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## PART 3: IMPLEMENTATION

This final section of the Unified Plan is the Plan's "user's manual." This section provides guidance to citizens, local agency staff, and elected officials regarding how to interpret and apply key concepts and policies contained within the Plan.

The central feature of Part 3 is a collection of detailed implementation summaries for each of the 33 policies that were listed under the five themes in Part 2. These summaries are organized to provide:

- A synopsis of the policy,
- The benefits the policy will facilitate,
- Key implementation steps necessary to achieve policy benefits, and
- Guidance for decisions to further implement the policies.

These summaries also show:

- Primary responsibility for implementation,
- Key implementation challenges, and
- Measures of success.

Organizing this information in one place and using a consistent format for each policy provides all parties – decision makers, administrators, and those affected by such decisions and processes – with a shared understanding of

what should and must be accomplished to make the policy successful over time.

The Short Term Work Program (STWP) prioritizes and identifies the key policies that should be initiated and in some cases completed within five years. Not all policies are included in the five-year Short Term Work Program. This is because it is not possible to begin all policies within five years. The policies not included in the five-year STWP are important, but the Plan's success does not hinge on their short-term implementation. However, it is important to remember that these policies can be initiated when needed and appropriate, based on available funding, manpower, and changing circumstances.

The sections entitled 'Using the Plan and Its Maps' and 'Changes to the Zoning Resolution and Development Regulations' provide policy guidance about the appropriate zoning districts for specific areas of the county. The sections also recommend important changes to the County's current zoning regulations. The final section of the Plan, 'Monitoring and Updating the Plan', provides guidance on how to track the Plan's effectiveness and amend it.

## A. POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

### A.I Theme I: Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health

#### POLICY A.I.I: Promote Major Mixed-Use Developments

##### Synopsis of the Policy:

Gwinnett must develop its own regional “mixed-use centers” if it is to absorb the highest levels of economic development, especially office growth, that are forecast for the County. Not being prepared to accept this office growth when it happens will possibly mean losing it to other jurisdictions. These centers will provide a mix of jobs, housing, recreation, and civic uses as well as create a stronger “sense of place” than current more-suburban centers. Regional “mixed-use centers” will require a substantial investment in capital facilities from the County to reach their full potential. Therefore, capital investment should be concentrated in growth nodes designated by the Board of Commissioners. Through the years, the County has already made major infrastructure investments in several commercial nodes, such as Gwinnett Place Mall, the Civic Center, the Mall of Georgia, and Gwinnett Village. While not ruling out the development of others, these commercial nodes are the most likely potential candidates to become the County’s regional mixed-use centers.

##### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Revitalization of I-85 corridor
- Increased number of local, high-wage jobs
- Increased redevelopment opportunities
- Development focused in specific areas
- Preservation of rural areas
- Focused capital investments



**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Revise Zoning Resolution to permit higher densities and more by-right uses in designated mixed-use centers	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Make proactive investments in designated mixed-use centers (e.g., upgrade roads and sewers, parking structures, civic buildings, landscaping, etc.)	Board of Commissioners, Various County agencies and CIDs
Revise approval process so that it is less complicated and easier to execute. For example, specify standards that if met allow for automatic, administrative approval of allowed uses	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Funding for infrastructure improvements will be needed
- Land assembly could be difficult
- Delegation of some development decisions to authorities and staff to simplify the approval process

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised Zoning Resolution
- Shorter amount of time for permit approvals
- Increased development activity within mixed-use centers
- Increased number of jobs within mixed-use centers
- Increased County investment in mixed-use centers



## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.1.2: Protect Large, Well-located Parcels/Areas For Office Use Through Proactive Rezoning

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Office development and the attendant jobs that it brings will ultimately produce the highest form of sustainable economic development for Gwinnett County. The ability to attract a larger share of the regional office market is vital to the long-term economic health of Gwinnett. To help ensure that prime office sites, hospitals and related medical uses are available and not developed for other uses prematurely, the County should initiate a comprehensive zoning plan that better protects the best sites for office development. Proactive area-wide zoning actions based upon careful study and analysis could be an effective way to implement this policy.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased number of high-wage jobs
- Development focused in specific areas
- Strengthen the tax base with targeted growth
- Faster rezoning approval and permitting process for appropriate uses



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Determination of which parcels to protect for future office use	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division
Rezone parcels to office use	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Protect parcels designated for office use rather than rezoning these parcels to uses that do not support sustained economic health and higher wage jobs in the County	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Market pressures to put land to use before office market develops in Gwinnett

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Revised zoning maps
- Revised Zoning Resolution
- Increased number of high-wage jobs
- Land designated and zoned for office use is not rezoned for other uses

### POLICY A.1.3: Strategic Placement of Sewer

#### Synopsis of the Policy:

The County will not have the resources to provide both new sewer connections in the east and rehabilitate older sewers in the western and southern portions of the County. The eastern part of Gwinnett currently remains largely unsewered today. While large sewer interceptors and regional pump stations were envisioned for that area over the years, sewer extensions have never been designed nor constructed due to budget limitations. Parcels that have built out on sewer have done so primarily through the use of developer-built wastewater pumping stations and force mains designed to convey flows relatively long distances to existing sewer infrastructure. Constructing interceptors and large regional pump stations in this area of the County would be expensive and would likely preclude the ability of the County to expend dollars on rehabilitation and expansion of existing sewer infrastructure in the western and southern areas of the County. This would limit densification efforts in areas needing revitalization and could in turn limit economic development in the County as a whole. Therefore, limiting sewer extensions in the east is a step toward fostering the type of growth which can revitalize Gwinnett and heighten economic development for the future. Ensuring that the sewer system is upgraded and expanded in key locations is one of the most important measures Gwinnett can take to protect its economic development potential.

Reserving sewer capacity is tied directly to limiting sewer extensions into the eastern portions of the County. One method of doing this is to reserve sewer capacity and make it available for office, mixed-use employment and hospital expansions in key locations. Currently, sewer transmission system expansions are needed in the major employment and mixed-use areas. Any gaps in capacity verses demand that may arise while the expansion process is underway should be managed in part by making employment sectors the priority user. With this, any problems associated with increasing sewer system capacities will be less likely to impede major employment growth.

Retaining a more “rural” eastern edge can also help promote Gwinnett as a desirable place to live for those seeking rural or “estate housing” lifestyles based on low-density, large-lot environments. Because owners and top management prefer to live near their businesses, establishing such opportunities fits in with the economic development



goal of attracting high quality, high paying jobs to Gwinnett. Even if housing in eastern Gwinnett does not all evolve as executive housing enclaves, limiting sewer extension in eastern Gwinnett is still paramount to the County's fiscal health strategy because low-density housing of average value costs the County more than it returns in revenue, unlike the higher density, mixed-use environments.

#### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Development focused in specific areas
- Rural estate preservation
- Provide executive housing
- Environmental conservation
- Growth directed to desired areas
- Maintain fiscal health of County
- Local job growth
- Increased number of high-wage jobs

**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to establish guidelines to limit the transfer of wastewater across sewer basin boundaries in the eastern area of the County (to include limiting the construction of developer built wastewater pump stations and force mains as well as tunnel gravity sewers).	Board of Commissioners
Action to identify specific boundaries and limit the extension of sewer into the areas of eastern Gwinnett County and to begin reserving sewer capacity for office, mixed-use and hospital expansion uses identified in the Unified Plan.	Board of Commissioners
Action to direct the Department of Water Resources to modify the Water and Sewer Master Plan accordingly.	Board of Commissioners
Modify sewer extension policy to prevent or limit new connections.	Department of Water Resources
Determine amount of excess sewer capacity in those areas designated for office development and estimate how much capacity should be retained for future office employment use	Department of Water Resources
Evaluate the most appropriate zoning district to rezone properties that will have limited or no sewer. Create new zoning district if needed.	Department of Planning and Development
Rezone areas not served by sewer that will have limited or no sewer service.	Board of Commissioners

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Pressure to rezone eastern area to more suburban uses.
- Limiting length and location of sewer main extensions could be difficult.
- Difficult to reserve capacity for a future use in some areas while current development is seeking service.
- Existing sewer facilities may be insufficient to provide the necessary treatment and transport capacity.
- The Georgia EPD and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District are exploring the use of water management policies to include consumptive use budgets in the permitting process. Because septic systems are currently considered 100 percent consumptive use, the long-term use of such systems could affect future water withdrawal permits if these kinds of policies were to be implemented in the future.

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised sewer policy
- Slower growth of total length of sewer system
- Slower growth of sewer costs
- Sewer capacity available when office uses arrive
- Office developers respond to/apply for these sites
- Fiscal outcomes in keeping with Unified Plan projections



## **POLICY A.I.4: Use Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for Rural Estate Housing in the East**

### **Synopsis of the Policy:**

Retaining a more “rural” eastern edge within the County can help promote Gwinnett as a desirable place for those seeking “estate housing” lifestyles based on low-density, large-lot environments. This policy is mutually supportive of several others, including:

- Establishing more executive housing, because owners and top management prefer to live near their businesses.
- Promoting University Parkway as Gwinnett’s research and development belt, because eastern Gwinnett would be the most likely location for needed executive housing to support the R & D businesses, which would in turn attract high quality, high paying jobs to Gwinnett.

All of these goals would be enhanced by the goal of strategic placement of sewer, because shifting sewer expansion to the I-85 and University Parkway (GA Highway 316) corridors would promote both redevelopment and support the County’s long term economic future.

Transfer of development rights (TDR) separates a parcel’s potential development rights from the parcel itself. The separation allows the development right that would have been constructed on the parcel to be sold and used on a different parcel in a different area of the County. The desired outcome of a TDR program is that the sending parcels would remain undeveloped or developed at very low densities while still allowing the landowners to receive development associated income. Receiving areas would be developed at higher intensities than otherwise allowed.

TDRs may also be a tool to promote rural clustering based on shifting development rights to designated parcels within the rural area. This pattern would permit limited extension of costly sewer system requirements and reduce the County’s long-term capital and operating costs for its sewer network. Residents of such a “rural” environment would have less need for such amenities as publicly-owned passive open space, resulting in another incremental reduction of overall County expenditures.



### **Potential Policy Benefits:**

- Development focused in specific areas
- Rural estate preservation
- High quality jobs attracted
- Environmental conservation
- Redevelopment in receiving areas

**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Policy direction to applicable department to study and develop an implementation plan for a TDR program	Board of Commissioners
Conduct TDR sending and receiving area analysis and recommend a measure of development rights	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with the Economic Development Division and Law Department
Specify sending and receiving areas	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with the CIDs and Board of Commissioners
Set the number of development units associated with sending and receiving area parcels	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Determine whether the system will include a TDR bank or be a market driven system	Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Division, and Board of Commissioners
Set up TDR marketing program	Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Division, and Communications Division
Adopt a TDR ordinance	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Need to create a limit on by-right development in receiving areas so that there is an incentive to purchase development rights from the sending area
- Opposition to higher densities in receiving areas
- Varying market demand for development in the receiving areas may necessitate purchase of additional development rights
- Development limits placed on sending areas

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- TDR analysis conducted
- Sending and receiving areas mapped / specified
- Program set up and marketed
- Ordinance adopted
- Preservation of the rural eastern edge of Gwinnett through targeted amount of land utilized as sending parcels
- Increased densities in the receiving areas

## POLICY A.I.5: Revise Current Millage Rates

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Gwinnett's current system of raising revenues – relying on SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Tax) and new development's property taxes – is becoming insufficient to keep up with revenue needs. These current revenue sources are geared toward a rapidly growing county, and they are not sustainable as Gwinnett County's growth slows and reaches build out. One of the first steps the County can take to help fund the County's future fiscal needs is to maintain the millage rate as property values increase. This will allow tax revenue to increase as a result of increased property values. Fiscal impact analysis, conducted in conjunction with the Department of Financial Services, suggests that the County may also need to consider an even more aggressive strategy. As the population of the County grows and increases the demand for services, even higher millage rates will be needed to keep pace with the demand.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Raise revenue
- Address fiscal impact concerns
- Provide funds for other County service needs

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Political opposition to "raising taxes"

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement a Study Seeking Direction Regarding Millage Rates	Board of Commissioners
Develop education and outreach program about County's current and future financial condition, strategies to address the situation, and the impact of doing nothing	Department of Financial Services in collaboration with the Communications Division
Revise millage rates	Board of Commissioners

## **POLICY A.1.6: Promote University Parkway (SR 316) Corridor as Gwinnett's Research and Development Belt**

### **Synopsis of the Policy:**

The University Parkway (SR 316) corridor already has some of the feel of a high-tech corridor. With the appropriate investments in transportation, including upgrading University Parkway to a limited access parkway, the County can take greater advantage of resources such as the existing and expanding medical center, the existing industrial parks, the airport, the Georgia Gwinnett College, and Gwinnett Technical College and use them as anchors for a stronger Gwinnett-based high tech-biotech business complex. The corridor can also take advantage of the airport and the emerging lifestyle amenities in downtown Lawrenceville.

Although SR 316 is an important economic development center, it will, and should, differ from the economic development centers and mixed-use nodes in the County's I-85 corridor. The SR 316 corridor will likely build-out as a set of suburban, campus-style office parks inhabited by related activities or even single user owners or tenants. These parks may have their own infrastructure and technical support requirements. Zoning and other related development policies and incentives will need to treat this corridor accordingly. Encouraging an "enterprise" relationship with area colleges and the Gwinnett Medical Center, evaluating the future of the airport, evaluating the needs of research and development businesses and then revising the zoning regulations and implementing a market strategy are all steps that will promote this valuable resource.

### **Potential Policy Benefits:**

- Local job growth
- Increased number of high-wage jobs
- Development focused in specific areas



**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Develop and implement a strategy to upgrade University Parkway to a limited access highway	Department of Transportation and Board of Commissioners
Determine specific areas along corridor to focus development	Department of Planning and Development in cooperation with Economic Analysis Division
Determine what amenities will attract high tech and research and development firms	Economic Analysis Division in cooperation with Chamber of Commerce and Partnership Gwinnett
Develop “enterprise” relationship with Georgia Gwinnett College, Gwinnett Technical College and Gwinnett Medical Center to encourage the transition of promising research ideas into successful businesses	Economic Analysis Division in cooperation with Georgia Gwinnett College, Gwinnett Technical College, Gwinnett Medical Center, Chamber of Commerce, and Partnership Gwinnett
Revise Zoning Resolution and Development Regulations to promote desired uses and amenities	Department of Planning and Development in cooperation with Economic Analysis Division, Board of Commissioners
Develop and implement promotional materials to attract businesses	Economic Analysis Division in cooperation with Chamber of Commerce and Partnership Gwinnett

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Revision of Zoning Resolution and Development Regulations
- May require County infrastructure investments (e.g., roads, sewers, high speed internet access, etc.)
- Difficult to attract enough businesses early on to create the agglomeration effect needed to attract additional business

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised regulations adopted
- Collaboration with college in expansion plans and a College master plan
- Increased number of high tech and research and development businesses in the corridor



## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.I.7: Employ Debt Financing of Major Infrastructure

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Gwinnett uses a “pay as you go” approach to fund major infrastructure projects. However, with State and Federal funds becoming limited and revenue generated by SPLOST and property taxes expected to decrease, the County will need to look at additional ways to pay for major infrastructure projects. The County has taken some initial steps to use debt financing, specifically to fund a major sewer treatment expansion, but it is likely that the County will need to greatly expand its use of debt financing to help support key public sector initiatives and improvements.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Speed up the provision of County infrastructure
- Provide funding for roads and transit
- Increase roadway capacity
- Infrastructure funding to support redevelopment of major mixed-use centers



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Determine costs for capital improvement projects	Various departments, for example, Financial Services, Transportation, Support Services, Community Services, etc.
Issue bonds to cover infrastructure costs	Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Very different method of paying for projects than the County currently employs

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Capital funds available for priority projects
- Issuance of bonds
- Faster provision of infrastructure

## POLICY A.I.8: Obtain Appropriate Balance of Retail

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Segments of Gwinnett are over-served by conventional retail development. Currently, Gwinnett has the lowest dollar per square foot yield on retail floor space in the region, which suggests the impact of too many retailers competing for too few dollars. An over supply of retail could also play a role in the number of empty stores and declining strip centers in the County. Vacant and economically blighted retail centers often affect surrounding residential areas. To ensure the long-term economic health of Gwinnett County, the current land use pattern of older, distressed strip malls and empty commercial structures along major arterial corridors must be changed.

Two potential ways to make older, surplus retail strip centers candidates for redevelopment are overlay zones or by rezoning. The first method would use an overlay or floating zone that allows larger (e.g., more than 10 acres) parcels or parcel assemblages to be redeveloped for a wider mix of retail/office/residential uses. The second method requires performing a market forecast to determine the demand for commercial space over time. Areas identified as having struggling retail or underdeveloped commercially zoned lands that exceed foreseeable market demand could be designated for rezoning to residential or mixed-use.

It is also important for the County to prevent a future oversupply. To address this issue, the County could consider requiring a market needs test prior to rezoning approval. The results of the market analysis could then be considered among other factors during the public hearing process for rezoning.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased redevelopment opportunities
- Reduced percentage of retail in the County
- Development focused in specific areas
- I-85 corridor revitalized
- Number of empty stores and distressed strip centers reduced
- Increase in the taxable value of commercial properties as retail sales per square foot increase
- Tools to evaluate rezoning increased



**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Conduct market forecast to determine the existing and anticipated market demand for commercial/retail uses along targeted corridors	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division
Determine priority retail centers for redevelopment and rezoning	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division
Create overlay or floating zone that can be applied to larger parcels	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Rezone excess commercial that is struggling or underdeveloped	Board of Commissioners
Develop “needs testing” methods for approving future retail	Department of Planning and Development
Amend Zoning Resolution to incorporate a market needs test as a requirement for future commercial/retail zoning applications	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Owners of older, decaying commercial properties that are still profitable
- Slow market for alternative uses in the county.
- Perception of negative fiscal impacts of slowing retail development

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

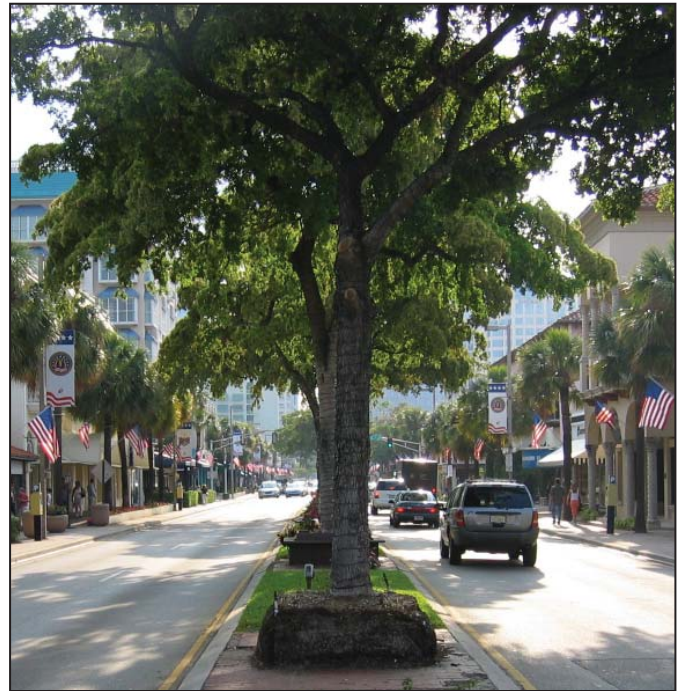
- Revised ordinances and policies
- Redevelopment of retail properties
- Improved dollar per square footage yield for retail property compared to the region
- Determination of appropriate amount and location of retail in County based on standard commercial market analysis
- Retail becomes a smaller percentage of overall non-residential development
- Higher percentage of occupied retail space
- Revitalized former retail spaces

## A.2 Theme 2: Foster Redevelopment

### **POLICY A.2.1: Institute a Variety of Redevelopment Incentives and Bonuses**

#### **Synopsis of the Policy:**

A variety of redevelopment incentives and density bonuses can help attract development into regional mixed-use centers and other areas that are designated for revitalization. Such incentives would help “level the playing field” with greenfield development to attract potential development to areas that have lost market appeal. Potential incentives include new standards for building height, massing of development, and Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which will allow more intensive development than in other parts of the County. Incentives and bonuses could also allow denser, more varied attached/multi-family redevelopment projects that include limited commercial development. Successful widespread redevelopment may require that other tax-related incentives, such as tax rebates and deferred reassessments, be made available through legislative action. Incentives could be supplemented by public sector actions such as land assembly and infrastructure improvements. The County can permit shared facilities for certain development needs such as parking and stormwater management facilities to encourage redevelopment.



#### **Potential Policy Benefits:**

- Increased redevelopment opportunities
- Development focused in specific areas
- Revitalization of I-85 corridor
- Local job growth

**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Determine the specific areas the County wishes to revitalize	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division, CIDs, and Board of Commissioners
Determine the desired amount and character of development of targeted areas	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with CIDs and Board of Commissioners
Determine which incentives would be most effective at attracting desired development	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with the Economic Analysis Division and CIDs
Change applicable policies and ordinances to allow the incentives	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Develop program to promote incentives to potential developers	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division and CIDs

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Land assembly
- Cost of providing or retrofitting infrastructure in designated areas

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised ordinances and policies
- Increased developer interest in redevelopment properties
- Reduction in underutilized or vacant land within redevelopment areas
- Increased percentage of public and private dollars invested in redevelopment areas



## **POLICY A.2.2: Promote Densification in Specific Areas Designated for Mixed-Use Through TDRs, Rezoning, Increased Infrastructure Capacity**

### **Synopsis of the Policy:**

As part of the effort to promote major mixed-use developments, Gwinnett County should promote higher development intensity in specific areas designated for mixed-use. Successful mixed-use depends on the integration of closely spaced residential, commercial and office uses which can be accessed on foot. The county can promote the creation of environments which will foster such high intensity/density development in many ways, including rezoning, transfer of development rights, and improved infrastructure. The most direct approach to promoting densification at appropriate locations is through the County's ability to rezone for higher densities and mixed-use as "by right" measures, in advance of specific requests to do so. Additional densities above a base level could be allowed through such measures as a transfer of development rights program that is tied to reductions of density in the eastern part of the County. The provision or reservation of infrastructure, such as additional sewer capacity, can also help implement this policy.



### **Potential Policy Benefits:**

- Revitalized I-85 corridor
- Increased number of local, high-wage jobs
- Increased redevelopment opportunities
- Development focused in specific areas
- Rural areas preserved
- Promotion of environmental conservation

**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning district text and/or create new districts to permit higher densities and design standards in specific areas in accordance with policy maps	Department of Planning and Development
Make complementary proactive investments in redevelopment areas designated for higher densities (e.g., parking structures, enhanced infrastructure capacity, civic buildings, landscaping, etc.)	Department of Planning and Development and the Law Department
Develop and implement TDR program	Department of Planning and Development and the Law Department

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Neighborhood concerns about higher densities
- For a TDR program, need to apply density ceilings to currently uncapped zoning districts designated as “receiving areas” and the possible need to downzone selected areas designated as “sending areas.” There will also be a need to monitor and adjust the caps so that receiving acreage is in balance with the market for sending acreage.
- Funding for infrastructure improvements will be needed

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised zoning resolution and maps
- TDR program/ordinance developed
- Increased County investment in higher density areas
- Increased density and design standards in designated areas

### POLICY A.2.3: Use Tax Allocation Districts (TADs)

#### Synopsis of the Policy:

Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) can be a powerful way to fund infrastructure and other improvements needed to promote mixed-use development or redevelopment. In Georgia, eligible uses of funds include capital costs for the construction or improvement of public works; new buildings; renovation, repair or demolition of existing buildings; grading and clearing land; soft costs associated with these activities; land assemblage costs; and costs associated with conducting environmental impact or other studies.

TADs (also known as tax increment financing or TIFs in other states) pledge the difference between the current taxed value of property and the future tax value of properties within a designated area to finance bonds that pay for the improvements. The increase in tax revenue is based on the increased value of the property not on a tax increase. TADs are applied to a specific, targeted location, and the tax increment is used to pay for improvements made within that specific location.

#### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Raise revenue
- Development focused in specific areas
- Revitalization of I-85 corridor
- Provide funding for infrastructure projects
- Promotion of redevelopment
- Address fiscal concerns

#### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- State legislation to allow TAD implementation
- Securing support of affected property owners
- Annually rolling back millage rates to offset increases in real estate market values, means only limited revenue will be generated by TADs.

#### Measures of Effectiveness/ Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Identification of TAD areas
- Creation of TADs
- New infrastructure constructed in TAD areas
- Generation of tax revenue from TAD areas

#### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action by General Assembly to allow revenue from School taxes to support TADs	State of Georgia
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Voter Approval	Citizens of Gwinnett County
Designate TAD areas	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division and CIDs
Identify projects for the TAD areas	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with CIDs and Economic Analysis Division
Secure bonds for the projects	Economic Analysis Division

## POLICY A.2.4: Promote Shared Infrastructure Facilities

### Synopsis of the Policy:

A frequent impediment to redevelopment is the magnitude of necessary upgrades associated with certain infrastructure facilities, such as stormwater ponds and required parking. To reduce these impediments and increase the economic feasibility potential of redevelopment areas, the County can allow several adjacent properties to install shared infrastructure facilities including, but not limited to, regional ponds and parking decks. These facilities may be owned, operated and maintained by a common association contractually responsible for the facilities. State legislation to permit the use of shared regional storm water ponds may be required.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Redevelopment opportunities increased
- Development focused in specific areas
- Revitalization of I-85 corridor
- Local job growth



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
If it is determined that State Legislative action is required, direct Law Department to develop appropriate amendment and find a Legislative sponsor	Board of Commissioners and Law Department
Change applicable policies and ordinances to allow multi-parcel owners to create and use shared storm water and parking facilities	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Water Resources and Board of Commissioners
Develop a program to promote this option to developers	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division and CIDs

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Will need to develop a formula to equitably compensate users and owners of shared properties
- Land assembly or shared easements have to be negotiated

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Revised ordinances and policies
- Increased developer interest in redevelopment properties
- Reduction in underutilized or vacant land within redevelopment areas
- Increased percentage of private dollars invested in redevelopment areas



## POLICY A.2.5: Allow “Corner Stores” within Specified Medium/Higher Density Areas as “Floating Zones”

### Synopsis of the Policy:

By providing convenience shopping at small stores within pedestrian-oriented medium and higher density neighborhoods, corner stores help shorten or eliminate car trips. Travel to and from corner stores is frequently done on foot or by bicycle and helps keep cars off of major roads. While they help achieve a public purpose and are often seen as valuable and convenient by many residents, corner stores can be subject to strong opposition by adjacent residents. This policy seeks to introduce them, in a planned way, into new medium- and high-density areas using floating zones. Floating zones are not mapped, but rather set standards for their approval. When these standards are met, they allow the applicant to submit for a rezoning. Uses like corner stores can benefit from this approach. Small-scale community-serving retail and personal services for surrounding neighborhoods would be subject to size limits (e.g., 1 acre maximum lot size), quality controls regarding permitted uses, lighting, signage, prohibiting gas pumps, etc. and would be applied for as part of an integrated design for a residential development plan of minimum size (e.g., 100 units) that exceeds a density of four dwelling units per acre.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Congestion on arterials reduced
- Bicycle and pedestrian trip-making increased
- Access for local residents improved



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Develop floating zone standards for neighborhood serving retail within new medium/higher density residential developments	Department of Planning and Development and Law Department
Revise zoning ordinance to include new floating zone	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Introducing new retail concept

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Increased number of small-scale retail uses located in residential areas



### A.3 Theme 3: Enhance Mobility and Accessibility

#### POLICY A.3.1: Enhance Signal Coordination and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

##### Synopsis of the Policy:

A cost effective way to increase the efficiency of the existing road system is to further coordinate traffic signal timing and further invest in Intelligent Traffic Systems technology such as electronic driver signboards that display traffic conditions and alternatives. The County already does a great deal of this type of activity using State and Federal funding. In order to do more, it will be necessary for the County to use its own funding.

##### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Reduced congestion
- Increased roadway capacity
- Increased roadway safety



##### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Determine areas in need of signal coordination and/or ITS improvements	Department of Transportation
Determine County funding source for improvements	Financial Services Department and Board of Commissioners
Installation of ITS improvements	Department of Transportation

##### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Relatively low cost to implement compared to most transportation projects
- Expansion would require County funds and not simply relying on State and Federal funds

##### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- List of intersections in need of improvements and signboard locations
- Funding sources identified
- Improved signal coordination and traffic diversion
- Greater percentage of intersections upgraded with “smart” signals

## POLICY A.3.2: Manage Access on Arterials

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Managing access to and from properties along major roads improves traffic flow and decreases probability of accidents. Many jurisdictions manage vehicular access onto arterials by an overlay district that varies the roadway design details by roadway classification. Typically, access management systems limit block lengths between access roads, require shared access ways and inter-parcel connections, require frontage roads or rear access, limit curb cuts, etc. These measures conserve valuable roadway capacity and improve safety. Redevelopment of land uses along such arterials may provide opportunities to implement such access improvements, but such changes should fit into an overall strategy for each arterial.



Gwinnett County already implements access management in a limited way. The County uses a Long Range Road Classification Map to identify and establish road classifications. Also, the Development Regulations provide some guidance for driveway separations. These tools could be strengthened and integrated more fully into an access management system.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased roadway capacity
- Reduced congestion
- Improved roadway safety
- Expanded roadway network
- Improved access between uses
- Create alternative routes in highway / street network

**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
<p>Strengthen the provisions in the County's existing Development Regulations in combination with the County's Long Range Road Classification Map to include provisions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit driveway access points for all roads above a certain classification (e.g. residential arterial or major collector) so that shared driveways or inter-parcel connections are planned as part of new development or redevelopment</li> <li>• Require roadway access from abutting development rather than direct driveway access to arterials and limit roadway spacing in relation to the level of roadway class; for example, roadway spacing may range from block lengths of 400 feet in denser, more urban areas for major collectors and perhaps minor arterials to 800 feet – 1500 feet for major and principal arterials</li> <li>• Require frontage roads, "backage" roads, or alleys to achieve these same outcomes for roadway spacing, especially where major development and redevelopment is occurring</li> <li>• Require that corner lots facing major roads and minor roads only take access from the minor road</li> <li>• Extend the classification concept to include multimodal road types so that where roads are classified as ped/bike roads or transit roads additional standards may be applied (e.g. sidewalk width, bike path striping, tree planting strips etc.)</li> </ul>	Department of Planning and Development and Department of Transportation
Similarly strengthen the access management portion of the County's existing activity center/corridor overlay districts overlay zone	Department of Planning and Development

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Cooperation of property owners is needed
- Coordination with Community Improvement Districts (CID) may be required.
- Additional development costs
- Requirement will be associated with these actions.

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised, updated Long Range Road Classification Map
- Revised Development Regulations addressing access management
- More effective access management evident in new subdivisions and site plan practices
- Modified Development Regulations
- Reduced number of driveways and curb cuts on arterial roads
- Increased use of access roads
- Reduced number of accidents on arterial roads

### **POLICY A.3.3: Enhance Incident Management (Traffic Control Center)**

#### **Synopsis of the Policy:**

A main objective of the Traffic Control Center (TCC) is incident management. The TCC can help relieve congestion and increase mobility by adjusting signal timing to handle additional traffic diverted onto local roads from Interstate Highways due to major incidents. Also, the TCC can produce real-time travel times, so that travelers can make better informed decisions regarding where and when to travel. Further expanding Gwinnett's current efforts in this area will pay handsomely and this will yield immediate short-term benefits at relatively little cost.

#### **Potential Policy Benefits:**

- Reduced congestion
- Increased roadway safety

#### **Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Data on cost-effectiveness of investment will be required to justify budget request will need to be established

#### **Measures of Effectiveness/ Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Acquisition of equipment, technology and personnel
- Increased speed in addressing traffic incidents compared to current benchmark

#### **Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Identify and prioritize additional resources for incident management	Department of Transportation

## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.3.4: Establish a Road Connectivity Requirement for New Development

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Establishing a connectivity requirement based on block length will help reduce traffic congestion and improve walkability. Because most subdivisions in Gwinnett do not interconnect, even short trips require the use of major arterials and collectors, contributing to the overloading of the major road systems. Keeping local trips to destinations such as nearby shopping areas, schools and parks off major arterials will help alleviate congestion. New development should be designed with more connections between developments and with alternative and redundant minor collector networks within developments that connect to the county's arterial roadway system.



### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Reduced congestion
- Increased roadway safety
- Expanded roadway network
- Improved access between uses

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Define block lengths for urban and suburban areas (typically these should be between 400 and 800 feet) and may vary between urban and suburban areas	Department of Planning and Development and Department of Transportation
Adopt a Connectivity Index for all new residential subdivisions. This index is measured as the number of street links divided by the number of intersections (or nodes) or link ends (cul-de-sacs). An index of 1.40 is an appropriate target.	Department of Planning & Development and Department of Transportation
Develop and incorporate into the Development Regulations connectivity standards for new development including requirements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide multiple direct connections to local street and pedestrian systems to increase access to and between local destinations, such as parks, schools, and shopping.</li> <li>• Establish criteria that must be met to obtain a variance to the requirement for stub outs to adjacent properties</li> </ul>	Department of Planning & Development and Department of Transportation

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Difficulty in creating connections between existing properties and new and other existing properties

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Increased connectivity between and within new subdivisions
- Increased connections between existing and new subdivisions
- Better connections between residential areas and commercial areas via secondary roads



## POLICY A.3.5: Create Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) at Appropriate Sites Through Proactive Zoning

### Synopsis of the Policy:

A transit system can help support more intensely developed, mixed-use centers in Gwinnett. A growing segment of the general population is attracted to the urban lifestyles associated with well-designed TODs whose density and use mix is a benefit for them. Creating TODs that are centered within livable, walkable mixed-use areas should be part of the County's formula for attracting and retaining urban-acclimated professionals, tech workers, empty nesters, and other households. Well-designed TODs will also help increase ridership once Gwinnett gets a rapid transit system. After the decision is made to develop a rail or bus rapid transit (BRT) transit system, the County should take action to establish incentives that encourage development that will support transit.



Many of the existing rail lines go through Gwinnett's cities, and being natural station areas, the Cities should be active participants.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Development focused in specific areas
- Revitalization of I-85 corridor
- Promotion of redevelopment
- Reduced roadway demand

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Identify possible transit alignments	ARC Transit Planning Board, MARTA, GRTA, Gwinnett Transit, Department of Planning and Development, and Department of Transportation in collaboration with Cities
Identify areas that would be suitable for TOD and station development	Department of Planning and Development and Department of Transportation in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division
Revise zoning in TOD areas	Department of Planning and Development, Board of Commissioners
Create incentives to promote development in TOD areas	Department of Planning and Development in collaboration with Economic Analysis Division and Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Applying TOD principles and getting development community commitment in advance of transit implementation plan
- Long lead time for implementation
- Funding

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Potential transit alignments are identified
- Areas are designated for TOD
- Zoning for the TOD areas is revised
- Developer commitments to development/redevelopment at station areas
- Density increases in areas designated for TOD

## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.3.6: Establish a More Extensive Transit System

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Efforts to minimize congestion serve to enhance Gwinnett's economic development and preferred place policies. Although transit will not greatly diminish congestion, it can provide people with travel choices. Providing people with more travel choices may encourage some number of single-occupant vehicle drivers to lessen their use of private vehicles, and it may persuade others who may not have considered living or working in Gwinnett because of congestion to consider Gwinnett as a location for their homes or businesses.

The existing rail line rights-of-way in the County can become the routes for cost-effective commuter rail service and should be protected until such service is viable. The potential for varied forms of bus rapid transit (BRT) along key arterials is more likely to occur during the life of the Unified Plan and also warrants future transit system investments, especially for routes that would provide an alternative for commuters to Atlanta and I-285 destinations. Finally, the County can make improvements to its local transit system to provide improved access to various destinations and east-west connectivity within the County.

It is important to note that rail or BRT transit development is not something Gwinnett County can do alone. It will require participation of Regional, State and Federal agencies including GRTA, ARC, the Transit Planning Board and the Federal Transit Administration. Many of the existing rail lines go through Gwinnett's cities, and being natural station areas, the cities need to be active participants.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Provide mode choices
- Reduce future roadway demand



**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Identify additional areas to be served by transit	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Transportation in collaboration with GRTA and Gwinnett Transit, as appropriate
Encourage protection of rail line right of ways for potential future transit service	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Increase funding levels for transit service and promotion	Board of Commissioners
Develop and implement aggressive transit promotion campaign	Gwinnett Transit
Encourage a development pattern that is more conducive to transit service	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Provide leadership for a regional transit solution and ensure local system supports regional system.	Department of Transportation

**Policy Challenges and Costs**

- Funding transit improvements
- Maintaining high levels of service
- Expansion costs for local bus service
- Implementation costs for BRT and rail service
- FTA New Starts submission hurdle
- Jurisdictions nationwide compete for limited Federal transit dollars

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- FTA New Starts submission
- Federal transit dollars secured
- Increased transit service
- Increased mode split
- Decreased roadway demand

### PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 **POLICY A.3.7: Pursue Strategic Road Widening and New Alignments**

#### **Synopsis of the Policy:**

Between 1970 and 2000, Gwinnett County was ranked as one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. During that period, the county absorbed approximately 25 percent of the total growth of the Atlanta Region. To counter the rapid growth, Gwinnett County invested more money in highway expansion than any other jurisdiction in the metropolitan area. Despite Gwinnett County's efforts, roadway infrastructure has not kept pace with the tremendous growth the County has experienced. A coordinated program of capacity improvement projects will provide some measure of relief. Capacity improvements include transforming key roads into "super-arterials," grade separation at key intersections, building additional travel lanes along key road segments, and constructing new roads.



#### **Policy Contributes the Following Intangible Benefits:**

- Increased roadway capacity
- Increased connectivity

#### **Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Prioritize capacity improvement projects (using CTP)	Department of Transportation and Department of Planning and Development
Establish requirement that where feasible new roadway construction will incorporate bikelanes and multi-use paths to provide alternative transportation	Department of Transportation, Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Develop funding plan for the projects	Economic Analysis Division
Implement the funding plan	Board of Commissioners

#### **Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Expensive to implement
- Potential opposition to specific widening projects or new alignments
- Provides some congestion relief in the short term, but only slows the growth of longer term congestion

#### **Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Prioritized list of capacity improvement projects from CTP
- Funding strategy for priority projects
- Funding secured
- Increased number of lane miles – especially in priority corridors and between key origins/destinations

## A.4 Theme 4: Provide More Housing Choice

### POLICY A.4.1: Establish and Provide Access to More Executive Housing Areas

#### Synopsis of the Policy:

Executives and corporate leaders typically prefer to locate businesses near where they live. Promoting such places is a basic economic development strategy for Gwinnett. However, establishing more executive housing areas cannot be achieved merely through zoning. Limiting sewer expansion in eastern Gwinnett may provide the catalyst needed to transition eastern Gwinnett to an area of executive housing developments adjacent to the vast park acreage the county has already invested in. Another key component of the strategy to encourage executive housing is to enhance highway connections to Fulton and Forsyth Counties to allow Gwinnett to benefit from existing executive housing areas. The improved connections to Fulton and Forsyth Counties in the proposed road plan will help cement the interactions between the Counties and add to Gwinnett's appeal to executives who may work in Fulton and Forsyth and live in Gwinnett or vice versa.



#### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Number of high wage local jobs increased
- Fiscal health of County maintained
- Increased County amenities
- Improved and expanded Chattahoochee River crossings

#### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Ensure that key connections to Fulton/Forsyth are on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) / Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) of the Department of Transportation and are given priority for funding.	Department of Transportation
Improve road connections to Fulton / Forsyth per transportation plan	Department of Transportation

#### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Long-range economic implications of connections to Fulton and Forsyth counties may be seen as less crucial than congestion mitigation when evaluating transportation projects for funding, so the economic development aspects of these projects may be downplayed unless they are championed by the Board of Commissioners

#### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Increased commuting to jobs in Gwinnett from Fulton / Forsyth
- Increased household relocations from Fulton / Forsyth to Gwinnett
- Increased technology related jobs in Gwinnett attributable to enhanced Fulton and Forsyth connections



## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.4.2: Preserve Existing Workforce Housing

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Gwinnett may see a decline in its ability to fill jobs in its services sector as commuting expenses and housing prices become ever greater burdens. Preserving workforce housing within Gwinnett through a variety of measures to retain a variety of housing types and price ranges will help achieve the County's goals of reducing congestion and sustaining its economic base.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Preserve available workforce housing
- Increase available workforce housing by reducing and/or eliminating substandard housing
- Reduce congestion



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Provide rehabilitation assistance from HUD grant funds and private sources to homeowners and to existing multi-family projects that preserve affordable workforce housing	Department of Financial Services, Community Development Current Program (on-going)
Provide financial assistance from HUD Grant funds and private sources to private and/or non-profit developers to acquire and rehabilitate substandard single-family housing for sale as affordable workforce housing to qualifying families	Department of Financial Services, Community Development Current Program (on-going)
Provide financial assistance from HUD Grant funds to private and/or non-profit developers to construct new single-family or new multi-family projects to provide affordable workforce housing	Department of Financial Services, Community Development Current Program (on-going)
Continue code enforcement through the Quality of Life unit to ensure that properties are maintained	Gwinnett County Police Department, Quality of Life Unit

<p>Consider creating a Housing Task Force to evaluate the following issues, and to consider developing recommendations for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles and responsibilities for existing housing entities or the possible creation of new housing entities</li> <li>• Mixed income multi-family housing units at selected sites in the County</li> <li>• Consider amendments to the Zoning Resolution to allow more Senior Housing at appropriate sites within the County</li> <li>• Workforce housing as component of mixed use developments through the use of incentives</li> <li>• Creation of an incentive-based moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) ordinance that encourages developments above a certain size to include some percentage of MPDUs (e.g., 10%) in exchange for a density bonus provision (e.g., 12%) that allows the developer to construct additional homes.</li> <li>• Permanent supportive housing for persons with special needs (including housing for seniors and assisted living facilities.)</li> </ul>	Board of Commissioners
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#### **Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Appropriate zoning to encourage mix of housing opportunities
- Finding land suitably priced to make workforce housing economically viable.

#### **Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Units of substandard housing that are rehabilitated and preserved as affordable workforce housing
- Units of substandard single family housing that are acquired/rehabilitated and sold to homebuyers as affordable workforce housing
- Units of workforce housing that are constructed to replace the existing stock of affordable housing
- Creation of MDPU ordinance

## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.4.3: Expand Maintenance And Rehabilitation Assistance To Homeowners And Small Businesses

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Expand existing HUD funded assistance programs to include more homeowners as well as small business owners/operators of older properties who may have difficulty with upkeep and needed rehabilitation of their properties. The expansion of these programs would allow the County to target many of the causes of neighborhood/commercial decline in older areas. Programs would offer long-term and recent residents of Gwinnett good advice and assistance on proper repairs and materials, low cost loans, etc. These expanded programs would provide the County with more tools to promote revitalization of declining areas.



### Potential Policy Benefits

- Available workforce housing preserved
- Substandard housing and commercial properties reduced
- Appearance and upkeep of an area maintained
- Revitalization goals of the Board of Commissioners enhanced

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Provide rehabilitation assistance from HUD grant funds for homeowner occupied dwellings	Department of Financial Services, Community Development Current Program (on-going)
Expand program beyond HUD grant funds to include County funds for commercial properties	Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- County has not historically funded rehabilitation of commercial properties

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Units of housing and commercial spaces are rehabilitated and preserved
- Funding allocated to this program

## POLICY A.4.4: Support Expanded Housing Opportunities for Seniors

### Synopsis of the Policy:

As they become a larger proportion of the population, there will be an increasing call for affordable and accessible housing suitable for the changing physical and financial situations of seniors. Gwinnett has historically had limited need for senior housing. However, as more people choose to “age in place” or relocate to Gwinnett to be closer to children and grandchildren, demand for various forms of senior housing will rise.

Senior housing needs are different from that of a growing family. Seniors may not want the maintenance responsibility of a yard and may prefer to live in a smaller home than they did when they were raising a family. Row houses, condominiums, and apartments may be more suitable housing types for these seniors. (Because such housing is for people at a post-family formation stage of their life, senior housing does not affect such issues as school capacity and therefore can be developed at higher intensities than equivalent units geared for younger families.) There will also be a growing need to provide available housing that can accommodate wheelchairs or other Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.



Locating housing within easy walking distance to grocery stores, drug stores, medical or other services will be increasingly desirable and useful for seniors who no longer can or want to drive. Such walkability adds to a healthier lifestyle and also puts seniors near potential employment (part of increasing trend of seniors continuing some form of work).

### Potential Policy Benefits

- Opportunities for existing residents to “age in place”
- Opportunities for senior relatives of Gwinnett residents to move closer to them
- More diverse mix of housing types
- More opportunity to accommodate seniors with physical limitations
- Increased emphasis on walkability and mixed use

**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Consider amendments to the Zoning Resolution to allow more senior housing at appropriate sites within the County	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Revise Zoning Resolution to create more walkable, mixed use communities	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Universal Design guidelines included in building codes	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Appropriate zoning to encourage mix of housing opportunities
- Has not historically been a focus of the County

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Proportion of seniors living in senior oriented housing
- Number of residents aging in place



## A.5 Theme 5: Keep Gwinnett a “Preferred Place”

### POLICY A.5.1: Improve the Walkability of Gwinnett’s Activity Centers and Neighborhoods

#### Synopsis of the Policy:

Quality of life in Gwinnett can be enhanced by making it easier for people to walk through their neighborhoods to and from attractions such as local parks, schools, churches, or even neighborhood shopping. Walking and bicycling are also increasingly popular exercises in their own right and do not require special facilities when adequate sidewalks, pathways, and greenways are provided. Major activity centers should be easier to walk and bike to, and the uses within the centers should be better connected for pedestrian and bicycle access.

Gwinnett currently requires the construction of sidewalks for all new development. This is the first step in making the county walkable, but creating a pedestrian/bicycle amenity that will enhance and promote the county as a preferred place will require additional actions, such as improving and expanding the greenway network.

#### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased connectivity
- Increased County amenities
- Improved public health and safety
- Removal of barriers to mobility on sidewalks for persons with disabilities



**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning and Development Regulations to ensure that sidewalk widths are appropriate for the anticipated intensities of development or redevelopment	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning and Development Regulations to provide for adequate shade and lighting so that people feel safe and comfortable walking along County sidewalks and greenways	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Community Services and Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning and Development Regulations so that buildings, storefronts and other active uses are adjacent to sidewalks	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning and Development Regulations so that pedestrian walks are minimized adjacent to isolated uses such as parking lots, garages, storage, etc.	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Transportation, and Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning and Development Regulations so that bicycle lanes are required on all new local, collector, and arterial roadways.	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Transportation, and Board of Commissioners
Revise zoning and Development Regulations so that pedestrians are separated or buffered from high-speed and heavy traffic volumes by distance and/or trees	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Transportation, and Board of Commissioners
Design/redesign busy intersections and mid-point crossings to improve pedestrian/bicycle safety	Department of Transportation
Allow County to require offsite extensions of sidewalks to establish connectivity (e.g., up to 200 foot beyond boundary) including county facilities	Department of Planning and Development
As part of the redevelopment process, remove existing barriers that prevent pedestrians and bicyclists from having direct access between destinations	Department of Planning and Development
In new development, prevent potential pedestrian/bicycle barriers from occurring	Department of Planning and Development
Encourage developers to have greenways within their projects and to provide connections to the existing and planned County greenway network	Department of Planning and Development
Remove barriers to mobility for persons with disabilities on existing sidewalks by providing curb cuts other accessibility improvements at existing intersections	Department of Transportation and Community Development Program [Using CDBG funds]

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Recognizing the need to work with local, state and federal regulators to arrive at accommodations that will facilitate greenway construction in floodplains, buffers, etc.
- Potential increased costs of development
- Sidewalks that need to be provided by the County for high priority linkages not likely to be provided by development regulations

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised zoning ordinance
- Increased number of pedestrian trips being made for short trips
- Improved pedestrian connectivity
- Reduction in pedestrian accidents and death

## POLICY A.5.2: Support and Promote the Georgia Gwinnett College

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Georgia Gwinnett College has the opportunity to become the “Campus of Tomorrow” and increase Gwinnett’s “preferred place” status. Research associated with the college could spawn new businesses, and employers interested in an educated workforce could choose to locate their businesses nearby. The land use needs and the spin-off employment uses that seek out and benefit from a significant institution like a college should be coordinated, in collaboration with the city of Lawrenceville.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Attract high-wage jobs
- Development focused in specific area
- Improved amenities



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Develop detailed land use plan for area around the college in collaboration with the college and Lawrenceville	Gwinnett, Department of Planning and Development, Lawrenceville Planning Department, College Facilities Department
Determine actions each entity can take to further goals	Board of Commissioners, City Council, College President

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Funding for possible infrastructure improvements
- County, city and college coordination related to student housing, business development, etc.

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Coordinated land use plan for the area around the college
- Specific action items each entity will be responsible for and timeline for accomplishment
- County funding to support improvements that benefit the college and the potential spin-off development

### PART 1 PART 2 PART 3

## POLICY A.5.3: Invest in Youth Enrichment Programs

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Beyond crime prevention measures like community policing, good lighting and defensive site design (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED), the County, in coordination with the Gwinnett County Public School System, can take actions to involve local youth in after school programs and activities. This involvement can help deter gang activity and recruitment, provide additional opportunities for children to get exercise, learn new skills, and provide a positive use of time. Extending and expanding current programs and developing new programs is an important redevelopment and quality of life strategy.

### Policy Contributes the Following Intangible Benefits:

- Improved County amenities
- Increased capacity of public facilities and services
- Reduction in crime and gang activities



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Identify programs to expand	Health and Human Services and Parks and Recreation Divisions
Identify new programs to offer	Health and Human Services and Parks and Recreation Divisions
Allocate additional funding resources to the program	Board of Commissioners
Coordinate with Gwinnett County Public Schools, Buford City Schools, and non-profit organizations.	Health and Human Services Division, Parks and Recreation Divisions and Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Availability of funding for these types of programs

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- List of programs to expand and offer and costs associated with them
- Increased funding for after school programs
- Increased number of after school programs
- Correlation with reduction in youth criminal or other antisocial / gang activity
- Improved graduation rates
- Retention of young adults in Gwinnett's work force



## POLICY A.5.4: Enhance Development Aesthetics

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Promoting high-quality development is a strategy for attracting top quality employers, new affluent residents, and making Gwinnett a preferred place in the region. Improved development quality for commercial and office buildings and associated public areas will also encourage current employers and residents to stay in the County. To achieve this, new design standards are needed both to encourage and promote redevelopment where appropriate and to enhance overall development quality. To give Gwinnett a competitive edge, development quality can be enhanced through design standards that improve the appearance of buildings and parking areas, require additional landscaping and urban design amenities, call for attractive public spaces, promote less sign clutter, and provide better lighting standards.

Additional areas of improvement may include building height allowances, massing and introducing Floor Area Ratio (FAR) as a design standard in mixed-use and non-residential areas. Allowing increased densities for such areas will provide an incentive for developers to consider redevelopment. However, designing these private shared environments as more functional and attractive locations will also require revising the current development standards regarding such issues as access, interior road design, location of buildings in relation to streets, location and design of parking areas, opens space and public realm design (including pedestrian facilities) and ability of various users to share infrastructure.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased redevelopment opportunities
- Redevelopment focused in specific areas
- Revitalization of I-85 corridor
- Number of high income residents increased
- Number of high-income jobs increased

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Determine specific design standards	Department of Planning and Development
Add/Revise standards accordingly	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners



### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Creating effective and uncomplicated application of standards
- This action has low implementation costs but introduces new elements and processes into the county's review process

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Revised standards
- Improved visual appearance and improved compatibility with existing areas
- Increased urban design amenities



## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.5.5: Provide Venues to Celebrate Growing Cultural Diversity of County

### Synopsis of the Policy:

As Gwinnett's diversity increases, the County can promote it as a positive attraction by providing support and locations for such events as cultural fairs, music festivals, "foodways" demonstrations, etc. Focus group members from different ethnic groups interviewed during the Unified Plan's development saw county funding and logistical support as a key catalyst in raising the profile of these events.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- County amenities increased
- Benefits of County's increasing diversity expanded



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Develop improved links to various ethnic communities	Chamber of Commerce and Department of Community Services
Develop criteria for promoting existing cultural activities	Department of Community Services/Board of Commissioners
Develop program to increase number of cultural activities	Chamber of Commerce and Department of Community Services

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Lack of funding mechanism to support this policy

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Increased number of cultural events
- Increased attendance at cultural events
- Increased revenue generated by cultural events
- Regional recognition and attraction of these Gwinnett events

## POLICY A.5.6: Expand Presence of “Arts Community”

### Synopsis of the Policy:

As a “preferred place,” Gwinnett should feature a strong array of cultural attractions and businesses that support the arts. While most of these activities will be run by non-profits or private owners (e.g., art galleries, music venues and theaters, etc.), a county-wide organization is needed to promote and link their activities into a coordinated effort to enhance the County’s quality of life. Such an organization should view promoting the arts in Gwinnett as its primary mission. To be effective, such an organization should function somewhat like the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau with adequate private sector and county support to accomplish its mission.



### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased County amenities
- Take advantage of the County’s diversity
- Increased number of urban-acclimated professionals, empty-nesters, tech workers and affluent residents

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Create and fund an arts authority or commission	Board of Commissioners, Department of Community Services and Partnership Gwinnett

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Establishing needed funding
- Developing long term marketing/promotion strategy

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Creation of arts authority or commission (or similar entity)
- County contribution to the arts authority or commission
- Increased number of cultural attractions and creative enterprises
- Increased attendance at Gwinnett Center events

## PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 POLICY A.5.7: Provide Incentives for Enhanced Open Space/Trails

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Gwinnett will benefit from increasing the variety of ways that open space, sensitive environments, and local recreation space, including pedestrian and bike trails, can be preserved and protected. Some examples of incentives to the developer/builder include tax benefits, smaller lot sizes, increased densities, and reduced infrastructure costs as result of clustered development. The inclusion of major greenways in the Unified Plan and tying open space enhancement to incentives in the Zoning Resolution and Development Regulations can facilitate the provision of open space through reservation or dedication.

Other options to facilitate the provision of open space include: revising current zoning districts (modified and CSO) that allow smaller lots in exchange for common open space to strengthen their appeal and ability to provide more meaningful open space, and allowing a lot size reduction in any residential zoning district. This would be in exchange for an equivalent dedication of right-of-way for greenway development or recreation area in excess of definite requirements.



### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased County amenities
- Increased amount of protected open space
- More active open space provided

### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Determine incentives/bonuses requirements	Department of Planning and Development/Department of Community Services
Revise Zoning Resolution and/or Development Regulations accordingly	Department of Planning and Development/Department of Community Services and Board of Commissioners

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Determining maintenance responsibility (and costs) of the local parks
- Possible conflict with current Development Regulations

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Revised regulations
- Increase in the amount of local, small-scaled parkland to meet a given target of all new open space provided (e.g., 5 percent to 10 percent)

## POLICY A.5.8: Use Development Regulations to Create Local Parks

### Synopsis of the Policy:

Gwinnett will benefit from increasing the variety of ways that open space, sensitive environments, and local recreation space, including pedestrian and bike trails, can be created, preserved, and protected. The County has an abundance of large acreage parks, but not enough smaller, local neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks are in short supply in Gwinnett, especially in denser housing areas. Parks of less than 10 acres which serve local communities rather than addressing county-wide needs are of increasing value in an urbanizing area. The Department of Community Services, Parks and Recreation Division's new policy of now building Special Purpose Neighborhood parks in underserved areas on 5 acres of land or more will fill part of this gap.

Using development regulations to increase the provision of local recreation areas is an important strategy. One way is to change the regulations so that local recreation beyond swim, tennis, playground and other facilities becomes a development requirement. For example, the regulations might require dedication of 10 percent of the land for publicly-owned and maintained active recreation land that is suitably level, and within easy access of area residents. Another possibility is that an open space dedication could be linked to development incentives in the Zoning Resolution, Development Regulations or the Subdivision Regulations, such as an exchange for smaller minimum lot sizes, or other measures that reduce a project's overall costs. Projects would provide specified active open space or parkland resources beyond the current requirements. A fee in-lieu-of provision could be included for small projects.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased neighborhood amenities
- Reduced auto trips to access everyday recreation needs
- Car-less segments of population (including local children) better served
- Park facilities scaled to local needs; less reliance on purchasing large properties
- Decreased areas of County with park deficiencies





**Key Implementation Steps:**

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Decide whether to make local parkland provision a development requirement or whether it will be linked to development incentives/bonuses	Department of Planning and Development, Department of Community Services, Parks and Recreation Division, and Board of Commissioners
Determine the regulations or incentive/bonus requirements	Department of Planning and Development
Revise Development Regulations appropriately	Department of Planning and Development and Board of Commissioners

**Policy Challenges and Costs:**

- Density bonuses or smaller lot sizes may not be considered worth the additional parkland by the development community
- Determining maintenance responsibility (including cost) of the local parks
- Perception that local parks are not needed because of the County's large regional and community park network
- Reduction in the number of buildable lots within a subdivision
- Conflict with current Development Regulations

**Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:**

- Revised regulations
- Increase in the amount of local, small-scaled parkland as a percentage of all new open space provided countywide (e.g., 5 percent to 10 percent)



## POLICY A.5.9: Acquire Surplus Industrial or Commercial Sites for Open Space/Recreation

### Synopsis of the Policy:

In the already built up areas of Gwinnett, properly located sites for various recreation needs are hard to find or are extremely expensive. Acquiring aged or abandoned industrial or commercial sites for conversion to park facilities, especially for active recreation, may be one way to bring such activities closer to the local populations that need them and end current and future service area deficiencies.

### Potential Policy Benefits:

- Increased County amenities
- Reduced number of vacant industrial and commercial sites



### Key Implementation Steps:

Action:	Primary Responsible Party:
Action to Implement	Board of Commissioners
Identify surplus industrial or commercial parcels that would be suitable for open space or recreational uses	Department of Planning and Development and Department of Community Services
Develop property acquisition and funding strategy	Department of Financial Services
Acquire appropriate parcels	Department of Community Services, Department of Financial Services and Board of Commissioners
Construct recreation and/or open space facilities	Department of Community Services

### Policy Challenges and Costs:

- Potential high cost to acquire land
- May be necessary to provide remediation efforts to some properties

### Measures of Effectiveness/Monitoring Benchmarks:

- Increased parkland per capita, especially in already built up areas that may not have parks in close proximity
- Reduction in surplus industrial and commercial land

## B. SHORT-TERM WORK PLAN AND PRIORITY POLICIES

The Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Chapter 110-12-1 Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning “Local Planning Requirements” require that all plans include a Short Term Work Program. The Rules define the Short-Term Work Program as “the portion of the Implementation Program that lists the specific actions to be undertaken by the local government over the next five years to implement the comprehensive plan.” For each activity or action listed, the Short Term Work Program must include a brief description of the activity, the timeframe for undertaking the activity, the party responsible for implementing the activity, the estimated cost of implementing the activity, and the funding source. DCA also requires local governments to prepare and submit annual or five-year updates to the

STWP. In addition to providing new policies and actions to achieve in the next five years, the updates should provide information on whether activities have been completed, are underway, have been postponed, or are no longer activities the government intends to undertake. Changes to the priorities for the STWP should be guided by monitoring current trends in accordance with the mechanisms described in Section 3.E, ‘Keeping on Course’.

Table 51 presents the State-mandated Short Term Work Program. The 22 actions identified for short term implementation were selected through collaboration between the Planning Advisory Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and County staff. The STWP focuses on implementing the critical actions needed to move the County in its preferred direction. It also lists the initiating actions like prioritizing highway and transit projects that are necessary precursors to subsequent actions such as building highways or implementing Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

**Table 51: Priority Policies, 2009 - 2014**

	Policy Number	Primary Responsible Party	Public Sector Costs	Funding Source
<b>Priority Policies 2009-2014</b>				
<b>Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health</b>				
Promote major Mixed Use Developments	1.1, 2.2	P&D with EAD	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County
Designate large, well-located parcels/areas for office use	1.2	P&D with EAD	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County
Promote University Parkway (Gw Hwy 316) as Gwinnett’s Research and Development belt	1.6	P&D with EAD and CD	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County
Obtain appropriate balance of retail	1.8	P&D with EAD	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County
Use Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for rural estate housing in East	1.4	P&D with EAD	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County
Employ debt financing for major infrastructure	1.7	DFS with various County departments	Low cost. Primary cost is staff time to identify policies/priorities.	County, PPP
Revise millage rates	1.5	DFS with CD	Low cost. Staff time to determine rate and develop outreach/education materials/programs	County
Strategic placement of sewer	1.3	P&D with EAD and DWR	Few costs. Primary cost is staff time to determine key employment areas and modify policies/priorities	County
<b>Foster Redevelopment</b>				
Use Tax Allocation Districts (TADs)	2.3	P&D with EAD	Low cost. Staff time to designate areas, manage process, and secure State and County approval.	County, PPP
Institute a variety of redevelopment incentives/bonuses	2.1	P&D with EAD	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County

	Policy Number	Primary Responsible Party	Public Sector Costs	Funding Source
<b>Maintain Mobility and Accessibility</b>				
Enhance incident management (traffic control center)	3.3	DOT with P&D and EAD	Significant capital and operating costs for vehicles, computers, setup, personnel, etc.	County, State, PPP
Enhance signal coordination and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)	3.1	DOT with P&D and EAD	May have significant capital and operating costs (that is, vehicles, computers, setup, personnel, etc.)	County, State, PPP
Manage access on arterials	3.2	DOT with P&D and EAD	Moderate to significant costs. Depending on the conditions, roadway improvements may be needed.	County, State, PPP
Prioritize strategic road widenings and new road alignments	3.7	DOT with P&D and EAD	Low cost.	County, State, Federal, PPP
Prioritize transit system initiatives	3.6	DOT with P&D	Low cost. Primary cost is staff time to identify priorities.	County, State, Federal, PPP
<b>Provide More Housing Choice</b>				
Preserve existing workforce housing	4.2	P&D	Low cost.	County, Federal
<b>Make Gwinnett a Preferred Place</b>				
Improve walkability of activity centers and neighborhoods	5.1	P&D with DOT	Moderate cost. Staff time to develop and prioritize projects, capital and operating costs for constructing needed improvements.	County, State, PPP, Federal
Expand presence of 'arts community'	5.6	DCS and CD	Modest costs. Staff time and County funds to promote/sponsor activities and events.	County, PPP
Invest in youth enrichment programs	5.3	HHS and P&R	Moderate costs. Staff time to identify programs to expand or offer. Capital and operating costs for running the programs.	County, State, PPP, Federal
Support/promote the expanded four year college	5.2	P&D, EAD, and CD	Modest costs. Staff time to develop land use plan for area in collaboration with the College and the City of Lawrenceville. May include some capital or operating improvements.	County, State
Provide incentives for neighborhood parks and enhanced open space/trails dedications	5.7	P&D with DCS	Moderate staff and consultant cost.	County
Enhance development aesthetics	5.4	P&D	Low cost. Staff time to revise standards/requirements.	County

P&D = Department of Planning and Development  
 EAD = Economic Analysis Division  
 DOT = Department of Transportation  
 HHS = Health and Human Services  
 DFS = Department of Financial Services

DCS = Department of Community Services  
 DWR = Department of Water Resources  
 PPP = Public Private Partnerships  
 P&R = Parks and Recreation Division  
 CD = Communications Division

Table 52 lists the 13 actions that are not included in the STWP. Although they are important, they have implementation timeframes beyond the five years specified in the STWP.

**Table 52: Non-STWP Priority Policies, Post-2014**

	Policy Number	Primary Responsible Party	Public Sector Costs	Funding Source
<b>Foster Redevelopment</b>				
Promote shared infrastructure facilities	2.4	P&D, Law Dept., DWR, and EAD	Minimal costs.	County, State
Allow corner stores within specified medium/high density areas as 'floating zones'	2.5	P&D and Law Dept.	Minimal costs.	County
<b>Maintain Mobility and Accessibility</b>				
Create Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at appropriate sites	3.5	P&D with DOT and EAD	Moderate costs. Staff time to determine locations and provision of development alternatives.	County, State, PPP
Initiate strategic road widenings and new alignments	3.7	DOT	Significant costs. CTP estimates the highway capital cost of the Middle of the Pack Scenario improvements at \$1.6 billion and the International Gateway Scenario improvements at an additional \$1.4 billion.	County, State, Federal, PPP
Establish a road connectivity requirement for new development	3.4	DOT and P&D	Minimal costs.	County
Establish a more extensive transit system.	3.6	P&D, DOT in collaboration with GRTA and Gwinnett Transit	Significant costs involving participation by local, State, and Federal governments.	County, State
<b>Provide More Housing Choices</b>				
Establish and provide access to more executive housing areas	4.1	DOT	Undetermined.	County
Expand maintenance and rehabilitation assistance to homeowners and small businesses	4.3	DoFS	Undetermined.	County, Federal
Support expanded housing opportunities for seniors as they become a larger proportion of the population and as more people choose to age in place or relocate to be closer to children and grandchildren	4.4	P&D, DoFS	Minimal costs.	County
<b>Keep Gwinnett a Preferred Place</b>				
Provide venues to celebrate growing cultural diversity of County	5.5	DCS	Undetermined.	County
Use development regulations to create local parks.	5.8	P&D, DCS	Minimal costs.	County
Acquire surplus industrial or commercial sites for open space/recreation	5.9	P&D, DCS, and DFS	Significant costs.	County

## C. USING THE PLAN AND ITS MAPS

This section gives County staff, elected and appointed officials, other agencies, developers, and property owners, as well as other interested parties, basic guidance on the types of uses encouraged or discouraged in the different character areas shown on the Unified Plan's Future Development Map. The recommendations herein are one set of guidelines for the evaluation of applications for rezoning and will help to keep such decisions consistent with the economic and fiscal analyses that are the foundation for this Unified Plan.

The Unified Plan is a tool to establish County-wide development goals and to broadly define the location of land uses that are projected between today and the year 2030. Therefore, the Board of Commissioners may consider the appropriateness of the proposed use, the timing of its approval, benefit to the community, and whether the request is consistent with the Unified Plan based on current community need and market conditions. To aid staff and the Board in these deliberations each Character Area description offers information on the types of uses that are encouraged or discouraged. In addition, guidelines follow the Character Area descriptions. The recommendations cited in the tables and the text which follow, are not intended to preempt the judgment of staff or the Board of Commissioners in their respective roles, but rather to serve as guidance for making decisions consistent with the goals and policies of the Unified Plan.

### C.1 Future Development Map

The Future Development Map (Figure 78) presents the various character areas of the Unified Plan. This map features those general target areas where a number of key land use actions must occur to meet the Unified Plan goals related to economic development, expanded housing choices, protection of rural character and transformation of current strip commercial highway corridors. The major proposed changes will affect the Regional Mixed Use, Preferred Office, Community Oriented Mixed Use, Research & Development Corridor, Mixed Housing and Rural/Estate designations. The Existing / Emerging Suburban and River Corridor designations are largely stable areas of the County with only incremental changes through infill or limited redevelopment likely to occur.

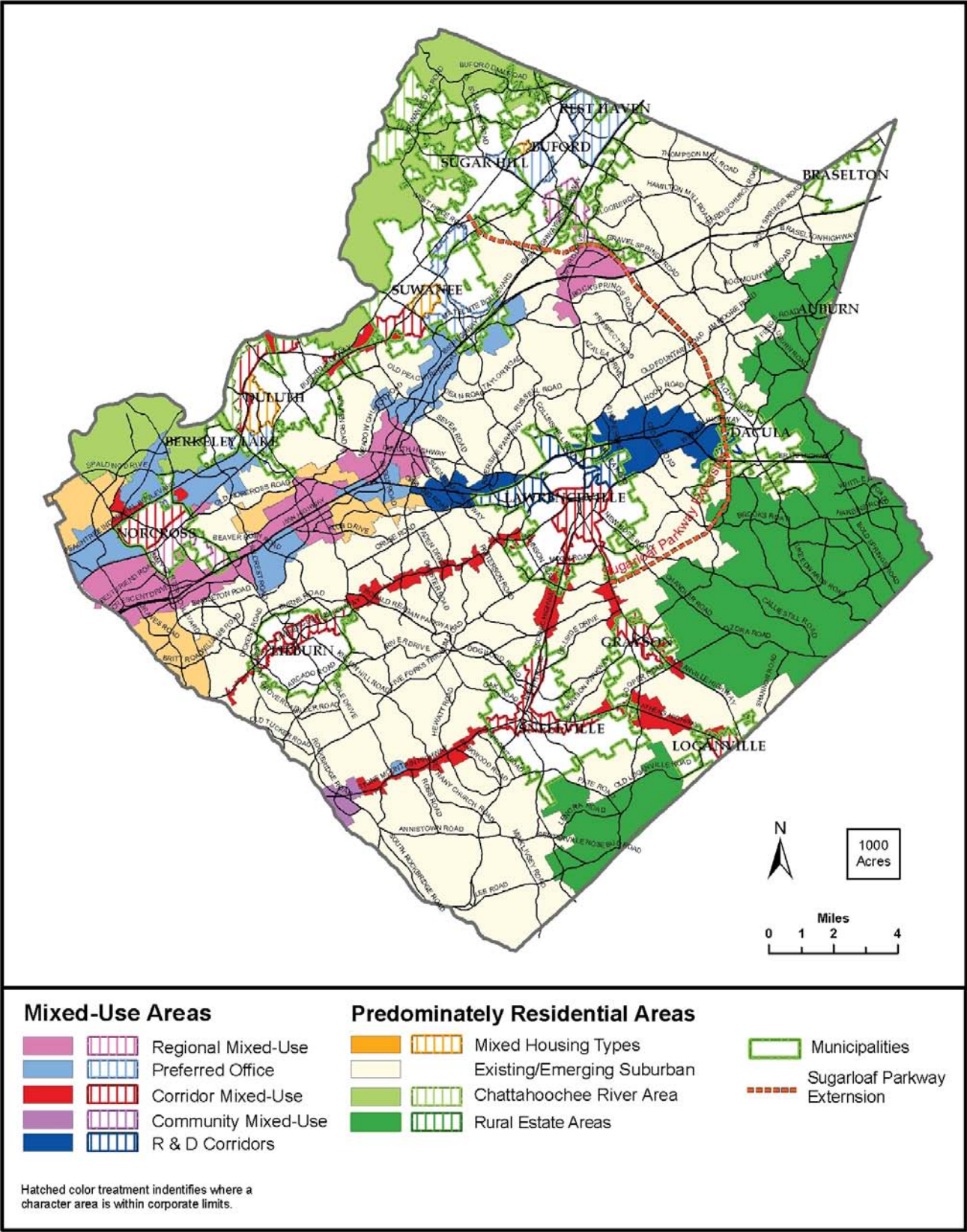
The character areas overlap the cities and these overlaps are a part of the map. The Unified Plan is conceived as a County-wide concept, even though, the cities execute and implement their own plans independently of unincorporated Gwinnett County. Nevertheless, the map suggests how the cities might play an important role in the County's overall future as envisioned by this Plan. The County will need to monitor how the cities plan and execute their future development so as to adjust this Plan accordingly in subsequent updates to this plan and in the County's own sector plans.

Table 53 provides a summary of the types of land uses encouraged and discouraged within these target areas. All site specific land use changes will require case-by-case judgments based on a variety of contextual circumstances and site capabilities. The adoption of more specific sector plans as recommended in Part I will supply much of the detail on how to more effectively carry out these generalized guidelines. While it will serve as a guide for the duration of the Plan, Table 53 therefore will be especially useful for the period between Unified Plan adoption and the subsequent adoption of these various sector plans.

Table 53 and the discussion of the Character Areas that follows use the terms "encouraged" and "discouraged" instead of "allowed" and "not allowed" to describe potential rezoning uses because each proposed rezoning must be assessed on its specific merits. In some cases the encouraged uses may not be appropriate and the discouraged uses may be beneficial and merit consideration where consistent with the overall policies and goals of the Plan.



Figure 78: Future Development Map



**Table 53: Future Development Map and Land Use Actions**

Character Area	Land Use Categories Encouraged	Land Use Categories Discouraged	Notes
<b>Mixed Use Sectors</b>			
Regional Mixed Use Sector	Mixed Use, Office Professional, Ultra High Density Residential, High Density Residential, Institutional Public, Public Open Space	Light Industry, Heavy Industry, Single Family Residential, Estate Residential	Free standing Commercial/Retail and Townhouses acceptable as minor components
Preferred Office Areas	Office Professional, Mixed Use	Commercial/Retail, Heavy Industry, Light Industry, All Residential, unless integrated	Commercial/Retail limited to incidental uses such as business services, food services.
Community Oriented Mixed Use Corridor	Mixed Use, Office Professional, Ultra High and High Density Residential, Townhouses, Public Open Space, Institutional, Commercial/ Retail	Heavy Industry, Light Industry, Single Family Residential, Rural/ Estate	Freestanding Commercial/Retail limited primarily to uses not easily merged into vertical or horizontal mixed use (e.g. auto repair, lumber yards)
R & D Corridor	Office Professional, Light Industry, Mixed Use, Institutional	Heavy Industry, Single family Residential, Commercial/Retail	Light Industrial related to product development, assembly. Warehousing and distribution are discouraged.
<b>Predominantly Residential Sectors</b>			
Mixed Housing Types Areas	All residential categories, but single family detached to be limited to 30 percent or less overall.	Employment Categories	Limited locally serving Commercial/Retail of corner store or village center variety acceptable
Existing/Emerging Suburban Sector	Public Open Space, Parks, Single family residential, Recreation and Conservation	Multifamily residential categories, all employment categories	Commercial / retail located at intersections and adequately buffered from surrounding single-family residential acceptable
River Corridor Sector	Agriculture, Estate Residential, Public Open Space, Parks, Single family Residential, Recreation and Conservation	Multifamily residential categories, all employment categories	Very limited crossroads Commercial/Retail acceptable
Rural/Estate Sector	Agriculture, Estate Residential, Public Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation	Single Family (Above RA-200 level), all attached residential categories, all employment categories	Very limited crossroads Commercial/Retail acceptable

*Note: Table 53 is a summary and should be used with the more detailed text in Section C.2.a-g which follows. Both these resources should be used together with the definitions of recommended Mixed use Districts in section D.1.*



## C.2 Using the Character Area Summaries

The following are summaries of each of the Character Areas listed in Table 53. The eight Character Areas are divided into two groupings. The first set applies to the Mixed-Use Character areas depicted on the Future Development Map. This set encourages mixed-use as a “by-right” use, meaning that approval of mixed-use in these character areas requires no plan amendment but only rezoning approval by the Board of Commissioners. The second set includes the Character Areas that are predominantly residential. In these character areas, a plan amendment by the Board of Commissioners is required to designate specific locations for mixed-use prior to rezoning.

Definitions of terms that may possibly be new to the reader are as follows:

**Mixed use:** A mixed use development or district consists of two or more land uses between which trips can be made using local streets, without having to use major streets. The uses may include residential, retail, office and /or entertainment. There may be walk trips between the uses.

**Node:** A node is a concentration of land use activity, relative to its surroundings, in a compact and defined area, as opposed to a continuous, narrow, linear development strip. A node will be deeper rather than wide. Nodes are typically located at the intersections of major roads.

### C.2.1 Mixed Use Character Areas Regional Mixed Use Centers

Regional Mixed-Use Centers should be the County's most intense concentration and mix of commercial, employment and residential developments. The dominant uses of these centers are non-residential, preferably office-based employment, but the residential component of these centers is significant, taking the form of mid-rise and high-rise development. Mixed-use is a relatively new zoning concept in Gwinnett County in 2008 and tends to be accommodated in separate zoning districts. These centers are envisioned to become Gwinnett County's business core intermixed with shopping and housing opportunities. The mix of structure types may range from single story to high-rise development. High intensity development requires higher capacity infrastructure (roads, water and sewer delivery systems), therefore the County must plan carefully for these centers and coordinate development approvals with capacity availability. These centers may also serve as the principal Transit Oriented Development (TOD) locations should transit services extend to them.

To maintain the long term growth potential of these regional mixed-use centers and to make the best use of the public investment in upgrading infrastructure that may be required to serve them, regulations should encourage larger scale, integrated development in these mixed use centers (and indeed also in the Community Oriented Mixed Use areas). The various sector plans completed for sub-county areas should provide adequate guidance as to where smaller-scale nonresidential development might be encouraged.

Encouraged uses in the Regional Mixed-Use Centers include:

- Regional Mixed-Use
- Office Professional
- Ultra High Density Residential, High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential (which may include townhouses)
- Free standing Commercial/Retail uses are acceptable as minor components of these centers, but are preferably mixed vertically or horizontally with other uses.

Discouraged uses include:

- Light Industry, Heavy Industry, Single-Family Detached Residential, Estate Residential

## Zoning Guidelines for Regional Mixed Use Centers

The Future Development Map indicates areas that are designated for Regional Mixed-Use Centers, which anticipates the most intensive land uses envisioned for Gwinnett County. At build-out, the Regional Mixed-Use Centers will resemble high density districts of major metropolitan cities such as Atlanta's Atlantic Station. Buildings will have a mix of uses and be closely spaced to enhance pedestrian activity. Within this context the following guidelines for rezoning activity are offered.

1. **Location Criteria:**
  - a. Nodal development, located at the intersection of arterial roadways is the preferred location for higher intensity development; however, other non-intersection locations are acceptable, providing there is adequate inter-parcel access for both vehicles and pedestrians.
  - b. All structures must have direct public access to streets.
  - c. All developments are encouraged to incorporate an internal, grid roadway system based on the standards outlined in Part 2 of the Unified Plan.
2. **Development Size Criteria:** Developments on individual parcels or parcel assemblages of 10 acres or more are encouraged.
3. **Timing Criteria:** Major urban developments will have major service delivery needs. Therefore, proposed developments should take the infrastructure conditions into account. A use may be suitable for a particular location, but due to market and service delivery constraints the timing is not appropriate.
4. **Mixed-Use Orientation:** Regional Mixed-Use Centers are intended to develop as mixed-use. As such, proposed projects should:
  - a. Contain a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. Employment uses rather than residential uses should predominate with an allowed range of 35 percent to 70 percent. Sufficient residences should be provided at 20 – 50 percent of the floor area in residential usage, and adequate commercial should be provided to satisfy both the neighborhood commercial/service needs of both the workforce and residents and the commercial/service needs of the community/regional market. Commercial uses can range from 10 percent to 50 percent.
  - b. Mixing of uses are encouraged to be both horizontal and vertical.
  - c. The development should be pedestrian oriented,

meaning that people living in the project should be able to satisfy all of their day to day needs comfortably without an automobile.

- d. The development should provide not only pedestrian access, but also places to exercise and recreate on foot.
  - e. The development should provide a grid street system for internal vehicular circulation with stub-outs to continue the grid to adjacent developments and with direct links to the public roadway system.
  - f. Parking lots and garages should be accessible, but not visually obvious.
5. **Land Use Compatibility:** High intensity development in the Regional Activity Center will phase in over time. Because the ultimate goal of the Regional Activity Center is high intensity development, all uses approved for development should be selected for their compatibility with the area's future high intensity development. Small-scale developments, below the intensities recommended should be discouraged.
  6. **Neighborhood Compatibility:** Within the Regional Activity Center, neighborhood compatibility is resolved by excluding incompatible uses such as those identified in the Discouraged Uses list, mainly industrial and lower density residential uses. Between the Regional Activity Center and surrounding Character Areas, especially the Existing/Emerging Suburban Character Area transitions should be established by stepping down building heights and imposing buffers to protect residential neighborhoods or individual residences outside the Regional Activity Center.
  7. **Services/Facilities:** Proposed developments should not degrade the capacity of water/sewer, or cause drainage problems. Nor should the level of service on the roadway system be degraded to unacceptable limits. Separate level of service studies should be conducted to establish level of service standards for the County and high intensity mixed-use centers.
  8. **Recommended Pre-Application Meeting:** A mandatory pre-application meeting will be held to guide the applicant with development standards and requirements.



## Preferred Office Areas

Nationally, service-oriented industries have replaced manufacturing as the highest wage-based employment. These businesses/industries are attracted to office complexes and may include anything from the individual entrepreneur and solo attorney to corporate headquarters for Fortune 500 firms. Attracting these types of businesses to Gwinnett County is a goal of both the Unified Plan and the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce's Partnership Gwinnett program. Over the long-term, office development offers Gwinnett County the highest form of sustainable economic development.

Attracting a larger share of the region's office based employment will offset the expected shrinking of the manufacturing, light industrial and warehouse and distribution components of Gwinnett County's economy. Making office development more predominant will also reduce Gwinnett's over-reliance on commercial development as a foundation of its tax base. Furthermore, attracting office development that features higher paying professional and other white collar jobs will help Gwinnett maintain today's above average household income profile. For these reasons, designation and protection of areas which are suitable for attracting such office development is important for Gwinnett County's long-term economic health.

The areas shown as Preferred Office on the Future Development Map have great long-term potential for such office development. This is due primarily to their regional accessibility, their close proximity to the economic centers of Forsyth and north Fulton Counties, and potential to be more consistently developed as contemporary employment centers. The Preferred Office areas adjacent to Regional Mixed-Use Centers are envisioned as high-rise and mid-rise developments focused on County investment in the infrastructure needed to support such development. The other Preferred Office areas should be limited to mid-rise development.

During periods of economic decline, prime office property is frequently committed to less strategically important uses. To discourage this, the County must take action to protect the value of its future tax base. In the near-term, these Preferred Office areas should be designated for office development and rezoning applications proposed for office development supported. In the long-term, additional analysis should be conducted to determine



the county for future office use through proactive area-wide rezoning and changes to the Zoning Resolution. (See Section 3. D. 2 for some recommendations.)

Encouraged uses:

- Office Professional Uses
- Mixed-use development

Discouraged uses:

- Large, free standing Commercial/Retail
- All forms of Industrial
- All Residential, except those incorporated into mixed-use

## Using the Unified Plan to Make Zoning Map Changes

Those submitting and those evaluating zoning change requests should incorporate a number of references to the Unified Plan in their efforts. Guidance is provided by the five theme maps and the Major Thoroughfare Map which link general land use policies and transportation capabilities within various areas of the County. In all cases, a zoning request should be supported by reference to the policies associated with the five themes and the theme narrative on the purposes of the theme and the issues the theme policies are to resolve.



## Zoning Guidelines for Preferred Office Areas

The Future Development Map indicates areas that are designated as Preferred Office Areas, one of the most intensive land uses envisioned for Gwinnett County. At build-out, the Preferred Office Areas will resemble high density business districts of a major metropolitan city, similar to Perimeter Center. Office buildings will be the predominate use, but residential and neighborhood service uses will be mixed either vertically or horizontally. Within this context the following guidelines for rezoning activity are offered.

### 1. **Location Criteria:**

- a. Nodal development, located at the intersection of arterial roadways is the preferred location for higher intensity development; however, non-intersection locations are acceptable, providing there is adequate inter-parcel access for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- b. All structures must have direct public access to streets.
- c. All developments are encouraged to incorporate an internal, grid roadway system based on the standards outlined in Part 2 of the Unified Plan.

### 2. **Development Sized Criteria:** Developments on individual parcels or parcel assemblages of 10 acres or more are encouraged.

### 3. **Timing Criteria:** Major urban developments will have major service delivery needs. Therefore, proposed developments should take the infrastructure conditions into account. A use may be suitable for a particular location, but due to market and service delivery constraints the timing is not appropriate.

### 4. **Mixed-Use Orientation:** Preferred Office Areas are intended to develop with a clear emphasis on office uses. As such, proposed projects should:

- a. Contain a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. Office uses should be predominate with a range of 50 to 95 percent of the floor space. Residential development is not required but when present no more than 30 percent of the floor space should be devoted to residential uses. Adequate commercial (minimum of 5 percent to maximum of 15 percent of the floor space) should be provided to satisfy most of the neighborhood commercial/service needs of both the workforce and residents.
- b. Mixing of uses is encouraged to be both horizontal and vertical.
- c. The development should be pedestrian oriented, meaning that people living or working in the project should be able to satisfy most of their day to day

needs comfortably without an automobile.

d. The development should provide not only pedestrian access, but also places to exercise and recreate on foot.

e. The development should provide a grid street system for internal vehicular circulation with stub-outs to continue the grid to adjacent developments and with direct links to the public roadway system.

f. Parking lots and garages should be accessible, but not visually obvious.

### 5. **Land Use Compatibility:** High intensity development in the Preferred Office Area will phase in over time. Because the ultimate goal of the Preferred Office Area is mid-rise to high intensity development, all uses approved for development should be selected for their compatibility with the area's future development intensity. Small-scale developments, below the intensities recommended should be discouraged.

### 6. **Neighborhood Compatibility:** Within the Preferred Office Areas, neighborhood compatibility is resolved by excluding incompatible uses such as those identified in the Discouraged Uses list, mainly industrial and lower density residential uses. Buffering between uses within the Preferred Office Areas tends to impair pedestrian access, and is therefore discouraged. Between the Preferred Office Areas and surrounding Character Areas of lower intensity or those that are predominantly residential, such as the Existing/ Emerging Suburban Character Area, transitions should be established by stepping down building heights and imposing buffers to protect residential neighborhoods or individual residences outside the Preferred Office Areas.

### 7. **Services/Facilities:** Proposed developments should not degrade the level of service on roadways, capacity of water/sewer, or cause drainage problems.

### 8. **Recommended Pre-Application Meeting:** A mandatory pre-application meeting will be held to guide the applicant with development standards and requirements.

### Community Mixed-Use Corridors

The Foster Redevelopment theme map (Figure 72) identifies Community Mixed-Use Corridors that over time should evolve from their current predominant strip commercial status (and in some cases aging and distressed retail sites) into mixed-use corridors. Higher intensity Community Mixed-Use nodes are located at key intersections. Between these nodes, the corridors are envisioned as lower intensity mixed-use with lower maximum residential densities. These mixed use areas, unlike the Regional Mixed-Use centers, are more oriented to the needs of the areas surrounding them. These mixed-use corridors will also be the principal means within the Suburban character areas for achieving the Unified Plan's goal for a greater variety of housing choices.

Encouraged uses at Major Nodes Where the Dominant Use is Office Professional and/or Community Mixed-Use (See page 184 for definition of 'Node' and 'Mixed Use'):

- Free-standing Office Professional uses as components of these nodes, but preferably mixed with other uses
- Free-standing Commercial/Retail uses as components of these nodes, but preferably mixed vertically or horizontally with other uses
- High Density Residential

Encouraged uses between Nodes Where the Dominant Use is Residential:

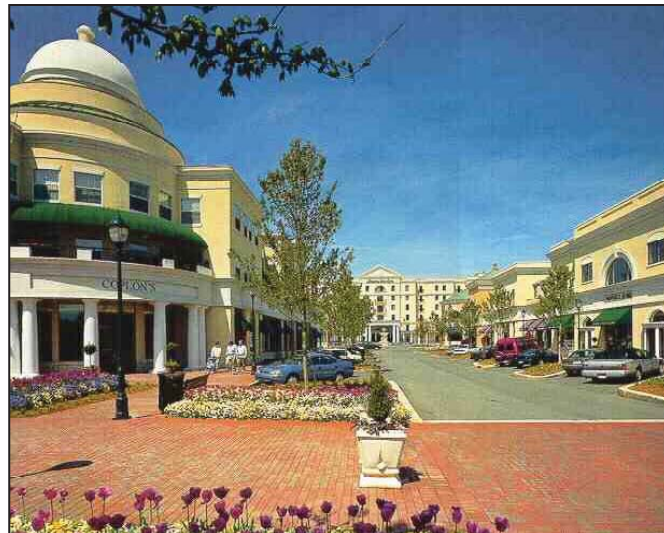
- Corridor Mixed Use development as described in Section D.1.3
- Free-standing Office Professional uses as components of these nodes, but preferably mixed with other uses
- Free-standing Commercial/Retail uses as components of these nodes, but preferably mixed vertically or horizontally with other uses
- Townhouse Residential
- Free-standing multi-family buildings

Discouraged uses at Major Nodes

- Light and Heavy Industrial,
- Single-family Residential
- Townhouse Residential

Discouraged uses between Nodes

- Light and Heavy Industrial
- Single-family Residential



### Zoning Guidelines for Community-Oriented Mixed Use Corridors

The Future Development Map indicates areas that are designated for Community Mixed-Use Corridors, which anticipates moderately intense land uses that address the community commercial/service needs of most residents of Gwinnett County. At build-out, the Community Mixed-Use Corridors will have building heights of three to five stories containing commercial, office and residences. These corridors will be redeveloped on the base of existing strip development that extends along many of the County's commercial corridors today. Buildings will have a mix of uses and be closely spaced to enhance pedestrian activity. These higher intensity uses will be buffered against the predominately residential neighborhoods that abut them. Within this context the following guidelines for rezoning activity are offered.

#### I. Location Criteria:

- a. Redevelopment of existing strip development is encouraged as the primary target for Community Oriented Mixed-Use, although new infill development is not discouraged.
- b. Nodal development, located at the intersection of arterial roadways is the preferred location for mid-intensity mixed-use development; however, non-intersection locations are acceptable, providing there is adequate inter-parcel access for both vehicles and pedestrians. Mid-block development should contain a higher mix of residential units.
- c. All structures must have direct public access to public streets.
- d. All developments are encouraged to incorporate an internal, grid roadway system based on the standards

outlined in Part 2 of the Unified Plan.

2. **Development Size Criteria:** Developments on individual parcels or parcel assemblages of 10 acres or more are encouraged.
3. **Timing Criteria:** Intensive mixed-use developments will have significant service delivery needs. Therefore, proposed developments should take the infrastructure conditions into account. A use may be suitable for a particular location, but due to market and service delivery constraints the timing is not appropriate.
4. **Mixed-Use Orientation:** Community Oriented Mixed-Use Corridors are intended to develop as mixed-use that serves the needs of the surrounding community. As such, proposed projects should:
  - a. Contain a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. Office employment uses, rather than residential uses, should predominate at intersection nodes with a minimum of 20 percent to a maximum of 60 percent allowed. Sufficient residences should be provided at a range of 20 to 30 percent of the floor area, and adequate commercial (from 20 percent to a maximum of 55 percent of the floor area) should be provided at intersection nodes to satisfy both the neighborhood commercial/service needs of both the workforce and residents. Additionally, it should serve the commercial/service needs of the surrounding community market. At mid-block inter-modal locations, office uses are not required but can range up to 60 percent of total floor area, residential uses may range from 20 percent to up to 90 percent. Commercial uses to support the local businesses or local residents of this intermodal areas should range from 10 percent to 60 percent.
  - b. Mixing of uses is encouraged to be both horizontal and vertical although heights are generally limited.
  - c. The development should be pedestrian oriented, meaning that people living in the project should be able to satisfy most of their day to day needs comfortably without an automobile.
  - d. The development should provide not only pedestrian access, but also places to exercise and recreate on foot.
  - e. The development should provide a grid street system for internal vehicular circulation with stub-outs to continue the grid to adjacent developments and with direct links to the public roadway system.
  - f. Parking lots and garages should be accessible, but not visually obvious.
5. **Land Use Compatibility:** Mixed-use development will phase- in over time. Within these corridors,

redevelopment to mixed-use should be encouraged. However, neighboring residential development within the corridor should be adequately buffered from non-residential uses. Buffering between uses within and between redeveloped or new developments should be kept to a minimum to encourage walkability and pedestrian activity within the mixed-use corridor.

6. **Neighborhood Compatibility:** Compatibility with neighboring residential development is key to the success of Community Mixed-Use Corridors. Buffering between the Community Mixed-Use Corridors and surrounding Character Areas, especially the Existing/ Emerging Suburban Character Area transitions should be established by stepping down building heights (no higher than three stories) and imposing buffers to protect residential neighborhoods or individual residences located outside the mixed-use corridor.
7. **Services/Facilities:** Proposed developments should not degrade the capacity of water/sewer, or cause drainage problems. Nor should the level of service on the roadway system be degraded to unacceptable limits. Separate level of service studies should be conducted to establish level of service standards for the County and high intensity mixed-use centers.
8. **Recommended Pre-Application Meeting:** A mandatory pre-application meeting will be held to guide the applicant with development standards and requirements.

### Research and Development (R&D) Corridor

University Parkway (SR 316) is characterized by industrial parks and commercial uses along much of its run between Interstate 85 and the City of Dacula. Georgia Gwinnett College and Gwinnett Technical College both are located in the corridor as is Gwinnett Medical Center. Briscoe Field, the County's airport, which serves primarily private aviation and corporate jets, is also located adjacent to the highway. The proximity of these key elements provide the opportunity for an enterprise-type relationship between area colleges and the Gwinnett Medical Center, and other research and development firms. The combination of these uses creates the synergy for developing a potentially high tech and biotech research corridor along University Parkway.

Uses encouraged:

- Office Professional
- Light Industrial
- Community Mixed-Use at intersections of Major roadways (in conformance with guideline in Section D.1)
- Institutional Public

Uses discouraged:

- Heavy Industrial
- All Residential Categories not associated with Mixed-Use
- Free-Standing Commercial / Retail



### Zoning Guidelines For Research and Development Corridor

The Future Development Map indicates areas that are designated as the Research and Development Corridor along SR 316; an area of corporate research/industrial campuses. At build-out, the Research and Development Corridor will consist of industrial parks interspersed with mixed-use nodes. Building height limits will be low to medium rise development areas with buildings averaging four to five stories. The proximity of these uses to the area colleges and the Gwinnett Medical Center creates the opportunity to attract research and development firms. Within this context the following guidelines for rezoning activity are offered.

#### 1. Location Criteria:

- a. Nodal development, located at the intersection of arterial roadways is the preferred location for medium intensity mixed-use development; Between nodal development industrial parks and research facilities are encouraged.
- b. All structures must have direct public access to streets.
- c. All developments are encouraged to incorporate an internal, grid roadway system based on the standards outlined in Part 2 of the Unified Plan.

#### 2. Development Sized Criteria:

Developments on individual parcels or parcel assemblages of 10 acres or more are encouraged.

#### 3. Timing Criteria:

Research and Development Centers will have significant service delivery needs. Therefore, proposed developments should take the infrastructure conditions into account. A use may be suitable for a particular location, but due to market and service delivery constraints the timing is not appropriate.



4. **Nodal and Non-Nodal Development Criteria**

The R & D development criteria will vary depending on whether a site is at a designated node or is located between such nodes.

a. **Nodal Criteria**

The mixed use orientation of nodal development in the R & D corridor will permit office development at 30 percent to 70 percent of total square footage. Residential development should be allowed at 10 percent to 30 percent of total floor area. These nodes should also accommodate commercial development at a range of 20 percent to 55 percent of total floor area.

b. **Inter-nodal Criteria**

In the areas between the nodes, employment is clearly the preferred use and residential is clearly discouraged. Employment uses should account for 85 percent to 100 percent of total development square footage. Commercial uses to support the employment development can range up to 15 percent of total floor area.

5. **Land Use Compatibility:** Research and Development Corridor development will phase-in over time. Because the ultimate goal of the Research and Development Corridor is to promote a combination of uses to create the synergy for developing a bio-tech research corridor along University Parkway, development of the appropriate use and intensity should not be denied because it is not compatible with the existing development. Despite this, new development should use buffering to minimize the adverse impacts on existing residential development located within the corridor.

6. **Neighborhood Compatibility:** Within the Research and Development Corridor, neighborhood compatibility is resolved by excluding incompatible uses such as those identified in the Discouraged Uses list, mainly stand-alone commercial, heavy industrial and lower density residential uses not developed in a mixed-use setting. Between the Research and Development Corridor Areas and surrounding Character Areas of lower intensity or those that are predominantly residential such as the Existing/Emerging Suburban Character Area, transitions should be established by stepping down building heights and imposing buffers to protect residential neighborhoods or individual residences outside the Research and Development Corridor.

7. **Services/Facilities:** Proposed developments

should not degrade the level of service on roadways, capacity of water/sewer, or cause drainage problems. Transportation studies to determine appropriate levels-of-service should be conducted to establish standards for the Research and Development Corridor.

8. **Recommended Pre-Application Meeting:** A mandatory pre-application meeting will be held to guide the applicant with development standards and requirements.

### Transfer of Development Rights

A system that assigns development rights to parcels of land and gives landowners the option of using those rights to develop or to sell their land. TDRs are used to promote conservation and protection of land by giving landowners the right to transfer the development rights of one parcel to another parcel. By selling development rights, a landowner gives up the right to develop his/her property, but the buyer could use the rights to develop another piece of land at a greater intensity than would otherwise be permitted.



## C.2.2 Residentially Oriented Character Areas

### Mixed-Housing Areas

The areas identified as Mixed-Housing Areas are currently developed as apartments with some single-family residential development or as single-family development with zoning that would permit apartment development. Located near mixed use centers, but generally away from the primary intersections, these Mixed Housing areas have only limited potential for redevelopment as sustainable mixed-use, office or commercial properties. Allowing these areas to redevelop with a broader range of residential options including apartments, townhouses, and cluster housing interspersed with neighborhood serving commercial uses would add variety to Gwinnett's housing stock. Also, as these areas are redeveloped, broadening the housing options will help break up large areas that are currently developed exclusively as apartments.

Encouraged uses include:

- Redevelopment as medium density single-family housing, townhouses, or cluster homes
- Redevelopment as medium density multifamily housing
- Neighborhood-serving commercial

Discouraged uses include:

- Employment Uses
- Non-residential uses such as retail that are intended to serve more than the immediate neighborhood
- All Mixed-Use types
- Convenience stores that dispense gasoline, ethanol, or diesel fuel

### Existing/Emerging Suburban

The majority of Gwinnett County's developed land is projected to continue as traditional suburban-style residential development. A primary goal of the Existing/Emerging Suburban Character area is to accommodate the needs of these extensive residential neighborhoods. These areas have developed as single-family detached communities based on extensive networks of cul-de-sacs and a limited presence of other uses within these neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods are less than 20 to 30 years old, especially in the area north of the SR 316 Corridor. Consequently, there is little need for significant redevelopment within many of these



northern single-family neighborhoods, which will remain some of the most stable parts of Gwinnett County.

In the southern and western parts of Gwinnett are sub-areas within the Existing Suburban area that need attention. Portions of these neighborhoods have been the focus of "Operation Fixing Broken Windows", and have been enhanced by the Quality of Life section of the Police Services.

Residential neighborhoods that abut primary strip commercial corridors such as Lawrenceville Highway (US 29), Scenic Highway (SR 124) and Loganville Highway (SR 20) are especially sensitive to decline. As these commercial areas age and decline, such decline typically begins to affect the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Revitalizing the highway corridors by allowing the conversion of vacant and declining strip commercial centers to higher density residential development mixed vertically and horizontally with neighborhood serving commercial uses could help to stabilize the surrounding residential sector as well. (See the Community Mixed-Use Corridor discussion in section D.1.2 for additional information.)

Promoting a variety of housing options for Gwinnett County residents is one of the policy goals of the Unified Plan. Simultaneously, the Board of Commissioners has the obligation to protect the character of existing neighborhoods. Therefore, within the Existing and Emerging Suburban Character Area this Plan establishes two density caps based on the character of the surrounding area.

- Proposed new residential development within the Existing/Emerging Suburban Character Area and in the vicinity of existing low density, single-family subdivisions should not exceed the 3.0 units per acre density.

- Proposed new residential development within the Existing/Emerging Suburban Character Area and in the vicinity of existing medium density homes should not exceed the 3.8 units per acre density.

Within medium density neighborhoods, the introduction of “corner store” developments (see Policy A.2.5) could be allowed as infill or as components of any new development. Such corner store developments should be encouraged where such uses can be accommodated without infringing on the overall character of the surrounding neighborhoods. A special “floating zone”, which sets a number of conditions that must be met to allow such a use where it otherwise is not allowed, would need to be added to the County’s Zoning Resolution.

Roadway congestion is a major issue for most of the residential neighborhoods in Gwinnett County. Because new subdivisions are developed in isolation from one another without street or sidewalk connections to adjacent residential or commercial developments, all vehicles entering or exiting a subdivision must flow through a single entrance on to a congested road. Requirements for multiple entrances to subdivisions, including stub-outs to adjacent uses would provide alternative access routes and help reduce congestion.

Encouraged uses include:

- Single family detached and townhouse developments at low to moderate densities
- Residential in-fill development at densities and architectural character compatible with existing development
- Neighborhood-serving retail and commercial services and neighborhood serving office employment at key nodes created at major intersections (adequately buffered from surrounding single-family development)
- Public Open Space, Parks (especially neighborhood parks), Recreation and Conservation Areas

Discouraged uses include:

- Heavy Industry, Major Warehousing and Distribution
- New Community level Retail (these uses should be located in Community Oriented Mixed-Use Corridors)
- New strip retail centers along roadways
- All Mixed-Use Types Unless specifically designated by the Board of Commissioners

### Chattahoochee River Area

This Character Area includes the land along the Chattahoochee River and Lake Lanier. This area combines the need for housing areas attractive to business executives and managers combined with the need to protect the water quality and environmental character of the Chattahoochee River and Lake Lanier. Consequently, this area will remain predominantly residential with future development implemented in more environmentally sensitive ways. Moderate density residential such as townhomes or very small single family detached lots should only be allowed when part of an environmental clustering strategy to preserve and buffer sensitive areas such as steep slopes or stream buffers.

The Chattahoochee River Area is close to the retail and commercial services areas of six cities: Norcross, Berkeley Lake, Duluth, Suwanee, Sugar Hill, and Buford. Consequently, there is little need to locate any retail or commercial beyond the corner store variety within this sector.

Encouraged uses include:

- Estate housing
- Single family detached
- Townhouses and Cluster homes (As part of an environmental clustering strategy to preserve and buffer sensitive areas such as steep slopes or stream buffers)

Discouraged uses include:

- All Mixed-Use Types
- Employment uses
- Conventional retail centers
- All Industrial Uses
- Multi-family housing
- All commercial uses that dispense gasoline, ethanol or diesel fuels

### Rural Estate Character Area

Two large areas on Gwinnett County's eastern border are all that remains of what was, just forty years ago, a large agrarian jurisdiction. As Gwinnett's remaining lands of rural character; these two areas are predominantly undeveloped, with scattered subdivisions and a few remnant agricultural tracts.

There are two basic reasons to preserve rural character in eastern Gwinnett County. The first is merely to preserve the rural lifestyle and heritage which has shaped the development of the County. Preserving a rural estate lifestyle increases the housing choices offered within the County which is a major goal of the Unified Plan.

These two rural areas are Gwinnett's last opportunity to retain some aspects of its rural heritage, a goal the Unified Plan encourages. The retention of any rural character will require new planning, zoning and subdivision development approaches. One tactic would be to withhold public sewer from these areas so that only low density development could be viable. Two other potential and complementary approaches—Transfer of Development Rights and Rural Conservation zoning—are described in Section 3.D.3.

The second reason is economic. Suburban-style single-family development costs the County more to service than it returns in tax revenue. In order to preserve the quality of life and level of service delivery that Gwinnett residents have come to enjoy, the County must reduce the cost to service single-family residential development. Studies indicate that limiting the expansion of suburban-style development and its attendant service demands in eastern Gwinnett County while shifting the area's development potential into areas that are prime for higher intensity development will allow the county to maintain a balanced tax digest with only moderate increases in property taxes over time.

Until an approach is ultimately approved for development in this Character Area, gross development densities for all new residential development should not exceed 2.0 dwelling units per acre.

Encouraged uses include:

- Agriculture (Non-grandfathered commercial agricultural uses should require public hearings)
- Estate Residential
- Limited "crossroads" Commercial/Retail uses are appropriate at roadway intersections or nodes, but

should be limited in size and subject to site planning and design criteria that promote traditional "rural" crossroads feel.

- Public Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Conservation

Discouraged uses include:

- Single Family densities other than those specified for Rural Conservation
- All Multifamily residential categories
- All employment categories
- All Mixed-Use types unless specifically designated by the Board of Commissioners

### Zoning Guidelines for Residential Character Areas

The Future Development Map indicates four Character Areas that are dominated by residential uses.

- Existing/Emerging Suburban
- Mixed Housing Types
- Chattahoochee River Area
- Rural Estate Areas

While these areas vary in the type and density of housing anticipated, they are all residential in character and non-residential uses should, therefore, meet a higher standard for approval than within the County's designated Mixed-Use Character Areas. Non-residential uses approved within residential character areas should be neighborhood scaled developments, providing goods and services that meet the needs of nearby residential developments. Examples of neighborhood serving uses include: convenience stores, specialty grocery stores, café/coffee shops, restaurants, bakeries, hardware stores, dry cleaners, video rental shops, child or adult day care centers, pharmacies, etc. Development opportunities for community-scale shopping are amply provided for in the County's various Mixed-Use Character Areas and in existing non-residential development already approved. Within this context the following guidelines for rezoning activity are offered.

#### I. Location Criteria:

- a. Nodal development located at the intersections of minor collector roads or higher. Mid-block development is not encouraged.
- b. Nodes should be located at least two miles from a Community Oriented Mixed-Use Corridor (or from other mixed-use Character Areas that provide Community and Regional scaled goods and services).
- c. Nodes should be located at least two miles from another node offering non-residential goods and

services.

d. Nodes should be located at signalized intersections.

2. **Development Size Criteria:** Due to their neighborhood orientation, nodes should be limited to no more than 20,000 square feet of developed non-residential floor space or on one acre, whichever is larger.
3. **Timing Criteria:** Proposed developments should take neighborhood and market conditions into account. A use may be suitable for a particular location, but due to neighborhood or market constraints, the Board may determine that the use is premature at the time of application.
4. **Land Use Compatibility:** Development intensity should transition so that in-fill development is consistent with the character of existing abutting densities. Smaller scale professional services and residential developments may serve as transition to existing neighborhoods. Staggered heights, greater rear and side yard setbacks, and/or increased buffers can help mitigate compatibility issues. Design standards for massing and articulation, roof form, and materials are desirable.
5. **Neighborhood Compatibility:** Commercial and office uses that by virtue of their scale and/or design could have a negative or blighting influence on adjacent residential neighborhoods or individual residences should not be permitted.
6. **Services/Facilities:** Small-scale developments, below the intensities recommended in the Mixed-Use Development discussion in section D.I, should be discouraged in areas that have received high levels of County and/or state infrastructure investments such expanded water; sewer; or roadway capacity as smaller developments do not fully utilize this investment.
7. **Recommended Pre-Application Meeting:** A mandatory pre-application meeting will be held to guide the applicant with development standards and requirements.

## Neighborhood Conservation and Enhancement

Although the Unified Plan calls for a significant amount of redevelopment and changes in new development standards, it still recognizes that much of Gwinnett will likely remain largely untouched by such changes. This is true for much existing development in the Existing/Emerging Suburban, the River Corridor, and the Rural/Estate areas.

The primary approach of the Unified Plan to such areas is to promote their stability and enhance them by providing new amenities such as local parks or better pedestrian facilities wherever possible. The following policies from the 'Keep Gwinnett a Preferred Place' provide for sustaining and enhancing the currently high quality of these areas.

- Policy 5.1: Improve the Walkability of Gwinnett's Activity Centers and Neighborhoods
- Policy 5.4: Enhance Development Aesthetics
- Policy 5.7: Provide Incentives for Enhanced Open Space/Trails
- Policy 5.8: Use Development Regulations to Create Local Parks
- Policy 5.9: Acquire Surplus Industrial or Commercial Sites for Open Space/Recreation

In addition to such policies, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration when new development or infill development is proposed for these areas.

- Discourage uses or densities not consistent with the Future Development Map or the five theme maps.
- Establish transitional areas between potentially incompatible uses, preferably through open space buffers but also through architectural or urban design solutions.
- Require that infill development be consistent or compatible in style and/or scale with surrounding uses.
- Encourage use of best practices for new development such as Traditional Neighborhood Design or clustering for open space and environmental resource retention.

## D. CHANGES TO THE ZONING RESOLUTION AND THE LONG RANGE ROAD CLASSIFICATION MAP

Implementing the Unified Plan will require a variety of new zoning districts and/or substantial modifications to the current zoning and development regulations. One of the first follow-up actions subsequent to adoption of the Unified Plan will be to complete a list of such needed amendments and present them to the Board of Commissioners to consider adopting as part of a Comprehensive Zoning Amendment.

The following are four significant Unified Plan concepts that will require appropriate Zoning Resolution amendments.

- Different Scale and Purposes of Mixed-Use Districts
- Rural Estate Land Uses, including provisions for
- Rural Conservation Zoning
- Transfer of Development Rights

An additional concept is preserving the Preferred Office Employment Sites. This will involve research and proactive area wide rezonings by the Board of Commissioners.

### D.1 Different Purposes and Scales of Mixed Use Developments

The Unified Plan anticipates at least four variants of mixed-use development in Gwinnett County that differ based on their purpose, location and character of the surrounding area. The following provides details on how these four mixed-use areas differ from each other and how they should be refined and incorporated in an updated Zoning Resolution. Below are the recommended categories. The descriptions introduce Floor Area Ratios (FAR) for non-residential development and density numbers (dwelling units per acre) for residential development. Both of these are directed at the land on which the proposed use is to occur, rather than for the tract or area as a whole. The descriptions also introduce another new concept – the notion of minimum densities – to ensure that public investments in infrastructure are used cost-effectively and that areas assume the desired character as shown on the Future Development Map.



### D.1.1 Regional Mixed-Use

**Where Recommended:** Regional Mixed-Use (MXD) Centers are recommended in locations where the County has invested, or plans to invest, in the infrastructure capacity required to support high intensity development. Four such centers are envisioned on the Future Development Map—the Mall of Georgia area, the Civic Center area, the Gwinnett Place Mall area and along I-85 near the southwest corner of the County. These MXD sites may be key locations along future transit lines.

**Recommended Uses:** Full range of commercial, office and residential uses at densities making them centers of regional significance. Developments providing for transit facilities, public open space or other community amenities may be eligible for density bonuses.

**Integration Pattern:** Vertical and horizontal mixing is encouraged with ground level commercial uses integrated into office and high-density residential structures

#### Building Height Limits:

Minimum: Three stories

Maximum: No limit

#### Residential densities:

Minimum Dwelling Units Per Acre: 30 (net)

Maximum Dwelling Units: no limit but must conform to FAR limits.

With Transfer of Development Rights: No Maximum

Non-Residential: Floor Area Ratio (FAR):

2.0 (net) By Right (Cap for tracts of less than 10 acres)

2.5 (net) (Applies to tracts of 10 acres or more)

Higher FARs may be allowed in return for certain desirable development amenities such as significantly increased open space or LEED silver certified buildings as will be determined by adopted development criteria.



### D.1.2 Community Mixed-Use

**Where Recommended:** These are major activity nodes recommended at intersections of major arterials located within the Preferred Office area, the R & D Corridor, and the Community Mixed-Use Corridors. Some of these Community Mixed-Use areas may be served by enhanced transit services operating on existing or proposed major roadways.

**Recommended Uses:** Full range of commercial, office and residential uses (except single family detached units) drawing from a wide variety of local sub-markets. Developments providing for transit facilities, public open space, shared facilities such as structured parking or storm-water facilities or other community amenities may be eligible for density bonuses.

**Integration Pattern:** Vertical and horizontal mixing is encouraged with ground floor commercial uses integrated into office and residential structures.

#### Building Height Limits:

Minimum: One story

Maximum: Seven stories

#### Residential Densities:

Minimum Dwelling Units Per Acre: 10 (net)

Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre: 40 (net)

If Transfer of Development Rights are created, they may be applied to this district and allow higher densities.

### D.1.3 Corridor Mixed-Use

**Where Recommended:** These developments are mixed-use areas recommended for locations between the Regional Mixed-Use (MXD) or Community Mixed-Use nodes cited above and along various corridors within Mixed-Use Character areas and along the corridors depicted on the Foster Redevelopment theme map and the Future Development Map.

**Recommended Uses:** Limited-range of retail, commercial services, office uses, and medium density residential that serve primarily markets between the larger centers. Over time, such mixed use should supersede many existing strip commercial developments.

**Integration Pattern:** Vertical and horizontal mixing is encouraged with ground level commercial and office uses integrated into medium density multifamily and townhouse communities.

#### **Building Height Limits:**

Minimum: One story  
Maximum: Five stories

#### **Residential Densities:**

Minimum Dwelling Units Per Acre: 10 (net)  
Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre: 30 (net)

### D.1.4 Neighborhood Mixed Use

**Where Recommended:** At less intensive areas within Community and Corridor Mixed-Use Corridors and Board of Commissioner approved Mixed-Use nodes at intersections of arterials in the Existing / Emerging Suburban Areas. (A Plan Amendment designating a Mixed-Use node would be required prior to acceptance of rezoning applications by staff.)

**Recommended Uses:** Limited-range of community serving retail, commercial services, office uses and medium density single-family or attached residential.

**Integration Pattern:** Horizontal mixing is encouraged with commercial and office uses integrated with medium density townhouse and small lot single-family neighborhoods. Some limited vertically integrated, work-live units may be allowed for independent small business operators.

#### **Building Height Limits:**

Minimum: One story  
Maximum: Three stories

#### **Residential Densities:**

Minimum Dwelling Units per Acre: 3 (net)  
Maximum Dwelling Units per Acre: 12 (net)

## D.2 Protected Office Employment Sites

A variety of incentives and restrictions will be needed to make this policy fully effective. The following are changes to the Zoning Resolution that should be part of the overall package of actions to protect office employment sites:

- Designation of those areas within which preferred office development status will apply as an overlay or the establishment of an Office zoning district.
- Within these designated areas, specify:
  - o Limitation on non-office by-right uses; especially retail or commercial
  - o Accelerated provision of infrastructure when office development is proposed and services are available;
  - o Back of the queue restrictions on infrastructure provision when capacities are limited and office developments are vying for similar permits



## D.3 Rural Estate

The effort to keep part of Gwinnett at least rural in feel will not succeed simply by withholding public sewer. However, that policy decision may be necessary to the ultimate success of such a goal. Even without public sewer, the remaining open landscape of Gwinnett County could give way to very low density development in which all perception of a remaining rural Gwinnett is gradually eroded. To avert such a result, the Unified Plan recommends amending to the Zoning Resolution to create rural clustering and rural landscape preservation provisions with a new 'Rural Conservation' zoning district. The Unified Plan also recommends a system of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). (See Policy A.1.4.) A TDR program would allow land owners to sell their development rights to the new mixed use corridors, through a variety of incentives, and at a slightly higher rate than their use-by-right densities without such transfers.

### D.3.1 Rural Conservation Zoning

In Gwinnett, there is only one low density single family residential zoning district (R-140) with minimum lot sizes greater than one acre. Additionally, the minimum lot size of the RA-200 District establishes a comfortable margin above minimum state standards for on-site septic systems. To better protect Gwinnett's remaining rural environment, the Unified Plan recommends a new approach to rural zoning be explored. The following are some key elements on which a new Rural Conservation Zoning might be based :

- It is a separate zoning district, not an overlay
- Its purpose is "rural landscape protection," which

includes maintenance of existing aesthetic and environmental characteristics and a land base for active agricultural uses.

- This district would allow as its residential component only single family detached housing at an overall density of 1 unit per 2 acres. All other non-residential uses of the current RA-200 zoning would be allowed.
- Individual developed lots would be a maximum of 40,000 square feet with the balance of the tract would remain undeveloped –either as common areas managed by a Home Owner's Association (HOA), dedicated as open space easements to the County as part of an open space system or as separately owned land used for any of the non residential uses allowed in the RA-200 zoning district.
- If shared septic systems are eventually allowed, minimum lot sizes could be reduced to 20,000 square feet to reduce the amount of land developed and to increase the amount of land that is preserved.
- All lots must front on common drives or local streets; no lots are allowed to have direct access to arterial or collector roads.
- A minimum landscape buffer of 75 feet is required along all arterial or collector roads. Standards for such buffers to encourage tree preservation or plantings should be developed. No stripping out of road with lots (i.e., need to have an internal road for more than 3 lots.
- For parcels under 5 acres, there is no maximum development lot size and normal small lot subdivision rules apply except that a variation of the landscape buffer for larger developments will also be developed.
- All Rural Conservation district properties of more than 5 acres are eligible as "sending areas" for a Transfer of Development Rights to designated "receiving" areas at a ratio of 1 dwelling unit per 1.5 acres – a 25 percent bonus over on site by-right yields.

### D.3.2 Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a system many jurisdictions across the country use to promote rural conservation or agricultural preservation. TDR programs give landowners the option of using those rights to develop their property or to sell and transfer these rights for use on another property that has been designated to receive them. By selling and transferring development rights, landowners are justly compensated and agree not to develop their properties in the future, thus preserving the property's existing character and resources. Buyers of such rights are able to develop their property at a higher density than would otherwise be permitted.

If one-acre zoning remains the by-right use in Gwinnett's Rural Estate area, any TDR program would need to incorporate transfer of some bonus density above this base level to encourage landowners to go through the TDR process. Although most TDR programs to preserve rural landscapes incorporate such density bonuses, the base level is usually much lower and the amount of development rights transferred are significant enough to encourage participation but not so high that the receiving areas gain a dramatic increase in additional density.

There are well over 100 TDR programs across the US and they exhibit a variety of characteristics. In larger jurisdictions like Gwinnett, the County acts as a banker of Development Rights to ensure that there is a balanced and attractive marketplace for buyers and senders. TDR programs can also work purely through the private market, which establishes the value of the Development Rights.

The typical elements that underpin a TDR program that an updated Gwinnett Zoning Resolution should include are:

- Designation of appropriate "sending" and "receiving" areas
- Minimum size of both sending and receiving parcels (to eliminate minor subdivisions from the program)
- Criteria for limiting the amount of TDRs receiving area parcels can absorb
- Requirements for permanent recording a "no further development" easement on sending area (apart from any residual rights).

## D.4 Access Management, the Major Thoroughfare Plan Map and Network Spacing

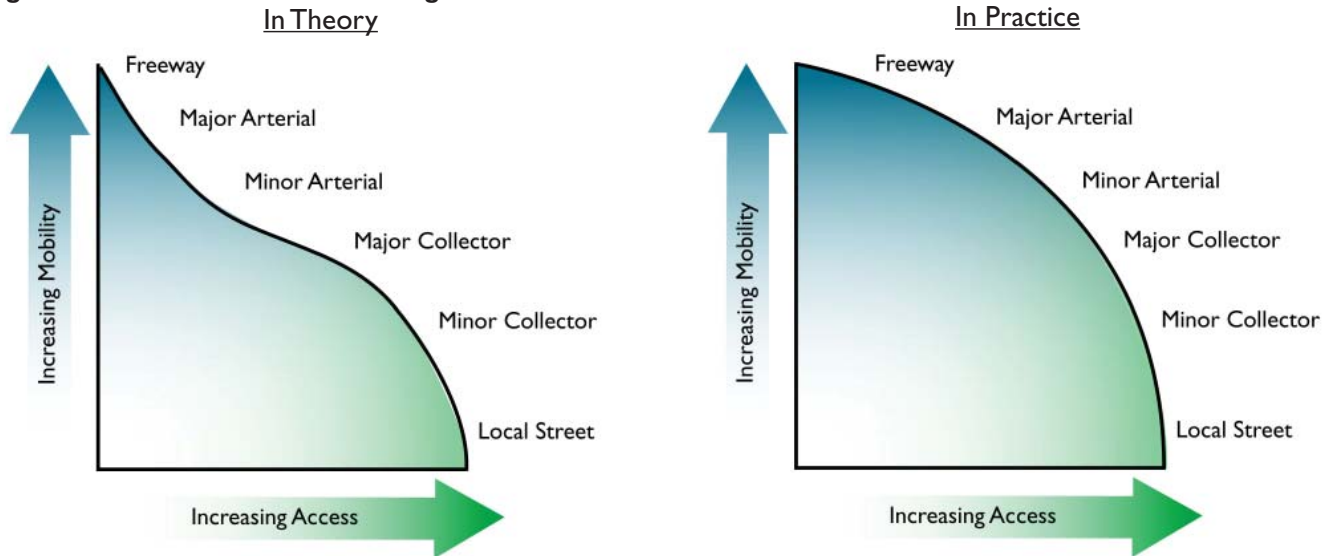
This Plan identifies the management of access on arterial roads as one of the County's priority policies for implementation over the next two years (Policy 3.2). Its implementation involves revisiting a key regulatory tool – the Long Range Road Classification Map (LRRCM) – one that has been generally underutilized in Gwinnett. Beyond the classification of current and future roads and tying these to access controls and abutting land uses, there is the larger issue of the roadway network, discussed briefly in Part I, Section C.6. The following section addresses these items in turn.

### D.4.1 Access Management

The 2008 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), included in the Appendix, describes and discusses access management at length and provides recommendations and examples for its application in Gwinnett. Local regulations can be applied to State roads if they have more stringent standards. Access management is the systematic control of the location, spacing, design and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections. It also encompasses roadway design treatments such as medians and auxiliary lanes, and the appropriate spacing of traffic signals.

Access management guidelines are developed to maintain traffic flow on the network so each roadway can provide mobility while providing adequate access for private properties to the transportation network. This harmonization of access and mobility is the keystone to effective access management. The left side of Figure 78 is the classic depiction of the Mobility/Access relationship by road type. The reality, however, in Gwinnett and around the country, is more like the right side of the figure, where arterials and collectors become so cluttered with driveways and other access points that they function more like local streets. Abundant research shows that travel speeds fall and accident rates rise as the number of access points increase.



**Figure 79: Road Classification Diagram**

With fewer new arterial roadways being built, the need for effective systems management strategies is greater than ever before. Access management is particularly significant as it offers a variety of benefits to a broad range of stakeholders. By managing roadway access, Gwinnett County can increase public safety, extend the life of major roadways, reduce traffic congestion, support alternative transportation modes, and even improve the appearance and quality of the built environment.

Access management programs seek to limit and consolidate access along major roadways, while promoting a supporting street system and unified access and circulation systems for development. The result is a roadway that functions safely and efficiently for its useful life, and a more attractive corridor. The goals of access management are accomplished by applying the following principles:

- Provide a Specialized Roadway System
- Limit Direct Access to Major Roadways
- Promote Intersection Hierarchy
- Locate Signals to Favor Through Movements
- Preserve the Functional Area of Intersections and Interchanges
- Limit the Number of Conflict Points
- Separate Conflict Areas
- Remove Turning Vehicles from Through Traffic Lanes
- Use Non-traversable Medians to Manage Left-Turn Movements
- Provide a Supporting Street and Circulation System

## D.4.2 The Long Range Road Classification Map/Major Thoroughfare Plan

One way to ensure access management is through strengthening the provisions in the County's existing Long Range Road Classification Map. This map, which classifies existing and future roads into six categories, was included in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. The map and associated text identifies right of way dimensions by road class.

This map is part of the County Development Regulations by reference where language notes that properties with 400 foot of frontage are entitled to one access point, and any fraction beyond that allows an additional driveway. The 400-foot threshold is not a spacing standard, however; and driveways are not subject to this separation. The maintenance of this map now resides within the Department of Transportation. It is used routinely in rezonings and plan review functions by planning staff.

This Unified Plan is an opportunity to set the stage for a significant upgrade of this existing tool to manage access to major roads. Such maps and their associated text are now routinely used around the country to achieve access management goals in a proactive manner. Below are some of the ways in which the map can and should be used in Gwinnett to achieve access management through the creation of an access management ordinance or via amendments to the Development Regulations:

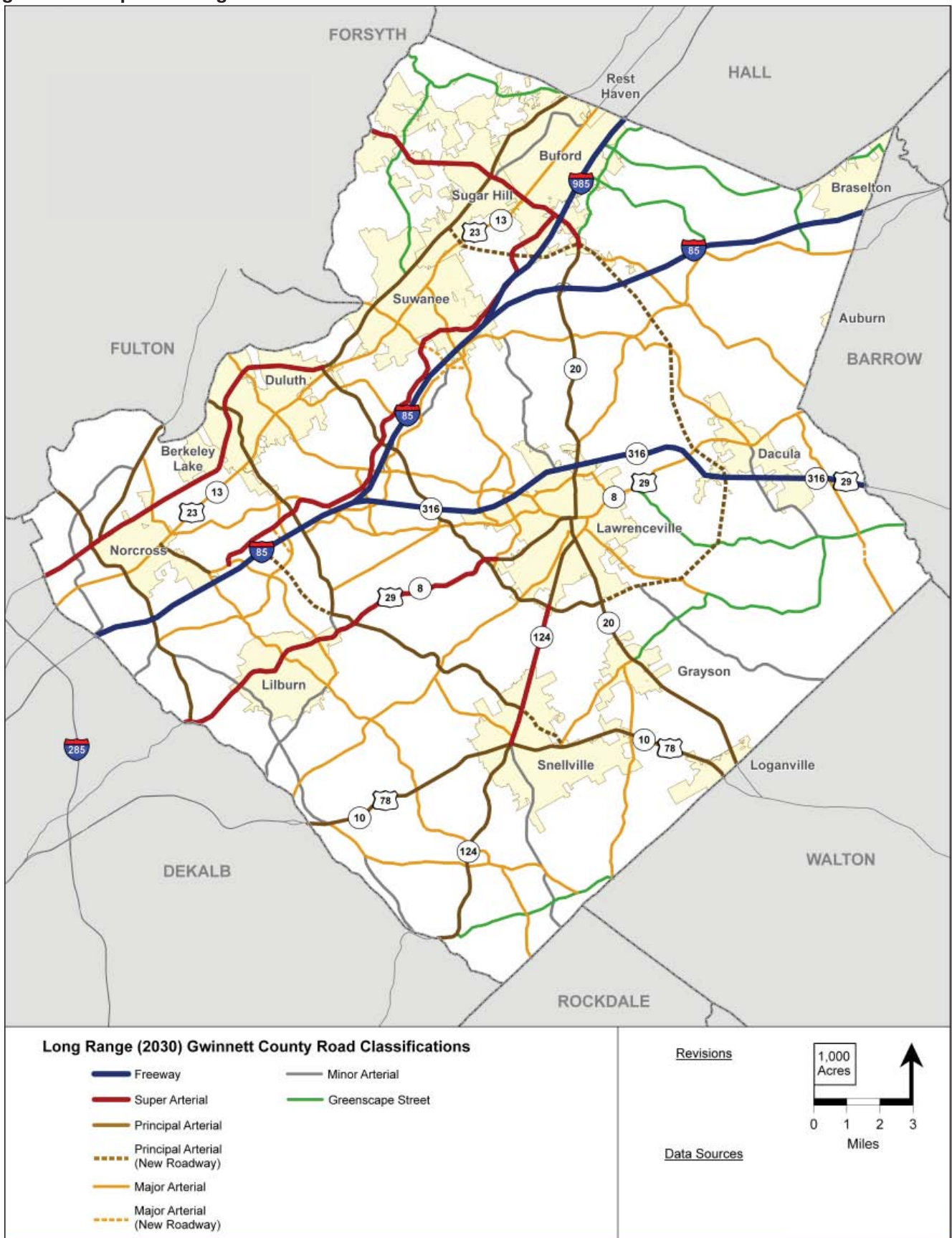


- Limit driveway access points for all roads above a certain classification (e.g. residential arterial or major collector) so that shared driveways or interparcel connections result from new development or redevelopment
  - Require roadway access from abutting development rather than driveway access and limit roadway spacing in relation to the level of roadway class (see Road Network section below)
  - Require frontage roads or “backage roads” to achieve these same outcomes for roadway spacing, especially where major development and redevelopment is occurring
  - In most cases, require that corner lots facing major roads and minor roads only take access from the minor road
  - Extend the classification concept to include multimodal road types so that where roads are classified as ped/ bike roads or transit roads additional standards may be applied (e.g. sidewalk width, bike path striping, tree planting strips etc.).
  - The County currently applies corridor overlay districts in the Zoning Resolution to selected arterials including: Buford Drive and Grayson Highway (SR 20), Stone Mountain and Loganville Highways (US Highway 78), Centerville and Braselton Highways (SR 124), and sections of Sugarloaf Parkway, Satellite Boulevard, Old Peachtree Road, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Peachtree Parkway, and Jimmy Carter Boulevard to name a few. These, however, do not currently govern access management but their existence provides an opportunity to do so in conjunction with the above requirements.
- where such connections are intended.
  - Expand the classification types to include and account for at least the following:
    - o Super-Arterials, depicted on the Mobility Plan network
    - o Boulevards – a new class which includes landscaped medians and stronger access controls than on undivided arterials
    - o Greenscape Roads which are applied to arterials and collectors in low density, more rural areas. These types of roads permit narrower cross sections and rights of way and promote enhanced drainage.
    - o Scenic roads which share some characteristics with Greenscape Roads but are more protective of the scenic qualities of the roadway
    - o Urban Main Streets which require that arterials, when traversing the County’s traditional downtowns, have reduced right of way and roadway widths, lane widths, on-street parking allowances, and horizontal curvature standards
    - o Provisions for multimodal considerations such as pedestrians, cyclists and transit modes are now typically recognized and addressed in such maps and associated text and standards.

For the purposes of this Unified Plan, an interim update of the LRRCM has been developed (Figure 80), entitled the Major Thoroughfare Plan (draft). Figure 80 differs from the current LRRCM map in that it includes additional classifications, and shows several proposed new roadways. Figure 80 is an interim document because the Gwinnett DOT will update the existing map, and perhaps include additional categories and regulations. In relation to this overhaul, this Plan recommends several enhancements:

- Depict and classify existing *as well as* future major roads.
- Increase the map road network to include minor collectors and add future links at the collector level so as to increase road connectivity, another policy of this Unified Plan. Even if exact alignments of such roads are not yet known, the map can provide guidance on

Figure 80: Major Thoroughfare Plan



D.4.3 Road Network Spacing

The above measures will help maintain mobility and accessibility in the County but they do not directly address the overall pattern of roadways as Gwinnett matures towards build-out. The wide spacing of County roads, described in Part I of the Plan, has inevitably resulted in the expansion of 4 lane arterials to 6 and 8 lanes over time and to the concentration of both short and long trips on a limited number of facilities leading to long queues at signalized intersections.

From a system-wide perspective, more frequently spaced 2 and 4 lane through roads are better than widely spaced 6 and 8 lane roads. The simplest guideline would be spacing through streets at no more than a half mile apart. For curvilinear networks the equivalent network density is 4.0 centerline miles per square mile of land area. This finer grain spacing of streets means that reverse lotting, frontage streets, looped local streets or deep setback boulevard designs are needed in the Development Regulations where residential subdivision lots would otherwise face these busier streets.

Another way of specifying network spacing systemwide and, more typically, for subdivisions is through the use of a Connectivity Index. This measure is the number of street links divided by the number of street nodes or link ends (i.e. intersections or cul-de-sac heads). The more links relative to nodes, the more connectivity. A good hybrid target is an Index of 1.40, about halfway between the gridiron and curvilinear cul-de-sac extremes.

A more case-by-case approach can be gleaned from the Transportation Research Board's 2003 Access Management Manual which recommends the access spacing guidelines in Table 54 for unsignalized conditions in suburban contexts.

Table 54: Example of Guidelines for Access Spacing (ft) on Suburban Roads

	Undivided Roadway	Divided Roadway		
		Full Median Opening	Right in/Out Only	Directional Median Opening*
Functional Class of Roadway	Not applicable**	2640	Typically not permitted	Typically not permitted
Principal Arterial	2640	2640	1320	1320
Minor Arterial	660	1320	330	660
Collector	330	Not applicable, medians typically not used		
Local Road	100			

\* Typically designed for left turns from the major roadway or left turns and U-turns  
\*\* Not applicable; strategic arterials are divided roadways with a nontraversable median

Source: Access Management Manual, Transportation Research Board, 2003

## E. KEEPING ON COURSE

It is not enough to make a plan and describe needed policies. The policies must be implemented, monitored, and corrections should be made when necessary. The Unified Plan and the recommended policies are based on many assumptions, and the Plan development process used analytical tools to arrive at its conclusions. The Plan's recommendations and the maps and policies that describe them include many ideas that are ambitious and complex to implement; they represent a break from past practices. Accordingly, it is important to monitor the assumptions on which the Plan is based, report on the Plan's progress, and make modifications to the Plan as needed.

### E.1 Monitoring Current Trends

An important component of implementing the Plan is monitoring progress by examining current trends. By observing what is currently happening and comparing it to what has happened before, it is possible to gain an understanding of whether the desired changes are occurring. Listed below are several ways the County can monitor current trends. It will be necessary for the County to refine this list and develop a tracking mechanism.

- a. Monitor plans in process including subdivision plans and site plans at each stage of review and approval. Special attention should be paid to minor subdivisions, which often are overlooked but represent a significant proportion of new development in older, established areas.
- b. Monitor the assumptions made in the scenarios on the regional economy and socio-economic shifts, as presented in Parts 2.A and 2.B in the Plan.
- c. Summarize at the TAZ level acres of change by zoning and land use category by Character Area.
- d. Interpolate five year projections for the International Gateway scenario at the County and Sub-County Area levels for jobs and households and use these as benchmarks to compare with actual trends as documented by construction data, occupancy permits and other similar development data.
- e. Compare traffic counts or interim modeling results with projections in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.
- f. Track land use or zoning changes within the cities to compare with Plan assumptions.

- g. Use PlanMaster, the web-based scenario model developed for this project, to test the fiscal effects of proposed land use changes and the land use effects of changing fiscal assumptions.

Most of the information cited above should be tracked continuously (i.e., zoning changes, new construction, redevelopment data, etc.) or at set frequencies (i.e., construction data, occupancy permits, traffic counts, etc.). While it may be difficult to obtain, arrangements should be made to have the cities within Gwinnett County report such items as zoning changes, new construction approvals and occupancy permits as they occur in order to create an overall Countywide database.

### E.2 Biennial Implementation Progress Report to Commissioners

Currently, an annual Plan update that focuses on zoning and policy amendments from the prior year is sent to the Board of Commissioners. The Biennial Implementation Progress Report would, in contrast, provide a two-year assessment report that focuses on the status of the various implementation actions cited in the policy summaries and what has been achieved with regard to each policy's measures of effectiveness. The report could be prepared by the Department of Planning and Development, in conjunction with the Office of Economic Analysis, and submitted to the Board of Commissioners and all departments and agencies that report to the Board. The report would show how well (or poorly) the assumptions and expectations cited in the policy summary sheets are being realized. The report would cite reasons (e.g., lack of appropriations, delay in extension of sewer, etc.) why a policy or its key actions had not occurred as set out in the policy summary. Items for which the designated time for implementation had not yet arrived should also be noted. The information gathered for the Biennial Implementation Progress Report would also provide DCA with updates and information on progress of the Short Term Work Program.

The first biennial report should also include key information for the monitoring efforts described in Section E.1 and summarize whether current development trends correspond with Plan expectations. The report should also

convey whether any pronounced lags in key items such as job growth or housing construction are sufficient to require consideration of adjusting the Plan implementation schedule. If severe enough, such lags would indicate the need to delay implementing actions and policies that depend on a certain level of growth having already occurred (e.g., transit upgrades) or certain economic trends noticeably strengthening (e.g., growth in office based employment).

## E.3 Amendments to the Unified Plan

All plans must be amended from time to time and the Unified Plan will be no different. Georgia regulations set forth criteria for major and minor amendments to the Unified Plan.

Changes to the plan are considered major amendments if they:

- Alter the basic tenets of the overall plan,
- Change a significant portion of the plan,
- Have the potential to affect another government.

All other amendments are considered to be minor:

In addition to unforeseen amendments which may arise in the future, two situations will specifically generate the need to amend this plan.

- A plan amendment shall be required prior to accepting an application for rezoning for any proposed development of a mixed-use center or mixed-use development of any type within Predominantly Residentially Oriented Character areas. Predominantly Residentially Oriented Character areas include the Mixed Housing, the Existing/Emerging Suburban, the Chattahoochee River Area, and the Rural Estate character areas.
- A plan amendment shall be required prior to changing any boundary of any Character Area depicted on the Future Land Development Map. If such an amendment must be sought to ensure the conformance of the Plan with a proposed rezoning petition, public hearings must be held and the plan amendment approved by the Board of Commissioners before staff could accept an application for rezoning for processing.





# STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Technical Advisory Committee for Unified Plan

Marty Allen	City of Suwanee
Buzz Benson	Gwinnett County Police Service
Alan Blake	Gwinnett County Fire Services
Dan Bruno	Gwinnett County Police Service
Vince Edwards	Gwinnett County Dept. of Transportation
Craig Goebel	Gwinnett County Financial Services
Grant Guess	Gwinnett County Community Services.
Regan Hammond	Atlanta Regional Commission
Donna Joe	Gwinnett County Water Resources
Martha Jordan	Gwinnett County Health System
Laura Keyes	Atlanta Regional Commission
Ed Knopnick	Gwinnett County Fire Marshal
Bryan Lackey	Gwinnett County Planning & Development
Rob LeBeau	Atlanta Regional Commission
Steve Logan	Gwinnett County Planning & Development
Alfie Meek	Gwinnett County Dept of Financial Services
Jennifer Petersen	City of Norcross
Tom Savage	Gwinnett County Police Services
Casey Snyder	Gwinnett County Fire Services
Greg Stanfield	Gwinnett County Public Schools
Van Stephens	Gwinnett County Law Department

## Department of Planning & Development Professional Staff

Glenn Stephens, Director, Planning & Development Department  
Brian Cunningham, Planner III  
David Gill, Planner III  
Brian Lackey, Deputy Director  
Steve Logan, Director, Planning Division.  
Nancy Lovingood, Planning Manager, Long Range Planning  
Miriam Marks, Graphics Tech  
Andrew Mendzef, Planner III  
Gillian Phillips, Planner II (former)  
James Pugsley, Planner III  
Patrick Quinn, Planning Manager, Planning Data Services  
Paige Rouse, Planner III (former)  
Sherri Schreiner, Planner I  
Ben Song, Planner I  
Jeff West, Planning Manager, Current Planning  
Mike Williams, former Director of Planning & Development Department, Gwinnett Co.

## Planning & Development Support Staff

Robyn Adams, Administrative Support Associate II  
Suzanne Fox, Administrative Support Associate II  
Cathy Kuhl, Administrative Support Associate II  
Carolyn McKinnon, Administrative Support Associate II

## Technical Assistance

Chuck Bailey	Gwinnett DOT
Eric Britt	Information Technology Services
Todd Cleaver	Department of Water Resources
Kim Conroy	Gwinnett DOT
Marcie Diaz	Department of Community Services
Mark Farmer	Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce
Steve Leo	Department of Water Resources
Darlene Locklear	Information Technology Services
Nick Masino	Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce
Jodi O'Brien	Department of Water Resources
William Powell	Gwinnett DOT (Retired)
Steve Pruitt	Department of Financial Services
Rex Schuder	Department of Community Services
Sharon Stevenson	Information Technology Services
Yvonne Williams	Department of Financial Services

# CONSULTANT TEAM

## Parsons Brinckerhoff

Uri Avin, project manager  
Julienne Chen, editing and layout  
Chris Dorney, GIS analysis  
Lisa Douangchai, GIS production  
Tim Hatton, data analysis  
David Holden, primary author and analyst  
Tom Hutchinson, transportation modeling  
Larry McGoogin, graphics  
Florence Ngai, transportation modeling  
Kip Reynolds, Community Assessment coordinator  
Larry Saben, deputy project manager  
Whitney Shephard, transportation analysis  
Holiday Storck, deputy project manager

## Facet Decision Systems

Stephen Chan, model execution  
Sanjaya De Zoysa, model development  
Dave Hawkins, project manager  
Scott Martin, deputy manager  
Rose Melzer, website development

## Robert Charles Lesser and Company

Sarah Kirsch, market intelligence  
Todd Noell, market intelligence

## Bay Area Economics

Robyn Eason, housing analyst  
Anita Morrison, Consolidated Plan author

## HNTB

Michael Bayer, Community Assessment analyst  
Jane Dembner, Community Assessment manager  
Shannon Yadsko, Community Assessment author

## Moreland Altobelli

L.N. Manchi, transportation needs analysis  
Tom Moreland, transportation strategies

## Dr. Thomas Hammer

Socio-economic forecasting

## **Georgia State University and Florida State University**

Dr. Robert Eger, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (GSU) and Reubin O'D. Askew School of Public Administration and Policy (FSU), fiscal analysis

## **Georgia Institute of Technology**

Dr. Daniel Immergluck, City and Regional Planning Program, College of Architecture, homeownership research and analysis

## **Ventana Marketing**

Fabricio Lopez, focus groups

## **White and Smith LLC**

Mark White Esq., zoning implementation