costs for the city have increased as the area has grown more popular, responding to the market demands for transitional shelter and providing accommodations for lower-end working households. Analysis in the 2009 Consolidated Plan suggests that moderate-income and the upper tier of low-income households in the city can afford market-rate rents on one- and two-bedroom apartments; but that a significant percentage of low-income households need more affordable alternatives. Additionally, some moderate-income households cannot afford three- or four-bedroom market-rate rents.



OWNER- OCCUPIED HOUSING

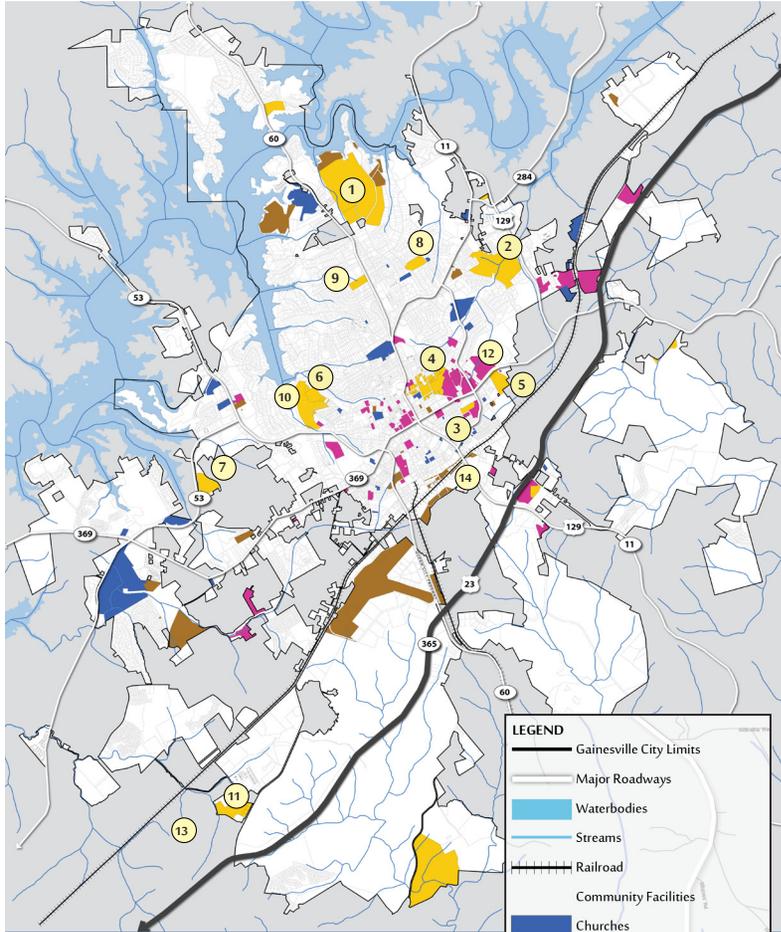


MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Source: *Thematic Analyses (2010 Projections)*

Unit Type	Average Market Rent	Monthly Income Needed to Afford Unit	Annual Income Needed to Afford Unit	Hourly Wage Needed to Afford Unit at 40 hrs per week	As % of Minimum Wage (\$6.55/hr)	Work Hours/Week at Minimum Wage to Afford Unit
1BR	\$538	\$1,792	\$21,505	\$10.30	157%	63
2BR	\$635	\$2,118	\$25,410	\$12.17	186%	74
3BR	\$764	\$2,547	\$30,569	\$14.65	224%	89
4BR	\$900	\$3,000	\$36,000	\$17.25	263%	105

Sources: *Novogradac & Company, 2009 Consolidated Plan*



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

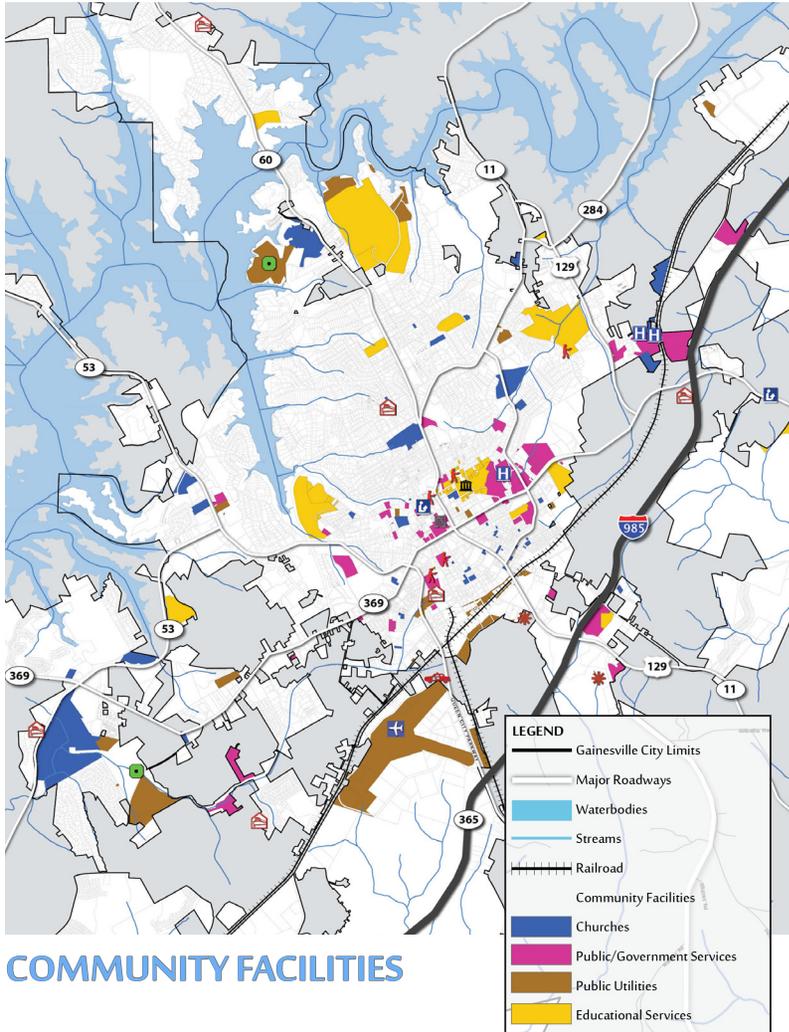
Educational Facilities

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| ① Riverside Military Academy | ⑦ Gainesville Exploration Academy | ⑫ Gainesville Middle School |
| ② Lakeview Upper Middle | ⑧ Enota Elementary | ⑬ Gainesville State College / Lanier Technical College |
| ③ Fair Street Elementary | ⑨ North Georgia Christian School | ⑭ Featherbone Communiversality |
| ④ Brenau University | ⑩ Centennial Arts Academy | |
| ⑤ New Holland Core Academy | ⑪ Lanier Career Center | |
| ⑥ Gainesville High / Woods Mill Academy | | |

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Schools

The Gainesville City School System, serving only city households, is one of the few municipally based systems within Georgia. The system currently features 5 elementary schools plus Gainesville Middle School, Gainesville High School and Woods Mill, a grades 6-12 alternative high school. For the 2009/10 academic year the total system had a full-time enrollment of 6,296 students, with 1,377 attending Gainesville High School. The system's current master plan projects enrollment to increase to 7,566 by 2013/14 which would necessitate the construction of up to two new elementary facilities. In a move to provide a unique learning environment elementary schools have individual academic themes and parents have the chance to choose to send their children to any school within the system. In addition to the Gainesville City School System, city residents have their choice among several private schools within the community including: Riverside Military Academy, Brenau Academy, Lakeview Academy and several faith based schools available in or within ten miles of the city including North Georgia Christian School, Maranatha Christian Academy and Heritage Academy. Post-secondary institutions include Brenau University and the Featherbone Communiversality (both private), as well as nearby Gainesville State College and Lanier Technical College.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| College / University / Technical School | Library |
| Airport | Police / Sheriff |
| Jail / Detention Center | Water Treatment Facility |
| Courthouse | Solid Waste Facility |
| Fire Department | |
| Hospital | |

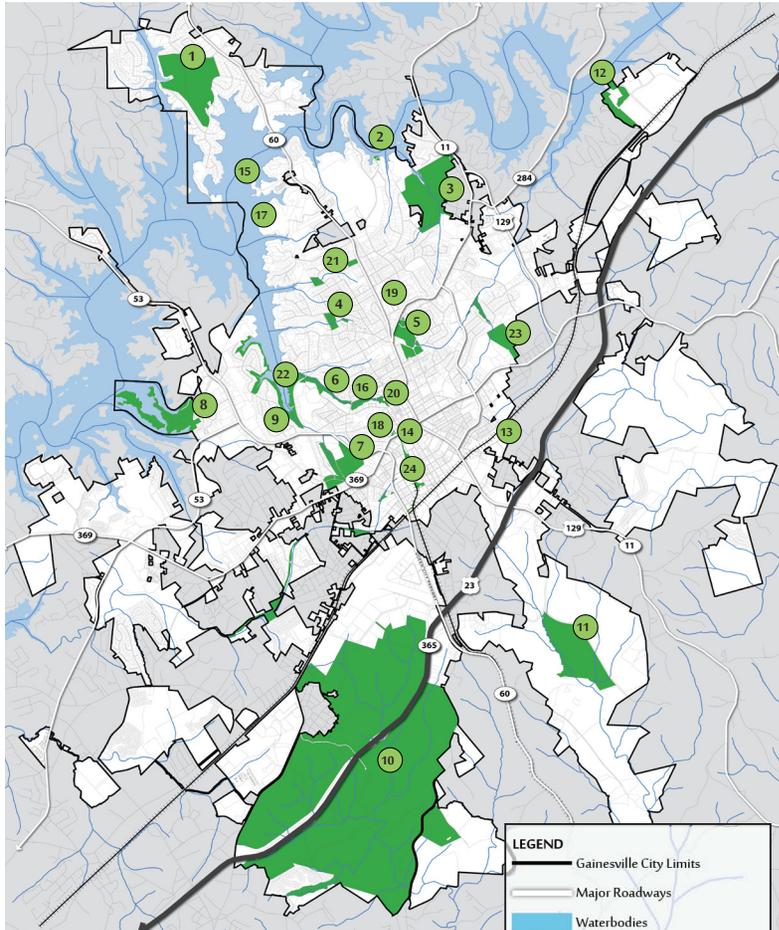
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Libraries

Local library services are provided by the Hall County Library System with the Gainesville location serving as the main branch. The system is a member of the PINES statewide library network that allows the sharing of resources.

General Government Facilities

Both Gainesville and Hall County are planning expansion, renovation or relocation of select government admin operations, which may include a realignment within the Joint Administration Building. The Community Service Center located in downtown is jointly funded/operated by the County and City (staff of 29). Services include counseling, parenting, homebound services, operation of the Hall Area Transit, Meals on Wheels, and the Senior Center. Legacy Link, Inc., a non-profit agency, contracts with Community Service Center, to provide state and federal funds to provide senior citizens services. Funding from the Gainesville and Hall County general funds and from private donations and participants' fees also support CSC/SAS programs. The City of Gainesville owns and operates the Civic Center and the Georgia Mountains Center. Located in the downtown area of the City, both facilities are supported by Special Revenue funds managed by the City, as well as consumer user fees. In addition, both facilities are open to the public within and outside of the City's incorporated boundaries.



PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Parks / Green Space

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Chattahoochee County Club | 7 Alta Vista Cemetery | 13 Desota Park | 19 Riverside Park |
| 2 Dogwood Park | 8 Lanier Point Softball Complex | 14 Engine 209 Park | 20 Rock Creek Park |
| 3 Botanical Garden Site | 9 Longwood Park | 15 Holly Park | 21 Roper Park |
| 4 Wessell Park | 10 Chicopee Woods Park | 16 Ivey Terrace Park | 22 Wilshire Trails |
| 5 City Park | 11 Allen Creek Soccer Complex | 17 Linwood Nature Preserve | 23 Francis Meadows Aquatic Center |
| 6 Rock Creek Greenway | 12 Clarks Bridge Park | 18 Poultry Park | 24 Midtown Greenway |

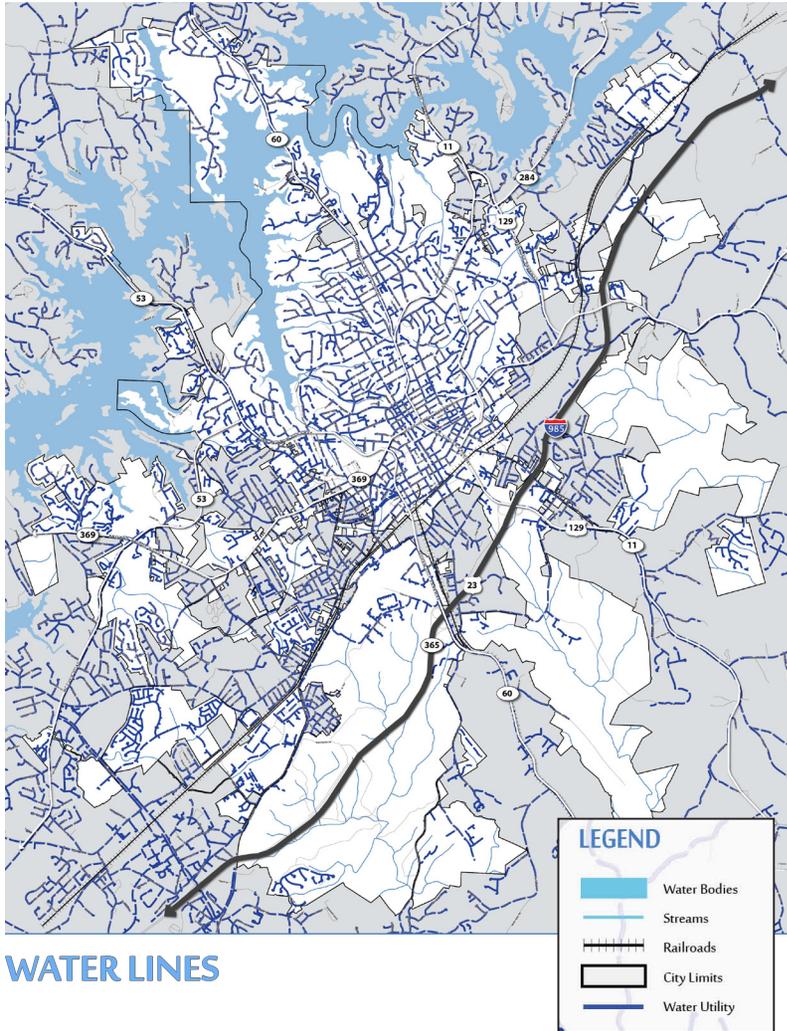
PARKS & OPEN SPACE

The Gainesville Parks and Recreation Agency developed a “Vision 2014 – Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan,” which is now in the process of a five-year update with the revised plan expected to be completed by July 2011.

Vision 2014 listed 19 park sites including nine neighborhood parks, four mini parks, three regional/community parks, and one special use park. The plan outlined over \$30 million in capital improvements over the next ten years with additional park-related expenditures of \$12.3 million by other agencies or organizations. The plan also recommended \$22.8 million in future greenway development, anticipated to add almost 20 miles of new pedestrian/bikeway trails to the city.

Recommendations from Vision 2014 included the need for a new recreation center with an indoor aquatic center, skate parks, a dog park, and additional softball/baseball fields. A new community park was also identified as a need. Since completion of the plan, the indoor aquatic center has been realized with the Francis Meadows Aquatic and Community Center, which in addition to its aquatic facilities includes state-of-the-art meeting and multi-purpose rooms.

In greenway development, the city is now building the first phase of the Midtown Greenway, a multi-purpose trail utilizing an abandoned CSX railroad line. The greenway has the potential to provide future linkages throughout the community by connecting with the existing Rock Creek Greenway and the future Hall County Multi-purpose Trail, currently in the final phases of design. When completed the county wide greenway system will provide linkages from downtown Gainesville to Chicopee Woods Regional Park, Gainesville State College, and eventually Lake Lanier, utilizing an existing sewer easement, owned in fee simple by the city.



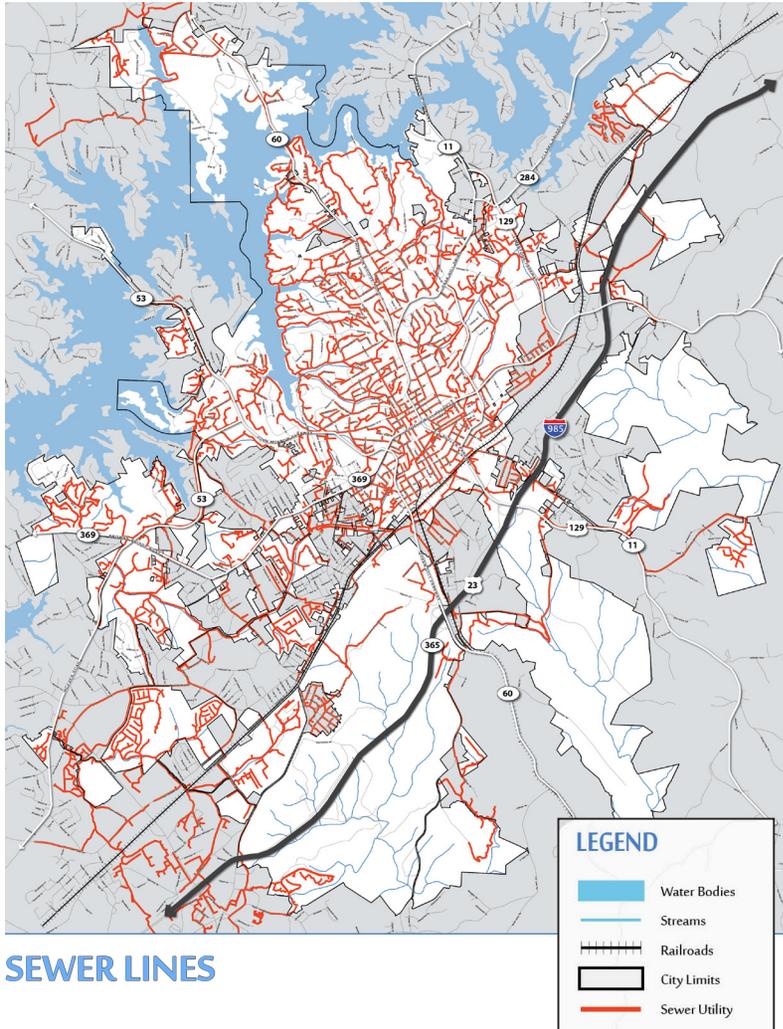
UTILITIES: WATER

The City of Gainesville Public Utilities Department (GPUD) provides water supply to both the City of Gainesville and Hall County Water Service Areas. Water supply originates from two sources, Lake Sidney Lanier in the Chattahoochee watershed and the North Oconee River in the Oconee watershed. Lake Lanier is the primary source, which provides the city with all drinking water demands.

The city currently operates the Lakeside Water Treatment Plant (WTP), which is rated at 10 Million Gallons per Day (MGD), and the Riverside Water Treatment Plant, rated at 25 MGD. The combined 35 MGD treatment capacity matches the city's total withdrawal permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

In late 2008, the GPUD completed a Water System Master Planning process with a goal of providing adequate water supply to these two service areas for a 25+ year period. A number of recommendations and a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) were provided within that master plan. Some of these recommendations are in the process of being implemented. In fact, at the time of this summary, the GPUD has nearly completed design work for a new water treatment plant, has made progress with the development of a new reservoir and is bidding work for the construction of a new water transmission main.

Population growth and future land use will influence the future water demands for the city. As such, the comprehensive planning effort will need to carefully consider these issues and compare them with the GPUD planning efforts. Recent and future court decisions on water supply, county / city relations and the further development of the CIP are all important regional factors that need to be considered.



SEWER LINES

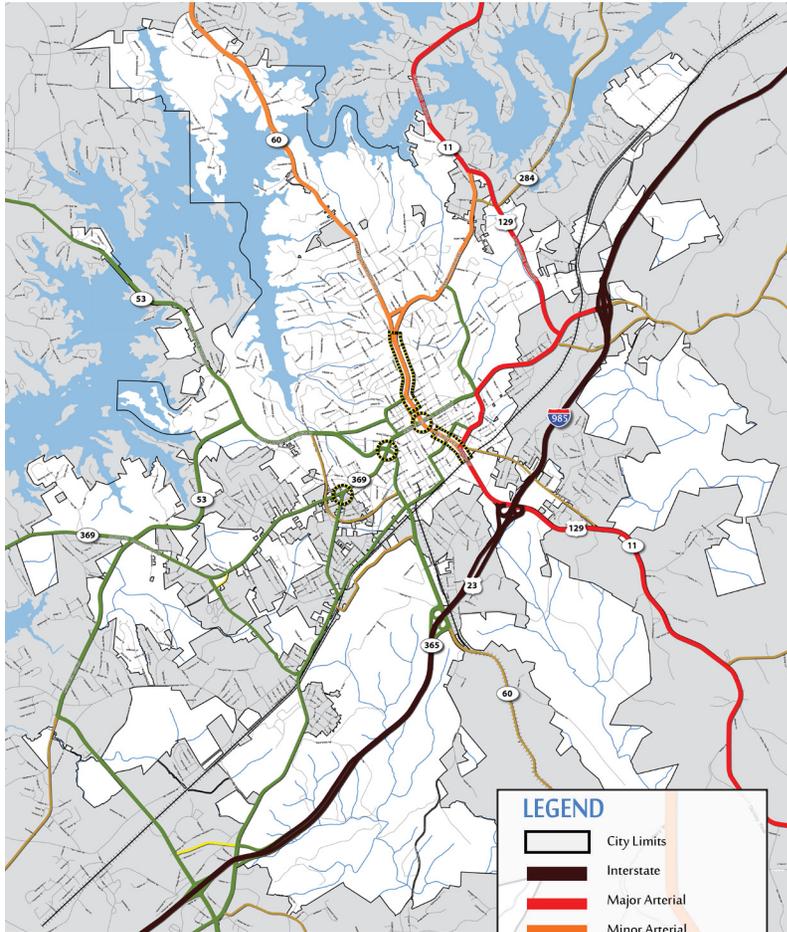
UTILITIES: SEWER

The City of Gainesville Public Utilities Department (GPUD) provides a sanitary sewer collection system and treatment of wastewater through two facilities. The two treatment facilities include the Flat Creek Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) and the Linwood WRF. Average daily flows for the two plants have a combined range between 7 and 10 MGD. A large portion of these flows originate from industrial facilities. In 2005, the ratio of industrial wastewater to residential wastewater was a 3:1 difference.

The Flat Creek WRF is located in the southwestern part of the city and is designed to discharge up to 12 MGD of treated wastewater to Flat Creek. The Flat Creek collection system consists of 150+ miles of gravity sewer (6-inch to 54-inch), 30+ miles of force main (4-inch to 24-inch) and 50+ pump stations (150 GPM to 3,200 GPM).

The Linwood WRF is located in the northwestern part of the city and is designed to discharge 5 MGD. The collection area for this facility serves primarily residential uses and includes approximately 60+ miles of gravity sewer (6-inch to 30-inch), 1+ miles of forcemain (6-inch to 16-inch) and 5+ pump stations (75 GPM to 3,600 GPM).

Treatment capacity appears to exceed actual flow, which is a good indication that GPUD has planned and implemented projects in advance of need. There have been some indications of locations within the system that have collection capacity issues. This topic needs to be better understood and researched further, which is important during the development of future land uses. A 2006 Wastewater Master Plan exists, which focuses on the wastewater collection system. Assumptions in this plan will be reviewed, such that the comprehensive planning effort considers projections and assumptions within the wastewater plan.



ROADWAY HIERARCHY

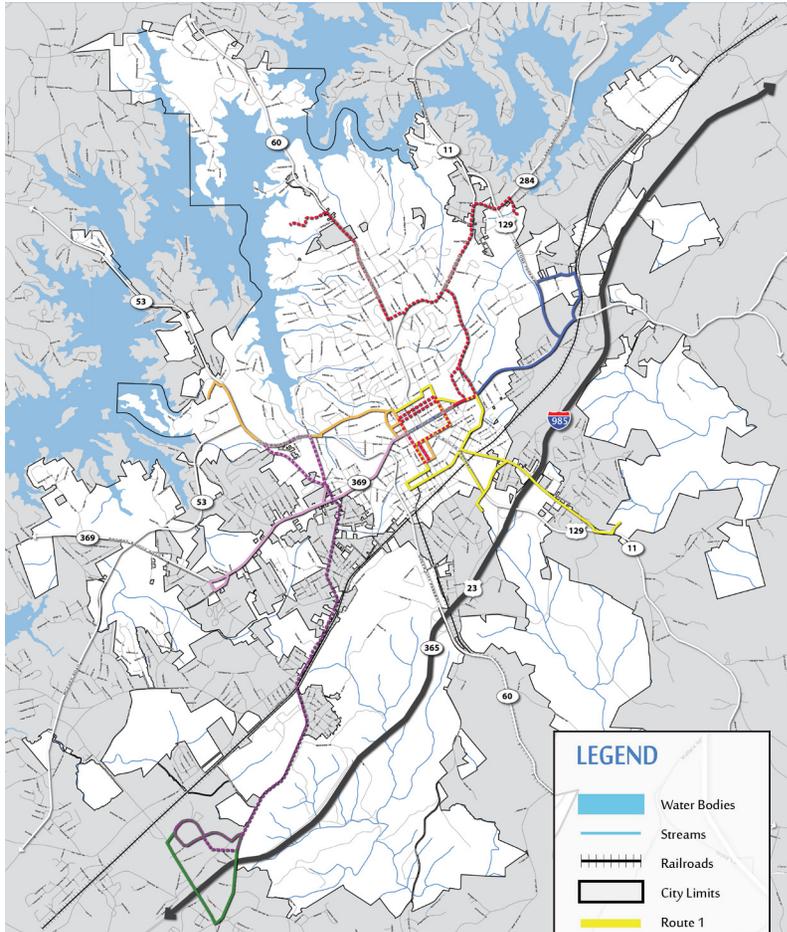
TRANSPORTATION: ROADWAYS

The City of Gainesville’s street network features a traditional core of grid patterned streets around downtown that eventually gives way to more curvilinear streets reaching out into surrounding neighborhoods. The path of streets further away from downtown generally follow historic trade routes and the area’s rolling topography. Key arterials in the form of state highways intersect at the northeast corner of downtown, forming the primary axes stretching out in all four directions. An additional main east-west connector is at the southeast corner of downtown, with Interstate 985 providing the most prominent north-south arterial approximately two miles east of downtown. As a regional center for employment, commerce, recreation, and medical and educational services, Gainesville features a high volume of local and commuting traffic. As a result, congestion peak periods not only include commuter periods but also a noontime rush hour. A recent study of traffic volumes on Jesse Jewell Parkway show noontime traffic volumes (vehicles per hour) is as high or higher than the 5:00 PM count and double that of the 8:00 AM count. Key transportation routes through the city include Interstate 985 and arterials such as E.E. Butler Parkway, Green Street/Thompson Bridge Road, Browns Bridge Road, and Jesse Jewell Parkway. These routes combine with collectors and local streets to form the county’s roadway system.

E.E. Butler Parkway is a four-lane divided arterial. Traffic flows predominantly southbound during the morning and northbound during the afternoon, peaking during the morning and evening heavy travel periods. E.E. Butler Parkway serves significant truck traffic between the industrial areas in the eastern portion of the City of Gainesville and I-985, with traffic volumes highest near I-985 and decreasing slightly approaching downtown Gainesville.

On the Green Street/Thompson Bridge Road corridor, traffic flow is highly directional during peak periods, with the flow predominately southbound in the morning and northbound in the evening. In addition, a mid-day peak period, extending from about 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, exhibits a roughly 50/50 directional split.

Browns Bridge Road and the western portions of Jesse Jewell Parkway are predominantly lined with strip commercial development, such as fast food restaurants, gas stations, and strip mall shopping. The traffic characteristics are typical of these adjacent land uses, with morning and afternoon peak periods overshadowed by a long mid-day peak period. The highest traffic volumes on this corridor are recorded on Jesse Jewell Parkway just west of E.E. Butler Parkway.



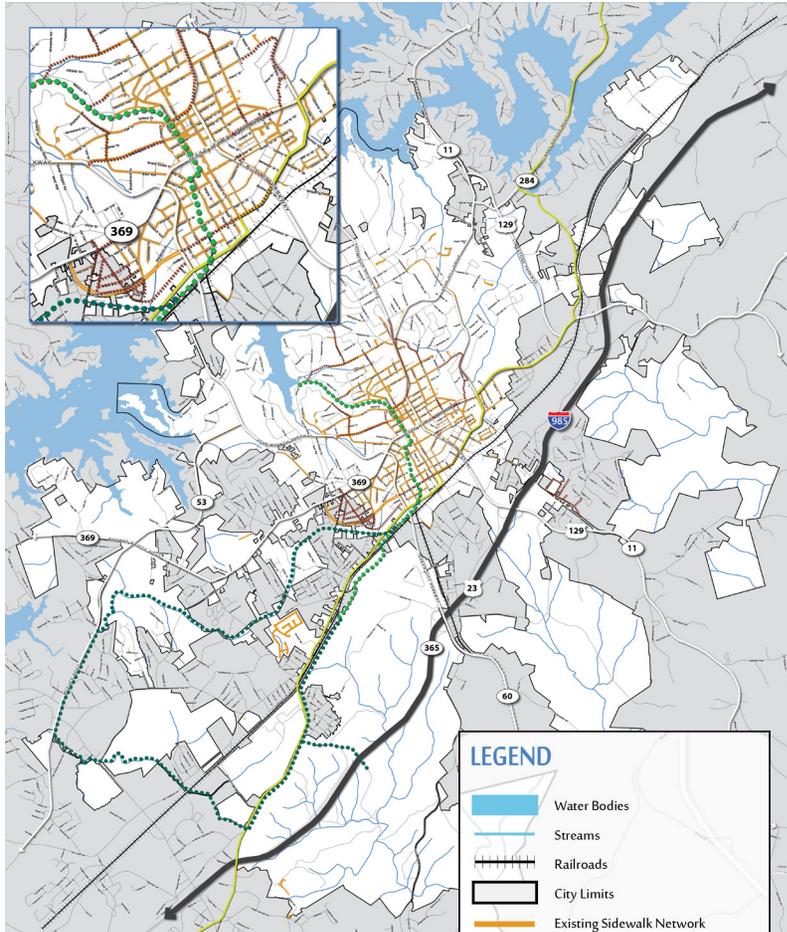
PUBLIC TRANSIT

**TRANSPORTATION:
PUBLIC TRANSIT**

Public transportation supports a community’s health and vitality by providing a functional alternative to private automobile ownership. It also gives greater access to those who may not be able to access a personal vehicle. Public transportation helps to diffuse traffic congestion, stimulate residential and commercial activity, and mitigate against sprawling development patterns associated with roadway expansion

Hall Area Transit (HAT) is the public transportation service within the Gainesville-Hall County area. The system is funded jointly by the City of Gainesville, Hall County, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Federal Transit Administration. HAT gives Hall County citizens greater mobility, providing access to employment, health care, education, shopping, community services, recreation, and other destinations. The system also has specialized transit capabilities for handicapped and elderly riders in Gainesville.

Hall Area Transit offers both fixed route and demand-response transportation. The “Red Rabbit,” is HAT’s fixed route system. There are currently six bus routes, with each bus making approximately 30 stops per hour. The Red Rabbit features a regular one-way fare of \$1.00 per trip (\$0.50 per trip for seniors, children and students) and allows free transfers. The Red Rabbit runs within the City and on Atlanta Highway to Gainesville State College. Service times are Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. The Dial-a-Ride is a demand-response service that provides door-to-door transportation for outlying areas of Hall County. Citizens must call to request van transportation at least 48 hours in advance. Nine transit vans service the county Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm. The fare cost is based on trip length. Specialized service on the Dial-a-Ride is available for those with mobility impairments.



BIKE & PED FEATURES

LEGEND

- Water Bodies
- Streams
- Railroads
- City Limits
- Existing Sidewalk Network
- Existing Multi Use Path
- State Bicycle Route
- Proposed Sidewalks*
- Proposed Multi Use Path*

* Short term priority (2005-2010) as part of GHMPO Plan

TRANSPORTATION: BIKE & PEDESTRIAN

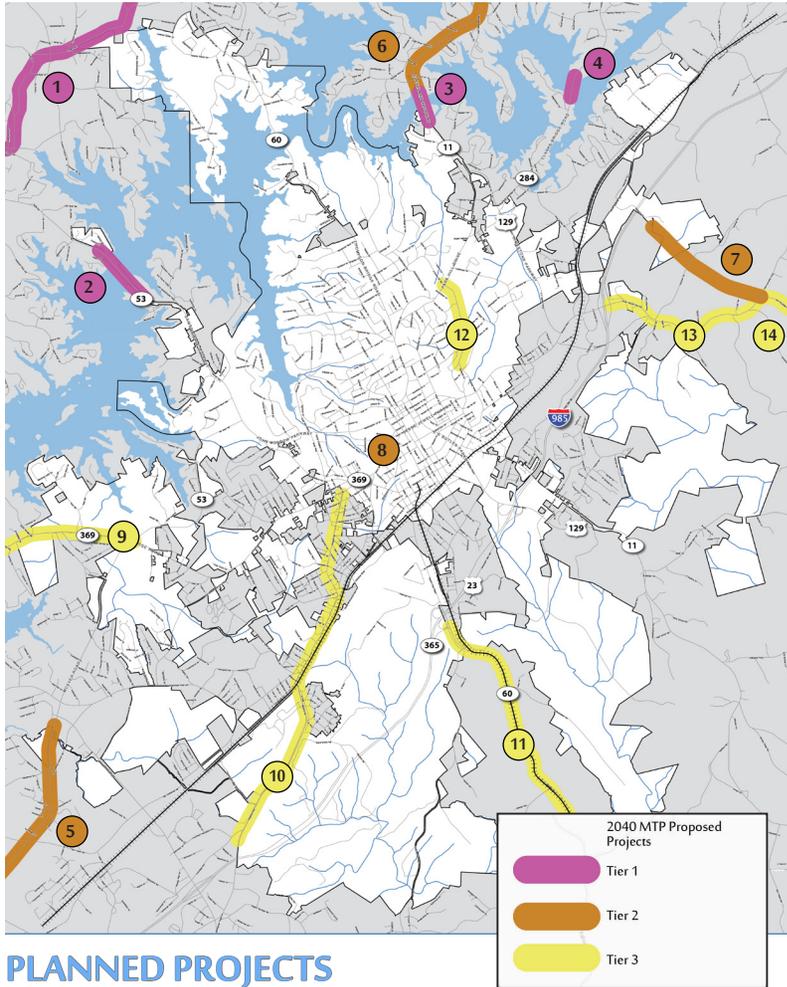
Sidewalks

Downtown Gainesville has an excellent sidewalk system that connects government and office buildings, downtown merchants, and major parking areas. However, the location of sidewalks outside of the downtown area is sporadic. Most of the blocks surrounding the square feature sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, with at least one side continuing outward for two blocks. Across Jesse Jewell Parkway to the east, the Midtown district features some sidewalks on an inconsistent basis, but the network does reach as far as the industrial buildings several blocks into the area. Most of the surrounding neighborhoods, including Fair Street and the Washington Street / Oak Street area feature sidewalks along most roads, even if only along one side. There is also a thorough sidewalk network within the Enota and North Gainesville neighborhoods and in the Brenau University area. Overall, the sidewalk network for the city is fairly extensive and serves residential areas reasonably well. Most sidewalks are in average condition, but improvements are needed at intersections to improve accessibility for the disabled. Improved crossings at arterials around the downtown area will be critical in the future if Gainesville is to foster a pedestrian-oriented urban network. The new pedestrian bridge over Jesse Jewell Parkway near the Georgia Mountains Center currently under construction serves as a strong stepping stone for future pedestrian facility improvements. Maintaining pedestrian connectivity with the Brenau and medical center campuses is also vital.

Bicycle Routes and Trails

These facilities have grown in popularity as recreational amenities, promoting a more active community and adding valuable greenspace. Trails and bicycle routes are also primary transportation corridors, providing viable alternates to vehicular travel. Gainesville's most prominent trail is the Rock Creek Greenway, a series of paved trails roughly one mile in length alongside a scenic creek. The Greenway links Downtown with Longwood Park and Lake Lanier, featuring several pavilions and seating areas as well as an amphitheater and playground. Rock Creek Greenway creates valuable connections between the northern Gainesville neighborhoods and three local schools. Future greenways currently being proposed or in development include the Midtown Greenway and the Central Hall Multi-Use Trail.

In addition, Gainesville features State Bicycle Route 55, which runs north-south along US 23 north to Gainesville, and then along SR 284 to the County line for approximately 26 miles.



PLANNED PROJECTS

Projects by Tier

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Sardis Connector | 5 McEver Road Widening | 9 Brown's Bridge Road Widening |
| 2 SR 53 Westbound Bridge | 6 Cleveland Highway Widening | 10 Atlanta Highway Widening |
| 3 Cleveland Highway Bridge | 7 Howard Road Connector | 11 SR 60 Widening |
| 4 Clark's Bridge | 8 Jesse Jewell / John Morrow Intersection Improvements | 12 South Enota Drive Widening |
| | | 13 Old Cornelia Highway Improvements |
| | | 14 Joe Chandler Road Widening |

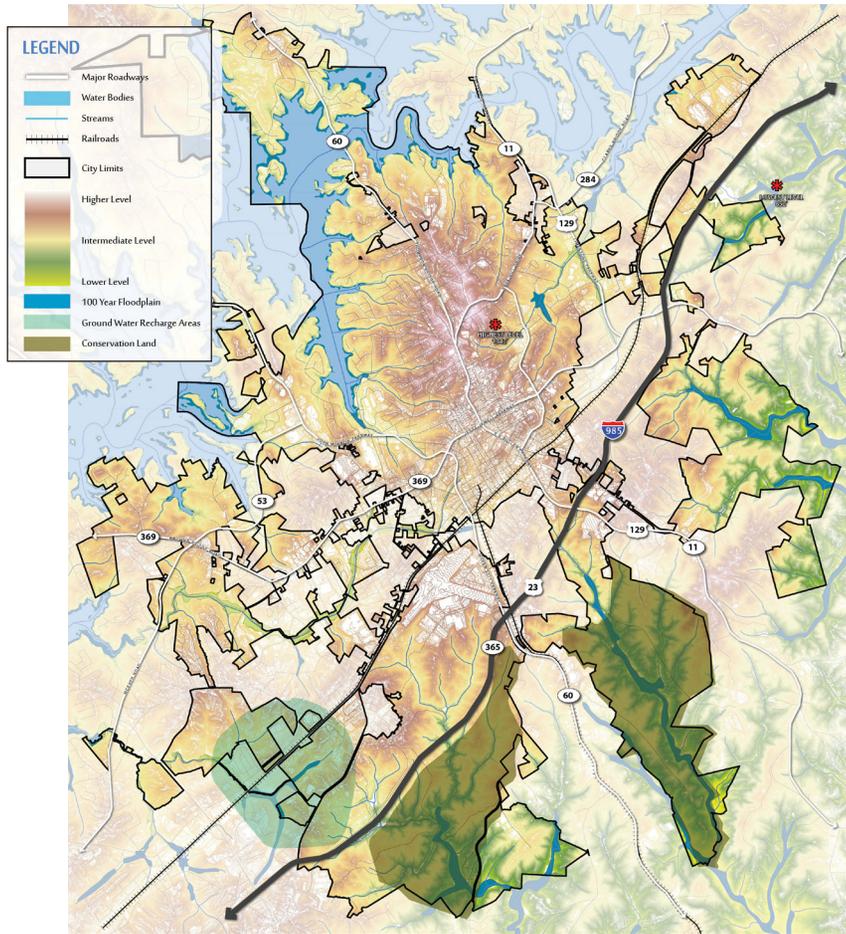
TRANSPORTATION: PLANNED PROJECTS

The Gainesville-Hall County MPO was convened in 2003 with representatives from all of Hall County's impacted governments among the various Committees and with an agreement designating the Hall County Planning Department to serve as the technical and administrative staff. Early assessments produced a travel demand forecast model to determine roadway conditions in through 2030, as referenced within the 2004 comprehensive plan update for Gainesville and Hall County. Ultimately the MPO completed its requirements in developing a long range transportation plan in 2007 and maintains a TIP for guiding transportation investment and supporting the transportation management for the City.

MPOs are required to update their long-range transportation plans every four or five years depending on air-quality non-attainment status. While much of the current long-range transportation plan remains valid, the GHMPO is currently developing an updated model and forecast that reaches through 2040 and takes into account recent issues with regards to roadway financing revenues and evolving traffic patterns. Some of the projects that may be proposed in the 2040 Master Transportation Plan (MTP) are shown in the map to the left. These projects are organized into three tiers.

Tier I are near-term projects because of their importance in relieving existing congestion, or their cost-effectiveness. They usually have some level of funding (preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, or construction) proposed for inclusion in the TIP over the next five years. Tier II project are mid-term, with funding proposed for 2018 to 2030. Tier III projects are the longest term, with a horizon between 2031 and 2040.

Full results and recommendations of the MTP will be released in mid-2011.



NATURAL FEATURES

NATURAL FEATURES: WATER SUPPLY

The City of Gainesville uses adjoining Lake Lanier and its Chattahoochee River vein as its primary source for water. As part of an intergovernmental agreement with Hall County, the city is assuming eventual ownership and management of a unified water system for the two communities. Presently the city withdraws water from two points along Lake Lanier: the Riverside pumping station on the city's north side along the Chattahoochee River vein of the reservoir, and the Lakeside treatment plant located in Flowery Branch. The Riverside location has a withdrawal permit for 25 million gallons per day (MGD) and the Lakeside facility is permitted for 10 MGD.

Lake Lanier is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is the most popular singular attraction within the Georgia Mountains Region and a major source of economic development. More than two dozen parks and public access points line the lake shore, as well as several private marinas and resorts. The Corps is revisiting the lake's management plan and has undertaken a nine-month long public commenting process leading up to their assessment of needs and demands. The outcomes from these efforts will impact stakeholders' interests in keeping the lake at or near full pool and making sure the region's residents have ample water supply throughout the Chattahoochee River watershed.

The city is also permitted for withdrawal from the North Oconee River to fill the Cedar Creek reservoir near Gillsville, in eastern Hall County. This reservoir was developed by Hall County around the year 2000 and has since been transferred to the city as part of the intergovernmental agreements authorizing the city to serve as the long-term water provider for Hall County. The City of Gainesville currently operates the pump stations to fill the reservoir and is engaged in the permitting process for developing an intake and treatment facility. The reservoir holds approximately 1,200 million gallons of water and covers 143 acres in water surface area alone. The city is applying for permitted withdrawal of up to 12 MGD.

The Cedar Creek reservoir is within the Upper Oconee River watershed. The reservoir is considered a critical environmental asset both as a water source that would ease inter-basin transfer concerns but also secure more green space through the conservation of surrounding land and subsequent development policies applied within the watershed.

NATURAL FEATURES: RIVERS, RECHARGES, & WETLANDS

Protected Rivers

The Chattahoochee River is the only State designated protected river within Gainesville, and where defined as being within the reach of Lake Lanier is under the auspices of the Army Corps of Engineers. Smaller tributaries to the Chattahoochee River in the region include the Soquee and Little Rivers. As part of their overall management of hydrologic resources Hall County and Gainesville have adopted measures to protect the Chattahoochee and the Chestatee Rivers as well as Lake Lanier. Both governments have ordinances protecting all surface waters with setbacks ranging from 25 to 150 feet, depending on the stream classification.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

There are minimal lands within the City limits contributing to significant recharge areas, and none that are located within areas with concentrations of personal wells. However, the City does maintain appropriate development policies for managing land disturbance and construction in these areas and works with Hall County in monitoring development for impacts on these resources.

Wetlands

Most wetlands within the City of Gainesville lie also within stream corridors and/or existing conservation areas. The topography of the region that fosters the mountain tourism and reservoir leads to concentration of wetland areas often to lands also protected for the surface water. The City of Gainesville has the required environmental regulations for development in place and identifies wetlands based on the national Wetlands Inventory Maps prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The inventory of wetlands is monitored in conjunction with the Hall County GIS department.

NATURAL FEATURES: LAND & HABITAT

Floodplains

Local floodplains are identified through topographic records and periodic flood analyses, with the Hall County GIS Department maintaining an inventory. The City employs development regulations and environmental planning standards to manage impacts to these resources by minimizing the presence of impervious surfaces, land disturbing activity and hazardous materials. The City has also worked to restore the viability of the Longwood Creek area as a greenspace for managing potential flood waters, and for improving the general collection and discharge of storm waters to improve rain event conditions.

Soils

The City of Gainesville is located in the Southern Piedmont area defined by steep-to-gently rolling topography with thin, well-drained red soil. The soil is mostly sandy-clay to clay subsoils characterized by fair-to-good suitability for building foundations and fair-to-poor suitability for septic tanks. However, the City of Gainesville requires all development to be either part of a sewer system (City or private) or to produce soil tests that verify the viability of septic systems on each property. General soil management is maintained through coordination of development with regards to a Soil Suitability map or inventory that illustrates the viability for locally identified soil groupings to support development, septic systems and/or other material infiltration. In addition, Gainesville lies within the Upper Chattahoochee River Soil and Water Conservation District. Gainesville residents and businesses may also seek assistance from the local Extension Service as part of environmental support provided by the University System of Georgia.

Steep Slopes

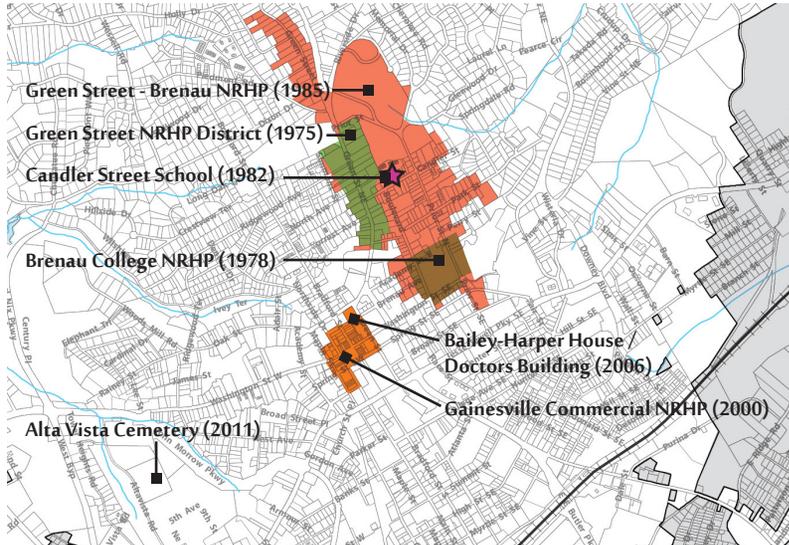
Located in a region transitioning from the Piedmont to more mountainous terrain, the topography of Gainesville features many areas exhibiting steep slopes. Local development has found these areas to provide attractive, dynamic amenities with regards to the Lake Lanier shoreline or on ridges affording scenic views, particularly as new roads tend to follow the ridgelines to decrease construction costs. The City of Gainesville and Hall County employ development standards that minimize land disturbance and encourage maintenance of local topography. Management practices for storm water, tree planting/retention and other environmental mitigation measures are used to ensure development along steep slopes does not adversely impact the environment or adjoining land uses.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

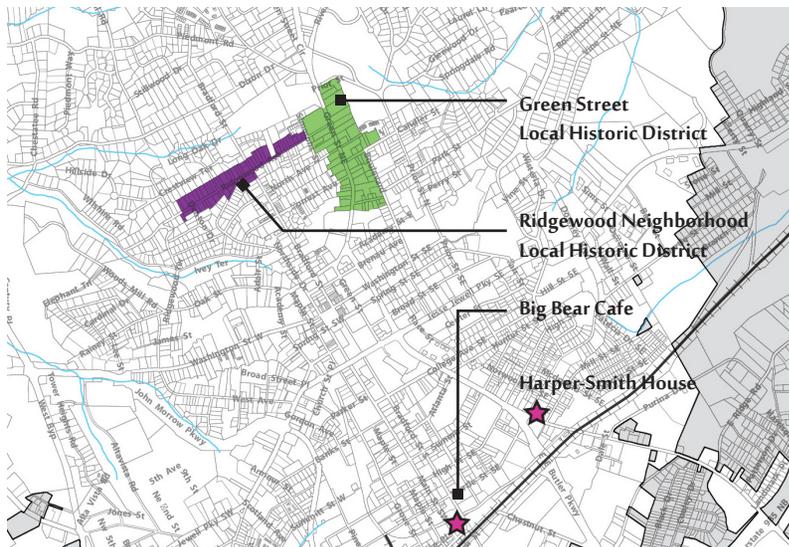
As a burgeoning urban center, the City of Gainesville does not feature prime lands for agricultural and/or silvicultural activity. Development regulations permit this activity but the city and surrounding areas have grown too expensive and congested to sustain agricultural activity.

Endangered Species & Protected Habitats

Information about endangered/protected species in and around Gainesville is recorded by USGS in accordance with studies performed by several federal and State agencies. Based on recent surveys, at least 6 species of animals and 10 varieties of plants within the County are classified as protected or threatened. The City of Gainesville and Hall County work with the local Extension Service, US Fish and Wildlife and other agencies to regularly monitor habitat conditions and development trends to support efforts at sustaining local habitats for these species, including the restriction of development forms and types to those compatible with desired environmental conditions.



NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED RESOURCES



LOCALLY DESIGNATED RESOURCES

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

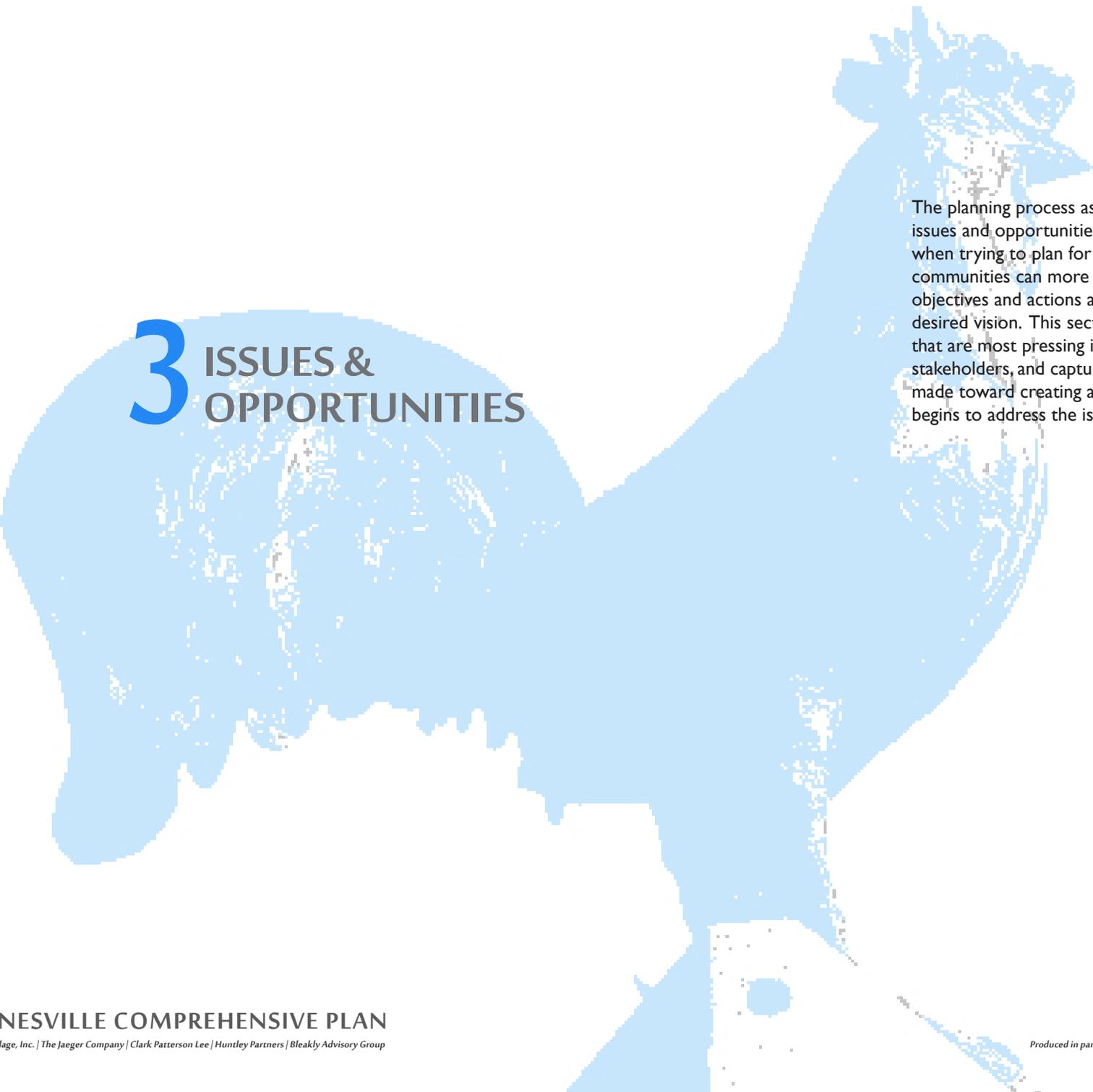
The earliest Georgia settlers came to this area of Georgia in the 1780s following the end of the Revolutionary War via the Lacoda Trail. In 1821, the Town of Gainesville was established as the governmental seat of Hall County by Georgia legislative action. Gainesville was named after Edmond P. Gaines, an army general who established Fort Gaines, Georgia in 1816 to protect settlers from raiding bands of Creek Indians. In 1936, a tornado destroyed much of the City of Gainesville. Except for a handful of original buildings, the only prominent feature left standing was “Old Joe,” Gainesville and Hall County’s much beloved bronze Confederate monument. Most surviving buildings found in Gainesville consist of a mixture of architectural styles ranging from elaborate Mid-19th Century examples to flamboyant Mid-20th Century masterworks, to no academic style. Between 2006 and 2011, a community-wide historic resources structural survey was conducted over five phases, resulting in the documentation of over 2,000 resources ranging in age from 40 years and older. As shown in this survey, many buildings (over half surveyed) are of no particular academic style but rather portray elements of one or more styles. The most recurring architectural styles identified in the survey include: 19th and 20th Century Commercial, Folk Victorian, Queen Anne, Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and English Vernacular; however, examples of other styles are also found in the Gainesville area. Such styles include 9th and 20th Century Mill Housing along the city limits, various revival styles (Gothic, Spanish Colonial, Romanesque, Federal, Dutch Colonial and French Vernacular), Second Empire, Prairie, Art Deco, Art Moderne, International, Italianate, and Mid-Century Modern (American Small House and Ranch).

There are several neighborhoods and districts in Gainesville with historic and cultural significance. Four districts in Gainesville have already been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Green Street District, Brenau Historic District, Green Street-Brenau Historic District, and Gainesville Commercial Historic District. Several other districts have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register, but have not been officially added to the list.

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES (continued)

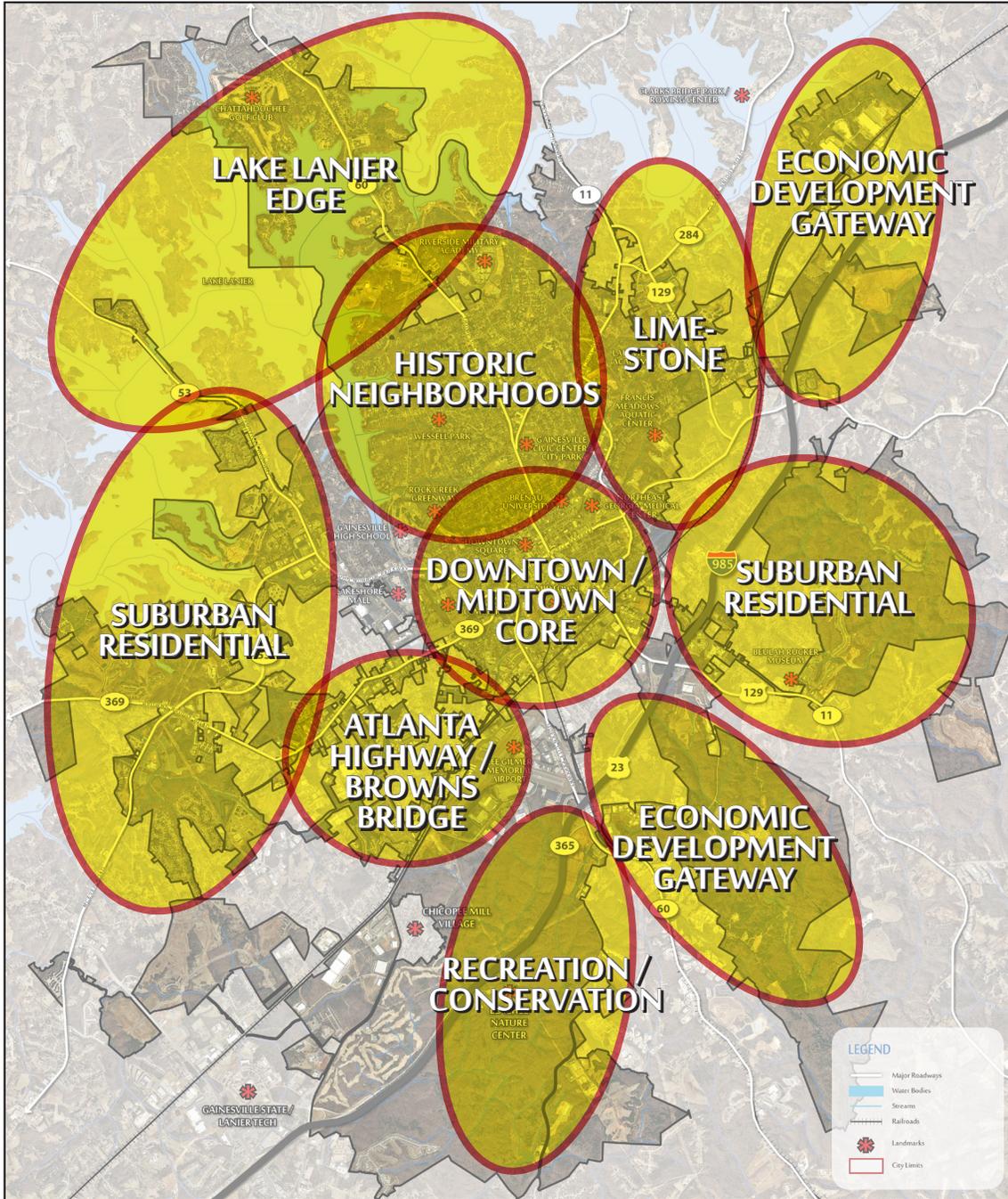
In 2001, the City of Gainesville adopted local legislation and established the Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission (GHPC). The purpose of local designation is to preserve irreplaceable and unique character elements, while allowing new construction to include architectural designs that are compatible with the neighboring historic buildings and landscapes. Further, local designation provides for design review of exterior changes through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. At present, there are a total of 111 locally designated properties located within the City of Gainesville. These properties include 60 properties located within the Green Street local historic district, 49 properties located within the Ridgewood Neighborhood local historic district, the Big Bear Café local historic landmark and the Harper-Smith House historic landmark. Furthermore, the community-wide survey, ongoing since 2006, concluded that the two existing districts could be expanded. Eight additional districts and eight landmark structures are eligible for local designation if so desired.





3 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The planning process asks communities to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered when trying to plan for the future. In doing so, communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions as to better achieve their desired vision. This section identifies the issues that are most pressing in the minds of Gainesville stakeholders, and captures the progress the city has made toward creating a Quality Community that begins to address the issues.



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

During the initial phase of planning, the consultant team and City staff conducted a wide variety of input forums including several meetings with an 8-member Project Management Team, 25 one-one-one interviews and a kick-off meeting with an 20-member Task Force. Along with previous efforts from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update, these meetings served to identify and validate the primary issues impacting the stakeholders of Gainesville.

In a City as geographically diverse as Gainesville, it became clear that stakeholder issues were highly varied depending on the location within the City to which they pertained. In order to organize issues efficiently, and to effectively guide early planning discussions, the wide range of stakeholder-enunciated issues were separated into nine distinct geographic categories as follows:

- Downtown / Midtown Core
- Atlanta Highway / Brown's Ridge
- Limestone Parkway
- Historic Neighborhoods
- Lake Lanier Edge
- Economic Development Gateways
- Suburban Residential
- Regional Recreation / Conservation
- City-Wide Issues

A summary of stakeholder issues by category are included on the pages that follow.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

DOWNTOWN / MIDTOWN CORE:

- Need for urban-scale housing, especially around Downtown and Midtown, and adjacent redevelopment areas
- The Mountain Center needs a diverse and unique program to remain competitive for convention events
- Develop the fourth side of the Square
- Implications of Hall County government occupying Liberty Mutual campus
- The ICE detention center in Midtown may be a detriment to redevelopment
- Lacking higher-end / greater variety retail, especially in the downtown core
- Small retail and dining continues to struggle around and near the city square
- Vacant land is not being utilized for infill development
- Industrial uses along Railroad / Ridge Road are negatively impacting adjacent neighborhoods, especially Newtown and Fair Street area
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center operations and expansion are constrained by a lack of parking
- Poor pedestrian connection between Brenau and downtown
- Increasing congestion on major corridors, especially Jesse Jewell, E. E. Butler and Green Street
- Sidewalks along Green Street are too close to traffic
- Intersection of Jesse Jewell and E. E. Butler Parkway is extremely congested during peak hours
- Truck loading and deliveries may be negatively impacting downtown parking
- Perception of increasing gang / crime activity south of College Avenue
- Downtown and Midtown need better marketing/ rebranding

- Architectural character of modern infill development within the historic, intown neighborhoods should be addressed.
- Historic district regulations may be too inflexible
- Flooding issues on Green Street - improvements are difficult due to DOT regulations
- Brenau University is lacking campus atmosphere, security issues with cut-through streets
- Need to explore housing products for aging population
- Downtown library considered inadequate for burgeoning metropolitan center

ATLANTA HIGHWAY / BROWNS BRIDGE:

- Future retail opportunities at the Lakeshore Mall and surrounding retail area may suffer as new regional commercial developments are located within other segments of Gainesville and Hall County
- Increasing commercial vacancies
- Hispanic community in flux
- Instances of blight, vacancies
- Visual chaos and lack of pedestrian amenities
- High-quality products available from Atlanta Highway merchants; should be marketed to a wider audience
- Atlanta Highway corridor aesthetics need improvement - underground utilities, smaller signs, streetscaping

LIMESTONE PARKWAY:

- Small, vacant Class C medical office space near the hospital may be creating “medical office building blight”
- Need for consensus on urban form
- Need better connection to core
- Future of existing watershed



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS:

- Need to protect the integrity and character of historic neighborhoods
- Code enforcement for infill development in historic neighborhoods
- Neighborhood resistance to big box development

LAKE LANIER EDGE:

- Underutilized Olympic rowing facility
- “Harbortown” development – a missed opportunity
- Lake Lanier underutilized by residents, limited public access
- Longwood Park needs improved program
- Improvements/better programming required in certain parks
- There are no “boardwalk” developments located along Lake Lanier.
- Maintenance of Lake Lanier at full pool level should be addressed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GATEWAYS:

- Blighted entry corridors from SR 365
- Incompatible industrial use with emerging residential along SR 129 / Athens Street
- Landfill sites and industrial use could be obstacles to future expansion of Allen Creek Soccer Complex
- There are vacant properties available for industrial development within the City’s industrial parks and along Athens Highway (GA Hwy 129) and Candler Highway

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL:

- Clear-cutting for new development / tree ordinance enforcement
- Stalled residential development near SR 129 (Shawshank property)
- Limited pedestrian facilities
- New residential subdivision development should be guided to encourage neo-traditional development patterns (i.e. traditional, walkable neighborhoods) in a compact, non-cul-de-sac manner.

REGIONAL RECREATION / CONSERVATION:

- Need to preserve environmentally sensitive areas (Elachee Nature Center and Chicopee Woods)
- Can do more to minimize development in natural greenspace areas



ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

CITYWIDE ISSUES:

- Lack of northern connector between Thompson Bridge road and Dawsonville Highway
- Limited/underutilized Red Rabbit transit service
- Need to consider future commuter / high-speed rail
- Need better connection with Gwinnett Transit
- Need comprehensive water strategy
- Possibility of future sewer capacity issues, especially with future medical and industrial development
- Shortage of mountain bike trails / outdoor athletic facilities
- Need a wayfinding / directional signage program for parks / public facilities
- City schools are facing increasing resource challenges
- Possibility of excessive hurdles (utility fees, taxes, building regulations, high rents) for small businesses
- Local retail is facing heavy competition from outside
- Retail leakage is affecting SPLOST revenue
- Banks are not lending to growing retail development
- Blighted entry corridors from SR 365
- Not enough protection of historic resources
- Limited resources for airport expansion
- Escalating homeless population
- Lack of funding for Safe Routes to School program
- Residential development is next to nonexistent
- Tourism is not adequately promoted
- The City contains hotels but does not have a high-end convention hotel
- Utility improvements and infrastructure are needed within some of the fringe areas to facilitate infill development.
- There are job opportunities in the City, particularly for skilled labor.
- Assess how much of the City's tree canopy exists and determine what percentage should be kept.



- Must continue to work on water quality monitoring
- Transportation alternatives should be explored for residents who commute to Atlanta.
- Peak-hour level-of-service issues along select arterials resulting from conflicts between through traffic and local traffic.
- Need to work with School System in finding sites for new facilities
- Consideration for 1-2 new fire stations in the future

- Larger, auto-oriented commercial developments impacting surrounding neighborhoods.
- Need to balance land use and traffic functions along city's arterials

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted 17 Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve her unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. This assessment is meant as a tool to give a community a comparison of how it is progressing toward these objectives set by the Department, but no community will be judged on progress. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles. A majority of positive responses for a particular objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. Negative responses may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these QCOs. Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective it may consider this assessment as a means of monitoring progress towards achievement.

The following assessment was conducted to address the Quality Community Objectives requirement of Chapter 110-12-1: Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, Local Planning Requirements. The analysis below uses the Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment Tool created by the DCA Office of Planning and Quality Growth, and is intended to identify issues and opportunities for adapting local activities, development patterns and implementation practices to the QCOs applicable to the City of Gainesville. In most cases, the City of Gainesville already has begun to address the QCOs, and will continue to work towards achieving fully the quality growth goals set forth by the DCA.



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

A. Development Patterns

I. Traditional Neighborhoods: *Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human-scale development, compact development, mixing uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.*

Assessment:

- The city adopted a new Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) on July 19, 2005, which allows mixed-use buildings within the City's Residential and Office (R-O) residential zoning classification and within the city's flexible zoning district.
- While one must seek rezoning for a Planned Unit Development (PUD), the city's PUD zoning provides maximum flexibility in the mixture and arrangement of land uses. The new ULDC provides general design principles and guidelines for specific uses, including live-work units and mixed-use buildings. The city's PUD zoning allows for mixed-dwelling unit developments that also include nonresidential, neighborhood-serving activities; as well as allows for mixed-use developments with no parameters on percentage of each use.
- The 2005 ULDC incorporates an Infill Residential Development Projects ordinance, which applies to existing vacant tracts or proposed subdivided property with the city's Residential-I (R-I) and Neighborhood Conservation (N-C) zoning districts. This ordinance incorporates "build-to" lines in lieu of front setbacks; average lot widths as opposed to a minimum width; a minimum floor area; and architectural building materials standard that requires at least 50% of the front façade be of brick, stone or split-face block masonry and other facades be of these same materials or wood clapboards or weather boarding. This section explicitly prohibits standing-seam or corrugated metal walls and vinyl siding; and outlines allowable roof materials among other site and architectural standards.
- Gainesville also has established a design review process in its historic districts (both of which were designated locally in 2005) which serves to protect existing traditional, residential-style neighborhoods.
- Gainesville initiated the creation of Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) in May 2007, as a means for continual micro-level land planning. The first of the two existing NPUs was established in May 2007 in the historically African-American community of Gainesville, while the second NPU was established in September 2008 in one of the city's most historic intown neighborhoods located just off the Downtown Square to its north.
- The city's tree ordinance, which has been amended to require the retention of at least 10% of the existing tree canopy (with additional credit given for the retention of significant trees), does require developments to include shade-bearing trees, improved frontage landscaping, buffers, and parking island trees.
- The city requires sidewalks within new development but also evaluated the existing network to see where it is lacking. The city adopted a sidewalk plan and has been working diligently to implement the plan in order to improve connectivity and to provide adequate safe access for pedestrians.



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

A. Development Patterns (continued)

2. Infill Development: *Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.*

Assessment:

- The 2005 ULDC incorporates an Infill Residential Development Projects ordinance, which is intended to prevent incompatible residential infill development, to protect the integrity of neighborhoods, and to balance the desire to preserve neighborhood character with the importance of good, quality reinvestment.
- Gainesville's Midtown Overlay Zone, which is intended to promote economic prosperity in a manner consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan and the Redevelopment Plan – The Renaissance of Midtown Gainesville, sets higher standards for the appearance and functionality of land uses and encourages mixed-use developments and the creation of more housing, employment and recreational opportunities in the Midtown Redevelopment Area. These standards impose site design and architectural standards, including parking and connectivity standards, signage regulations and landscaping requirements which are intended to help create an extension of the city's Central Business (C-B) district.
- The city has acquired an abandoned CSX Rail right-of-way, has participated in its cleanup and protection under the Georgia Brownfields Program, and is currently constructing a multi-use greenway with trail heads on the right-of-way. As well, the city is actively encouraging redevelopment in the city's Midtown Redevelopment Area (an area comprised of blight and brownfields), which is evident by the city's adoption of a Tax Allocation District (TAD).
- Some neighborhoods are declining, especially in areas where there are a large number of rentals and overcrowding conditions.
- Pockets of reinvestment are visible, particularly near the heart of the city, as the city experiences a slow correction of nonconforming situations with changes in ownership. Yet, less promotion of reinvestment or correction of nonconforming situations is occurring at the outer fringes of the city where the city / county limits interweave, as each jurisdiction has differing standards in place. Similarly, potential new development on the outskirts of the city has been hindered slightly by the lack of sanitary sewer.



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

A. Development Patterns (continued)

3. Sense of Place: *Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.*

Assessment:

- The city participates in the Main Street Cities program under the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and uses both the local government and Main Street websites to promote Downtown.
- The city has been participating in the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's VISION 2030 initiative, which is a community visioning effort intended to create a common vision for Gainesville / Hall County.
- The city recently constructed a new parking deck which provides another parking option to those visiting downtown.
- Although not located in the historic downtown core, the city has developed the nearby Francis Meadows Aquatic Center that provides a unique cultural and recreation amenity for downtown residents and visitors.

4. Transportation Alternatives: *Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.*

Assessment:

- The city continues to build and expand its existing network of sidewalks and trails. The acquisition of abandoned CSX Rail right-of-way for the development of a multi-use trail will serve as an integral connector between the existing downtown trail system that leads from downtown to Lake Lanier and the planned Central Hall Trail that will connect to Gainesville State College.
- The city also continues to acquire and add property to the existing Rock Creek / Wilshire Trail system, which is a trails system that meanders alongside an established, intown neighborhood just north of the downtown square leading users from the commercial activity of downtown to homes to Gainesville City Schools to a park at Lake Lanier.
- The Unified Land Development Code requires sidewalks in new developments, while the city has adopted a sidewalk plan to complete and add to the existing sidewalk network.
- The Hall Area Transit currently serves citizens of Gainesville, mainly through its "Red Rabbit" scheduled bus service.

5. Regional Identity: *Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.*

Assessment:

- The City of Gainesville is the economic center for the Georgia Mountains region, and continues to grow in its role as the medical hub for Northeast Georgia.
- Lake Lanier continues to contribute to Gainesville being a regional destination for recreational tourism.
- Gainesville has continued to promote its history and identity as the "Poultry Capital of the World" with the promotion of the Phoenix Society's "Struttin' with the Rooster" project that was intended to highlight local artists but did so using a natural icon of Gainesville.
- Gainesville's "Green Street" attracts many visitors with its stately Greek Revivals and other significant historic homes, as does the Alta Vista Cemetery which is the preeminent burial place that has been in operation nearly 140 years.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

B. Resource Conservation

I. Heritage Preservation: *The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining local character.*

Assessment:

- Gainesville locally designated its first historic resource in January 2004. In 2005, the city designated two residential-style districts, one along Ridgewood Avenue and the other along Green Street.
- A design review procedure is in place for any exterior material changes to the two locally-designated landmarks or within either of the two districts. Model design and construction guidelines were adopted for the residential-style districts, while the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation would be applied to any exterior work on the locally designated commercial landmark.
- The city participates in the Main Street Cities program under the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
- There are a number of properties within the city that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including Green Street, the Brenau University campus, and the Downtown Commercial District.
- A multi-phased community-wide historic resources structural survey was initiated in August 2006. This detailed architectural survey was initiated upon the completion of a windshield survey, from which recommendations were used as the premise for the multi-phased approach.
- Gainesville is a Certified Local Government (CLG).
- The City of Gainesville is pursuing National Register listing of Alta Vista Cemetery.



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

B. Resource Conservation (continued)

2. Open Space Preservation: *New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.*

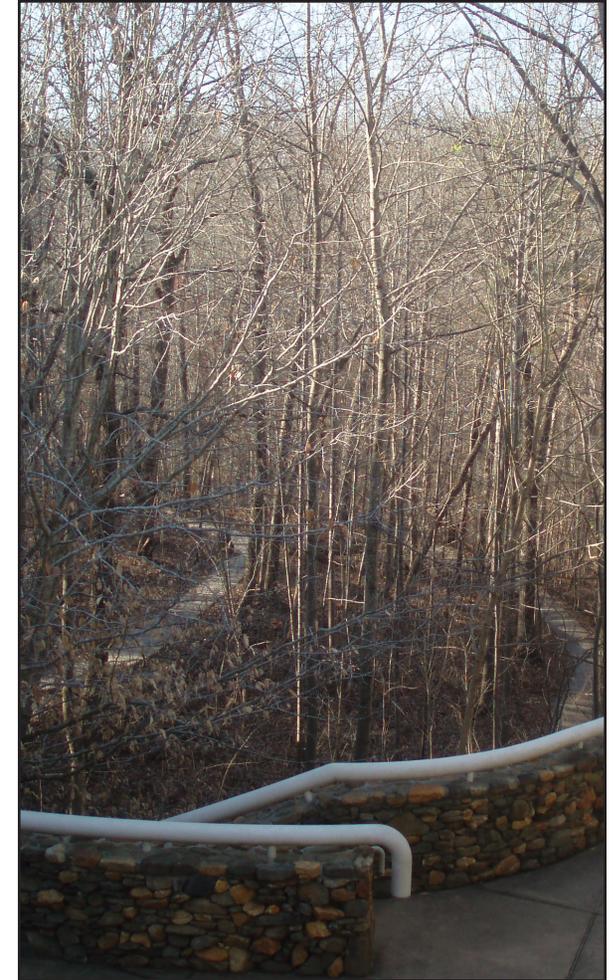
Assessment:

- Gainesville’s Unified Land Development Code provides minimum percentages of open space/greenspace in all zoning districts, with areas falling under several of the overlay zones being required to have more. As well, minimum buffers are required in most of the nonresidential zoning districts and in some cases the multi-family Residential-II (R-II) and Residential and Office (R-O) zoning districts.
- Currently, the city’s development code does not require or explicitly encourage the use of Conservation Subdivisions (or similar concept), and the use of flexible zoning to accommodate such a concept is hindered under current regulations which require rezoning.

3. Environmental Protection: *Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.*

Assessment:

- The Gainesville Unified Land Development Code includes provisions for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, including Lake Lanier, rivers and streams, flood plain, and wetlands. Minimum buffers and/or specified building requirements are outlined.
- The city also has a tree ordinance which requires the retention and protection of at least 10% of existing trees as a means for encouraging the protection of the existing tree canopy.
- The city has protections in place for stormwater management and water quality.
- A restoration plan for Flat Creek, a major water source in Gainesville, has been developed and is beginning to be implemented with the restoration of a segment in the Midtown area.



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

C. Social and Economic Development

1. Growth Preparedness: *Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.*

Assessment:

- The city's current Comprehensive Plan includes population projections for its 20-year planning perspective, to which the city often refers when making decisions about infrastructure improvements.
- The city adopts, and updates as required, a Capital Improvements Program that is intended to support current and expected growth. Also, the city adopted an Impact Fee program for Public Safety (Police and Fire) and Parks and Recreation in August 2006, as a means for providing facilities to serve new growth.
- The city adopted a service delivery strategy in 2004, and has proposed an urban growth boundary.

2. Appropriate Business: *The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.*

Assessment:

- Various agencies, including the Downtown Development Authority, Main Street, and the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce; provide prospective industries with the information necessary to make informed decisions on locating their business in the city.
- Numerous industrial parks (like Industrial Parks North, South, and West; Airport Industrial Park; Atlas Business Park; and Gainesville Business Park) throughout the city are promoted through the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce to attract appropriate industry, although vacant parcels still remain undeveloped.
- The city offers various incentives for businesses considering location in Gainesville, and has adopted a Tax Allocation District and an Opportunity Zone which includes the Midtown area and downtown as a mechanism for encouraging redevelopment.

3. Employment Options: *A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.*

Assessment:

- Gainesville has a rich diversification of businesses, including retail, office, educational and medical institutions, industrial, agricultural and manufacturing, that provide a range of job types.
- An Employment Opportunities listing is provided through various sources, including the city's website, a notebook kept in the lobby of the Human Resources Department, the local government channel, and websites of other agencies (i.e. Georgia Municipal Association, applicable organizations, etc.).
- The city has a community learning center known as Featherbone Communiversity. Founding members include Brenau University Department of Nursing, the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids, and the Lanier Technical College Manufacturing Development Center. The Communiversity provides a community-wide forum to explore diversity, discover commonalities and imagine a better future for families and the environment. It is also the home for the Gainesville offices of the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center and the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

C. Social & Economic Development (continued)

4. Housing Choices: *A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.*

Assessment:

- The current Unified Land Development Code has created an opportunity for compatible infill development.
- There is adequate infrastructure in the city for the development of additional high density single-family or multi-family housing; however, Lake Lanier water capacity may continue to hinder such development.
- Currently underway is a housing study intended to assess the existing housing stock and the availability of affordable housing.

5. Educational Opportunities: *Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.*

Assessment:

- Located near the heart of Gainesville is Brenau University, which provides for higher education locally as do Gainesville State College and Lanier Technical College, both of which are located south of Gainesville in the Oakwood area.
- Gainesville has a community learning center, Featherbone Communiversity, which provides a communitywide forum for people to explore their diversity, discover their commonalities and together imagine a better future for their families and their environment.
- The Georgia Department of Labor Gainesville Career Center offers a wide range of services to both job seekers and employers, including training and education information and referral.



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (continued)

D. Governmental Relations

1. Local Self-determination: *Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.*

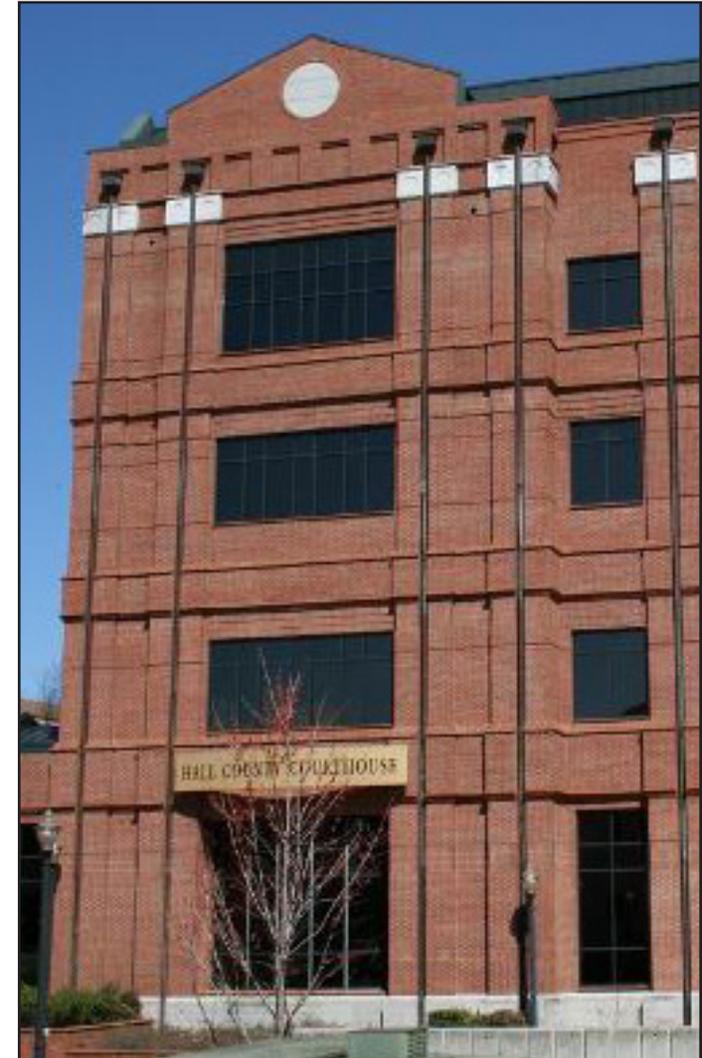
Assessment:

- The city offers various citizen-focused academies, including the Citizen Government Academy through which residents learn about the various services provided by the city – including Planning and Development which is a program designed to place participants in the roles of Planning Commission members conducting a public hearing on annexation and rezoning requests.
- City employees, elected officials, and board members attend Georgia Municipal Association training; among other comparable training workshops. The city provides individual training on planning and zoning matters, and historic preservation matters.
- The public is kept informed of land use and zoning decisions as required by State law, but the city goes above the minimum notice requirements by sending notice letters to owners within a 500-foot radius of the subject property, by including notices on the city’s website, official calendar/annual report and newsletter, and by including the notice on the local government channel.

2. Regional Cooperation: *Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.*

Assessment:

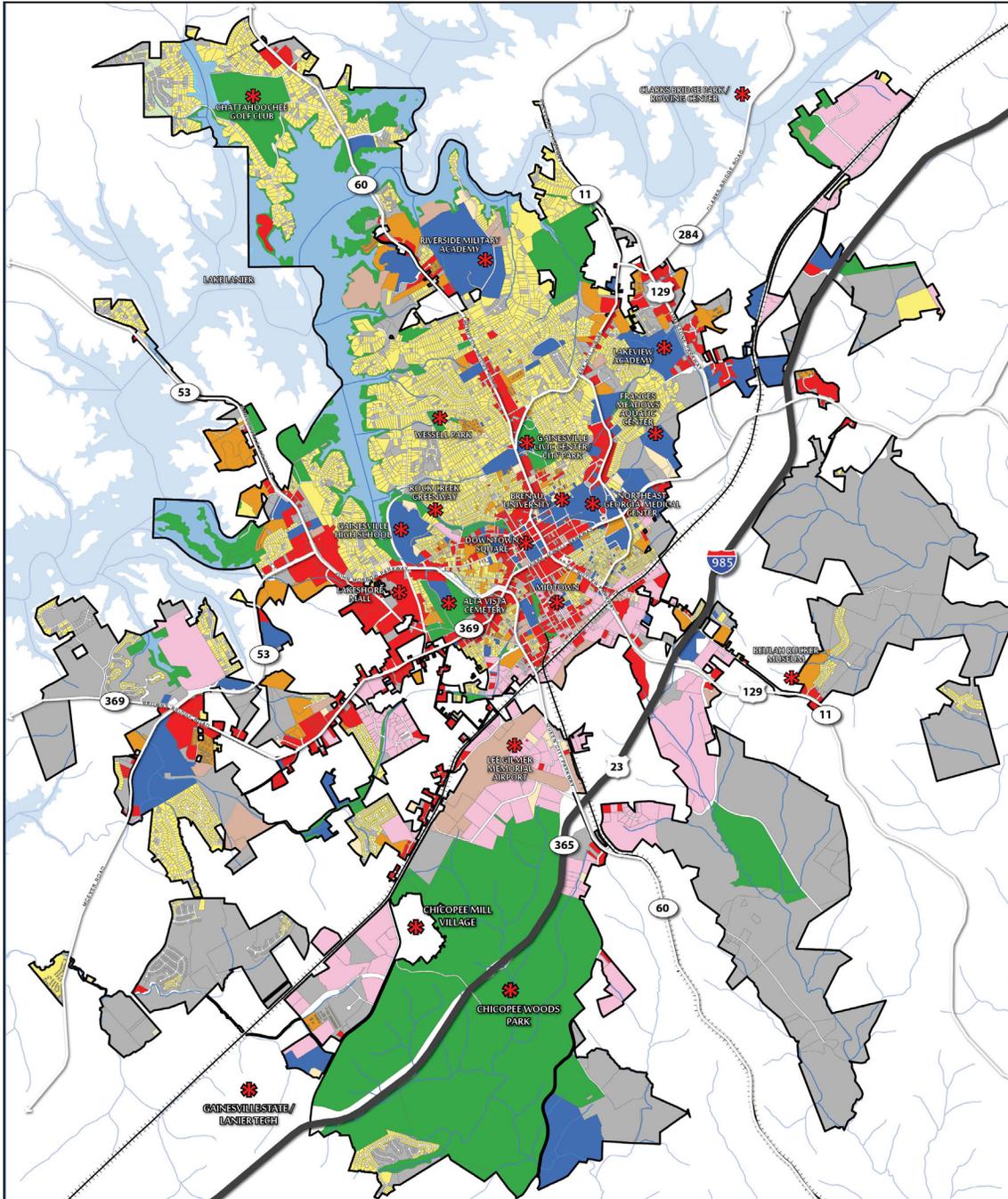
- The 2004 Comprehensive Plan was a joint Gainesville-Hall County effort. In addition, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan process has and will continue to involve various city and county officials.
- The city is generally satisfied with the current Service Delivery Strategy (SDS), which incorporates shared services within Hall County.
- Gainesville and Hall County have entered into “First Responder” / “Automatic Aid” and “Mutual Aid” agreements, given the jurisdictional boundaries interweave throughout the city.
- There is a ride-sharing program for residents of the city and the surrounding area, and it includes 13 different carpools that either originate in or lead to Gainesville.
- There is limited interaction with the other jurisdictions within and adjoining Hall County (i.e. Gwinnett County).
- Hall Area Transit and the GIS program are jointly funded by Hall County and the City of Gainesville (GIS also includes Oakwood and Flowery Branch)





4 DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

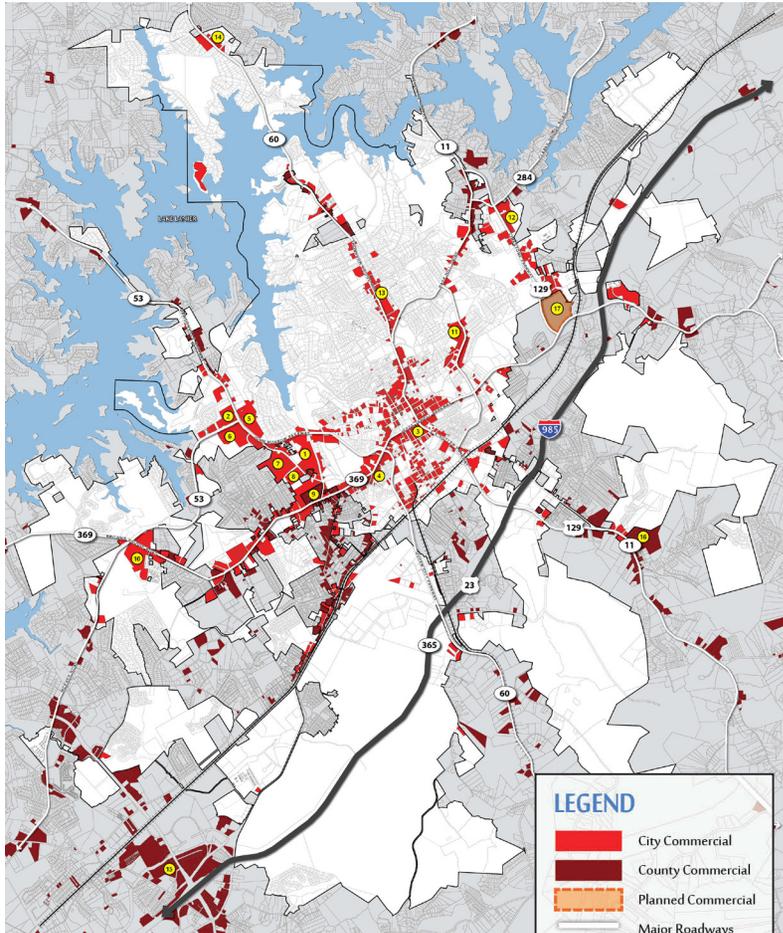
Land use management policies and programs represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. This section presents an inventory of existing land use patterns and development trends for the community, analyzes Gainesville's land use sustainability, and suggests draft Character Areas that will be the basis for public visioning and preparing the Community Agenda.



EXISTING LAND USE

The City of Gainesville is centered on its original urban core, an historic downtown that reaches for several blocks in all directions beyond the central square. This traditional business district has cohesive land uses with retail, office and institutional buildings on a traditional street grid. Older urban neighborhoods and the Brenau campus cluster tightly around this core. The highway corridors and surroundings radiating away from downtown, conversely, have uses more conditioned by topography, Lake Lanier, automobile access, and the railroads and Interstate to the south and east. Here the development pattern is dominated by larger blocks on curvilinear, dendritic street networks associated with suburban-style subdivisions and multifamily development. Along with the historic neighborhoods, residential uses make up 17% of the city's total acreage. Commercial and office development within the urban core and along the highway corridors makes up 6% of total area; while industrial development equates to 8%. The city's fringe areas have approximately 6,000 acres (28% of total) of vacant land for future development or conservation.

	Land Use Categories	Acreage	Percentage
	Single Family Residential	2,914	14%
	Multifamily Residential	616	3%
	Commercial / Office	1,292	6%
	Industrial	1,617	8%
	Conservation/Open Space/Parks	4,127	19%
	Lake	1,136	5%
	Institutional	1,364	6%
	Public Utilities	450	2%
	Vacant	5,998	28%
	Roads	1,818	8%
	Exempt	133	1%
	Total	21,500	100%



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial / Shopping Centers

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| ① Colonial Mall Lakeshore | ⑧ Target | |
| ② McEver Corner | ⑨ Blue Ridge | |
| ③ Town View Plaza | ⑩ Liberty Mutual | |
| ④ Broad Street | ⑪ Sherwood Plaza | |
| ⑤ Home Depot | ⑫ J & J Foods | ⑮ Merchants Walk |
| ⑥ Publix | ⑬ Publix | ⑯ Gainesville Truck Center |
| ⑦ Walmart | ⑭ Ingles | ⑰ New Holland Market |

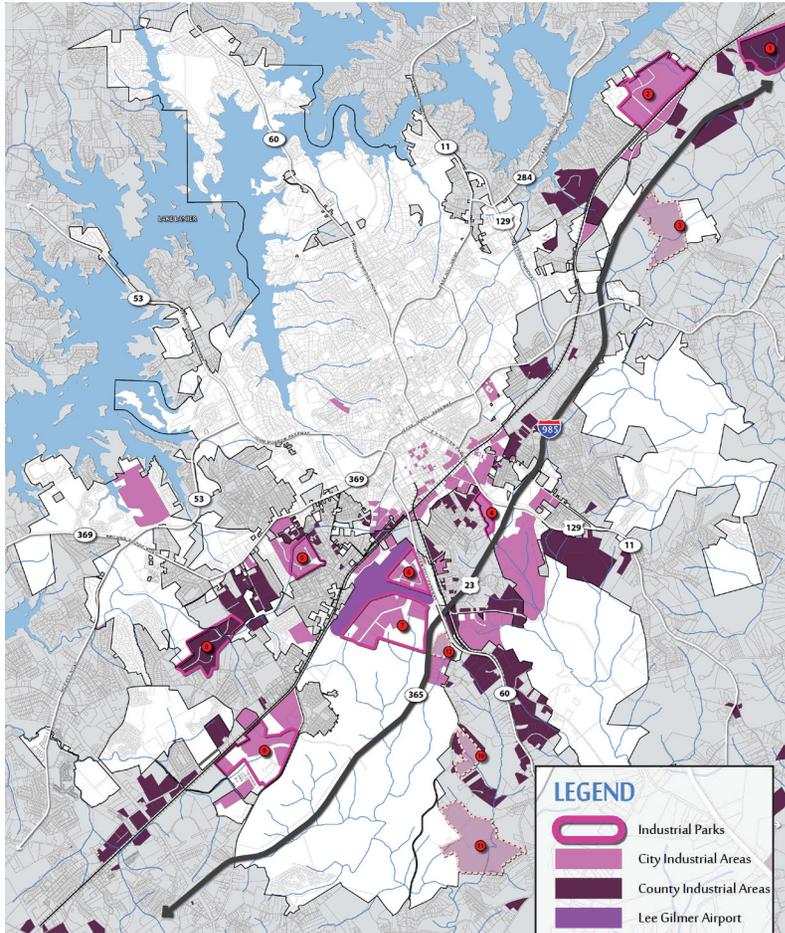
EXISTING LAND USE: COMMERCIAL

Retail and commercial land uses in Gainesville are located primarily within the central business district and along major arterial corridors radiating outward - SR 369, SR 53, SR 60, and SR 129. Most of these are businesses that provide goods and services to serve the local needs of residents. However, their development profile varies from small-scale downtown retail to suburban-style strip commercial and power centers with big box and chain retail stores.

Downtown has about 35 boutique-type stores offering a wide range of services and products such as restaurants, bars, clothing, books, home decor, music, hair styling, photographs, and others. The district is built as walkable urban environment that provides a pleasant shopping and dining experience. The retail corridors away from downtown, though, are auto-oriented and not heavily visited by pedestrians, with the exception of Atlanta Highway. New stores like Kohl's, Pet Smart, Best Buy, Michaels and others are serving to draw shoppers from the greater Gainesville area and in the process turning Dawsonville Highway (SR 53) into the city's most prominent commercial artery. The power centers of McEver Crossing and Blue Ridge have in some ways replaced Lakeshore Mall, which is struggling to find its place in the changing retail landscape. Nearby Browns Bridge Road (SR 369) is largely an auto sales and service corridor, and Thompson Bridge Road has more neighborhood serving retail even though the street cross-section is similar to SR 53.

The large influx of Hispanic households on the city's southwest side has created a fast-growing market for ethnic shops, restaurants and services. These have clustered together for economic and cultural reasons, and have greatly influenced the form and function of Atlanta Highway. While the corridor was the city's first commercial highway, it has not changed significantly beyond its product orientation and customer base. It has few sidewalks, but is heavily patronized by pedestrian and transit riders. Its three-lane section limits its traffic-carrying capacity. With its diversity and unique character, it has the potential to be a distinctive and walkable main street –but needs a comprehensive plan for public improvements and marketing.

Finally, Limestone Parkway is an emerging commercial / mixed-use corridor that will have an increasingly important role in Gainesville's future, starting with the development of the New Holland Marketplace. It is a major vehicular corridor, but will need careful oversight to preserve a balance of land uses and multimodal mobility.



INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial / Business Parks

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Gateway Industrial Centre | 7 Gainesville South |
| 2 Gainesville North | 8 Centennial |
| 3 Howard Road | 9 Gainesville West |
| 4 Interstate Ridge | 10 Danji Industrial Park |
| 5 Atlas | 11 Gainesville Business Park |
| 6 Airport | 12 PRX Office/Industrial Warehousing |

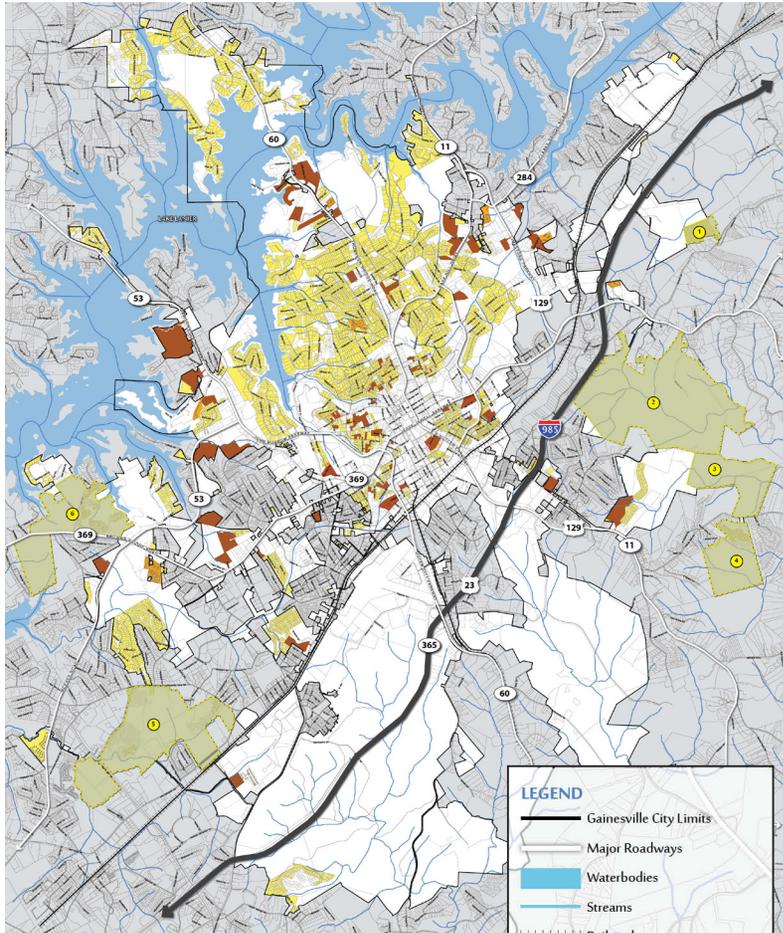
EXISTING LAND USE: INDUSTRIAL

Gainesville's industrial uses comprise only 8% of city's total area; however when combined with nearby areas in Hall County (left, dark purple) a much more complete picture emerges on the extent and impact of industrial development. Partly due to the efforts of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, Gainesville and Hall County have a very strong and diverse economic base with an aggressive economic development attitude that has helped them weather the worst of the recent recession.

Historically, Gainesville was the center for trading and supply for frontier expansion into the North Georgia Mountains. The city quickly evolved to be a wholesale transfer point for farm goods. Towards the last quarter of 19th century, railroads brought industrial growth in the form of textile mills, foundries, and manufactured products from lumber harvested and milled in the mountains to the north. The mills were built near the city's railroads with company housing in close proximity for the workers. In the 1950s poultry processing and related agricultural businesses began to outpace others, and replaced textiles as the dominant use along the railroad corridor. Gainesville became known as the "Poultry Capital of the World". Even today, agribusiness (Cargill and Purina among others) has been a primary economic driver for the city; but Gainesville has developed a balanced manufacturing economy that includes machine parts, medical equipment and more.

Additional economic diversification came with the construction of industrial and business parks connected to Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport and Interstate 985 / GA 365. The parks along the I-985 corridor include a wide range of light industrial, office, research and development, and heavy commercial uses. They are not dependent on rail, but need access to major highways. Recently, the city and the Chamber of Commerce have been successful in attracting high-tech companies such as ZFWind Power LLC, and intend to continue to focus on high-tech business attraction.

The city has six major industrial parks - Industrial Park West, Airport Industrial Park, Atlas Circle Business Park, Industrial Park North, Industrial Park South, and the Gainesville Business Park. All except Atlas and the Gainesville Business Park are located at entry points to the city. The complete list of area parks is located to the left.



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Planned Residential Developments

- 1 Oconee Circle Residential
- 2 Sussex
- 3 Gaines Mill Residential
- 4 Heritage Pointe Townhomes / SF
- 5 Mundy Mill Development
- 6 Cresswind - Planned Community for Active Adults

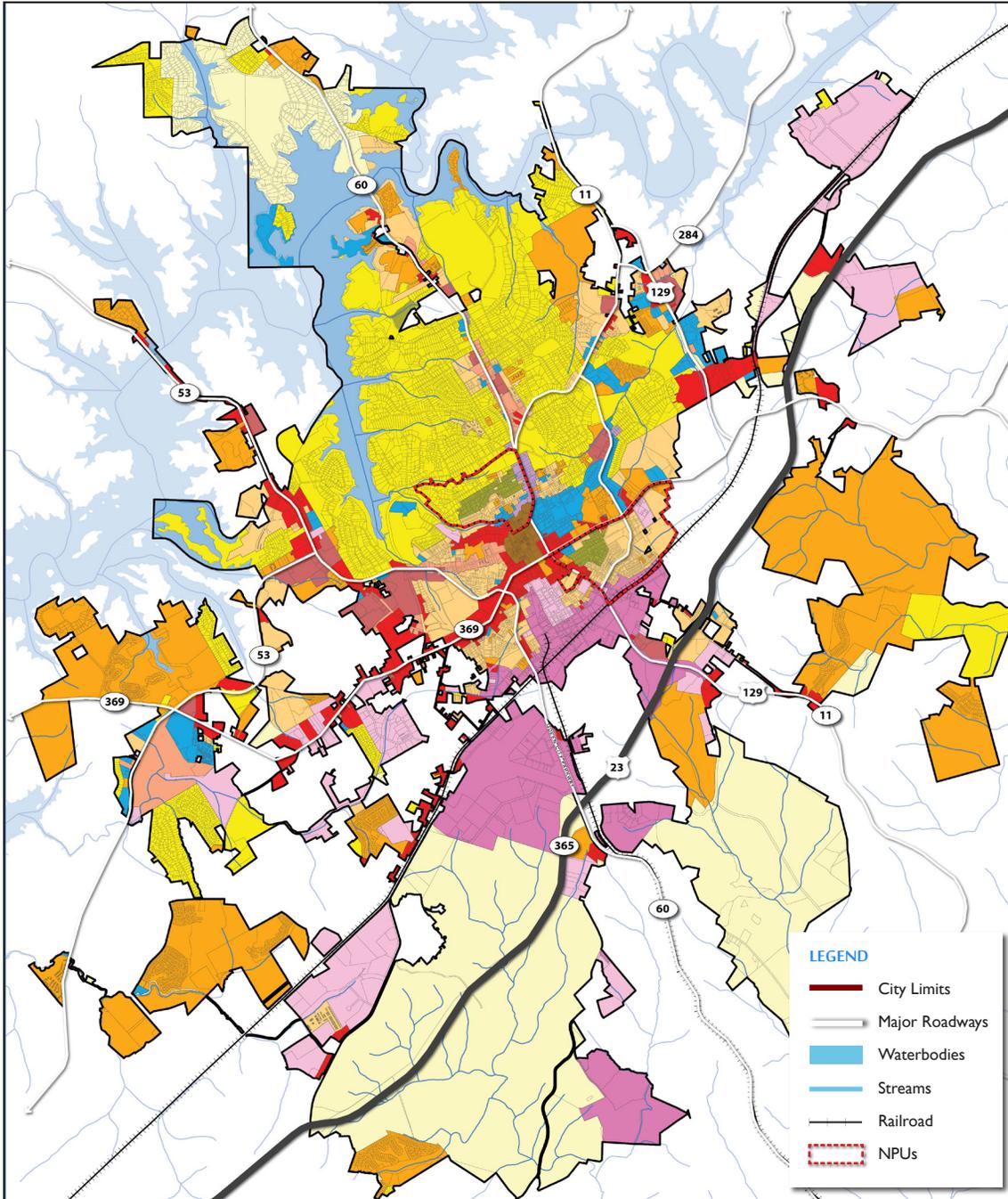
EXISTING LAND USE: RESIDENTIAL

Gainesville has been urbanizing over the last few decades, moving from a small regional city in a largely rural context, to a major satellite city in the Atlanta-Athens metro area. Its housing stock has reflected this shift as it has grown beyond traditional neighborhoods dominated largely by single-family detached homes, to a more diverse and dispersed pattern of small multifamily and single-family attached infill and larger multifamily projects. Population growth and maturing development forms are driving the city to adopt more urban scale housing that is more viable as the city grows.

Gainesville's established urban neighborhoods are located around downtown and midtown. Fair Street and Newtown, the city's older African-American neighborhoods, are southeast of downtown but have been somewhat isolated by auto-oriented commercial development and heavy industrial uses. Bradford-Ridgewood is immediately north of downtown, and includes the Ridgewood Historic District. Traditionally owner-occupied single-family, it has experienced some transitioning to rental housing in the recent past. Recently the city initiated the creation of Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs) as a means for continual micro-level land planning. The city has established two NPUs - one at Fair Street and one at Bradford-Ridgewood. Further north, the neighborhoods on both sides of Thompson Bridge Road and Park Hill Drive are stable single-family residential areas, although there are larger multifamily developments at the periphery and scattered instances of townhouse and condominium infill projects.

The city's inner postwar suburban neighborhoods were developed as a result of the construction of Lake Lanier and are oriented toward it. They are typically designed as a series of culs-de-sac or loop road subdivisions that provide maximum lake frontage on the many promontories, with one or two rolling drives that link them together and to the broader context. They privilege the single-family detached house over the public right-of-way. Sidewalks are rare, but homes are well-designed and built, and sometimes have exceptional architectural character and merit. The Island development terminating Riverside Drive is a pristine example of this type of subdivision.

Finally, several suburban-style residential projects are planned or under construction on the fringes of the city. These new developments are located on the far west side near Mundy Mill and Browns Bridge roads, and on the far east near Athens Highway. They are listed below the map to the left.



EXISTING ZONING

The current zoning in Gainesville is dominated by various residential categories across the city, except for the central core and industrial areas near the railroad and interstate. The largest residential zoning district is the R-I between Lake Lanier and downtown. The remaining zoning districts include four residential categories (R-I-A, N-C, R-II, and R-O). R-I-A zoning is used mostly for conservation / undeveloped areas like Chicopee Woods, the Chattahoochee Country Club, and the undeveloped parcels near Allen Creek. N-C, R-II, and R-O surround the downtown core and run along major arterial corridors. Commercial and office districts (O-I, N-B, C-B, R-B and G-B) are also present in the downtown core and along transportation thoroughfares. These zoning categories are intended to allow goods and services for the adjacent residential areas. Finally, two industrial districts - L-I and H-I - are located along the Norfolk Southern railroad and the I-985 / 365 corridor and provide space for the city's major economic / industrial development activity.

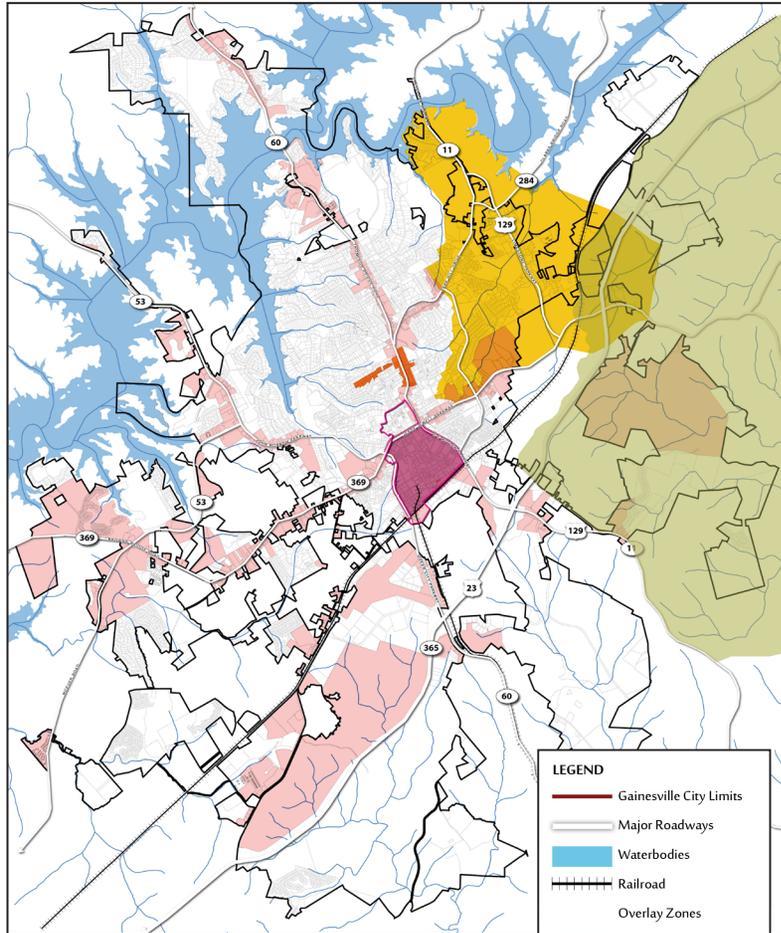
Zoning	District
C-B	Central Business
G-B	General Business
H-I	Heavy Industrial
L-I	Light Industrial
N-B	Neighborhood Business
N-C	Neighborhood Conservation
O-I	Office and Institutional
PUD	Planned Unit Development
R-B	Regional Business
R-I	Residential-I
R-I-A	Residential-I-A
R-II	Residential-II
R-O	Residential and Office



EXISTING ZONING (continued)

The PUD zoning districts are scattered throughout the city, with larger PUDs located mostly in the fringe areas (usually associated with large development projects) and smaller PUDs along major corridors. They allow for mixed-dwelling developments that can include nonresidential, neighborhood-serving activities. They also provide for mixed-use developments with no parameters on the percentages of each use.

Gainesville initiated the creation of Neighborhood Planning Units as a means for continual micro-level land planning. The City has established two NPUs - the historical African-American community (Fair Street), and historic intown neighborhoods north of Downtown Square (Ridgewood-Bradford).



OVERLAY DISTRICTS

LEGEND	
	Gainesville City Limits
	Major Roadways
	Waterbodies
	Railroad
	Overlay Zones
	Historic Districts
	Midtown District
	Limestone District
	Gateway Districts
	North Oconee Watershed Protection District
	Opportunity Zone

EXISTING ZONING: OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Overlay districts are land use management tools to help coordinate development in areas with special combinations of needs and conditions. By layering regulations in this manner communities are able to balance multiple objectives, and can allow more flexibility than conventional zoning. The City of Gainesville currently has six overlay districts employed throughout the city (a seventh, the Airport Overlay District, is largely for safety in regulating building heights within proximity of the facility.) These overlay districts provide specialized management of respective areas based on unique needs and / or objectives for those areas.

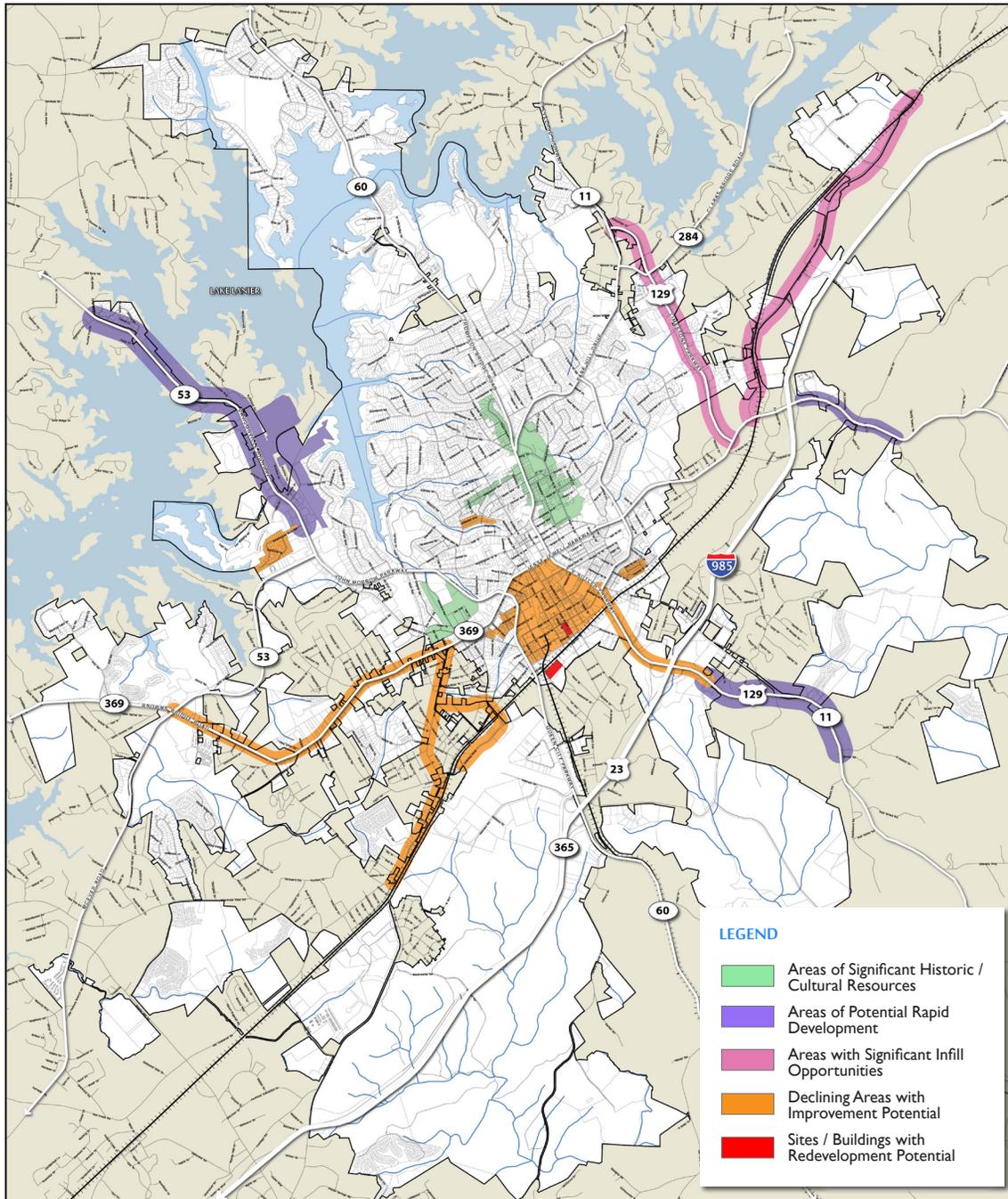
Green Street Historic District / Ridgewood Historic District –These two overlays guide development to ensure architectural compatibility with the historic homes and structures of the areas. At their heart, these districts provide for the cultural and economic viability of the historic buildings and neighborhoods which have come to define much of Gainesville’s urban form.

Gateway Corridor Overlay –These overlays have been created to shape development forms and aesthetics along the arterial corridors leading to and from downtown Gainesville. These roadways serve both as crucial corridors for through traffic but also as destinations for economic generators like regional commercial centers, retail and office operations. These overlays will help manage this variety of uses while working to create a sense of architectural harmony.

Midtown Overlay District –As discussed elsewhere, this district provides for the impetus and coordination of redevelopment by defining the city’s first Tax Allocation District and Opportunity Zone. The overlay guides infill patterns and architectural design, as well as laying the foundation for larger capital improvement projects such as the proposed Midtown greenway and park.

Limestone Parkway Overlay –This overlay was created to guide development within a critical area that is expected to see increased pressure for densities and intensities of use greater than some of the established adjoining neighborhoods. It provides special design requirements to maintain a consistent appearance to foster compatibility between old and new development, and provisions to limit extreme alteration of the terrain.

North Oconee Water Supply Watershed Protection Overlay –The intent of this overlay is to preserve the quality of the watershed and maintain its yield by minimizing the transport of pollutants and sediment to the North Oconee River, and ensuring that its water can be treated to meet state and federal drinking water standards.



AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

Analysis of the prevailing trends will assist in the identification of preferred patterns of growth for the future. More specifically such analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention with regard to management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development. Evaluate the existing land use patterns and trends within the jurisdiction of the local government (including areas that are likely to be annexed within the planning period) to identify any areas requiring special attention.

Areas Requiring Special Attention are denoted on map to the left.

A. Areas of significant natural, historic or cultural resources:

Lake Sidney Lanier not only contributes to the municipal water supply but also is a source of natural and scenic beauty. The natural and aesthetic qualities of Lake Lanier have lent themselves toward the area becoming a prime location for recreational tourism. The lake has been designated on the map as an “Areas of Significant Natural Resources”.

Gainesville’s town square is a cherished setting and the heart of the community, which the city works hard to preserve and grow economically. Green Street (and other local and National Register districts), the Brenau University campus, and Alta Vista Cemetery are notable historically-significant resources that contribute to the city’s sense of place. These areas which are worthy of preservation and protection are noted on the map as “Areas of Significant Historic / Cultural Resources”.

B. Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur:

Most rapid development will occur on the edges of Gainesville in areas dominated by auto-oriented forms and more abundant greenspace, but only where the infrastructure will allow. Given that the City of Gainesville is a thriving community with infrastructure in place (or in close proximity), annexation at the fringes or closer to the urban core is always a possibility. However, because of annexations along Dawsonville Highway (GA Hwy 53), Old Cornelia Highway, Athens Highway and White Sulphur Road, significant amounts of land could become eligible for annexation. These areas are designated on the map as “Areas of Potential Rapid Development”.

C. Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation:

Not applicable. Gainesville has an extensive utility and infrastructure system throughout the city, with enough capacity to match near-term projections for demand. The possible exceptions would be areas of State highways which are near or at capacity and could be improved for better levels of service, but these are State matters and GDOT is aware of the need.

D. Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors):

There are several residential areas scattered about the city that are in decline and need significant improvements to aesthetics to spur reinvestment. These residential areas include the Newtown community as well as properties along Hillcrest Avenue, Banks and Armour Streets, and Beechwood Boulevard. Gainesville’s Midtown has been designated a redevelopment area, for which a redevelopment plan and TAD have been adopted. Other nonresidential properties in need of improvements include the Browns Bridge and Atlanta Highway corridors and properties along E. E. Butler Parkway between Monroe Drive and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. These are essentially established residential areas with scattered distressed units, surrounded by more intense industrial or auto-oriented commercial activity that adversely impacts residential values. These areas are noted on the map as “Declining Areas with Redevelopment or Improvement Potential”.

E. Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated:

The former Gainesville Iron Works and Gainesville Mill building in the Midtown area are vacant or underutilized large-scale buildings which could be redeveloped. Deteriorated or contaminated sections of the Gainesville Iron Works should be demolished and the site redeveloped; while the Gainesville Mill buildings and grounds have the potential to be renovated as a mixed-use project. These properties are located within Gainesville’s Midtown and are noted on the map as “Sites or Buildings with Redevelopment Potential”.

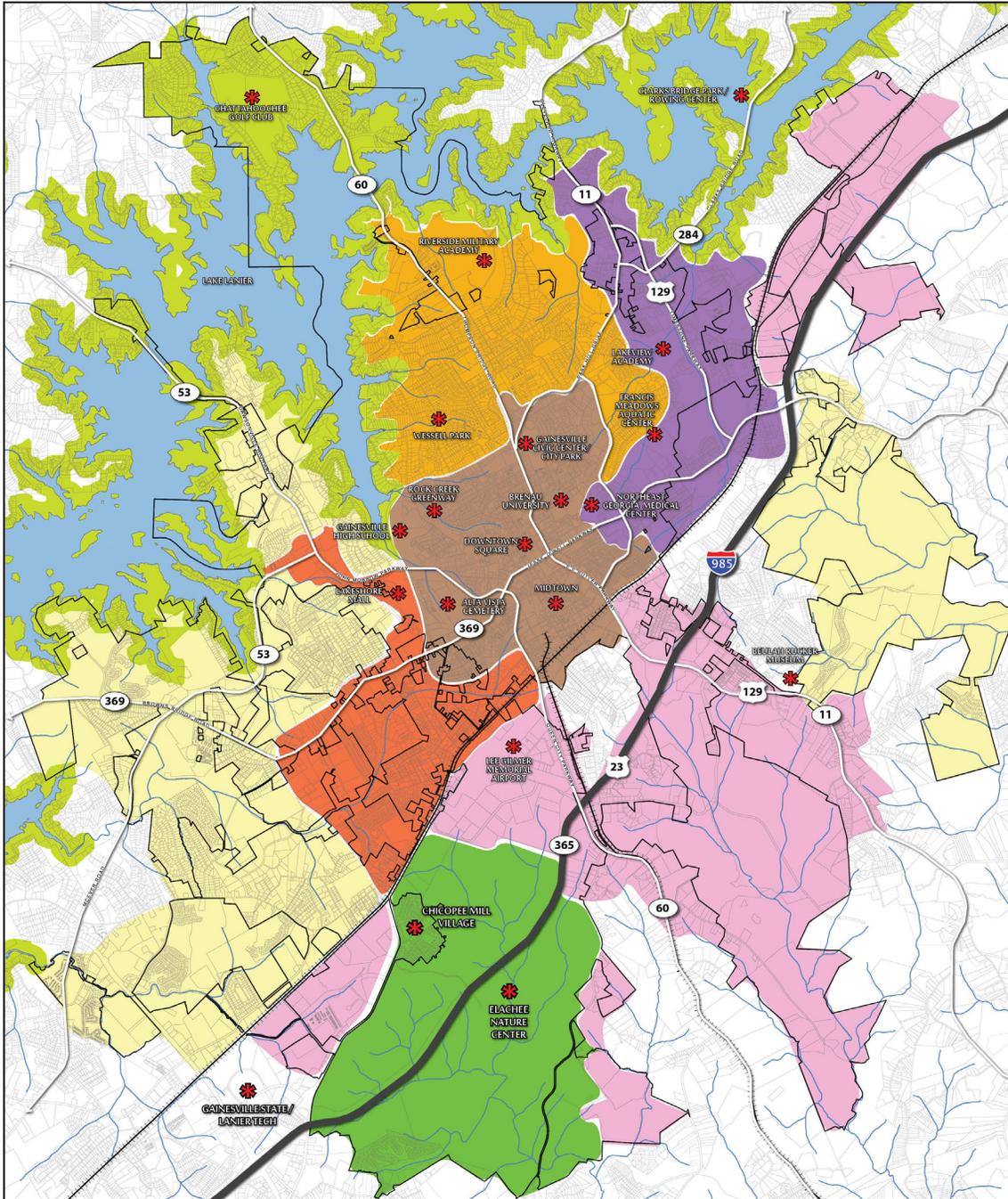
F. Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites):

Two areas for the potential for significant infill opportunities include Limestone Parkway and White Sulphur Road. These areas are shown on the map as “Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities”.

G. Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole:

Not applicable. Midtown and the South Gainesville residential areas may exhibit lower income levels and disinvestment, but neither features notable or concentrated levels of poverty. Needs for these areas have also been addressed within the “Redevelopment” area (Category D).





PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS

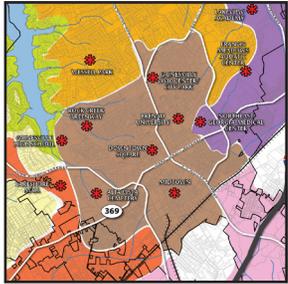
Character area planning is rooted in the idea that cities are made up of unique places with distinct functions and purpose, physical identities, and social interests. Breaking a city into its component Character Areas encourages a better understanding of what a city is and how its parts interrelate; facilitates a more manageable process to create a common vision for future growth; and helps organize strategies for capital improvements, programs and policies that implement the vision. A Character Area framework also makes it easier for citizens and stakeholders to understand the issues a city faces, without being overwhelmed by data and concepts that can often become confusing when considered in total.

The draft Character Areas identified for Gainesville are based on the geographic zones that represent aggregations of stakeholder issues. They are intended to shape community visioning, and will likely be further subdivided during the Agenda process to reflect the kinds of distinctions underlying the recommendations of the Regional Commission (See Volume 2). There are eight proposed:

- Downtown / Midtown Core
- West Side (Atlanta Highway / Brown's Bridge)
- Limestone Parkway
- Gainesville North / Historic Neighborhoods
- Lake Lanier Edge
- Economic Development Gateways
- Suburban Residential
- Regional Recreation / Conservation

A summary of each draft Character Area is included in the pages that follow.

PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS (continued)

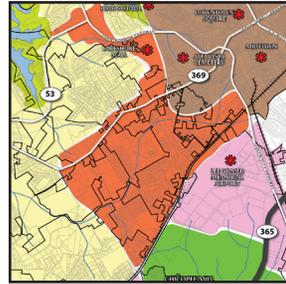


CENTRAL CORE:

The Core character area represents the historic center of the city as it existed before suburbanization. It is very diverse encompassing a downtown business district, an industrial quarter, an iconic college, and several in-town neighborhoods. Despite the variety in use, it is united by a connected street network; a complete sidewalk system; relatively small blocks; buildings that are human-scaled and relate to the public realm; and a collective sense of being at the heart of the city.

The establishment of Main Street Gainesville, the Midtown TAD, and the two NPU's point to the continuing importance of the Core. Moreover, the ongoing Midtown Greenway project, grassroots planning in the Fair Street and Bradford / Ridgewood neighborhoods, and the quest to redevelop / reposition the Georgia Mountains Center underscores the need for creating a comprehensive, community-based vision for long-term development. Pressing issues of traffic congestion, pedestrian safety / access, and sustainable economic development are priorities.

The Core is a work in progress, and its goals should reflect conversations and actions that have occurred since the last comprehensive plan. These include enhancing the urban scale and fabric; protecting historic resources; encouraging business growth; strengthening neighborhoods, preventing undesired encroachment; and connecting Brenau and the NEGA Medical Center to downtown.

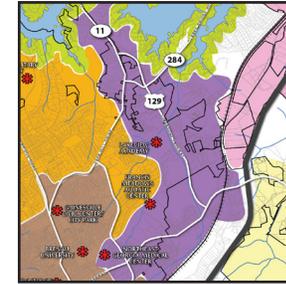


W. SIDE / ATLANTA HWY / BROWNS BR.:

The West Side is dominated by aging strip commercial uses and has been significantly impacted by the economic recession. It is centered on two highway corridors and includes an older regional mall that is struggling. Atlanta Highway has emerged as the Main Street of the Hispanic community; while Brown's Bridge Road is a patchwork of auto dealerships and repair shops, chain restaurants, and motels. A slight northern extension along Dawsonville Highway incorporates the current regional retail center at McEver Road.

While there are pockets of residential and commercial blight that contribute to a general negative impression, the West Side has arguably one of the greatest concentrations of small businesses in the city, an attribute worth nurturing. Proximity of residential areas (and to older industrial parks) makes the area a test case in advancing Smart Growth by improving mobility and connectivity. Still, the chaotic physical environment and visual clutter, while lively and idiosyncratic, presents an obstacle to wider acceptance and patronage.

Goals for the West Side will include fostering long-term economic viability and sustainability; balancing vehicular needs with other forms of mobility; improving the pedestrian environment; identifying key catalyst redevelopment sites and strategies; empowering stakeholders to engage in the process; and creating a vision that can be embraced by both the city and Hall County.



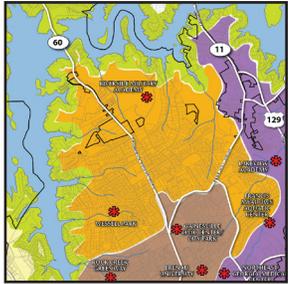
LIMESTONE PARKWAY:

Limestone Parkway is the primary transportation / economic development corridor defining the northeast side. It is largely undeveloped, but has begun to take shape with new commercial, denser residential, small office / institutional, and medical facilities. It is also anchored by Lakeview Academy, the Francis Meadows Aquatic Center, and two city schools - New Holland Elementary and Gainesville Middle. The southern end will be radically reconfigured through the impending development of New Holland Marketplace, and the long-term transformation of the mill grounds and village into a distinctive urban neighborhood.

The design quality of existing structures is relatively high, with attention given to masonry exteriors and smaller, more pedestrian-friendly parking lots reflecting the provisions in the Limestone Corridor Overlay. The city has targeted the area for emerging medical services and research, capitalizing on the influence of the Northeast Georgia Medical Center and related professional offices.

The Limestone Parkway Corridor has a viable template for growth through the overlay district and the focus on medical expansion. Additional goals will be to assess the road's function and role in the evolution of the City's circulation system; foster compatible residential development; protect the adjacent stream corridor; and support the transformation of New Holland.

PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS (continued)



GAINESVILLE NORTH / HISTORIC NBDS.:

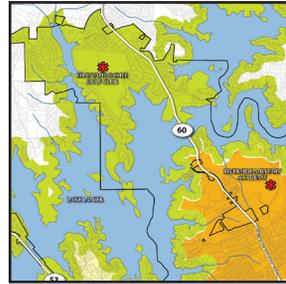
This area is comprised of historic residential neighborhoods north of downtown on either side of Thompson Bridge Road, Riverside Drive and Park Hill Drive. It embodies the characteristics of traditional design – interconnected streets, small blocks, and modest lot sizes with homes in close proximity. Most importantly, there is a wide variety of housing forms / sizes but a consistent typology of facades and porches. The area also includes many homes worthy of historic listing, as evidenced by the findings in the completed phases of the historic resources structural survey.

Gainesville North also includes the small commercial node at the northern terminus of Green Street, which features the Civic Center, the City Park complex, Riverside Military Academy, and the collection of commercial structures along Riverside Drive. It is a vital area that serves residents throughout the city. It also provides a strong sense of place for neighborhood-scale dining and retail, and does not intrude on nearby residences.

In general these neighborhoods are considered stable and vibrant; the primary goal should be to maintain their character. Likewise, the small commercial area should be preserved, with attention given to maintaining economic vitality and the general scale of development. However, the long-term role of Thompson Bridge Road should be clarified.

GAINESVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Urban Collage, Inc. | The Jaeger Company | Clark Patterson Lee | Huntley Partners | Bleakly Advisory Group

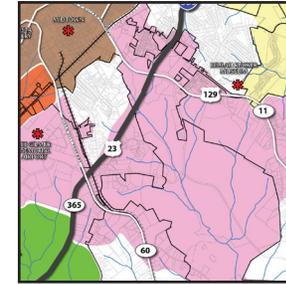


LAKE LANIER EDGE:

Lake Lanier forms most of the northern boundary of the city and is a major reason why Gainesville has maintained its wealth and desirability during the recent recession. It is surrounded by some of the most exclusive neighborhoods in the city, but has limited public access points and is largely hidden from view (except when crossing bridges). The lake has become an emblem for the pressing issues like regional cooperation / governance, the role of conservation, and the shrinking capacity of natural resources.

While this character area is driven by the presence and form of the lake, it is less about the lake as an object and more about the city's relationship to it. The coastline is serrated by small coves and tributary streams, with rolling and forested land. Peninsulas project into the lake with uses that orient toward it. Despite limited control over the lake edge, the city might use this opportunity to examine what growth might mean for related wetlands and ecosystems.

In the stable residential areas, preservation of the existing character and natural environment is paramount. However, there may be ways to restore or enhance the biodiversity of the shoreline and improve access, as well as extend the essence of the lake further inland. There also may be ecological principles specific to the context that could apply to the sensitive treatment of the lake edge.



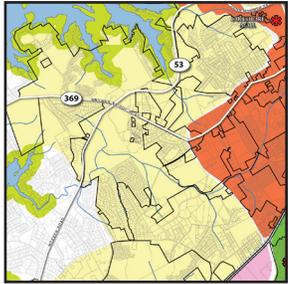
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GATEWAYS:

This character area represents the industrial, warehousing and other commercial enterprises that parallel the I-985 and Norfolk Southern railroad corridor. Because many of these industrial / business parks and facilities were built over the last 30 to 40 years, they exhibit modern industrial development norms such as single-story large footprint buildings, extensive parking / loading areas, and reliance on truck transportation. They are also highly visible to motorists entering the city from the south and east, and therefore act as gateways to Gainesville.

The area includes large, forested tracts of natural land and coexists with recreation and conservation landmarks like the Allen Creek Soccer Complex, the Elachee Nature Center, and the Chicopee Woods Agricultural Center. It also encompasses the Athens Street corridor, which was a primary entry to the city from the south and been the subject of recent revitalization planning efforts.

The primary goal for the area is to continue to support economic development while preserving and strengthening important natural and cultural resources. Other goals include creating a positive impression for visitors entering the city from I-985; supporting the improvement of Athens Street; creating better connections to the Downtown / Midtown area; and preserving the historic Chicopee Mill and village.

PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS (continued)

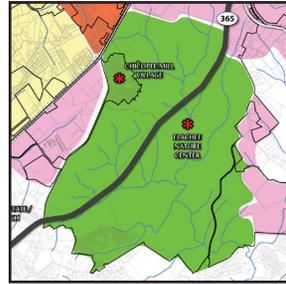


SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL:

This character area includes existing or planned projects with two important distinguishing features: locations on the outskirts of the city with limited pedestrian connections; and development on large greenfield sites, typically by one entity following a single master plan or plat. They also exhibit common features such as larger lot sizes and standardized housing types (in older developments), and amenities such as pools and recreation spaces. Housing in suburban residential areas ranges from starter homes to premium estates, and older (30+) product to new construction.

While most areas are stable and provide good basic housing stock, some may be facing foreclosure issues, limited reinvestment, and transitioning of surrounding land uses. Other areas may include projects that have stalled due to the collapse of the housing market. High-end properties are generally insulated from these problems; but even these developments may be affected by the economic slump and have stalled.

The goals for this area will vary. Newer projects designed around small lot sizes will be supported. Stable, strong subdivisions will be targeted for preservation, while those that are struggling economically will need attention to avoid a collapse of property values or a transition in tenure or use. Those closer to central Gainesville may have opportunities for pedestrian connectivity or other coordinated infill.



REGIONAL RECREATION / CONSERVATION:

This district represents the adjoining property of the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve, the Elachee Nature Center and the Chicopee Woods Golf Course. With the exception of the golf course this is a unified patch of greenspace on the southern fringe of the city, providing environmental benefits as well as cultural and educational amenities for residents throughout the region.

Chicopee Woods encompasses a sizable valley that straddles I-985 and abuts the Atlanta Highway Corridor. It acts as a partial buffer/boundary for Gainesville's urban form and the eastern frontier of Oakwood at US 332. The Nature Center and the Golf Course serve to drive tourism and support to the area, while the City also supports the facilities as premier benefits to the community. These lands are in formal protective, conservation covenants and will be preserved throughout the planning time frame.

Note: Additional lands throughout the city may contain environmentally sensitive areas and/or protected greenspace, but they will be included within their own character areas.

