

# **CITY OF GRAYSON, GEORGIA**

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY AGENDA**



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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Location and Description**

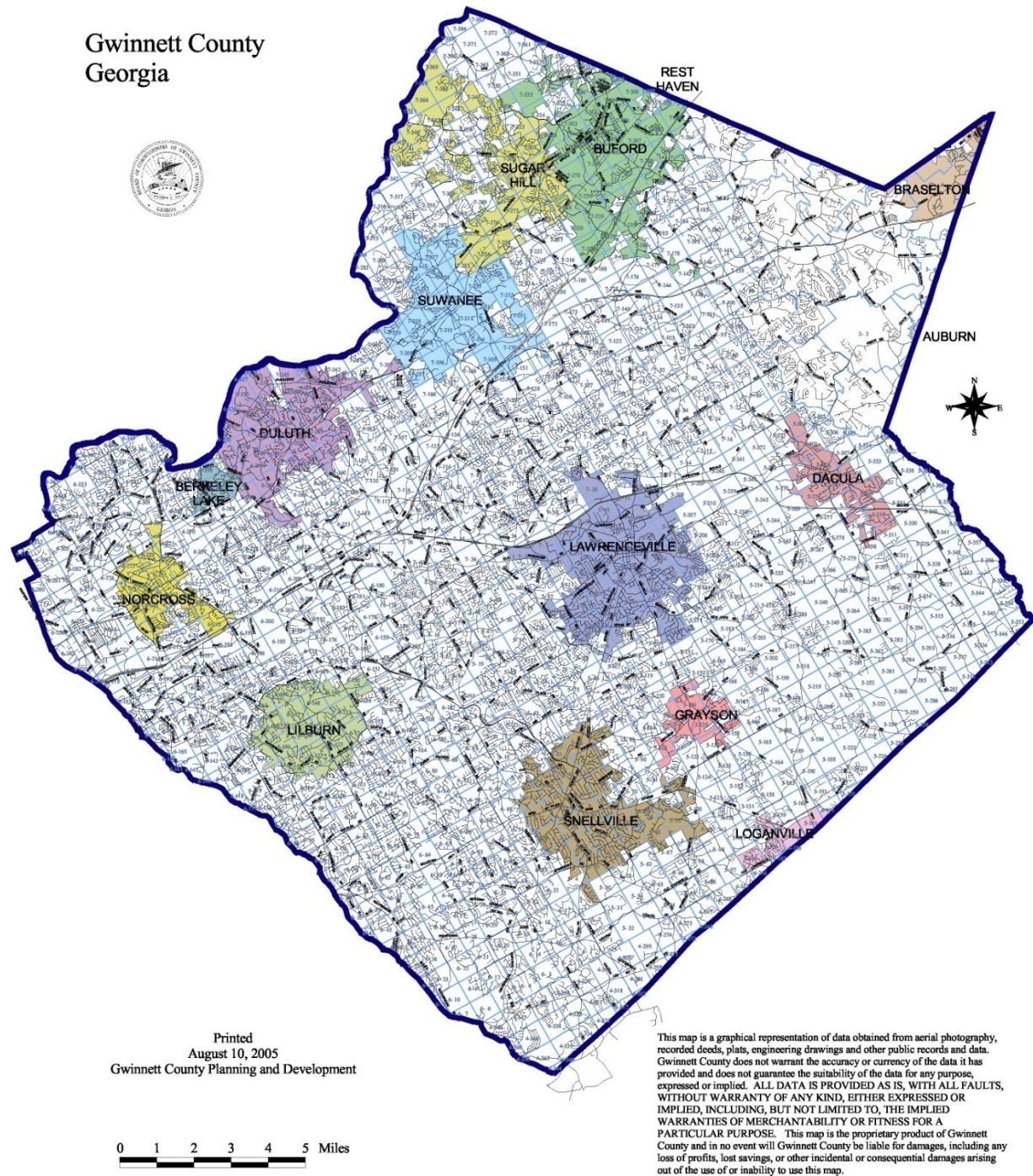
The City of Grayson is located in the southeastern part of Gwinnett County, Georgia (see figure). Gwinnett County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the nation in terms of population growth during the 1980s and later, witnessing suburbanization on a massive scale in from the 1970s through at least the 1990s. As Gwinnett County has matured, the emphasis in terms of development and growth has shifted from one of suburbanization of “greenfields” to revitalization and redevelopment, at least in the earlier developed portions of the county.

Grayson is a small city that has largely escaped the massive growth pressures occurring in Gwinnett County, at least until recently. The eastern part of Gwinnett County has been one of the last parts of the county to experience suburbanization. Grayson is different from Norcross, Lawrenceville, Duluth, and other municipalities in the western and central portions of Gwinnett County which developed in prior decades and are now experiencing the issues of aging suburbs. In short, Grayson has only recently begun the process of becoming a suburb. This distinction between Grayson and other municipalities is an important one, as it sets the tone for its comprehensive plan – this document. With the exception of tiny Berkeley Lake in the western part of Gwinnett County, Grayson has one of the smallest land areas (at approximately 17.8 square miles) of the municipalities in Gwinnett County (see figure).

Although Grayson has remained a small city, in 2004, it completed 12 annexations which added 246.2 acres to the city limits (2004 Update of the Gwinnett County 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update, Table V-1, April 2005). Most of those annexations were in the northern part of the city along Grayson Highway (SR 20). While that year Grayson annexed more than most municipalities in Gwinnett County, Grayson has generally exhibited much less of a propensity to annex unincorporated lands than other Gwinnett Cities, again as shown in the following figure.

#### **Overview of Planning Documents**

The first phase of the comprehensive planning process consisted of preparation of three reports: (1) a “Community Assessment Report,” (2) a “Technical Appendix to the Community Assessment Report,” and (3) A Community Participation Program. This document is the “Community Agenda,” which was prepared following review of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. The Community Assessment was prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff for the county and several of the cities within the county. The Grayson City Council submitted the community assessment for regional and state review via resolution on March 19, 2007. The assessment, along with the city’s public participation program, were subsequently accepted by the region and state and the public part of the planning process began in earnest thereafter.



## **Framework for the Community Agenda**

Goals of local comprehensive plans, according to general guidance by the state of Georgia, include among others the following: to coordinate land use and transportation planning; to provide infrastructure and services; to support sustainable economic development; to protect natural and cultural resources; and to provide adequate housing for the community. Comprehensive planning is also an opportunity to improve coordination with their other governments. Completion of the comprehensive planning process according to state rules allows a local government to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) status and, thus, maintain its eligibility to receive certain state grants and loans.

At its most basic level, a “Community Agenda” according to the administrative rules for local planning effective May 1, 2005, consists of at least the following: a summary of issues and opportunities; a future development map of character areas, policies, and a short-term work program. Implied within these requirements is supportive demographic information, such as population projections. A citywide vision statement is optional under the planning rules.

The intent of Grayson’s comprehensive planning effort was not just to fulfill State requirements for local comprehensive planning. Rather, the city’s planning effort was envisioned as ultimately resulting in a document that would provide detailed guidance to more directly influence everyday planning and development decisions within Grayson over the next decade and beyond. In particular, the city and its planning consultants identified the following priorities to be addressed in the comprehensive plan:

- Ways to effectively use the comprehensive plan update to promote the desired image of Grayson as an attractive and livable traditional Georgia “small town.”
- Basic concepts for an economic development strategy to market this image and attract the types of development that fit well with this goal, especially for more professional and office types of businesses to Grayson.
- Development of the Georgia Highway 20 frontage as more of an urban boulevard rather than as a typical strip commercial highway.
- Coordination with the county using the municipal circulation plan as a means to improve coordination of County road improvements with Grayson land use and urban design goals.
- Potential preservation and enhancement actions for the town center.

## **Purposes and Uses of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Community Agenda is first, a physical plan intended to guide the physical development and redevelopment of the City by describing how, why, when, and where to build, rebuild, or preserve aspects of the community. Second, the Community Agenda covers a long-range planning horizon of 20 years (i.e., to the year 2028). Third, the Community Agenda is “comprehensive” in the sense that it covers the entire City limits, plus it encompasses all the functions that make a community work and considers the interrelatedness of functions. The

Community Agenda is based on the foundation that if the City knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there.

The Community Agenda is intended to serve numerous purposes. It provides a primary basis for evaluating all future development proposals, whether they are requests for rezoning, applications for special use permit or subdivision plat approval, and others. The Community Agenda is also intended to provide guidance for operating and capital improvement budgets. Business persons, investors, real estate brokers, and developers can learn from the plan what the future vision of the community is, as well as the overall direction and intensity of new growth and redevelopment. Market analysts and researchers can draw on the wealth of data provided in the Community Assessment (a separate precursor document) for their own specific needs. A preliminary market analysis was also conducted as a part of the comprehensive planning effort. Other local governments, regional entities, and state agencies also look at the contents of the Community Agenda as the best available statement of municipal policy and intent.

The ultimate clients, however, for the Community Agenda are the Mayor and City Council of Grayson and the Grayson Planning and Zoning Commission. By adopting the Community Agenda, the Mayor and City Council make an extremely important expression of their consent and support for the policies, and work program contained in the Community Agenda.

### **Summary of Participation**

Grayson convened steering committee members and stakeholders for several meetings which took place at the Grayson Senior Center. The first public meeting of the committee was held on August 22, 2007. The city advertised this meeting broadly and as a result some 65 persons attended. Objectives of that first meeting included summarizing the process and major contents of the comprehensive plan, describing the committee's role and tasks, discussing possible "character" areas, and considering possible issues and opportunities.

On September 20, 2007, the committee met again and considered a presentation on past and present conditions, issues and opportunities already identified. It brainstormed on additional issues and opportunities to be considered in the comprehensive plan. A third meeting of the steering committee took place on November 1, 2007, at which time the city's consultants presented more detailed concepts and images for the downtown area (Uptown Grayson), the SR 20 corridor, and the remaining areas of the city. At this meeting considerable discussion was devoted to prospects for developing a town center (and the desired scale and mixture of uses), and access and land use patterns in the SR 20 corridor. Both a low intensity town center concept and a more intense redevelopment concept were presented to the committee.

The fourth meeting of the committee was held February 28, 2008, when there was a presentation by Robert Charles Lesser & Co. on market conditions. A connection concept plan was also the subject of discussion. The ideas of providing new roads and a roundabout at the intersection of Grayson Parkway and Rosebud Road raised several questions and concerns from the general citizenry and elected officials of the city.

The committee met a fifth time, on March 27, 2008, to consider certain findings and more detailed analysis and concepts regarding the proposed circulation improvements. This meeting focused on the connection concept plan, because of concerns and questions raised in the prior meeting of the steering committee.



The steering committee and committee members met two additional times after the March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting (April 24, 2008 and May 29, 2008), during which time the members discussed and finalized recommendations with regard to the future development map, future land use map, policies, and the recommended short-term work program.

The complete draft of the community agenda (this document) was finalized in September and presented to the city in early October. The Grayson Planning and Zoning Commission, along with steering committee members and stakeholders, convened a public hearing on October 13, 2008, at which time a detailed overview of the document was presented by the city's planning consultants and testimony and discussion took place. The Grayson City Council held another public hearing on October 20, 2008, after which a resolution was considered to authorize regional and state review of the draft Community Agenda document.

### **Amendment and Update of the Plan**

As an adopted expression of the City's policy, the Community Agenda must be maintained in a manner that still reflects the desires of the current Mayor and City Council. Developers, the general public, and other agencies have a right to rely on the adopted Comprehensive Plan as an expression of current policy. In cases where it is determined that a particular policy, goal, program, or statement is no longer a valid expression of the City's policy, then the plan needs to be amended. Otherwise, the validity of the plan is weakened, and those that have relied on the Community Agenda when it is not a reflection of current policy have then been, in effect, misled. Local governments are required to update the Comprehensive Plan every five years, and at that time, they are encouraged to provide major rewrites of the Comprehensive Plan. Regardless, the Comprehensive Plan must be comprehensively revised every 10 years. Amendments may be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council whenever the City finds it necessary to do so. When there is a significant change in policy by the Mayor and City Council, for instance a decision to drop a major capital improvement project that is described in the adopted plan, the plan should be amended.

## **SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY AGENDA**

### **Population, Housing, and Economy (Chapter 2)**

In 2008, Grayson has an estimated population of 2,216 residing in approximately 800 housing units. There are approximately 250 lots that have been platted but not built upon in Grayson, which suggests that population growth will become accelerated again as soon as the residential market economy recovers. Based on the land use plan, Grayson is likely at "buildout" (end of the planning horizon in 2028) to grow to 7,868 persons with 2,840 housing units. The vast majority of housing units in the city will be detached, single-family residences, though some attached housing types are called for within the Uptown Grayson part of the city through town center planning and development. Uptown Grayson will eventually be ringed in part by new traditional neighborhood development (TND), which provides for an alternative physical design to conventional suburbs (i.e., with grid street patterns, houses close to the street, and higher densities than found in most of Grayson's other neighborhoods).

Although Grayson is at this time a bedroom community, its economy will grow significantly. Current (year 2008) employment is estimated at 1,828 jobs in Grayson, and the larger Grayson Zip Code (30017) had employment of 2,418 (including only establishments with payroll). The land use plan calls for the city to grow its economic base, primarily along Grayson Highway (SR

20) with new office and retail/commercial development. Based on the land use plan, there is capacity to add more than 4,500 jobs, leading to prospects that Grayson's total employment could reach 6,391 by buildout (year 2028). If Grayson attracts that much non-residential development, it will be what is termed a "job rich" community, something that may be a surprise to those accustomed to Grayson's image as a low-density residential community.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources (Chapter 3)**

Grayson's natural environment poses relatively few limitations on development. The city is divided between the Big Haynes Creek and Alcovy River Watersheds, both of which are "water supply" watersheds. This chapter summarizes various environmental characteristics in the city, including flood plains and wetlands.

A narrative history of Grayson is provided in this chapter, and based on the desires of the steering committee it includes a descriptive inventory of 37 historic structures and properties (prepared by the city's historian).

### **Character Areas and Land Use (Chapter 4)**

This chapter provides detailed descriptions of character areas which are shown on the "future development map." It also provides an existing land use map and summary description of existing land uses and land use trends. To provide more detail for policymaking and to aid decisions regarding rezoning and special land use permit applications, this chapter includes a future land use plan and compares acreages of existing and future land use in an effort to predict major land use change during the planning horizon. The statistics with regard to land use change form the basis for projecting population and jobs and inform other parts of this plan.

### **Community Facilities and Transportation (Chapter 5)**

This chapter provides a detailed description of existing, planned, and proposed community facilities and services in Grayson. It also provides local transportation concepts to supplement countywide transportation master planning which includes the Grayson area. Central to this chapter is the "Connection Concept Plan," which shows a series of local road improvements and private ways, along with a six-mile greenway system in and around Grayson.

### **Policies (Chapter 6)**

This chapter presents a consolidated set of policies that will guide future decision making. The policies are organized by substantive area (housing, land use, natural resources, etc.).

### **Issues and Opportunities and Implementation (Chapter 7)**

This chapter provides the final set of issues and opportunities that was used to establish priorities for the content of this comprehensive plan. After each issue or opportunity, the chapter describes how each one is implemented (or not) in this Community Agenda. This chapter also includes one of the most important components of the plan – the short-term work program – which provides a listing of specific measures that Grayson will take to implement the comprehensive plan. Finally, this chapter discusses capital cost estimating in a general sense.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **POPULATION, HOUSING, AND ECONOMY**

This chapter provides a summary of past and present trends in population, housing, labor force, and employment and provides projections of population, housing units, and employment. Population trends include total population and growth rates, racial and ethnic composition, age, education, and income. Important considerations with regard to housing include household size, occupancy, tenure, age, condition, quantity, type, and affordability. The countywide Community Assessment<sup>1</sup> provides detailed statistics on such characteristics, which are not reiterated (or only briefly mentioned) here.

The issues and opportunities raised by this analysis, and those identified during the planning process as they relate to these functional topics, and implementation measures for these functional topics are identified in Chapter 7 of this Community Agenda.

### **POPULATION**

Total population includes household population and group quarters population. A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. The “group quarters” population refers to people who live in such arrangements as nursing homes, college dormitories, and correctional institutes. Grayson had no group quarters population in 2000 according to the decennial census.

### **Population Change**

At the most fundamental level, population changes can be explained in terms of two components: natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths), and net migration (the number of persons moving into the area minus the number of persons moving out of the area). In addition, municipalities can add to their total populations through a third mechanism, adding to the city’s land area through annexation (the incorporation of additional land containing population). To explain in more detail, population increases, whether short-term or long-term, can be influenced by at least six factors: (1) natural increase (births minus deaths); (2) net in-migration as result of increases in the number of housing units; (3) expansion of the city limits (annexation); (4) increases, if any, in household sizes; (5) additions to the group quarters population (including major additions to institutional or group quarters populations); and (6) land availability and capacity, and zoning for future residential development.

**Table 1**  
**Historic Population Trends**  
**City of Grayson and Gwinnett County**  
**1980-2000**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>% Change 1980-1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change 1990-2000</b>
City of Grayson	464	529	14.0%	765	44.6%
Gwinnett County	166,903	352,910	111.4%	588,448	66.7%

Source: Gwinnett County Community Assessment, Technical Addendum, p. 1-7.

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<sup>1</sup> The Gwinnett Unified Plan, Draft Joint Community Assessment Technical Addendum for Gwinnett County and Participating Municipalities (10/25/06). Summary Report and Technical Addendum.

## Age Characteristics of the Population

Age is among the most important dimensions of the population when planning for the future. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years and over through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. The relationship of the age of population to the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high elderly population often translates into a need for health care, nursing and personal care homes, possible demand for continuing care retirement communities, and increased demand for senior centers. On the other hand, a city or county with a projected increase in children signals a need for schools, day care centers, and playgrounds.

The Community Assessment Technical Addendum (Figure 1.4a) indicates that Grayson is one of the few municipalities in Gwinnett County that will increase its percentage of school age population through the year 2030 (ages 5 to 13 in that study). By 2030 approximately 18 percent of the total population in 2030 is projected to be in that age category, increasing about one percent from year 2000 trends. The Community Assessment also indicates that Grayson's college-age population (Figure 1.4b) is uncharacteristically low in comparison with all other municipalities in Gwinnett County except for Berkeley Lake. It indicates a significant decline in the college-age population (ages 21-24 according to the study), from approximately 2.5 percent to less than 1 percent of the total population in 2030 in Grayson. As a basis of comparison, countywide the figure for college-age population is projected to be about 5 percent in 2030. Grayson's senior population (ages 65 and over) was among the highest in 2000 among all the cities in Gwinnett County in 2000, and the senior population is projected to remain steady through the year 2030 at approximately 9 percent of the total population (Figure 1.4c). As a basis of comparison, countywide, the senior population is expected to remain at approximately 5 percent of the total population throughout the planning horizon to 2030.<sup>2</sup>

These predictions about the future age composition of Grayson's population, if they hold true, have important implications depending on how they are interpreted. These predictions appear to be logical in many respects – Grayson is in the center of a suburbanizing area of Gwinnett County with new county public schools being constructed in and around the city -- school construction and capacity tends to attract more families with school children, and indeed the development trends in Grayson at present are predominantly toward building new subdivisions of detached, single-family homes (which are likely to include school-age children). This means that to serve school-age populations Grayson should focus on safe routes to schools, sidewalks, playgrounds, park amenities, and youth programs.

Grayson is also an attractive area for seniors, in that it is less congested and contains lower intensity development than other parts of Gwinnett County. However, one should consider that the absolute increase of senior population projected in the Community Assessment through 2030 was very small (despite a large percentage), and if Grayson is to maintain its share of the senior population given the higher total population projections in this Community Agenda, significant changes in housing stock might be needed to accommodate preferences of seniors.

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<sup>2</sup> The Community Assessment provides age-specific population projections for Grayson in Table 1.5. However, since the total population projected in the Community Assessment for Grayson, at 2,327 persons, is substantially lower than the population projection provided here in this Community Agenda, the actual numbers for population by age are not reported here.

If the senior population in Grayson in future years maintains its current proportion of the total population, more senior-friendly homes are likely to be needed, and assisted care homes, personal care homes, nursing homes, and retirement communities may be needed in the area. Also, Grayson's senior center may be taxed over the long-term and need expansion.

The findings of the Community Assessment with regard to the college-age population (ages 21 to 24) also deserve brief interpretation here. Since there is not a college or university campus or branch in the Grayson area, and given what we know about the future land uses projected in the city, it appears logical to assume that Grayson will not maintain a significant share of its total population in that age group. One implication of having a low percentage of college-age population in Grayson is with respect to the labor force – Grayson is likely to have fewer people available to take employment positions at the lower end of the wage scale (e.g., retail cashiers and workers in fast food restaurants). This could mean an importation of labor from other parts of the county, and more traffic congestion due to commuting into the area for work given that transit is not currently available in Grayson.

### **Race and Ethnicity Characteristics of the Population**

With regard to race and Hispanic origin, in 2000 Grayson's population was characterized by homogeneity. Hispanic origin is not a race, and thus it is noted separately in Census statistics. Year-2000 statistics indicate only 27 black or African-American persons and only 7 people of Hispanic origin lived in Grayson.

The Community Assessment predicts that there will be declines in the majority (White) population in all cities in Gwinnett County, especially in Norcross. Indeed, there is likely to be greater diversity in the city's population as it continues to increase during the planning horizon. However, Grayson has exhibited significant trends toward maintaining its homogeneity, and given the trend toward construction of detached, single-family homes as the predominant housing type in the city, such changes in the racial or ethnic composition of Grayson's population are likely to be negligible, if they occur at all, at least when compared with other parts of Gwinnett County.

### **HOUSING**

Grayson's housing stock has grown substantially in the last seven years, with the addition of approximately 460 housing units between the U.S. Census Count in 2000 and the ARC's estimates for 2006 (see Table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Housing Units by Type, 1990-2006**  
**City of Grayson**

<b>Type of Unit</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>%</b>
Single-family, detached	196	86.0	252	83.7	726	95.4
Multi-family	27	11.8	25	8.3	11	1.4
Mobile Home	5	2.2	24	8.0	24	3.2
Total Housing Units	228	100.0	301	100.0	761	100.0

Sources: Gwinnett County Community Assessment, Figure 3.1d, p. 3-39. Atlanta Regional Commission (2006 estimates).

The housing stock has trended very heavily toward detached, single-family homes, which is also characteristic of unincorporated parts of the county in recent years. This translates also to a comparatively small percentage of renter households. Indeed, in the year 2000 in Grayson, the percentage of renter-occupied housing was only about 25 percent of all households, considerably lower than unincorporated Gwinnett County at approximately 30 percent (Figure 3.3a, Community Assessment Technical Appendix).

Several factors suggest that Grayson will maintain a low percentage of renter-occupied households. Grayson has very few multi-family units. The vast majority of new homes being constructed or planned are detached, single-family which are predominantly owner occupied. The stock of single-family homes most likely to be rented are those older homes along SR 20 and in transitional areas, and many of those homes are converting to offices and businesses, have been torn down for road widening, or will be demolished in favor of office and commercial developments. Due to the comparatively young age of Grayson's single-family neighborhoods, the "filtering" process which usually comes with an aging housing stock and which causes transitions to renter-occupied housing units does not seem likely (yet) to occur to any significant degree. Grayson's land use plan does not call for higher-density housing that would tend to be majority renter occupied. And, to the extent Grayson's housing stock diversifies in future years with attached housing in Uptown Grayson and traditional neighborhood developments near Uptown Grayson, even those housing types are unlikely to be majority renter occupied.

When housing units age, the possibility is greater that such housing units will have substandard conditions, be inadequately maintained, or be functionally obsolete unless renovation or rehabilitation occurs. Age of housing units is not a concern in Grayson – as of the year 2000 more than 20 percent of Grayson's housing stock had been built since 1990 (Figure 3.2d of the Community Assessment), and brand-new housing units is the trend in Grayson, given substantial recent subdivision activity in the city. More is said about housing trends under the section "Population and Housing Projections" in this Chapter.

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTIONS**

Comprehensive plans often project population by looking at past trends and extrapolating them in to the future. Such an approach would not be appropriate for Grayson, as its recent explosion of housing activity would not be captured in such an extrapolation, even if it were exponential in nature. Some population growth occurs due to natural increase, but the vast majority of Grayson's population increase can and will continue to be attributed to new households moving into the city as a result of new housing units being constructed in Grayson. Here, population is projected based on land capacity in the city for residential development and by applying its land use policies with respect to densities and types of housing permitted.

In other words, the city's future population is ultimately influenced the most by land availability and the zoning restrictions for housing densities. The best approach for projecting population in a rapidly suburbanizing environment is to project the housing units that will be constructed in the city, which is determined by looking at vacant land and zoned or planned densities, and adding those numbers to existing numbers of housing units. This approach is often referred to as calculating a "buildout" population. The projections of population and housing units, provided in Table 3, are based on the land use analyses and land use plan in Chapter 4 of this document.

**Table 3**  
**Population and Housing Projections at Buildout**  
**City of Grayson**

	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Estimated Units Per Acre</b>	<b>Total Yield of Housing Units</b>	<b>Population @ 2.77 persons per unit</b>
Existing (2008)			800	2,216
Vacant Lots	--	250 lots	250	693
1.5 unit or less	180	1.25	225	623
1.5 to 4.0	70	3.0	210	582
TND	300	4.0	1,200	3,324
Mixed Use	62	2.5	155	430
Total			2,840	7,868

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, June 2008.

Table 3 indicates that as of 2008 Grayson had an estimated 800 housing units and a total population of 2,216 persons. Due to uncertainty with regard to future market conditions for housing development, it is difficult to provide a reliable estimate of the timing of population growth. Nonetheless, good planning suggests that best available projections need to be provided in this Community Agenda so that the city can plan for future community facilities.

As shown in Table 3, based on a general estimate of already platted lots, Grayson has the immediate capacity for another 250 homes and approximately 693 new residents. That population increase can be immediately realized, market conditions permitting.<sup>3</sup> This means that population growth, upon economic recovery, will be very swift again in Grayson. Exactly when it will occur is anyone's guess, but again assumptions are made here because of the need to program additional municipal community facilities. It is assumed that the supply of vacant residentially platted lots will be built upon within a five-year period.

Table 3 is informative with regard to how Grayson's housing stock is likely to diversify in the future in terms of housing types. While Grayson does not have a diverse housing stock presently, with the addition of mixed use development within Uptown Grayson, some additional condominiums, apartments, townhouses, and/or lofts will be added to the city's housing stock. Furthermore, traditional neighborhood development is planned for areas near Uptown Grayson, but those units will be detached, single-family dwellings. Table 4 provides projections of housing units by type for various years in the planning horizon, based on the land use/housing information in Tables 2 and 3 and the assumptions described in this section.

Also, it is noted here that the mixed use development and traditional neighborhood development will most likely not occur within the short-term time frame. During the planning process, it was determined that there is strong market support for traditional neighborhood development, which could begin within the next five years. However, given the current supply of platted lots in Grayson and current economic conditions, traditional neighborhood development is more likely

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of this writing (2008), the housing market was virtually lifeless due to worsening economic conditions and the mortgage crisis. Predictions at the time of this writing were that the housing market would not recover until at earliest the second half of calendar year 2009.

to occur in years 5-20 of this plan's horizon. Similarly, the addition of new housing in Uptown Grayson, while modest in number and therefore believed to be feasible from a market perspective, will not be constructed in the short term and may be more realistically expected to occur within years 10-20 of the planning horizon. Consistent with Table 3, the projections in Table 4 do not separately estimate population by housing unit type; rather, a total of 2.77 persons per unit is utilized. For that reason, population by housing type is not shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Projections of Housing Units and Population by Type of Housing Unit**  
**City of Grayson, 2008 – 2028**

Unit Type	2008		2013		2018		2023		2028	
	Units	Persons	Units	Persons	Units	Persons	Units	Persons	Units	Persons
Detached Single Family	775		1,135		1,645		2,155		2,660	
Attached Multi-Family	25		25		75		125		180	
Total	800	2,216	1,160	3,213	1,720	4,764	2,280	6,316	2,840	7,868

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. September 2008.

## **LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT**

Grayson's labor force in 2000 consisted of 413 persons. In 2000, 25.8 percent of the city's resident labor force was employed in educational and health services. The second largest category of employment was retail trade (15.2 percent), followed by manufacturing (13.6 percent). Generally, the occupational profile of Grayson's residents as of 2000 appeared to be relatively balanced between white-collar and blue-collar type jobs.

Top employers in Gwinnett County are Gwinnett County Public Schools (18,226 employees), Gwinnett County Government (4,586 employees), and Gwinnett Health Care System (4,229 employees). Two other governmental entities, the U.S. Postal Service (2,760 employees) and the State of Georgia (2,159), are also major employers. Others in the top 15 list of major employers include grocery stores (Publix and Kroger), Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Waffle House. Gwinnett County had 295,738 jobs in 2000, according to the Community Assessment.

Detailed employment data or even estimates of employment are not available for cities. However, Table 5 shows the number of establishments and total employment for establishments with payroll from 2001 through 2005 for the City of Grayson's zip code. The figures in Table 5 do not represent city estimates, since the zip code boundary is not the same as the city limits of Grayson. Employment has increased substantially in Zip Code 30017 for the years shown, nearly doubling in just five years. Also, the number of establishments has increased by more than 50 percent in just five years. It is also important to note that the employment and establishment figures do not take into account government employment, nor do they include self-employed persons.



**Table 5**  
**Employment in Grayson Zip Code, 2001-2005**  
**(Establishments With Payroll Only)**

<b>Zip Code 30017</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Employment	1,336	1,346	1,468	2,176	2,418
Establishments	204	239	259	287	316

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns, 2001-2005.

As with housing units and population, it is important to estimate the current employment in the city and project future employment, in order to evaluate future needs for community facilities and assess the relationship of new employment opportunities to the needs of the local labor force. Table 6 provides a current estimate of employment in Grayson (2008). The estimates are based on land use data supplied in Chapter 4 of this Community Agenda and are calculated based on likely building yield per acre of developed land and multipliers of average employment per square feet (or square feet per employee). The figures, while based on more national trends and available technical sources,<sup>4</sup> reflect relatively low intensity of nonresidential land use that is evident in Grayson. Employment currently in Grayson is estimated to be 1,828 persons. While the employment estimate is considered reasonable for planning purposes, the estimates of building space should be used with considerable caution.

**Table 6**  
**Existing Employment Estimate**  
**City of Grayson, 2008**

<b>Use Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Multiplier of Building Yield (sq. ft. per acre)</b>	<b>Building Yield</b>	<b>Multiplier (Employee per sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Total Employment</b>
Retail/Commercial	105	6,000	630,000	700	900
Office	24	6,000	144,000	400	360
Industrial	16	8,000	128,000	1,000	128
Institutional	162 (80 w/ buildings est.)	5,000	400,000	1,000	400
Residential	5% of housing units	--			40
All Uses	--				1,828

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., May 2008.

Table 7 provides a future employment estimate for Grayson. The employment projection is based on “buildout” of the vacant, non-residentially zoned land in Grayson. The land use plan for the City provides extensive acreage along SR 20 to grow the office and retail/commercial

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<sup>4</sup> Square feet per acre figures are based on Tables 4-1 and 4-2 of *Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs*, by Arthur C. Nelson. (Chicago: Planners Press, 2004).

economic base of the city, and there are ample opportunities for the expansion of institutional uses such as churches and schools which also generate employment.

**Table 7**  
**Future Employment Estimate by Employment Type**  
**City of Grayson, 2028**

Use Type	Acres	Multiplier of Building Yield (sq. ft. per acre)	Building Yield	Multiplier (Employee per sq. ft.)	Total Employment
Retail/Commercial	163	6,000	978,000	700	1,397
Office	200	6,000	1,200,000	400	3,000
Industrial	8	8,000	64,000	1,000	64
Institutional	--	5,000	--	1,000	--
Residential	5% of housing units	--	2,040		102
All Uses	--				4,563

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., May 2008.

It is estimated that there is capacity for an additional 4,563 jobs in Grayson. As noted in Table 7, the largest capacity for employment is office workers (3,000). Capacity for retail employment is less than half the amount of office, and there is very little additional capacity for industrial and manufacturing employment, given limited land availability in the city's only industrial park and no other lands planned and zoned for industry. There are also contributions to the employment base by institutional uses (schools, churches, etc.) and a small addition from home occupations in neighborhoods.

Table 8 puts together the figures in Tables 6 and 7 to show the total employment at buildout. According to these figures, Grayson if developed (built out) according to the land use plan will have an employment of 6,391 in the year 2028. This plan does not project employment here at five year intervals (but see Chapter 5), but it seems reasonable to assume that employment growth will be spread relatively evenly or uniformly during the 20-year planning horizon.

**Table 8**  
**Existing and Future Employment by Employment Sector at Buildout**  
**City of Grayson**

	Retail/Comm.	Office	Industrial	Institutional	Residential	Total
Existing	900	360	128	400	40	1,828
Future	1,397	3,000	64	--	102	4,563
Total	2,297	3,360	192	400	142	6,391

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., May 2008.

## MARKET ECONOMY OUTLOOK

As a part of the comprehensive planning process, Grayson's planning consulting team conducted a limited evaluation of the potential future market shares of selected land uses that

could be captured in the Grayson area.<sup>5</sup> In particular, the city's market consultant (Robert Charles Lesser & Co.) focused its analysis on the market outlook for retail, office, and higher density residential growth. The consultant considered such questions as the following: What is the capacity for Grayson to develop a town center, and how does that compare with prospects for Town Center development in other cities in the Atlanta Region? What is the office market likely to be in Grayson in the future? Is there likely going to be a market for higher density housing? One of the primary purposes of the market analysis, however, was to help "right size" the city's land use plan. By investigating future potential to capture market shares for these residential uses, the land use plan could be adjusted in terms of how much available land made available for each type of use. Indeed, some adjustments were made based on these data.

### **Commercial/Retail**

According to the market analysis, the Grayson area appears to be currently under-supplied with commercial retail, but more detailed analysis is required to determine if secondary sources are missing recent development activity. The estimated current unmet demand is strongest for restaurants (both limited and full-service). Other retail sectors currently under-supplied include clothing, accessories, gifts, specialty food, and wine. It was also found that Grayson may not meet site criteria for "comparison good stores" such as furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliances. Overall unmet demand for retail is estimated to be 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of retail space. Based on year 2030 forecasts for the Grayson area, the market consultants suggested that the area had potential for an additional 350,000 to 400,000 square feet of retail building space with all of the following types possible: grocery-anchored; big box; town center; and "unanchored."

### **Prospects for Town Center Development**

Town Centers have been constructed in Woodstock, Duluth, Smyrna, and Norcross, among other cities in the metropolitan Atlanta region. When compared with those other town centers listed here, Grayson is distinct in that it has a smaller number of households and population, a larger number of households with children, vastly higher homeownership rates, and a substantially higher median household income. These findings suggest that Grayson's town center building efforts should be smaller, and more family oriented than efforts in the other comparison cities. General observations of the consultant were that Grayson should keep its town center aspirations relative small and reasonable, build upon current assets such as historic architecture, and focus on attracting families with a food or other destination niche. A full service restaurant was suggested as a potential anchor for the town center. The steering committee in discussing the market outlook tended to agree that a focus on restaurants and building a family-friendly atmosphere in Uptown Grayson would be a desirable focus for future town center planning efforts.

### **Office Development**

With regard to office development, demand for services (medical services, real estate services, child care, etc.) is likely to be generated from household growth in the Grayson area. Demand will be generated from executives and small practitioners who want their offices closer to their

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<sup>5</sup> "Market Considerations for Land Use Plan." Presentation by Robert Charles Lesser & Co. February 28, 2008, to the Grayson Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Stakeholders.

homes. There will also be “naturally occurring” demand for business park and/or flex space. However, overall demand for office space generally by 2030 was considered to be negligible; if Grayson could capture its fair share of future office development within a three-mile radius, that share is estimated to be 350,000 to 400,000 square feet of office space and 225,000 to 250,000 square feet of business park space. This, incidentally, is much less than the capacity in Grayson as provided on the future land use plan map, even after adjustment/revision.

### **Traditional Neighborhood Development**

The market analysts also explored the future market potential for traditional neighborhood development. The analysis indicated there is an increasing desire to live near work and services. It is probably safe to assume based on prior research that 30 to 40 percent of future households will likely prefer residing in traditional neighborhoods. That assumption translates into a demand by 2030 for 1,100 to 2,700 homes in the Grayson area, with a likely case of 1,600 to 1,700 homes.

### **Jobs-Housing Balance Analysis**

It is an accepted practice to strive for a jobs-housing unit ratio of between 1.3 and 1.7, with 1.5 considered to be a relative balance.<sup>6</sup> The estimated job-housing unit ratio (employment divided by housing units) in the year 2028 for the City of Grayson could be 2.25 jobs per housing unit. This means the forecasted job-housing unit ratio of 2.25 is considered unbalanced with regard to the optimum range of 1.3 to 1.7 jobs per each housing unit. It means that Grayson would become a job-rich community in 20 years. That figure (job to housing unit ratio) is quite surprising, given the preponderance of single-family units and an as-of-yet underdeveloped economy. It reflects a general estimate of employment for office and retail uses that is possible from a land use capacity standpoint but probably high from a market feasibility perspective. As noted above, a limited, preliminary market analysis by Robert Charles Lesser and Co. indicated Grayson may not be able to capture as large a share of future office space and employment reflected in the city’s land use plan, even though it was adjusted to some extent in response to that market outlook. Nonetheless, the figures reflect the future land use plan and reasonable estimates of possible yield per acre of nonresidential development and the resulting employment. It is encouraging also to note that, even if Grayson’s land use plan is not accomplished with all of the nonresidential development shown, it is likely to attain a reasonably balanced job-housing unit ratio. Finally, it is necessary to point out that a balance in terms of quantifiable jobs-housing unit ratios does not necessarily imply there is a “qualitative” balance in the city, such that the jobs available are filled by the resident labor force.

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<sup>6</sup> Weitz, Jerry. 2003. *Jobs-Housing Balance*. Planning Advisory Report No. 516. Chicago: American Planning Association Research Department. The reason why a jobs-housing unit ratio of 1.5 is considered balanced is because there are generally 1.5 workers per housing unit.

## CHAPTER 3 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### Watersheds

Grayson is split relatively equally between the Alcovy River watershed and the Big Haynes Creek watershed (see map). State Route 20 is generally the dividing line (high point) between the two watersheds. The Big Haynes Creek watershed lies generally on the west side of SR 20, while the Alcovy River watershed lies to the east. Big Haynes Creek itself lies west of Grayson, outside the city limits, but its tributaries extend within the city limits.



#### Watersheds in Grayson

Source: Map 4-2, Community Assessment, Technical Addendum, Gwinnett County and Participating Municipalities.

Both the Big Haynes Creek and Alcovy River watersheds are “water supply watersheds” under the terms of the state’s Environmental Planning Criteria. Gwinnett County has adopted the required protection criteria in its zoning code (see Sec. 1314). However, those regulations only refer to a prohibition of hazardous waste and require that sanitary landfills provide leachate collection systems. There are buffer requirements and impervious surface setbacks according to state environmental planning criteria which are applied in unincorporated areas of Gwinnett County via the county’s Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance. Grayson has adopted a stream buffer ordinance as required by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (see discussion below), but that ordinance requires minimum 50 foot wide stream buffers, and Grayson has no more restrictive requirements for water supply watersheds per the Environmental Planning Criteria. Grayson follows Gwinnett County’s “development regulations,” but since water supply watershed protection requirements are not codified within them, they are not applicable in Grayson.

### **Groundwater Recharge Areas**

In 1990, the state Department of Natural Resources passed and the Georgia General Assembly ratified Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria which include regulations to protect significant groundwater recharge areas (Rule 391-3-16-.02) from certain land uses. A significant amount of land in the Grayson City Limits (primarily the northern portion) is classified as a significant groundwater recharge area with low pollution susceptibility, according to Hydrologic Atlas 18 of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (see also Map 4-1, Hydrologic Resources) of the Community Assessment, Technical Addendum, Gwinnett County and Participating Municipalities). Most of these land uses, such as sanitary landfills, agricultural waste impoundment sites, hazardous wastes, and above-ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks, do not exist in the Grayson area. The rules also establish higher lot sizes (110% of the area in low pollution susceptibility areas) when septic tanks are utilized, than would otherwise be required by the Georgia Department of Human Resources' *Manual for On-Site Sewage Management Systems*.

Grayson has not adopted regulations that pertain to the protection of groundwater recharge areas. Because the environmental criteria pertaining to groundwater recharge areas do not appear to have significance in Grayson, given the availability of sanitary sewer and the absence of the uses of the types referred to in the rules, Grayson did not adopt the environmental planning criteria in Rule 391-3-16-.02.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands are areas that are flooded or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to grow vegetation adapted for life in water-saturated soil. A wetland does not have to be flooded or saturated for more than one week of the year in order to develop the vegetation and soil characteristics that qualify it as a wetland. Wetlands serve many functions and have a number of values. Wetlands temporarily store flood waters, thereby preventing flood damage, and they can also protect lands from erosion by reducing the velocity of water currents. They serve as pollution filters by helping to remove sediment, absorb chemicals and nutrients, and produce oxygen. Wetlands have important environmental values including improving water quality by intercepting stormwater runoff, preventing eutrophication of natural waters, and supporting delicate aquatic ecosystems (nutrient retention and removal, food chain support, migratory waterfowl usage, providing other wildlife habitat, etc.). Many wetlands are areas of groundwater recharge, and they also can provide a source of recreation (hunting and fishing), aesthetics, and scientific research.

The state has no specific regulations to protect wetlands, and the primary protection is via the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The United States Army Corps of Engineers' Section 404 permitting process governs the discharge of fill material into wetlands and other water bodies. Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), the Corps of Engineers is authorized to issue individual and general permits. Development of wetlands is generally prohibited unless there is no practical alternative, and even then the environmental consequences must be mitigated. Section 5.10 of Gwinnett County's development regulations, which are followed in Grayson, requires that a 404 permit authorization be filed before local land development approval involving wetlands will be granted.

### **Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

Steep slopes are relatively non-existent in Grayson and therefore pose no development limitations. Flood plains do exist to some extent (see Map 3-19, Character Areas, Community Assessment), and Grayson has adopted its own stand-alone flood plain management ordinance (see Chapter 26, Article VI of the Grayson City Code).

### **Air Quality**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated a thirteen-County area around Atlanta as a non-attainment jurisdiction for ozone. Ozone is created by a photochemical reaction of a mixture of organic compounds and nitrogen oxides (created by fuel combustion) and is a major air pollutant in the lower atmosphere. The City of Grayson will need to cooperate with any regional air quality plan mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and transportation plan prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.

### **Erosion and Sediment Control**

State law (Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975, O.C.G.A. 12-7-1 et seq.) requires local governments to control erosion and sedimentation. "The governing authority of each county and each municipality shall adopt a comprehensive ordinance establishing the procedures governing land-disturbing activities which are conducted within their respective boundaries. Such ordinances shall be consistent with the standards provided in this chapter" (O.C.G.A. 12-7-4). Grayson has adopted a soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance in its city code (see Chapter 26, Article III).

Grayson may become its own "issuing authority" if it has sufficient staff available. State law provides: "If a county or municipality has enacted ordinances which meet or exceed the standards, requirements, and provisions of this chapter and which are enforceable by such county or municipality, and if a county or municipality documents that it employs qualified personnel to implement enacted ordinances, the director may certify such county or municipality as an issuing authority for the purposes of this chapter" (O.C.G.A. 12-7-8(a)). In counties that are not certified pursuant to this law, applications for permits shall be issued by the [Environmental Protection] division (O.C.G.A. 12-7-7).

### **Stormwater Management**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-570 et seq.) was passed in 2001 and is well known to planners in the district's jurisdiction. The district is authorized to prepare plans for storm-water management, waste-water management, and water supply (O.C.G.A. 12-5-574). The district was mandated to prepare model ordinances for storm-water management for local governments (O.C.G.A. 12-5-582). "Local governments within the district shall implement the provisions of the district plans that apply to them. Should any jurisdiction fail to do so, the director [of EPD] shall exercise his or her powers pursuant to this chapter" (O.C.G.A. 12-5-582; see also O.C.G.A. 12-5-583 with regard to waste-water plans and O.C.G.A. 12-5-584 with regard to water supply and water conservation management plans). Further, any local government failing to adopt the model storm-water management ordinance developed by the district shall be ineligible for state grants and loans for storm-water related

projects (O.C.G.A. 12-5-582).<sup>1</sup> Grayson has adopted the model ordinances required by the District. They are found in Chapter 26 of the Grayson City Code.

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **Historic Overview**

The Gwinnett County community of Grayson, Georgia, was founded circa 1879-1880 by Reverend James Patterson McConnell. J.P. McConnell and his wife Susan Arendell McConnell purchased 90 acres of land from his uncle Stephen Billue in an area known then as the Bay Creek District (a Georgia Militia District). The property, located at the current intersection of Highway 20/Loganville Highway and Highway 84/Grayson Parkway, was quickly improved with the construction of a wood-framed house and adjacent store. The McConnell's store became home to a post office named "Trip" on April 5, 1881, with McConnell serving as the community's first postmaster. The name "Trip" was suggested by area merchant J.D. Spence, who commented that it was a "trip" from the county seat of Lawrenceville to the new post office.

Although the post office served as the first official organization of the early Grayson community, farmers and tradesman had settled the area as early as the 1820s. However, J.P. McConnell proved to be an effective developer of the area by selectively clearing land and constructing homes, thereby making the community more attractive to new residents and business people. Early families who settled in the community of Trip included the Billue, Chandler, Cooper, Tribble, Carroll, Rawlins, Kennerly, Cates, Jacobs, Gower, Ford, Petty and Hawthorne families.

Early families were members of area churches that functioned as the social and religious center for most in the community. Early churches included New Hope Methodist Church (currently New Hope United Methodist) founded prior to 1829, as well as the Haynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church founded in 1826. In 1850 the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church was founded; J.P. McConnell was pastor of the Chestnut Grove church later in the century. One of the historic church buildings is still standing on the grounds of The Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church established in 1884 (now the Grayson United Methodist Church). In 1913 the Grayson Baptist Church was founded, later becoming the First Baptist Church of Grayson.

The growth and development of early Grayson was due in large part to the construction of the railroad through Grayson in 1898. The Loganville and Lawrenceville (L&L) Railroad passed through Grayson and neighboring farms on daily round trips between the two larger Gwinnett County towns. The train tracks ran in a northwest-southeasterly direction through town in the vicinity of current Britt Street, crossing current Highway 20 northwest of the remaining historic homes fronting on Highway 20. The train hauled passengers, animals, mail, farm products and other freight and laid over nightly in Loganville. The train was operated initially by the Georgia, Carolina, and Northern Railway but was purchased in later years by Seaboard Airline Railroad. Although Grayson was never a major stop along the railroad, there was a small passenger station erected in the vicinity of the Grayson School (current site of Grayson Elementary) in the early twentieth century (1911 Map of Grayson, Georgia). However, most freight and passengers could be loaded along the railroad line anywhere the train could be flagged down on its trip.

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<sup>1</sup> From Jerry Weitz, "Uncovering Obscurity: Georgia's Little-Known Land Use Laws," Paper Delivered to the Georgia Planning Association's Spring Conference, Decatur, Georgia, April 17, 2008.



In the first years of the twentieth century, there were several efforts to incorporate the town and change its name from Trip. The postmaster and a civic leader of the period, John Ellery Jacobs, successfully requested that the town's name be changed to Berkely in December 1901. However, it was discovered that another Georgia town had the same name of Berkely; subsequent suggestions for new town names included Graymont that was also already taken. Therefore, it was not until December 17, 1902, that the community was permanently incorporated as the Town of Grayson, based on a suggestion from Mrs. Ada McConnell Jacobs who had relatives in Grayson County, Texas. The first aldermen to serve the town were J.P. McConnell, W.P. Williams, J.S. Pate, A. Bennett and W.J. Trimble.

With convenient and timely transportation of goods made possible by the railroad, a small commercial and industrial economy was established and sustained in Grayson during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1911 there was a series of attached commercial buildings, including a bank, constructed on the southwest side of Lawrenceville/Monroe Road (now Highway 20) along Stone Mountain/Dacula Road (now Grayson Parkway). The Grayson Post Office was a separate structure adjacent to the other commercial structures. A mill, a series of cottonseed houses, warehousing and a cotton gin were located in the vicinity of the railroad.

Education of the community's children was made possible from an early period due to the dedicated support of citizens. The first school recorded in the vicinity of town was Evergreen School, a log cabin with a stick and mud chimney, located on the south end of the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church cemetery. Smaller schools located further out included Harris and Roberts Academies as well as Midway, Ozora and Campground Schools. Trippe Academy was constructed in the early Grayson community in 1881. By the beginning of the twentieth century a two-story, wood-frame school building was constructed on the site where the current Grayson Elementary School resides. The new school was made possible by the involvement of many local citizens, including the Independent Order of Odd Fellows as well as Moses McConnell (brother of J.P. McConnell), who donated the property for the school. In 1913 the city issued bonds to fund a brick-veneered, two-story school in Grayson. Known as the Grayson School, this two-story was later expanded and consolidated as Grayson High School. A school bell for the Grayson School was a gift from 9<sup>th</sup> District Congressman Thomas M. Bell; citizens later purchased the bell from the school and it now resides in front of Grayson Elementary School.

An end of an era came on January 17, 1932, when the railroad through Grayson stopped running. The railroad succumbed to the multi-faceted challenges of county road improvements, the rise of the automobile, the effect of the boll weevil on cotton production, and the Great Depression. The demise of the daily train was an economic loss to Grayson, as well as a physical loss--the appearance of the town changed when the steel tracks themselves were subsequently removed for salvage. A surviving element from the historic railroad period is the railroad's original stone livery stable located at the rear of the lot containing the McConnell-Webb House.

In 1956 Grayson High School was consolidated into South Gwinnett High School; the present South Gwinnett High School is located on Hope Hollow Road in Loganville and opened in 2000. The original 1913 brick building in Grayson was demolished in 1957 and replaced by the current Grayson Elementary School building. However, a remnant of the historic Grayson School building remains with the presence of a stone building on the west side of Britt Street; this building was constructed during the mid-1940s to replace an earlier school building that burned in a fire.

The post office in Grayson has remained one constant in the history of the city. Postmasters over the years have included a long list of influential citizens. During the 1960s the post office was threatened with closure by postal authorities. Local lobbying efforts successfully retained the local post office and provided a new home for it in the downtown area. A new post office was dedicated and an open house held on July 12, 1964. During the late 1980s or early 1990s, the downtown post office location sited at the corner of Grayson Highway and Britt Street was closed and a new post office facility was constructed on Pine Grove Avenue. The former post office building still stands and has been reused as a café.

The City of Grayson today brings many changes to the physical landscape of the community, including significant commercial and residential growth. However, the core of the historic community is plainly evident in the small commercial block on Grayson Parkway, of which many of the buildings feature the use of indigenous stone. There are also many historic residences that are still intact in the vicinity of Redbud Road, Rock Springs Road, Grayson Highway, and Georgia Highway 20. Many of these homes have been converted to commercial or institutional use, such as the Kennerly-Cox House, built at the turn of the twentieth century, purchased by the city in 2002 from Ms. Flora Kilgore Cox. This home, located in the 8-acre Grayson City Park, now functions as the Grayson Arts and History Center. Similarly, the J.J. and Effie Brooks Cofer home on Rosebud Road now houses the Grayson House Restaurant. Further, the historic wood-framed church building and the historic cemetery of the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church are still intact and currently in use on the site of the church property.

*Sources: Gwinnett Daily Post, April 24, 2002; Hinkle, Barbara and Jim. Interview by Diana Werling, September 14, 2007; Map of Grayson, Georgia, Showing Electrical Lighting System, 1911, The J.B. McCrary Company, Engineers, Atlanta, Georgia; Grayson Arts and History Center; Starling, Steven. Unpublished manuscript; Grayson Arts and History Center, undated. Starling, Steven and Beth V. Serrero. Historic Grayson, Georgia; City of Grayson website, website accessed September 2007; Vanishing Georgia Photograph Collection, Digital Library of Georgia, Athens, GA, 2004.*

### **Summary of Historic Resources**

Significant historic resources survive in Grayson, notably an intact though small commercial area, a residential area, a variety of institutional buildings and industrial buildings, and several historic objects. A majority of buildings were constructed from 1880 to 1932. That is the period of time when Grayson experienced its greatest growth and development, from the community's founding in 1880 to 1932 when the railroad stopped running.

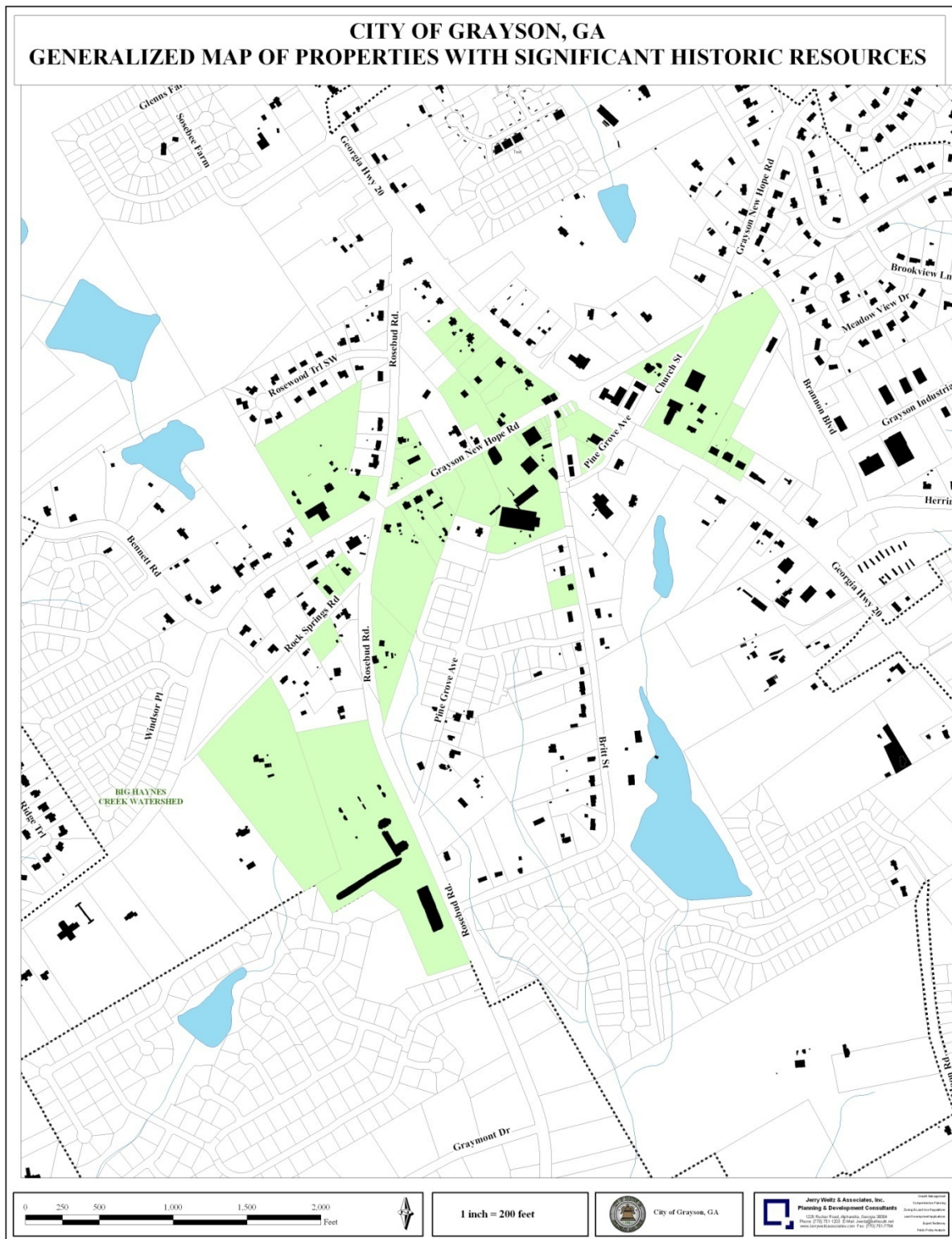
Single-family residences are located in the core of town along Highway 20, Grayson Highway, Redbud Road, Britt Street and Rock Springs Road. Local craftsman constructed modest single-family homes of wood; many of these homes feature foundations, chimneys, retaining walls and curbing made of locally quarried stone. The vast majority of the older homes in Grayson were built in a vernacular tradition, meaning that the buildings were constructed using local materials and traditional methods reflecting the modest lifestyles of a railroad and farming community (in contrast to high-style buildings often designed by architects). Common historic house types in Grayson include bungalows, New South cottages, Queen Anne cottages, gabled wing cottages, and Neoclassical homes. None of these resources is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Grayson still has attached commercial buildings on Grayson Parkway which dating from the twentieth century. Many of these feature facades of stone. Institutional resources include a wood-framed church building and a church cemetery at Chestnut Grove Baptist Church, the Billue Family Cemetery, and a historic stone school building dating from the mid-1940s on Britt Street. There is a former warehouse building with stone foundation on Britt Street (currently Back Home Exterior Products) and a stone livery stable once utilized by the railroad located behind the McConnell-Webb Home on Georgia Highway 20. Historic objects include the bells at Grayson Elementary and the Methodist Church. None of these resources is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Detailed Inventory as of September 2007**

City Historian Steven Starling compiled the following list of properties in September 2007. Although a detailed map of these historic properties was beyond the scope of the consultant's work program in preparing this Community Agenda, a generalized map of historic properties is provided here (see the following page).

1. First Baptist Church of Grayson. Although the old 1913 church building has been torn down, the bell from the original Grayson Baptist Church sits on Highway 20. It dates from about 1913. The bell sits next to the front of the present church sanctuary on Grayson-Loganville Highway.
2. Grayson Elementary School. Although the old two story school has been torn down since the late 1950s, the bell from the old building rests on the front lawn of Grayson Elementary School at 460 Grayson Parkway. The Bell was erected on its present pedestal by the Grayson Lions Club in 1968. The school bell was presented to the Grayson High School in 1913 by 9th District Congressman, Thomas M. Bell.
3. Grayson Elementary School. The "Rock Building" was built in the 1940s to house lower grades of the school. It was gutted by fire in 1945 and rebuilt under the direction of W.J. Cooper; renovation was completed sometime after February 1946 when Mr. Cooper died. This building sits behind the newer school at 460 Grayson Parkway. This building is built of "Grayson Granite."
4. Grayson United Methodist Church. Although the old 1885 church building has been torn down, the bell from the original Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, South (later Grayson Methodist Church) sits at the corner of Rosebud Road and Grayson Parkway. The bell dates between 1885 and about 1900. When the church was torn down, the bell was found hanging in its original shipping crate in the bell tower. The newer church campus is behind this bell.
5. Chestnut Grove Baptist Church and Cemetery. Located at 2299 Rosebud Road. The church was organized in 1850. The old church building dates to pre 1900. The cemetery is held by the church and is in good repair. Many old graves that are marked or unmarked hold the remains of early Grayson residences. The cemetery could date before the formation of the church, although that has not been verified as a fact.



6. Billue Family Cemetery. This is a site that is in peril and needs protection. All the graves of this Grayson pioneer family are marked with field stones and sit in a spot unguarded by a fence or sign. development encroaches on all sides of this property. This cemetery is located off the Grayson-Loganville Highway across from the intersection of Sosbee Farm Road.
7. Herring Family Cemetery. Located next to 1804 McConnell Road (on the left side). It has several fieldstone graves and one or two marked graves with written tombstones. It has been vandalized in recent years as a subdivision encroaches on all sides. There is a fence around the cemetery, but no sign.
8. Green House. Located at 2112 Rosebud Road. This house dates from the late 1880s or 1890s. Many families have lived in this house, including the Langley family. Gordy Yancey lived here prior to the Hoyt Green family moving in about 1941. The Green Family still lives in this residence. The lake behind the house used to be a large pig pen.
9. Grayson House Restaurant. Located at 516 Grayson Parkway. This building was built in the late 1880s or 1890s. The John J. and Effie B. Cofer family lived in this house for most of its life until a tea room was started in it. Later it became the Grayson House Restaurant. This home is owned by Greg Fisher.
10. Williams-Fisher House. Located at 512 Grayson Parkway. Built in the late 1880s or 1890s. The H. T. Williams family lived in the home as well as the Carr family in the 1970s. This home is now used as an office building owned by Greg Fisher.
11. Batchelor-Bennett House. Located at 502 Grayson Parkway. The Batchelor family lived in this house in the early part of the 20th century, then it was occupied by the John F. and Floy Bennett family. This house was probably built in the 1900s. It is now an office building owned by Greg Fisher.
12. Ambrose Petty House. Located at 535 Grayson Parkway. It was built in the early 20th century by Ambrose Petty for his family. His family lived there until the 1980s. W. H. and Darren Britt now own the house and it is used as an office.
13. Jacobs-Britt House. Located at 2199 Britt Street. This home was lived in by Mrs. Snowey Head Jacobs until the Walt Britt family moved there about 1941. This home is still a private residence. The home was built around the 1890s.
14. Fertilizer Warehouse. Located at 2104 Britt Street. It was built in the 1890s and was used as a fertilizer warehouse run by Mr. Brownlee. It housed a coffin company at one time and now is a private business. This warehouse is the last remnant of shops and gins that were located near it and behind Grayson School. The old passenger depot was located near this building as well as a cannery.
15. Potato House. Located at 426 Grayson Parkway. This building once housed the Williams Brothers store. In the 1940s it was used as a curing house for the potatoes grown by Grayson citizens and was run by agriculture teacher Lloyd Williams. It now houses a bead shop and a cake bakery. This building is built of "Grayson Granite."

16. Cofer's Store. Located at 424 Grayson Parkway. Mr. John J. Cofer operated a store here for several years, which included an ice cream counter. The building served later as Grayson City Hall. It now houses the Family of Christ Church of God. The building was built in the 1890s or at the turn of the century.
17. Hoyt Cown's Store. Located at 422 Grayson Parkway. This brick building was once Rance Martin's service station, then Byron Mitchell had a billiard hall there. In later years it was the junk store of Hoyt Cown. The building dates to the turn of the century.
18. Old Grayson Post Office. Located at 420 Grayson Parkway. The building was built in the 1960s as a new U. S. Post Office by Tom Moore. It now houses the Grayson Café.
19. Bankston-Loveless House. Located at 2172 Rosebud Road. This home was occupied by the Bankston family, then by the Jim Loveless family. It dates to the late 1880s or 1890s. It is now a private residence. The Cannon family lived there at one time also.
20. Brownlee House. Located at 610 Rock Springs Road. The Brownlee family lived here and it was known as their home place. It was later lived in by Vic and Lou Luster. The house was most recently occupied by the family of Jimmy Adams. It dates to late 1880s or 1890s.
21. Gower-Swanson- Briscoe House. Located at 579 Rocksprings Road. This house was lived in by the S. M. Gower family, then the Cordele and Josephine Swanson family. It was most recently lived in by Rachel Briscoe. The house dates to the late 1880s to 1890s.
22. Bulldog Plumbing Office. Located at 416 Grayson Parkway. It once housed Jane Emmett's Beauty Shop, then Jeff Moore's Law Office. It dates to the late 1890s or early 20th century. It has some decorative concrete building stones used in the area at that time.
23. Bank of Grayson. Located at 412 Grayson Parkway. This building was built around 1900 as the Bank of Grayson, which closed in the late 1920s. It later served as the U. S. Post Office for Grayson until the 1960s. It now houses Quality Awards. It retains its pressed tin ceiling and other decorative features.
24. Calvin Ethridge Store. Located at 410 Grayson Parkway. This building was built of "Grayson Granite" and was completed just after the Bank of Grayson building. It now houses the Grayson Flower Shop.
25. Janice's Beauty Shop. Located at 408 Grayson Parkway. William Farmer built this building in 1964 or 1965 as a barber shop. He operated for a couple of months and then Janice Mitchell Briscoe opened her beauty shop on August 13 1965. Her shop is still housed there.
26. Smith-McDonald-Bollinger House. This home is located at 19 Grayson-New Hope Rd. It was built in the 1890s and was lived in by William G. Smith and his family. His Daughter, Miss Stella Smith, lived there for many years before her death and the home was sold to Doris and Ed McDonald. Terry Bollinger and his family lived there for many

years. The house is now empty but has been rented and is still owned by Terry Bollinger.

27. McConnell-Webb House. This home is located at 2057 Grayson-Loganville Highway. It was built by James Patterson McConnell for his son Andrew “Buddy” McConnell. It is the foremost example of Victorian architecture in Grayson. The house was built probably about 1890 or earlier. The McConnells moved and Alexander and Cora Cooper Webb bought the home and property in the 1910s. After the death of Cora Cooper Webb the house was rented for several years and then sold to the Steve Allen family. After they moved, the house served as a gift shop. It is now the Gwinnett School of Music. Many original doors, windows, and mantels are still in this home.
28. McConnell-Webb Rock Barn. This barn is located behind the McConnell-Webb Home. It was built by J. P. McConnell and was the livery stable and livestock storage for the railroad in Grayson. It appears to date to the 1890s.
29. Chupp-Britt House. This home is located at 2047 Grayson-Loganville Highway. It is a bungalow style that has an impressive stained glass window above the front left window. Many families lived in this home, among them the Langley family. Mrs. Alice Cooper Chupp lived in the home until her death in the 1960s. The Bailey sisters lived there and then the house became a rental house. The Law office of Pamela Britt now occupies this home.
30. Whispering Firs. Located at 2037 Grayson-Loganville Highway. This impressive home started as a one-story home and had a second story added in the 1900s. This was the home of the J. E. Jacobs family from the 1890s to the 1990s. It served as a special events facility and was then sold as an office building. It now stands empty and for sale. The two fir trees in front were brought as seedlings from Washington DC.
31. Hawthorn - Carroll House. Located at 459 Grayson Parkway. Built in the late 1880s, this home has had several prominent citizens live in it. Minnie, Martha, and Althea Hawthorn lived in the home for many years and then Derryl Carroll and his family lived there. It has housed a doll shop, an engineering firm, and a day spa.
32. Grayson Arts and History Center. Located at 2070 Rosebud Road. This is known as the Kennerly-Cox House. The town blacksmith and coffin maker, T. T. “Doc” Kennerly and his family lived there for many years. The Bramblett family also lived there. Flora Cox and her family lived there before the City of Grayson bought the property in the 21st century and turned it into a gift shop, artist studio, and museum. The house was probably built by James P. McConnell in the late 1880s.
33. Farmers Barber Shop. This tiny barber shop was relocated to the grounds of the Grayson Arts and History Center in the last couple of years. It is the William Farmer barber shop and dates from the 1960s. It is a Grayson landmark.
34. Nix-Mason-Payne House. This home is located at 660 Rock Springs Road. It was the Henry A. Nix home place, then was sold to the Wideman Mason family in the 1930s. The Payne family bought and restored the house in the 1980s. It also was lived in by Rev. Buddy Parish. This house dates back to the late 1870s.

35. Gouge House. Located at 589 Rock Springs Road. This home was probably built in the 1900s. It was lived in by Clyde and Alice Gouge for many years. It is currently a private residence.
36. Ethridge House. Located at 480 Grayson Parkway. The Calvin and Beuna Ethridge family lived in this home. It was probably built in the 1900s. The Gwinnett County Board of Education now owns it. This home might have been built by J. P. McConnell.
37. Grayson Masonic Lodge #549 F & AM. Located upstairs at 423 Grayson Parkway. This lodge has been in operation since the 1900s. The Masons still meet in the building.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CHARACTER AREAS AND LAND USE**

#### **CHARACTER AREAS**

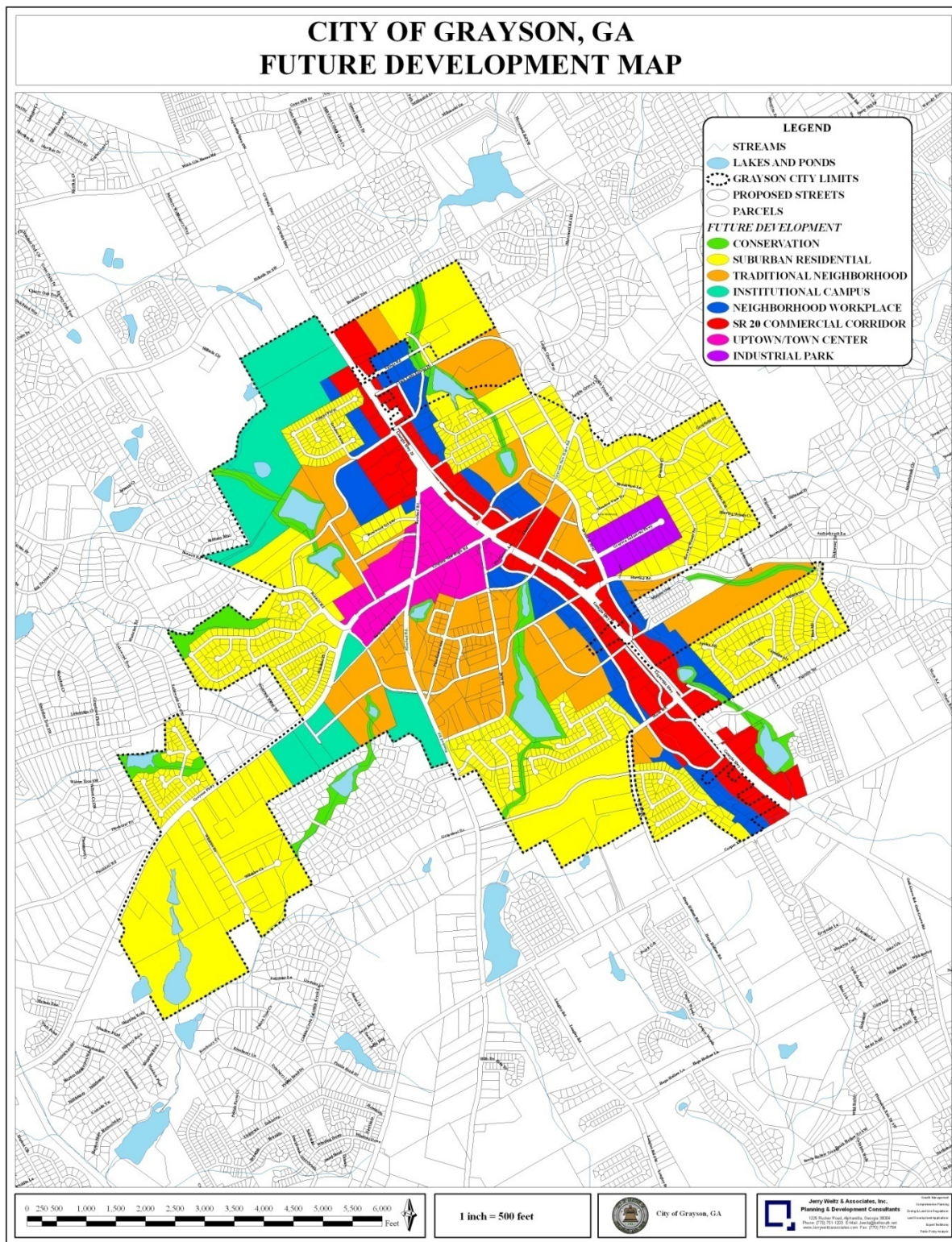
Character areas are specific geographic areas that have unique characteristics, or they have potential to develop into a unique area with guidance. They are aspirational (a goal to strive for) but their delineation is grounded in the reality of existing conditions. The delineation of character areas can be based on one or more of the following unique characteristics, among others: Predominant function; design characteristics / streetscapes; design of blocks and lots; street characteristics (e.g., straight, or curvilinear); mobility and access (e.g., pedestrian friendly or auto-reliant), type of open space (e.g., pocket parks and greenway corridors); and development density or intensity.

The City of Grayson has been divided into the following character areas as shown on the map titled “Future Development Map” (attached):

- Conservation
- Suburban Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Institutional Campus
- Neighborhood Workplace
- SR 20 Commercial Corridor
- Uptown Grayson/Town Center
- Industrial Park

The Future Development Map is not a zoning map, and it is not an existing or future land use map either. Rather, the future development map shows areas that have, or are expected to take on, unique characteristics that distinguish them from other parts of the city. The titles of these character areas imply there is a predominant land use for each. That is true for the suburban residential, institutional campus, and industrial park categories in particular. However, the driving force behind preparing a character map is to identify unique character, as opposed to suggesting one specific land use. Some of the character areas may consist of different land uses. For instance, the SR 20 commercial corridor, while predominantly commercial, can also include offices, residences, and institutions. The Uptown/Town Center character area, as another example, provides a mix of office, retail, residences, restaurants, civic uses, and open spaces.

Confusion sometimes arises about whether the Future Development Map is based on existing conditions or is intended to illustrate future desired characteristics. To some extent, both are true: the map has been drawn based on knowledge of existing conditions, yet it is “aspirational” in the sense that a vision is set forth for the future of each character area. There is also sometimes some uncertainty about how the Future Development Map is supposed to be used, particularly when there is also a future land use plan map (as is the case in Grayson). The Future Development Map can form the basis for additional design-related regulations, such as overlay districts. In the case of Grayson, overlay districts already exist to protect and enhance the desired characteristics of certain parts of the city. A map of character areas (future development map) and a description of each character area follows, along with statements about how they meet the state’s quality community objectives and the extent to which the vision is (or needs to be) implemented.





## Conservation

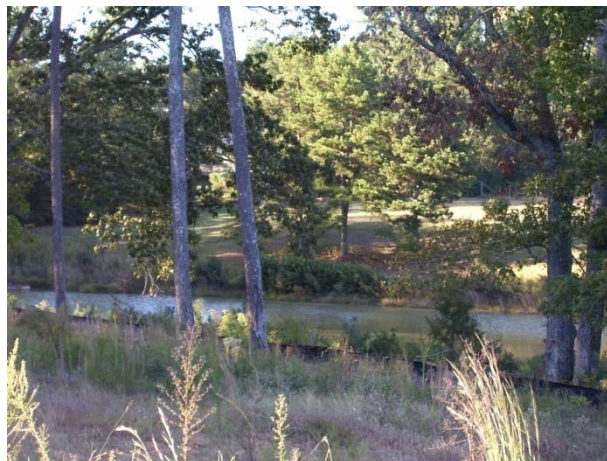
**Vision:** An interconnected system of riparian corridors which protect the environment, enhance water quality, and provide passive recreational opportunities. These areas will be connected to facilitate habitat movement and provide for maximum water quality enhancement.

### Quality Community Objectives:

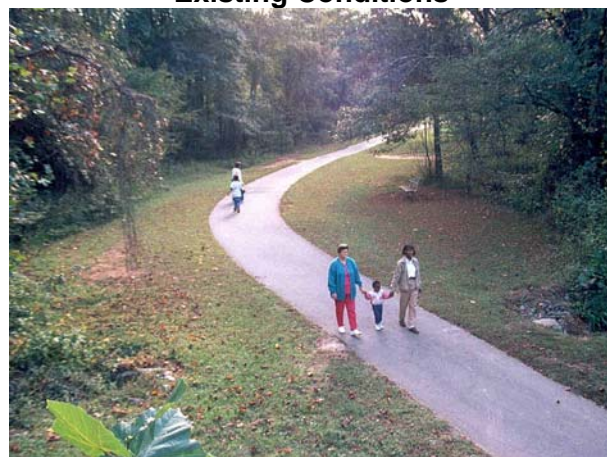
Environmental Protection; Open Space Preservation; Transportation Alternatives

**Uses and Intensities:** Since these are lands that are or should be set aside for open space, uses are limited to preserve natural features. Access and development are limited to conservation-compatible activities and may include trails and greenways in natural areas.

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Parks, recreation, and conservation



**Existing Conditions**

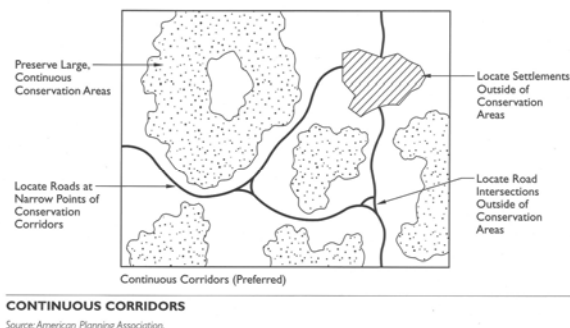


**Multi-Use Trail/Greenway**

**Implementation Measures:** Flood hazard prevention ordinance or floodplain regulations; use restrictions through zoning ordinance; Requirements for open space set-asides; Acquisition of land, or protection through conservation easements; sidewalk and greenway capital plans.



**Cross-Section of Multi-Purpose Trail**



**Connectivity of Corridors**

## Suburban Residential

**Vision:** Conventional suburban subdivisions for predominantly single-family, detached housing. Most neighborhoods are designed with cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets. Improved pedestrian connectivity is a goal. Character is suburban, with curvilinear roads and cul-de-sacs. Lot sizes may vary within this character area, based on whether they are connected to sewer. Lots connected to public water supply and on-site sewage management (septic tank) system may be larger than the minimum lot size required of the county Health Department. Houses have significant setbacks from the street, and yards are provided on all sides of the dwelling.

**Quality Community Objectives Realized:**  
Housing Opportunities; Infill Development;  
Transportation Alternatives

**Uses:** Predominantly detached, single-family dwellings and supportive civic, institutional, and recreational uses.

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Residential, Less than 1.5 units per acre; Residential 1.5 to 4 Units per Acre

**Implementation:** The following zoning districts: R-100, R-100 MOD, and PUD. Design standards requiring stone subdivision entrance monuments.



**Existing Conditions**



**Illustrative Subdivision Characteristics**



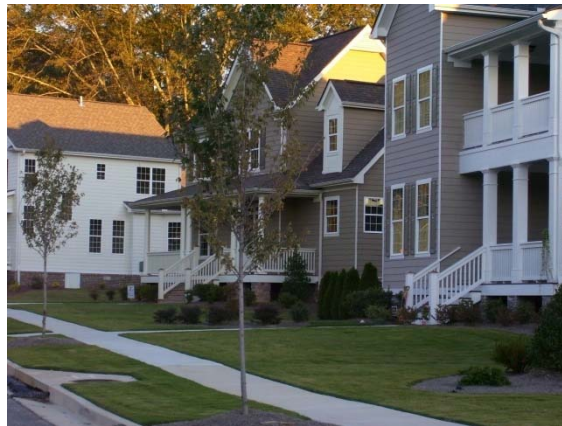
## Traditional Neighborhood

**Vision:** Predominantly detached residential neighborhoods with a grid-street pattern. Neighborhoods generally have smaller lots and dwellings are built closer to the street than those in other suburban and residential areas. Streets have shade trees and sidewalks and may be narrower than in suburban subdivisions. Density of development is higher than in suburban residential areas (up to 6 units per acre). Houses usually have front porches facing the street. Alleys may also be used. Such areas are served by sanitary sewer and are located within convenient walking distance to the Uptown/Town Center character area.

**Specific Land Uses:** Primarily detached, single-family uses on individual lots. Diverse housing types such as duplexes or townhouses may be permitted.

**Quality Community Objectives Realized:** Traditional Neighborhood; Housing Opportunities; Sense of Place; Transportation Alternatives.

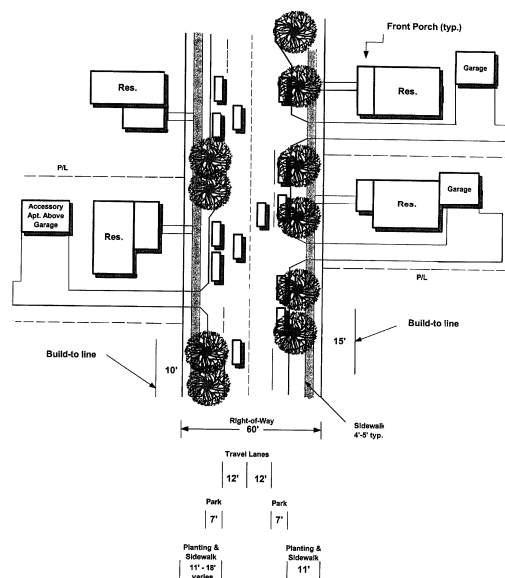
**Implementation Measures:** Use and development restrictions through zoning ordinance; Traditional neighborhood development ordinance or overlay with design guidelines; infill development compatibility requirements.



Existing Conditions



Grid Street Pattern



Traditional Neighborhood Street Detail

## Institutional Campus

**Vision:** The need for this character area is grounded in the existence of schools and churches in the city. Such areas are generally single-function and separated from other uses. They usually involve large-acreage tracts that are master-planned and may continue to develop over time.



Existing Conditions

### Quality Community Objectives Realized: Educational Opportunities

**Uses:** Religious institutions, public and private schools, and transportation facilities such as school bus parking and fueling.

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Public-Institutional; Office; Mixed Use.



Existing Conditions

**Implementation:** The following zoning districts: O-I (others may permit the uses described in this character area).

## Neighborhood Workplace

**Vision:** These areas serve as compatible transitions between the SR 20 Commercial Corridor and residential neighborhoods. Establishments include features making them compatible with residences, and they do not exceed 10,000 square feet in any building, to keep the bulk and intensity in scale with adjacent neighborhoods.

**Quality Community Objectives:** Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options; Transportation Alternatives

**Uses:** Offices and attractive, non-auto related neighborhood retail establishments and services, with distinctive architectural features and a scale compatible with pedestrians and connected to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Public-Institutional; Office

**Implementation:** The following zoning districts: O-I, with special use permits for compatible retail and service establishments



**Existing Conditions**



**Existing Conditions**



**Desired Scale and Character:**  
Business establishment has appearance  
of a residence



## SR 20 Commercial Corridor

**Vision:** Accessible centers of businesses, services, and complementary uses, which may include mixed-use developments, in a linear pattern along State Route 20, and contributing extensively to the economic base of the city. Such areas will be constructed as pedestrian-friendly places, with connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

### Quality Community Objectives:

Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options; Transportation Alternatives

**Uses and Intensities:** Suburban shopping centers, offices, and mixed use developments; Existing intensity is approximately 8,000 to 10,000 square feet per acre; higher intensities are possible.

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Commercial

**Implementation:** Connection concept plan; Access management regulations; Multi-modal corridor and streetscape improvements; Use restrictions through zoning ordinance (O-I, C-1 and C-2 zoning districts); Corridor-specific quality development regulations (SR 20 overlay)



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



### Uptown Grayson/Town Center

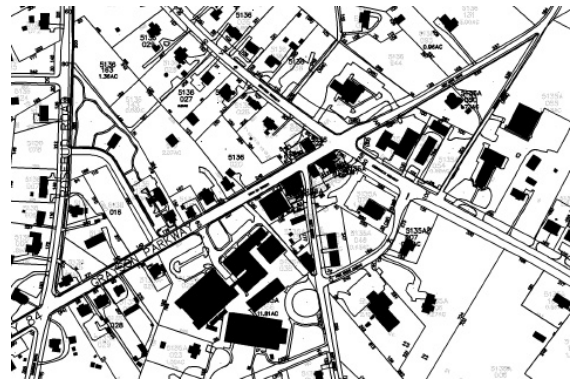
**Vision:** Compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed use area corresponding with the City's historic and revitalized downtown.

**Quality Community Objectives Realized:** Sense of Place; Heritage Preservation; Infill Development; Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options; Traditional Neighborhood; Housing Opportunities; Transportation Alternatives

**Uses and Intensities:** Residences, businesses, offices, civic buildings and uses, institutional, and mixed-use developments.

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Mixed Use

**Implementation:** Livable Centers Initiative plan; O-I, C-1 and Grayson Uptown Overlay



Existing Building Forms



Existing Conditions



Low Intensity Concept  
For Uptown Grayson



Higher Intensity Concept  
For Uptown Grayson

## Industrial Park

**Vision:** This character area corresponds with Grayson's existing industrial park. Uses are set back from the road and have yards on all sides, and the area takes on a low-intensity, landscaped character. Within this area, truck traffic may be frequent, and individual industrial establishments are not necessarily connected with one another. Truck traffic makes pedestrian compatibility difficult, but safe pedestrian passage is necessary. These areas contribute to the city's economic base.



Existing Building Form

**Quality Community Objectives Realized:**  
Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options;  
Growth Preparedness

**Uses:** Predominantly industrial and manufacturing; transportation, communication, and utilities facilities

**Compatible Future Land Use Map Categories:** Industrial

**Implementation:** M-1 zoning district; extension of sanitary sewer service is needed



Grayson Industrial Park has the appearance of a residential street



Existing Conditions

## LAND USE

A set of maps and regulatory provisions establish the overall framework for land use policy and regulation in the City of Grayson. It is important that the citizens and developers understand clearly the role that each component plays in the city's land use framework.

### Existing Land Use Map

The existing land use map is descriptive only; it shows how land is used inside the city limits. It does not in itself suggest policy or regulate land. It is used to inform character area delineation and land use planning efforts. Existing land use was inventoried by the City's planning consultants in 2007 and 2008 (see map)

### Existing Land Use Categories

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

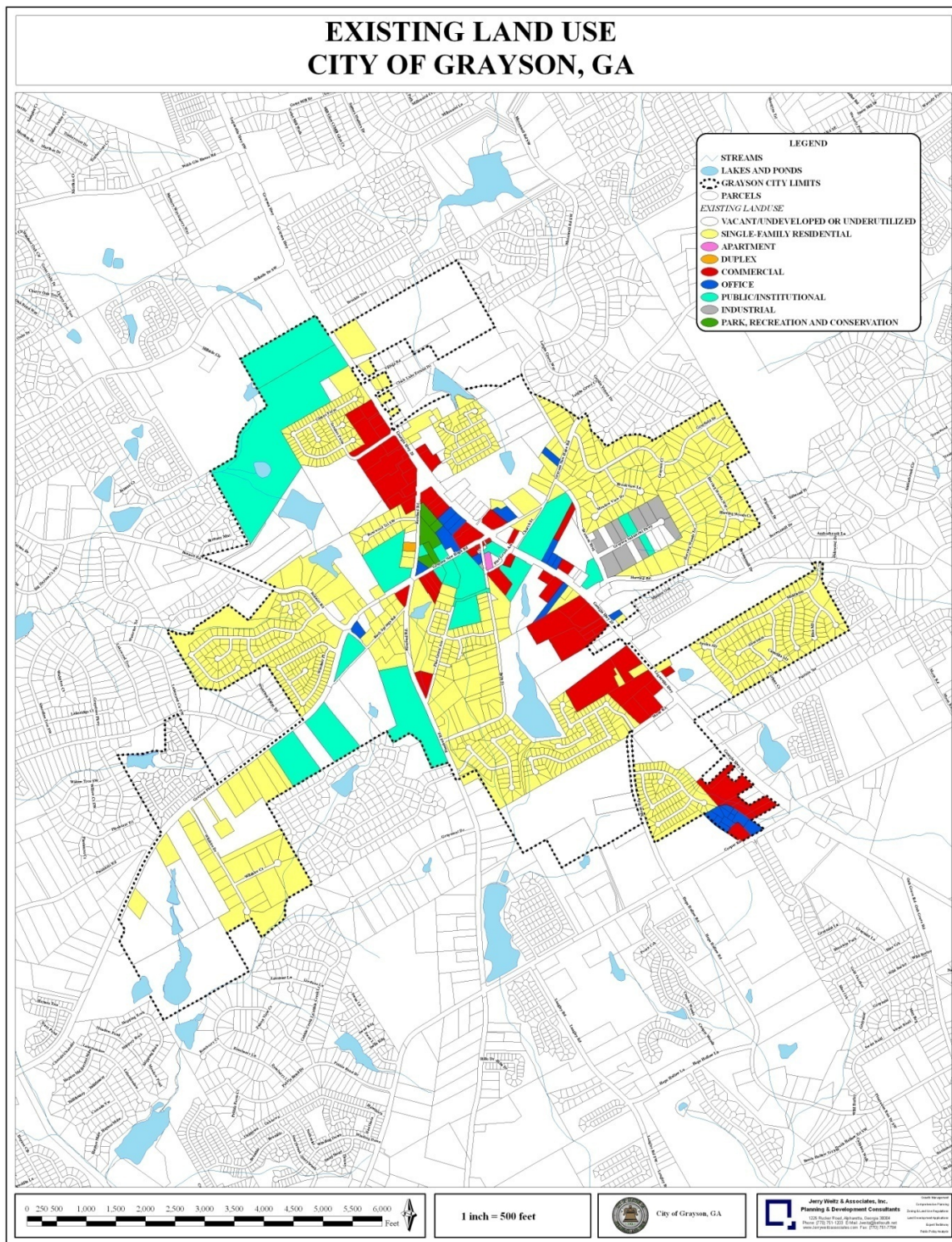
- **Multi-Family Residential:** Residential buildings containing two or more dwelling units, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and apartments. In Grayson, this applies only to one property designated as "duplex" and one site which contains eight apartment units (see photo).



**Only Apartments in Grayson**

- **Commercial:** Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities.
- **Industrial:** Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, and other similar uses.
- **Public/Institutional:** State, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Institutional uses include schools, colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.
- **Park/Recreation/Conservation:** Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses.





- **Vacant/Undeveloped/Underutilized:** Lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were previously developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned. In addition, the existing land use inventory designated as “underutilized” several large tracts in the city that contain a single dwelling on them but are most likely going to be subdivided in the future. It was important to designate these lands as “underutilized” and part of the vacant category, rather than residential, so as not to overestimate the amount of residential acreage in the city and not to underestimate the development potential in the city.

### Summary of Existing Land Use

Grayson is predominantly a low-density suburb of Gwinnett County. Because much of its development has occurred recently, it does not have a pattern defined by history, except for its small downtown (Uptown/Town Center) and some pre-existing, highway-oriented uses along SR 20.

Subdivisions containing detached, single-family residential uses comprise the predominant land use pattern. Presently, there is a wide variety of residential neighborhood densities – these range from very large lots such as those along Wilshire Drive (photo) and Wilshire Court, to homes on large, deep lots along the north side of Bennett Road (photo) and the east side of Grayson Parkway, to subdivisions east of SR 20 which are mostly not served by sanitary sewer, to other subdivisions on both sides of SR 20 that have higher densities on sanitary sewer.



**Wilshire Drive in Grayson**

Such subdivisions are constructed in a conventional suburban style, with curvilinear roads and cul-de-sacs. Because subdivision streets end in cul-de-sacs and have not been required to connect with one another, the result is that subdivisions are isolated from one another and significant obstacles to through traffic and pedestrian access are inherent.



**North Side of Bennett Road in Grayson**



Public-institutional uses include at least three churches, Grayson City Hall (photo) and Senior Center, a Gwinnett County library and fire station, a large school complex and bus parking facility (under construction), and Grayson Elementary School in the Uptown/Town Center area.

At the time of this writing, the Georgia Department of Transportation was improving SR 20 to widen it throughout Grayson and beyond. That road widening alone has had profound impacts on land use in the corridor.



**Grayson City Hall**

A number of detached, single-family homes exist along the SR 20 corridor. Some of these have been acquired for right-of-way, some have converted to office and commercial uses in the existing residential structures (photo), some continue to be used as residences, and others are destined to be replaced with new office and commercial developments.

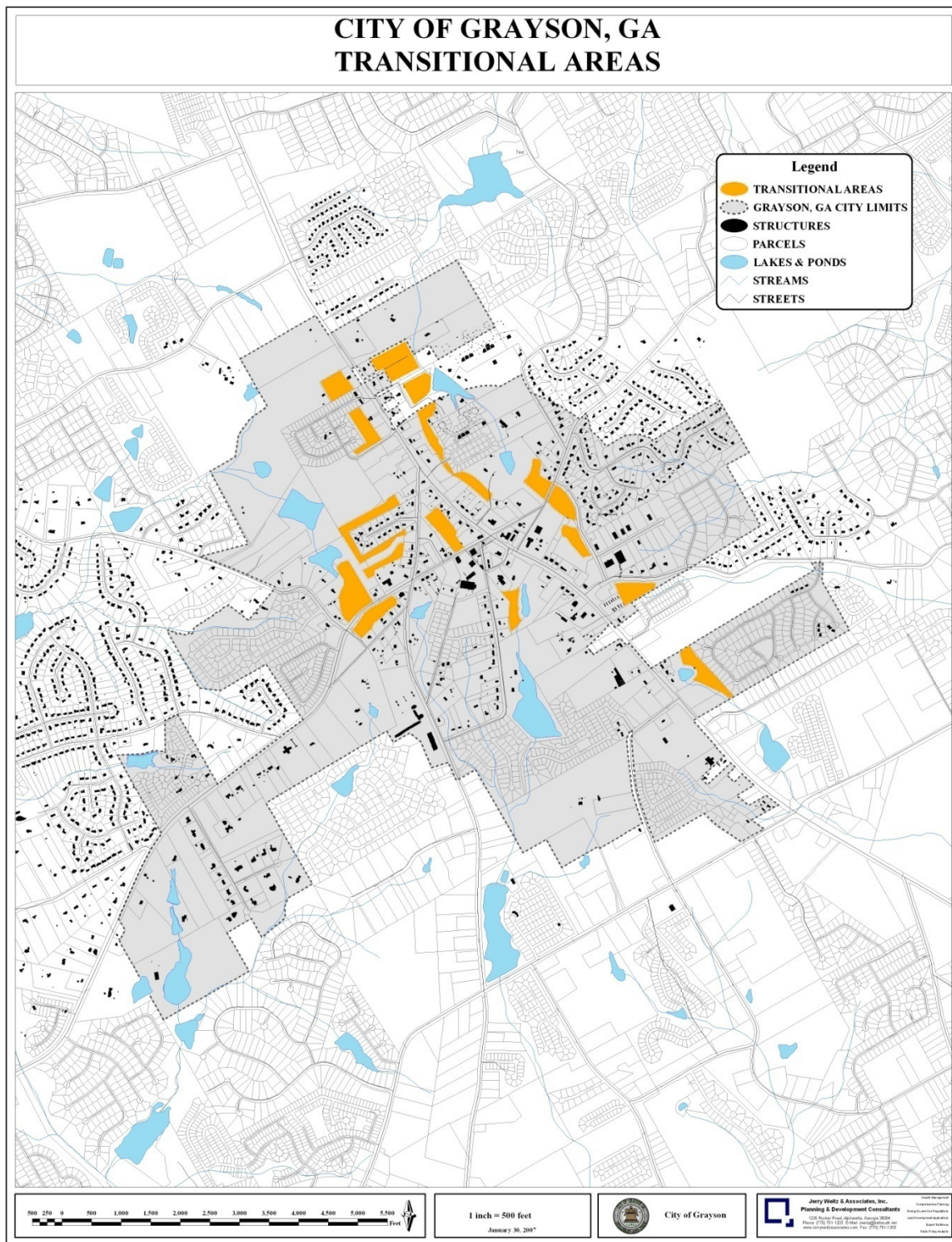


**Commercial Use of Residential Structure Along SR 20**

Commercial land uses consist primarily of a shopping center at Rosebud Road and SR 20 and highway-oriented commercial uses along SR 20, and a few low-intensity commercial uses in the Grayson Uptown/Town Center (photo). There is also a small node of commercial use at Rosebud Road and Pine Grove Avenue. Office development has generally not occurred in Grayson, although an office building along the east side of SR 20 was recently constructed, and smaller offices within residential structures also exist.



**Commercial Within Uptown/Town Center**





Light industrial development is confined mostly to the industrial park along Grayson Industrial Parkway. There are also some light industrial uses on the west side of SR 20 just south of the Grayson Uptown/Town Center. Presently, the city contains little open space other than the several lakes and ponds, the city's park along the east side of Rosebud Road, and open spaces along flood plains within existing platted residential subdivisions. Including large tracts which contain only a single dwelling, there is extensive undeveloped or underutilized land within Grayson.



**Office Building Under Construction,  
SR 20 Corridor, 2007**

### **Future Land Use Map**

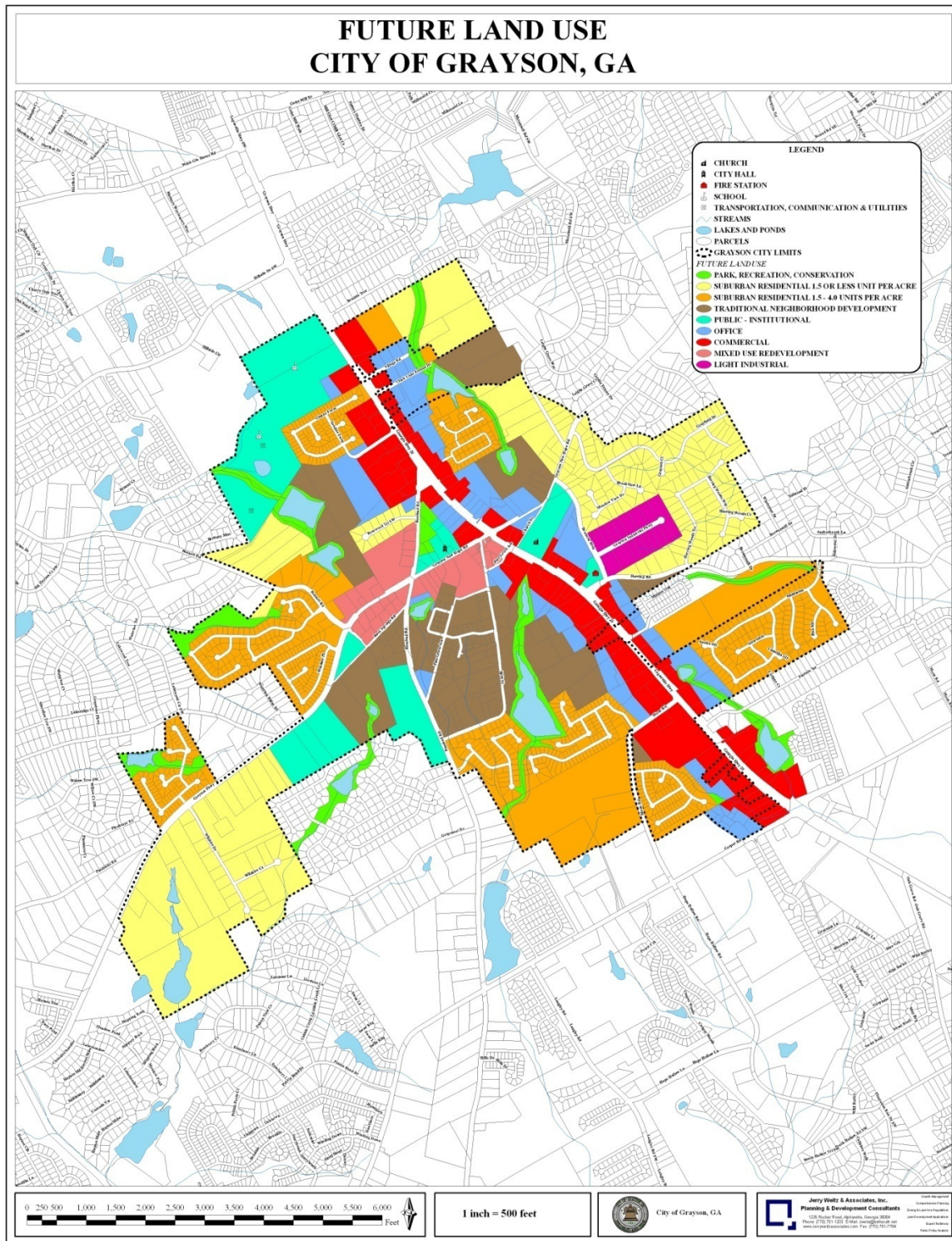
Under the state administrative rules for local planning, a future land use plan is optional. However, for local governments that have adopted zoning ordinances, a future land use plan is often considered to be essential in guiding rezoning decisions, which must consider the land use compatibility of proposed zoning actions with adjacent and nearby land uses. The future land use plan map is not a legal document per se, but it is used as a guide in making rezoning and other decisions.

### **Comparing Future Land Use and Future Development Maps**

At first glance, the Future Development Map and the Future Land Use Map for Grayson appear to be very similar if not identical. There are some important differences, however. The Future Development Map incorporates the “connection concept plan” (see chapter 5) by showing future streets, whereas the Future Land Use Map does not. Because future roads are left off of the Future Land Use Map, there are subtle differences between the boundaries of the two maps. In cases where interpretation is needed, the following rule will apply: Where the proposed local street or other connection exists or is planned or required as a part of a particular development, the recommendations of the Future Development Map prevail; but where such local street or other connection does not exist or is not planned, the use boundaries recommended on the Future Land Use Map should prevail.

The Future Land Use Map divides the “Suburban Residential” character area into two future land use categories (see descriptions below) which differentiate between densities of residential uses; the Future Land Use Map provides more detailed guidance than the Future Development Map with regard to zoning decisions, as Grayson's single-family residential zoning districts provide ranges of allowable (maximum) lot sizes. The Future Land Use Map also divides the Grayson Uptown/Town Center character area into several future land uses, including park/recreation/conservation, office, public-institutional, and commercial.





## Future Land Use Categories and Applicability in Grayson

- **Park/Recreation/Conservation**

This Future Land Use Map category corresponds with the flood plains along streams and creeks in the City, as well as land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. Lakes and ponds are shown as a separate color on the Future Land Use Map but are considered generally to be part of the “Conservation” category.

Specifically within Grayson, this category includes open spaces within subdivisions, reflective of those areas already designated as open space due to the existence of flood plains. The park land in the Grayson Uptown/Town Center is also shown in this category. Grayson’s comprehensive plan envisions a connected network of greenways, surrounding existing lakes and ponds and (ultimately, with improvements) providing pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the city.



**Playground in Grayson City Park**

- **Suburban Residential, 1.5 Unit or Less Per Acre**

Uses permitted within this future land use plan category include predominantly detached, single-family dwelling units on individual lots. Densities of some tracts are well below the maximum recommended density of 1.5 units per acre. This future land use plan map category corresponds with parts of the “Suburban Neighborhoods” character area on the Future Development Map.

In Grayson, this category applies to lands east of SR 20, more removed from the SR 20 commercial corridor. More than half of the land area on the east side of SR 20 within this category is already developed. This classification also applies to the southwest part of Grayson, west of SR 20 along the south side of Grayson Parkway, where subdivision of land (except for some large lots) has not yet taken place. It also applies to larger lots on the north side of Bennett Road and to an existing subdivision along Rosewood Trail.

- **Suburban Residential, 1.5 to 4.0 Units Per Acre**

Uses permitted within this future land use plan category include predominantly detached, single-family dwelling units on individual lots. Densities of some tracts typically are under three units per acre but can range from 1.5 units per acre to up to 4.0 units per acre. This future land use plan map category corresponds with parts of the “Suburban Neighborhoods” character area on the Future Development Map.



In Grayson, this category applies to several existing subdivisions (photo) on both sides of the SR 20 corridor. While much of the land in this category is already developed, there are considerable opportunities for additional residential development on the east side of SR 20 and along the west side of Moon Road.



- **Traditional Neighborhood Development**

This future land use plan category corresponds with the Traditional Neighborhood character area shown on the Future Development Map. Uses and characteristics are the same as those described for the Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area; generally, detached, single-family dwellings on smaller lots is the predominant land use, and lots are platted in a grid street pattern. This category provides for a variety of housing types but does not include manufactured homes or apartments. Densities do not exceed six units per acre.

In Grayson, some lots along Pine Grove Avenue and Trip Street (photo) are already developed with a subdivision characteristic of a traditional neighborhood. The Future Land Use Map envisions that traditional neighborhoods will develop in four major locations: around a lake east of SR 20 north of Grayson-New Hope Road; surrounding the existing traditional neighborhood along Pine Grove Avenue and Trip Street; north of Grayson Parkway east of Bennett Road; and west of the library along the south side of Grayson Parkway.



**Pine Grove Village in Grayson**

- **Public-Institutional**

This category includes state, federal and local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, post offices, schools, etc. Institutional uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. While these public and institutional uses are sometimes located, appropriately, within residential neighborhoods, they are usually located with access to major thoroughfares. This designation on the future land use plan map corresponds with existing public and

institutional uses in Grayson, along with additional vacant land where institutions are expected to be developed in the city.

In Grayson, public-institutional land uses already exist in the form of a large county school complex at the north end of SR 20 on the west side, and including a tract planned for the storage of school buses (extending almost to Bennett Road), the Gwinnett County library (photo) and fire station, and some churches. There is undeveloped land in this category, along the south side of Grayson Parkway west of Rosebud Road, that provides some land appropriate for public-institutional development and designated as such on the Future Land Use Map.



**Gwinnett County Library in Grayson**

- **Office**

This future land use plan map category corresponds with the “neighborhood workplace” character area. This category is a subset of commercial land use; it is intended primarily for office uses and does not allow broadly all of the retail and service uses recommended in the “Commercial” category. Commercial uses are restricted to small retail and service establishments (less than 10,000 square feet in a building) and are subject to standards to ensure they are compatible with nearby residential neighborhoods.

With the exception of historic structures fronting the west side of SR 20 in the Grayson Uptown/ Town Center, most of the land in this category is currently undeveloped or used for other purposes, including some retail and service uses. It is envisioned that this category will provide an appropriate transition between the SR 20 commercial corridor and residential neighborhoods, along both sides of the corridor.

- **Commercial**

This future land use plan map category corresponds with land dedicated to commercial, retail, service, restaurant, and highway oriented businesses. This category corresponds with the SR 20 Commercial Corridor character area shown on the Future Development Map. Offices may be included, although, as noted above, a separate office category is also included on the future land use map. This category is limited in its applicability to properties fronting SR 20, but it spans most of the lands in that highway corridor.

- **Mixed Use Redevelopment**

This category corresponds with parts of the Grayson Uptown/Town Center character area as shown on the Future Development Map. In this district, mixed land uses are recommended, including some combination of commercial, office, and residential uses in the same building or on the same development site. The intensity of mixed use redevelopment should be consistent with more detailed planning done via a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study, by the Downtown Development Authority, or as otherwise described in this Community Agenda.

In Grayson, this category includes the Grayson elementary school site, which is proposed in this plan for redevelopment, along with properties east and west of the elementary school, on the south side of Grayson Parkway. Small tracts west of Rosebud Road are also included.

- **Light Industrial**

This future land use plan map category corresponds with the industrial park character area as shown on the Future Development Map. It corresponds with lands developed as, or appropriate for light industrial buildings such as warehousing, wholesale trade, manufacturing and other similar uses. This category applies to the industrial park along Grayson Industrial Parkway. Some of the lots in this industrial park are already developed, while some other tracts are vacant.



**Industrial Use, Grayson Ind. Pkwy.**

- **Future Land Use Categories Excluded**

The following categories, from the state's standard land use classification system, are not utilized or shown on the Grayson Future Land Use Map: transportation/communication/utilities, forestry, and agriculture.

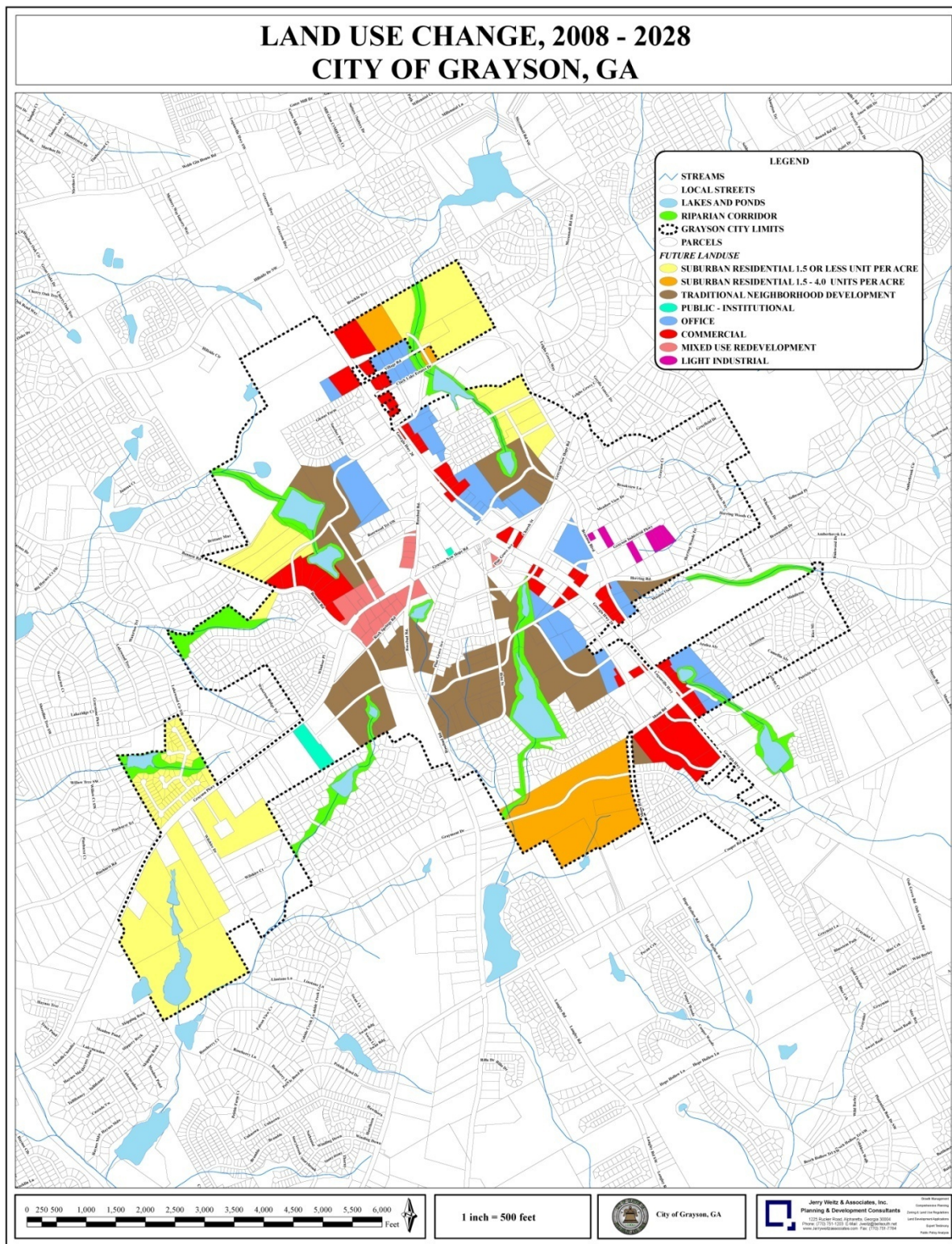
### **Land Use Change, 2008-2028**

A map titled "Land Use Change" has been prepared, which signifies the consultant's prediction of the major land use changes that will occur within Grayson during the twenty-year planning horizon. Open spaces, along the flood plains of creeks, and including existing lakes and ponds, will be permanently protected and improved for passive recreation. Residential subdivisions will develop as currently zoned (indeed, some of these are imminent at the time of this writing). Traditional neighborhood development, with the exception of one development, does not exist but will take place in designated locations during the latter part of the planning horizon.

Several tracts fronting SR 20, containing single-family dwellings, will be developed for commercial uses. On both sides of the SR 20 commercial corridor, in transitional areas, office and light commercial areas compatible with nearby residential neighborhoods will develop. Within Grayson Industrial Park, industrial development will occur on currently vacant lots.

Table 9 provides acreage estimates of existing and future land use, and land use change is shown on a map on the following page.





**Table 9**  
**Existing and Future Land Use**  
**City of Grayson**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Existing, 2008 (Acres)</b>	<b>Percent of Total Land Area</b>	<b>Future 2028 (Acres)</b>	<b>Percent of Total Land Area</b>	<b>Predicted Major Change 2008-2028</b>
Residential, Single-Family	8,561.7	74.9%	--	--	--
Suburban Residential 1.5 unit or less per acre	n/c	--	493	4.1%	+500
Suburban Residential 1.5 to 4.0 units per acre	n/c	--	10,433	86.1%	+300
Multi-family Residential	1.5	0.1%	n/c	--	--
Traditional Neighborhood Dev.	n/c	--	426	3.5%	+300
Public-Institutional	161.6	1.4%	140	1.2%	--
Office	23.6	0.2%	271	2.2%	+200
Commercial	105.4	0.9%	268	2.2%	+163
Mixed Use Redevelopment	n/c	--	62	0.5%	+62
Light Industrial	16.0	0.1%	24	0.2%	+8
Park/Recreation/Conservation	7.3	0.1%	12	--	+5
Vacant/Undeveloped/Underutilized	2,550.7	22.3%	--	--	-1,000
<b>Total (Shown)</b>	<b>11,427.8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,129</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+1,538</b>

Note: Excludes public rights-of-ways. Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., May 29, 2008.

## **ZONING AND OVERLAY DISTRICTS**

Grayson's Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map set forth several zoning districts and overlay districts, which regulate land in the city. Those districts are identified below for purposes of better informing the character area descriptions (where abbreviations only are provided):

- R-100 Single-Family Residential District
- R-100 Modified Single-Family Residential District
- R-4 Medium Density Residential District
- RM Multi-Family Residential District
- OI Office Institutional District
- C-1 Neighborhood Business District
- C-2 General Business District
- C-3 Central Business District
- M-1 Light Industry District
- MH Manufactured Housing District
- PUD Planned Unit Development District
- UG Uptown Grayson Overlay District
- Grayson Highway 20 Overlay District

## **CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION**

### **OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Grayson provides a limited set of municipal services. Police, fire, water, sewer, and schools are provided by Gwinnett County, in addition to many countywide services like tax collection and environmental health. A county fire station is located in Grayson. Grayson does provide sanitation/solid waste management, parks and recreation, transportation/public works, planning and development, and code enforcement. Grayson provides several of its services through private contracts. It has a contract with an engineering firm (Precision Planning) for its planning, zoning, and development review functions, and it contracts with private vendors for street repairs and garbage collection.

Generally, community facilities can be divided into the following types: public safety; health, education, welfare and social services; general administrative facilities and services; utility-type operations; and park, recreation and cultural facilities. Each of these types of facilities is discussed in the following paragraphs. Transportation is described later in this chapter.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

This general category includes law enforcement (sheriff, police, courts, corrections) fire protection and rescue operations, emergency medical services (EMS), 911, emergency management and animal control. All of these facilities are currently provided by Gwinnett County in Grayson. Grayson does not have its own police department, and instead is served by Gwinnett County.

An emergency management ordinance exists, jointly adopted by Grayson and Gwinnett County, and effective July 18, 1994. Grayson contracts with Gwinnett County for animal control (ordinance adopted by the City of Grayson on December 18, 1973). Fire protection is provided to Grayson by Gwinnett County via formal intergovernmental agreement, which was effective January 3, 1974. The relocation of Fire Station 8 was completed (due to the widening of Grayson Highway) and a ribbon cutting ceremony was held on June 19, 2007. This two-bay facility provides fire and EMS services to the residents and businesses in the Grayson area. The station is located on Brannan Boulevard. With this relocated fire station in Grayson, it is anticipated that the city's future growth will be served with adequate response times. Gwinnett County is responsible for capital planning for fire stations, and it is planning two new fire stations (#29 in the Buford/ Braselton area and #30 in the Tribble Mill Park area) to meet future needs. The total cost for fire station #30 is \$6,265,613, and it is scheduled for completion in 2009.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to crime and law enforcement, the current arrangement that Gwinnett County serve in lieu of a municipal police department appears to be adequate. Some discussion took place during the comprehensive planning process as to whether the city needed to establish its own police force in the future. Given the reportedly low crime rates in Grayson, stakeholders and the steering committee did not express significant concern about public safety or suggest it was imperative that Grayson establish its own police force. That conclusion is reinforced by the finding that Gwinnett County is preparing to meet future needs for police forces in the county. Specifically, Gwinnett County is planning a future police precinct which is scheduled to begin in 2009. The precinct will be located in the Grayson area next to Bay Creek Park. The Grayson

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<sup>1</sup> Gwinnett County 2008 Budget Document: Community Services Capital Improvement Programs.



Police Precinct is scheduled for construction in 2009 at a cost of \$3,200,000, according to Gwinnett County's capital budgeting documents.

## **HEALTH, EDUCATION, WELFARE, AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

This category of community facilities and services includes hospitals, nursing homes, public welfare programs, public and private school systems and institutions of higher learning, libraries, and public cemeteries. Public health facilities are provided through Gwinnett County, as are hospitals and libraries. Schools are provided by the Gwinnett County Board of Education and numerous private schools. The City of Grayson is not engaged in facilities and services of this type, and it will likely rely on churches and other private organizations, and to a lesser extent Gwinnett County, to meet citizens' needs for social services, such as temporary housing, emergency shelter, guidance and counseling.

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES**

This category includes administrative offices for city personnel, including city clerk, city management, code enforcement, and business registration, among others. Residents are the predominant generator of demand for city administrative services, though business, industry, and institutions also generate needs on the city administration for things such as business licenses. The city of Grayson and Gwinnett County have an agreement regarding ad valorem tax billing and collection (effective January 1, 1998).

Grayson is one of few municipalities that has established its own code enforcement board. Cities and counties in Georgia are authorized to establish code enforcement boards pursuant to Chapter 74 of Title 36, the "Local Government Code Enforcement Boards Act" (O.C.G.A. 36-74-1 et seq.). Such boards, once established, have the power to conduct hearings, and issue orders having the force of law to command whatever steps are needed to bring code violators into compliance.

Because both residential and nonresidential growth will generate future demands for general administrative facilities it is important to consider projections of demand based on both. Capital facilities planners use the concept of "functional" population, which combines resident population and employment to determine future needs. Grayson has a current functional population (population and employment in 2008) of 4,044 persons. Assuming that employment growth will occur uniformly during the twenty-year planning horizon, Grayson's functional population is projected to be 2,968 (employment) plus 3,213 (population) = 6,181 persons in five years (i.e., the year 2013). By the end of the planning horizon, in 2028, Grayson will have a projected functional population of 7,868 population plus 6,391 (employment) for a total of 14,259 functional population.

## **Administrative Space Needs and Level of Service**

Grayson operates its administrative offices out of its city hall building in Uptown Grayson. The current facility is approximately 1,700 square feet. The current facility operates at a level of service of 0.42 square feet per functional population in 2008. Given that the city privatizes its planning and zoning functions and other services, the current level of service appears to be adequate, though municipal offices are currently considered cramped or tight. The level of service standard recommended for Grayson is 0.5 square feet per functional population, which represents an increase over the existing level of service.

Table 10 shows projected administrative space needs for 5-year and 20-year intervals, at the suggested level of service standard. Table 10 shows that Grayson should provide an additional 1,390 square feet to the existing city hall, for a total city hall of 3,090 square feet, if it wants to achieve the recommended level of service standard by the year 2013 of 0.5 square feet per functional population. Of course, it should be noted that Grayson's employment growth may not proceed as quickly as that assumed here in the future, and it is not guaranteed that Grayson's resident population will increase as quickly as that projected, given the current state of the residential market. This means Grayson may be able to build less space, or defer its capital program for another few years, and still meet reasonable level of service standards. However, for purposes of this community agenda, it is useful to project the maximum needs.

**Table 10**  
**Administrative Space Needs, 2013 and 2028**  
**At the Level of Service Standard of 0.5 Square Feet per Functional Population**  
**City of Grayson**  
**(Square Feet of Building Space)**

	<b>Existing Space, 2008 (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Year 2013 Space Requirements (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Square Feet to Add by 2013</b>	<b>Year 2028 Space Requirements (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Square Feet to Add, 2014-2028</b>
General Administrative Facilities	1,700	3,090	1,390	7,130	4,040

Looking further into the long-term (year 2028), Grayson is projected to need total city hall space of 8,830 square feet. It now has a total of approximately 1,700 square feet, which suggests that it should build more than 5,000 square feet between now and the year 2028 (i.e., 1,390 square feet by 2013 and an additional 4,040 square feet by 2028).

#### **Options for Providing Additional City Hall Space**

Grayson has land available next to city hall which will enable it to add on to the existing city hall building. This is considered a preferred option, as it is good for cities to keep their city halls and administrative spaces in the downtown (Uptown Grayson) where they can serve as an anchor and catalyst for future town center planning efforts. In the future, Grayson's officials will have to decide whether it makes sense to provide incremental additions to city hall, as implied in Table 10 (i.e., build a small amount within five years and a larger amount between years 2014 and 2028), or whether it is more economical to build all of it at once to meet long-term needs.

On the one hand, a marginal addition will ensure the city meets its short-term needs, will be more easily funded, and gives the city different options in the future if needs or objectives change with regard to future office facility space. On the other hand, there are economies of scale in designing and constructing a city hall addition that will meet its long-term needs at one time during the relative short-term. Doing so would also hedge against escalating capital construction costs – Grayson can build today or tomorrow at less cost than if it defers the capital improvement several years into the future.

It seems prudent for Grayson to design a city hall addition that would accommodate its short-term needs but also prepare full designs as if it were to build 5,430 square feet of new office

space (i.e., what will be needed to serve future growth). Grayson's officials should also keep in mind that, if funding sources fall short, it can lower its level of service standard and build less space. And again, Grayson officials should be wary that the employment projections may be high for what will actually take place in Grayson, and that nonresidential uses (employees) present much less of a demand on space than residents do. The decision on future office space should also ultimately be made in the context of what facilities and services Grayson will provide in the future (e.g., whether it adds additional departments or municipal services).

## **UTILITY TYPE OPERATIONS**

Utility operations include water systems, sewer systems, stormwater management, and solid waste collection and disposal.

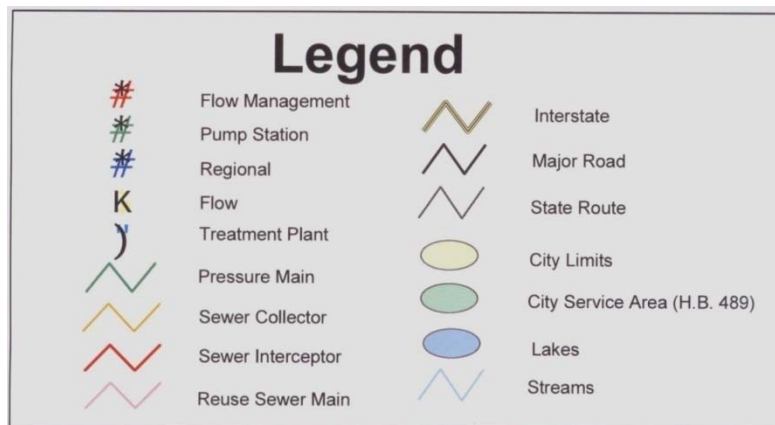
### **Water and Sewer**

Grayson previously owned and operated its own water system. However, it sold the system to Gwinnett County. A Water System Purchase Agreement was entered into between Gwinnett County and the City of Grayson on May 17, 1993.

Grayson is generally very well served with county water, and much of the city is now connected to sewer or within reasonable distances of connecting to sanitary sewer lines. There are sections of Grayson, such as the industrial park, that are not currently connected to sanitary sewer but will need to be served with appropriate sewer line extensions.



**Grayson Area Existing Sanitary Sewer, August 2008**



### Stormwater Management

Stormwater management is another area of evolving need, due in part to stricter federal standards and mandates of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. Grayson has many different tasks associated with stormwater management for which it is now and will continue to be responsible. A stormwater agreement was reached between Gwinnett County and Grayson on March 24, 1997. Because the city is relatively small and provides a limited set of services, it makes sense to continue to coordinate with and rely upon Gwinnett County with regard to stormwater management facilities and meeting the water district's mandates.

A stormwater utility may be a viable approach to correcting existing storm drainage problems, maintaining stormwater detention ponds, and enhancing stormwater management (and, therefore, water quality). As noted in Chapter 3, stormwater management is especially important in Grayson because both of its watersheds (Big Haynes Creek and Alcovy River) are downstream water supply watersheds. Establishment of a stormwater utility and user fee is needed to provide funding to correct existing storm drainage problems, maintain stormwater detention ponds, and enhance stormwater management.

Also, the connection concept plan in this chapter shows various lakes and ponds in the city. A tentative proposal has been put forth in this Community Agenda to consider whether the system of lakes and ponds in Grayson can serve not only as a recreation/open space resource but also regional (i.e., multiple property) detention facilities. The short-term work program calls for Grayson to conduct an engineering feasibility study to determine if that concept holds merit, and any sort of regional detention system should be coordinated with overall master planning by Gwinnett County for areawide (watershed-specific) stormwater management.

### Water Reuse or Gray Water

Reused wastewater, sometimes referred to as "gray water" or "reclaimed water," is wastewater from sewage treatment plants that receives at least secondary treatment before being used for agricultural, industrial, landscaping, or other uses. Gray water is subject to standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency which are based on the anticipated level of human contact. Gray water helps conserve potable water when lower quality water (i.e., "gray water" will serve the purpose). There is no such system in Grayson, at this time. However, given the need to conserve water in metro Atlanta, Grayson, with Gwinnett County, should during the

planning horizon consider the feasibility of developing a grey water system for water reuse. Reclaimed water systems can save extensive amounts of drinking water each day.

### **Solid Waste Management**

Municipalities and counties were required under the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 to begin planning for the reduction of municipal solid waste streams. Comprehensive solid waste management plans have for some time now been required to be prepared in accordance with Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-4-3, Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Solid Waste Management. There are seven required elements of a solid waste plan: waste stream; collection; reduction; disposal; land limitation; education and public involvement; and implementation and financing. Each element is required to contain an inventory, analysis, policy and goal statements, and an implementation strategy.

Grayson adopted a resolution on December 19, 1994, adopting the countywide solid waste management plan. Grayson continues to participate with Gwinnett County in terms of preparing and implementing the comprehensive solid waste management plan. According to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the county and other participating municipalities including Grayson are due to submit a revised solid waste plan by February 28, 2009.

### **PARK, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL FACILITIES**

The City of Grayson owns and has improved a city park consisting of approximately 8 acres in Uptown Grayson. It also has a senior center of approximately 2,400 square feet and an arts and history center which consists of approximately 1,600 square feet. Hence, Grayson's current levels of service for its municipal park and cultural facilities are 8 acres of park land serving 2,216 residents in 2008 (3.6 acres per 1,000 residential population) and 4,000 square feet serving 2,216 residents (1.8 square feet per residential population). Unlike public safety facilities, which clearly serve the residential and nonresidential populations, it is customary to evaluate these land and facility needs on the basis of the residential population only, even if businesses, institutions and industries have some positive benefits they may receive from such facilities.

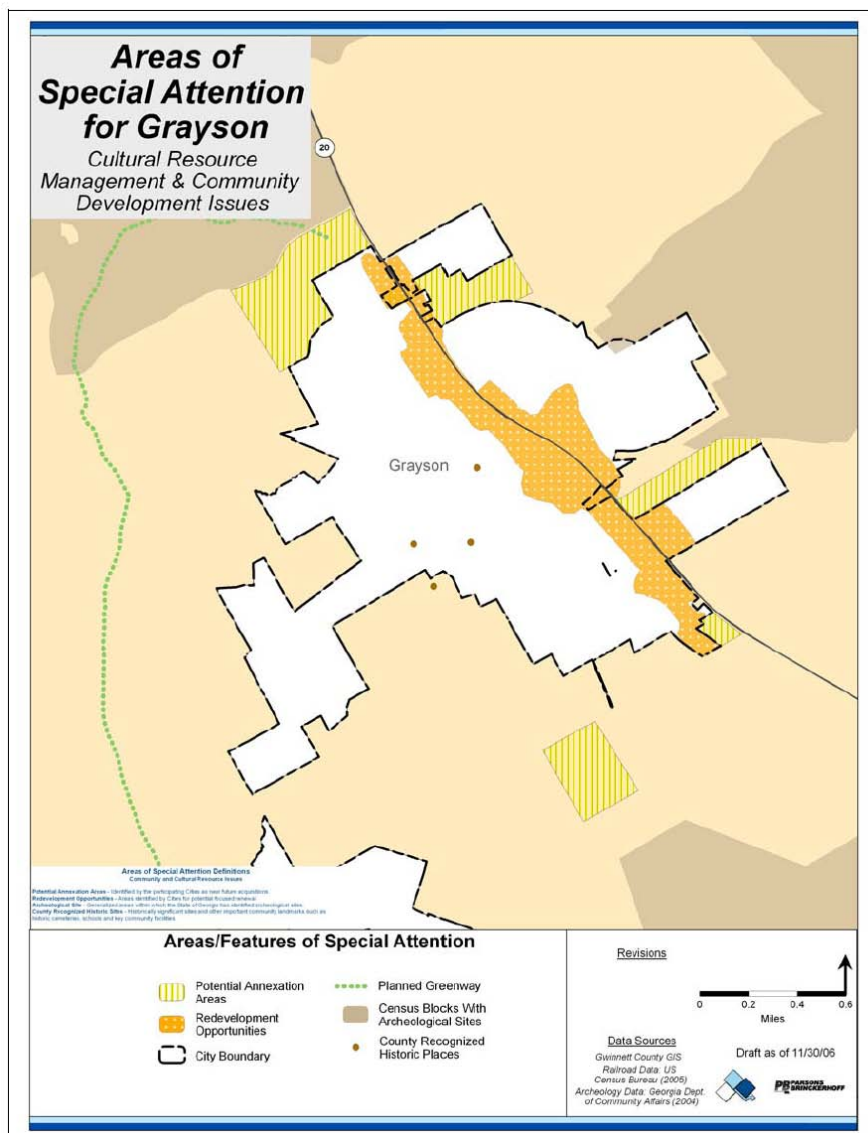
In addition to municipal facilities, Grayson's residents are served by Gwinnett County's system of active and passive parks and recreation facilities. That fact must be factored into any assessment of the adequacy of park and recreation facilities. In particular, Grayson is served by Gwinnett County's Tribble Mill Park, which consists of 700 acres. Based on the fact that additional county parks serve the residents of Grayson, the existing level of service for park facilities is considered adequate, and it is recommended that Grayson maintain the existing level of service as its level of service standard – 3.6 acres of municipal parkland per 1,000 residents. It is also recommended that Grayson maintain its current level of service of 1.8 square feet per person of cultural facility space in the future, as the residential population increases. Park and cultural facility needs are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11**  
**Park Land and Cultural Facility Needs, 2013 and 2028**  
**To Maintain Existing Level of Service**  
**City of Grayson**

	<b>Existing, 2008</b>	<b>Year 2013 Requirements</b>	<b>Add by 2013</b>	<b>Year 2028 Requirements</b>	<b>Add 2014- 2028</b>
Municipal Parkland	8 acres	11.6 acres	3 acres	28.3 acres	16.7 acres
Cultural Facilities (senior center and arts and history center)	4,000 sq. ft.	5,783 sq. ft.	1,783 sq. ft.	14,162 sq. ft.	8,379 sq. ft.

With regard to municipal parkland, this Community Agenda contains a generalized greenway master plan which is shown on the Connection Concept Plan in this chapter (note that because greenways serve important transportation functions, that information is presented in the transportation part of this chapter). It is recommended that any future park acquisition by Grayson be targeted in the “green” areas shown on the Connection Concept Plan, and that Grayson’s emphasis from here on park facilities be focused almost entirely on greenway development. This does not necessarily mean Grayson will indefinitely forego any active park facilities, but it is recommended that the big park development responsibilities be left to Gwinnett County and that the passive recreational/transportation needs be pursued via implementation of a greenway system that also connects with county greenway master plans.

With regard to county plans for greenways, Gwinnett County’s adopted Open Space and Greenway Master Plan calls for 16 pedestrian and multi-use path projects which should be completed by 2010 according to the Community Assessment Technical Appendix (p. 7-102). According to a budget document of Gwinnett County (2008 capital improvement plan), Gwinnett County has spent \$8.9 million on greenway acquisition and development and intends to spend another \$12.7 million in 2008 and 2009 for greenway acquisition and improvements. A greenway is planned to the west of the current city limits (see green line on the following map, from Map 3-17, Areas of Special Attention, of the Gwinnett Unified Plan Community Assessment). Grayson’s greenway concept plan, shown on the Connections Concept Plan later in this chapter, would connect to the county greenway and provide an overall open space and alternative transportation network for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the city.



### County Greenway Plan West of Grayson

As is evident in Table 11 above, to maintain its current level of service standard, Grayson will need to more than double the existing space in the senior center and arts and history center by the end of the planning horizon (2028). The current arts and history center may be suitable as it exists and there may not be a need to expand space – the center is located in a historic structure. Similarly, it may or may not be feasible for the city to add onto the existing senior center as demands on that facility increase. Also, it should be noted that the higher percentage of youth population anticipated during the planning horizon might suggest that Grayson provide for youth activities in any additional cultural facility building program. This Community Agenda is not specific in terms of recommending capital improvements in that regard, in order to allow future flexibility as more specific trends develop.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Gwinnett County is in the process of completing a comprehensive transportation plan, coordinated with its comprehensive plan in an overarching effort referred to as the unified plan. As such, the countywide transportation planning effort provides considerably more detail on inventory, assessment, and proposed transportation improvement projects. This Community Agenda is therefore brief with regard to major aspects of the multi-modal transportation system serving Grayson, and the focus here is primarily on local needs and efforts as opposed to regional mobility.

Grayson is almost entirely auto-reliant as of 2008, and its network of public streets is not well connected. While some sidewalks do exist in the city, there is not a very well defined pedestrian network. During the planning process, citizens, stakeholders, and steering committee members expressed concerns about increasing traffic congestion in the city. During the time this Community Agenda was developed, Grayson Highway (SR 20) was in the process of being widened through Grayson.

In response to these existing conditions and concerns, the city's planning consultants developed a "connection concept plan" which is described later in this chapter after a description of the existing road network.

## **EXISTING ROAD NETWORK**

The most important route in Grayson is Grayson Highway/Loganville Highway (State Route 20), which bisects Grayson generally in a north-south direction. This state route extends to the south through Conyers and ultimately to McDonough and beyond. It extends north through Lawrenceville to Buford and ultimately to Cumming and beyond. It is therefore an extremely important regional route and is heavily traveled. At the time this plan was written, SR 20 was being widened throughout Grayson.

Grayson Parkway (State Route 84), connects with Grayson-New Hope Road at SR 20 and carries traffic in a southerly direction from Grayson. Grayson-New Hope Road is an important arterial road that connects to New Hope Road in eastern Gwinnett County. Rosebud Road is another important arterial in the city, beginning at Grayson Highway (SR 20), crossing Grayson Parkway (SR 84), and providing for southbound travel through the city.

Bennett Road is a collector road that connects Webb Gin House Road and Grayson Parkway (SR 84). It primarily serves as a residential collector road but increasingly receives through traffic movements as an alternative to using the intersection of Webb Gin House Road and Grayson Highway (SR 20) for southbound travelers. Cooper Road, not within the Grayson city limits, provides an east-west arterial connection on the south side of the city, linking Rosebud Road and Loganville Highway (SR 20). Moon Road is a collector road that links Loganville Highway (SR 20) to Cooper Road. On the east side of SR 20, Brannon Boulevard is a collector road that provides an alternative route to SR 20, connecting Grayson New Hope Road and Herring Road (a residential collector road).



## **ROAD MAINTENANCE**

A Roadway Resurfacing and Maintenance Agreement was reached between Gwinnett County and the City of Grayson on June 20, 1991. As of 1990-1991, Grayson had 6.58 total miles of streets, of which 5.18 miles were the maintenance responsibility of Grayson and 1.40 miles were the responsibility of Gwinnett County. The short-term work program calls for an engineering study to determine road maintenance and resurfacing needs and prioritize them, so that Grayson can take a systematic approach toward tackling those needs.

## **CONNECTION CONCEPT PLAN**

### **Overview and Purpose**

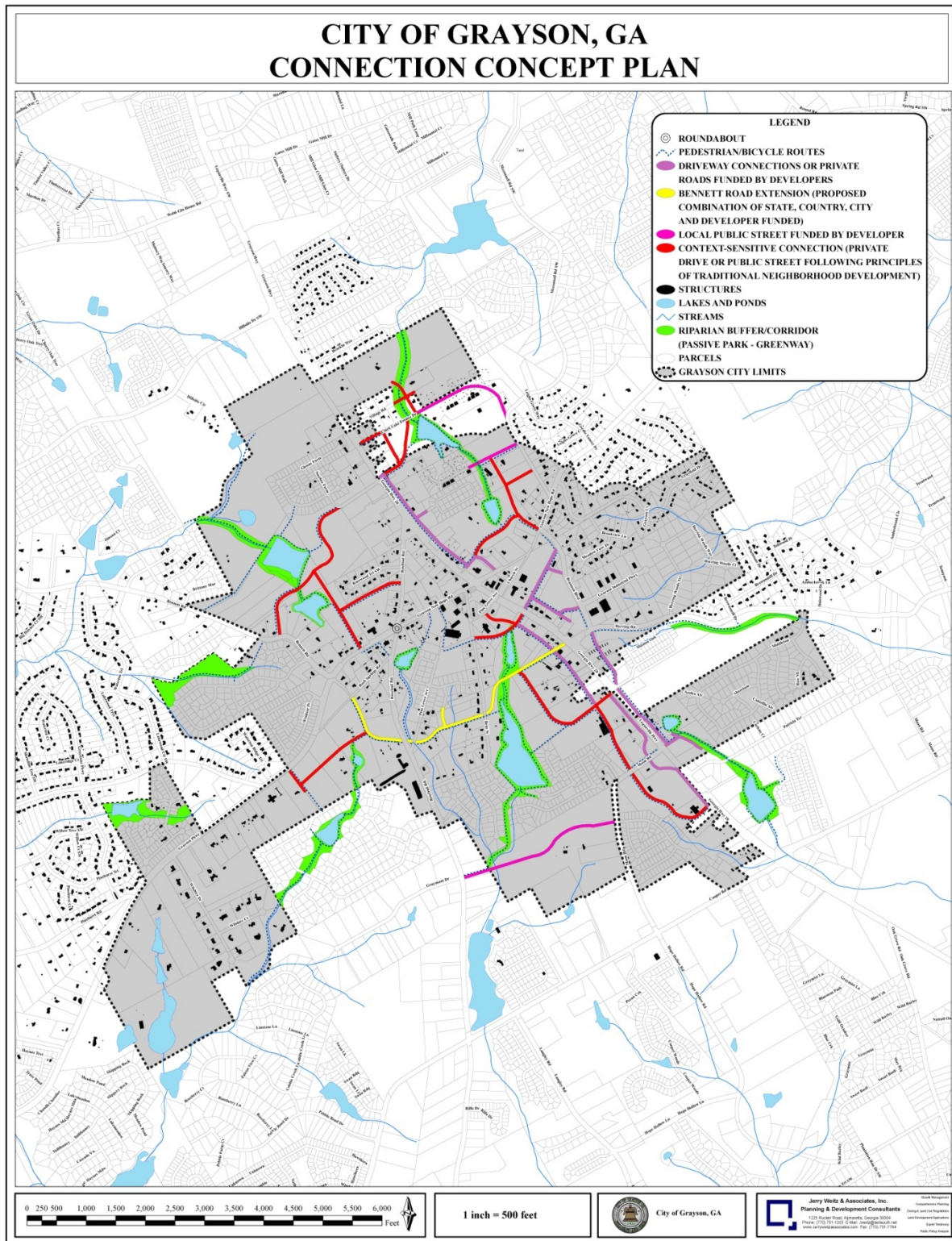
Because residential subdivisions have been platted in a way that does not provide for street connections among them, the result is a disconnected land use pattern that forces traffic onto the major streets in the city, such as SR 20, Grayson Parkway, and Rosebud Road. As Grayson and the surrounding unincorporated area develop further, congestion on these major arterials will worsen.

As a part of the planning process, Grayson has determined there are several opportunities to provide better road and bicycle/pedestrian connections that will ensure mobility as development continues. A map has been prepared, titled “connection concept plan,” and accompanies this document. The map shows two major types of improvements – proposed streets, and pedestrian/bicycle routes. The map also shows the several lakes and ponds in the city and just outside the city limits which might serve as a regional stormwater management system.

### **Why the Connection Concept Plan Was Recommended**

Additional local roads are needed to provide for more connectivity and alternative routes if the city wants to address traffic congestion – it is the best available alternative the consultants could recommend. The connection concept plan is “long term” (20 years) and some projects may never be constructed, depending on developer interest. The plan’s premise is that the bulk of cost will be borne by private developers, at the time of development. It is also acknowledged that, in some cases, structures and land uses will be impacted; the initial design was to take the “path of least resistance.” Improved access can increase property values rather than decrease them.

The city is already requiring commercial driveway connections implied in the connection concept plan (see the zoning ordinance). There is a need to compensate for lack of connections now. A transportation model run by the consulting team shows beneficial impacts of doing these improvements. Having congestion relief options that have been vetted locally gives the city some control over its future transportation improvements, as opposed to have the county, region or state suggest and then implement their own proposed solutions. The connection concept plan is considered feasible in the long-term with developer participation and funding.



The connection concept plan is not a rigid proposal – it is conceptual, and if the concept is fully implemented it will integrate much flexibility. The community asked the consulting team to pose solutions to traffic congestion, and the committee itself identified the need for the Bennett Road extension across Grayson Parkway to SR 20. Finally, the concept plan integrates transportation, land use planning, and urban design – the future development map takes the suggestions for future roads into account.

### **Types of Road Connections Contemplated**

The proposed roadway connections are divided into various types on the connection concept plan. The types are described in further detail below. They differ in terms of whether they are likely to be public or private streets, what their design characteristics are, and how they are likely to be funded.

#### **Bennett Road Extension**

The first road discussed is the Bennett Road Extension, shown in yellow on the connection concept plan. This road connection was suggested by the steering committee and would provide an alternative to use of Grayson Parkway and part of SR 20. This improvement consists of approximately 0.95 mile and would involve approximately 5.7 acres of land acquisition. This road is envisioned to be a public street, with a 50 foot right-of-way. It should meet the city's specifications for a standard residential local street, with curb and gutter and sidewalk. It would begin east of Grayson Parkway at the local public street running behind the new County Library and extend to Rosebud Road, then cross Pine Grove Avenue and Britt Street and connect with SR 20 with an intersection aligned with Herring Road. There is also a road connection to an adjacent local subdivision street east of Pine Grove Avenue. This project alone is anticipated to decrease congestion in Uptown Grayson, or at least prevent future conditions from worsening, specifically at the intersections of SR 20 and Grayson Parkway and Grayson Parkway and Rosebud Road.

The Bennett Road Extension concept has at least three complications implied within it. The first relates to the present “V” intersection of Pine Grove Avenue and Rosebud Road. Since Rosebud Road is a state route, cooperation and assistance from the Georgia Department of Transportation will be required. Implied within the Bennett Road Extension project is a complete reengineering and realignment of Pine Grove Avenue to tie into the Bennett Road Extension rather than connecting to Rosebud Road at a less than 90 degree intersection. The second complication is that the Bennett Road Extension will have to meander between two ponds east of Britt Street – this means crossing low lands which are flood plains and it probably involves construction of a bridge. Third, to connect at SR 20, a new intersection will be needed that was not contemplated in Georgia DOT's road widening plans, and further, such a connection is likely to involve land acquisition and would impact one or more commercial property owners with lands fronting on the west side of SR 20 in order to align with Herring Road. These are not necessarily insurmountable problems, but they require state approval and may be protracted in terms of their implementation time frame, given right-of-way acquisition needs and so forth.

As to the funding of the Bennett Road Extension, it is most likely that a combination of state, county, city, and private funding would be pursued. Because the project would extend to or cross two state routes, intersection improvements would be designed by GDOT engineers and perhaps funded mostly by the state, except for utility relocation and right-of-way acquisition

costs. Right-of-way acquisition costs, at least some of them, would presumably be negated or reduced if the city adopts the Connection Concept Plan as an “official map” and requires that the land be reserved for the improvement, thereby preventing development that might frustrate the proposed alignment. As the city receives development proposals in the area where the Bennett Road extension would be constructed, it may be possible that the city can negotiate the donation of the necessary right-of-way for the project or if not at least reserve the right of way for future acquisition. If a developer’s plans would rely on the new road for access, it is likely that it would be to the developer’s benefit to provide the right-of-way and perhaps even fund the improvement. For this reason, the remaining costs of acquiring right-of-way and constructing improvements outside of GDOT influence could be a combination of private, city, and county funding sources.

Most of the Bennett Road Extension is also proposed to include a pedestrian/bicycle route along the south side of the road. The connection concept plan shows the pedestrian/bicycle route following the south side of the Bennett Road Extension until it crosses Britt Street, where the pedestrian/bicycle route would meander along the lake shoreline, then follow a stream and flood plain until it connected back to the Bennett Road Extension and ultimately connecting to Grayson Highway (SR 20).

### **Local Public Streets Funded by Developers**

The connection concept plan shows a second type of future road connection, one that would link existing subdivisions. There are three different roads of this type shown on the concept plan. The first would start at Rosebud Road, aligned with Graymont Drive, and traverse an undeveloped parcel, ending at Moon Road and aligning with an existing subdivision street entrance. This subdivision through street has not been contemplated by the current property owner/developer, who has proposed a new subdivision that would not provide such a through street connection. However, until and unless Grayson has approved subdivision plans and the construction of a new road as proposed is prevented, this proposed connection remains a possibility (and policy).

Two new local public streets, proposed to be funded by developers at the time of land subdivision, are proposed in the northeast part of the city (east of SR 20 and north of Grayson-New Hope Road, as shown on the connection concept plan in purple. One of these would extend Clark Lake Estates Drive to connect to McConnell Road. Such roads would be built to Grayson’s local public street standards, with curb and gutter and sidewalk. In total, the three roads constitute approximately 1.1 mile in distance.

### **Context-Sensitive Connections**

A third type of road connection concept is shown on the concept plan. These roads are shown in red on the graphic and could be private drives or public streets, depending on individual circumstances. It is envisioned that these roads or private drives would be compatible with the land development alongside it, and built to narrower street standards than required for local public streets. Specifically, some of these are expected to serve new traditional neighborhood developments in Grayson. There are approximately four miles of such context-sensitive street connections shown on the connection concept plan. They are unlikely to be built until or unless they are constructed as a part of individual land development projects, with private funding. As with the Bennett Road Extension project, adoption of the connection concept plan map means that this plan becomes an “official map” and the city can require (perhaps with additional



ordinance amendments) developers to reserve and possibly construct these roads or private driveway connections at the time land development occurs.

### Private Driveway Connections

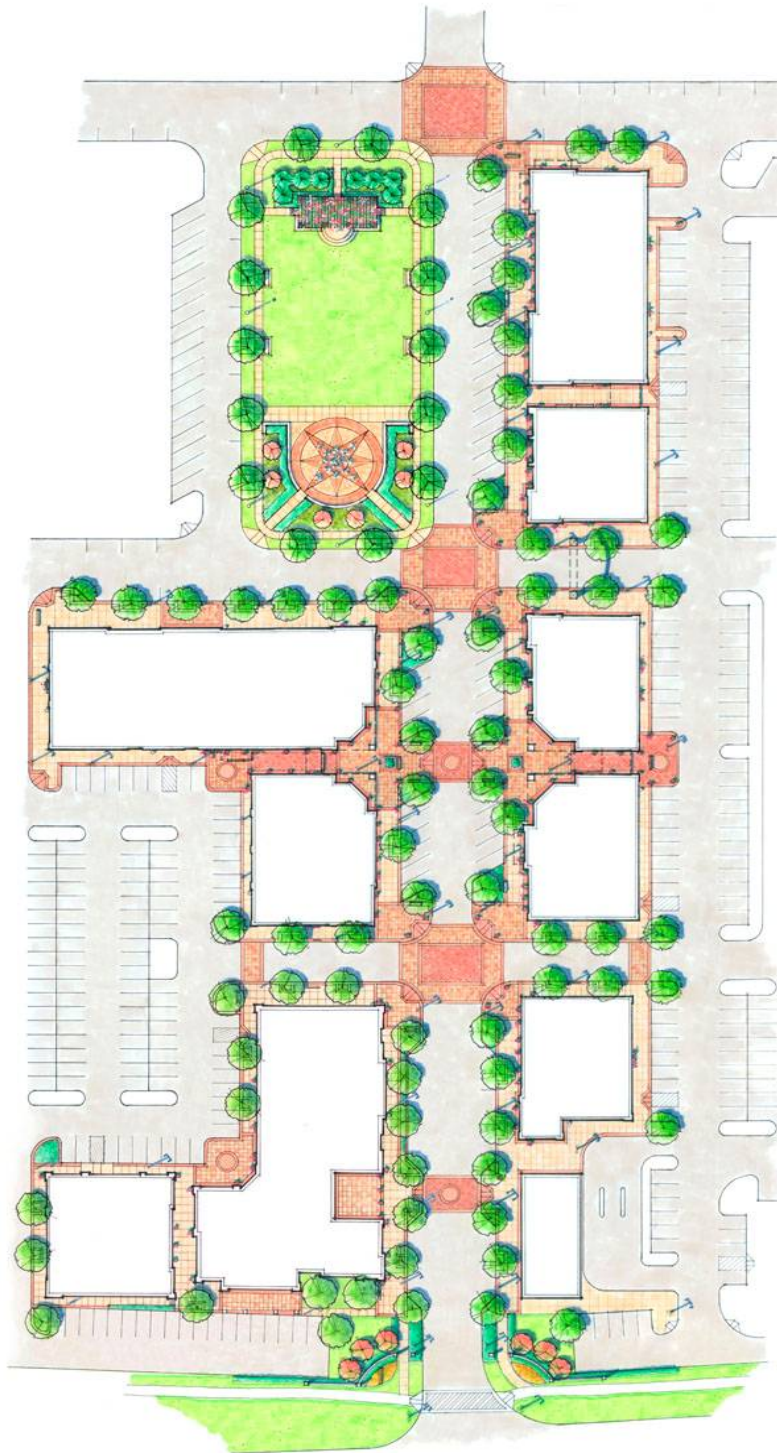
A fourth type of road connection concept is a series of frontage or backage roads paralleling or extending from Grayson Highway (SR 20). These proposed drives are shown in light purple on the plan concept map. The following two images illustrate desirable future conditions with regard to access and connectivity for nonresidential developments in the SR 20 corridor.



**Recommended Design Concept 1  
for the SR 20 Corridor, City of Grayson**

Source: Mahan Rykiel Associates, Inc.



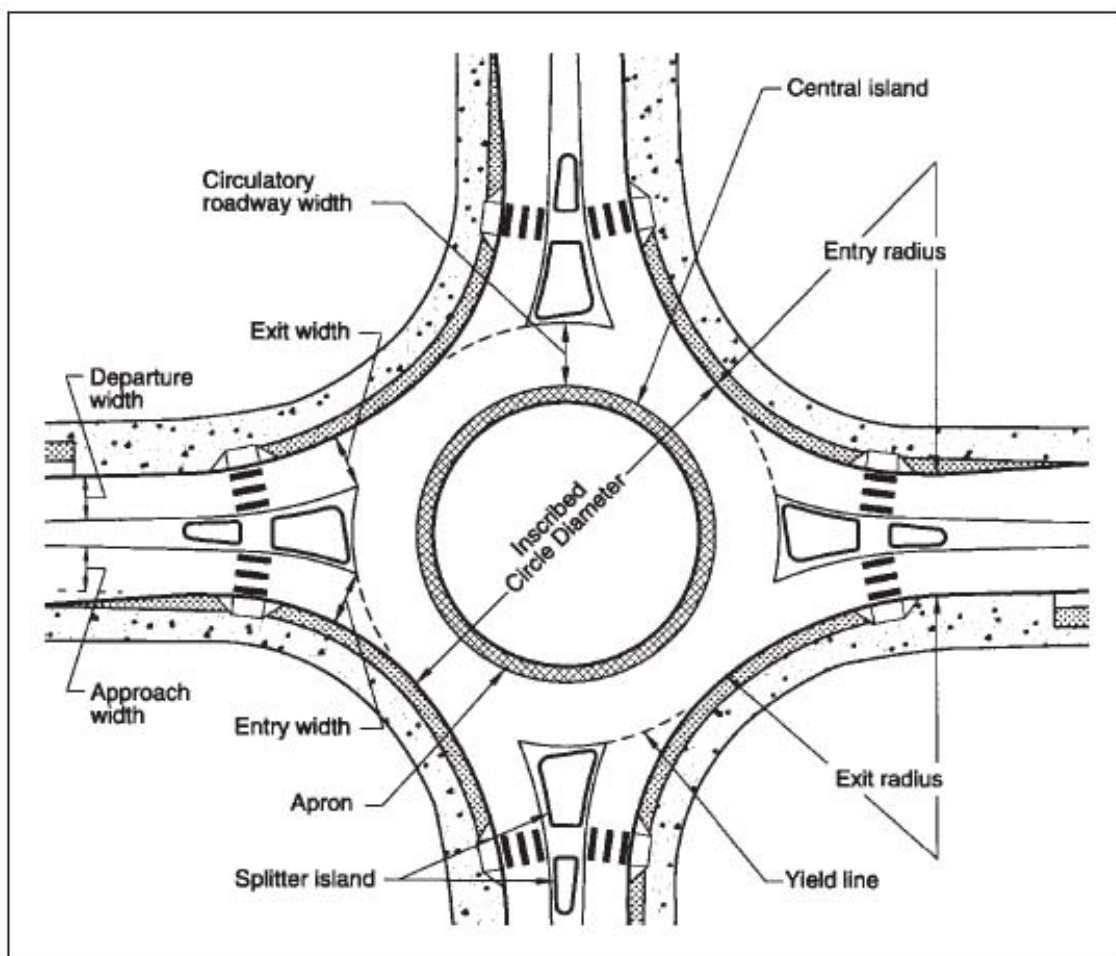


**Recommended Design Concept 2  
for the SR 20 Corridor, City of Grayson**

Source: Mahan Rykiel Associates, Inc.

## The Roundabout Proposal

A roundabout is an alternative transportation design feature to a signalized intersection (see figure below). As a part of the connection concept plan and local transportation planning efforts, the consulting team recommended a roundabout be considered for the intersection of Grayson Parkway and Rosebud Road (see figure). Roundabouts allow for a continuous, though usually slower, flow of traffic through an intersection. Engineering evidence of the operation of roundabouts shows that they can improve traffic flow and decrease the potential for automobile accidents. In addition, the roundabout at the intersection of Grayson Parkway and Rosebud Road was recommended because it can enhance the long-term prospects of creating a “place” atmosphere for the town center in Uptown Grayson.



**Typical Geometrics of a Roundabout**

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation



**Proposed Roundabout, City of Grayson**

Source: Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2008

Parsons Brinckerhoff's traffic engineers completed an empirical analysis of the transportation benefits of the roundabout, in conjunction with the loop road sections shown on the connection concept plan (including the Bennett Road Extension) if constructed. As shown in Table 12 below, building the network of local roads (four of which were modeled) and the roundabout would provide for beneficial improvements in the level of service of major intersections in Grayson in 2030, or in other words, less congested intersections than would be experienced if these improvements are not built.

**Table 12**  
**Traffic Model Results With Roundabout and Local Loop Road System**

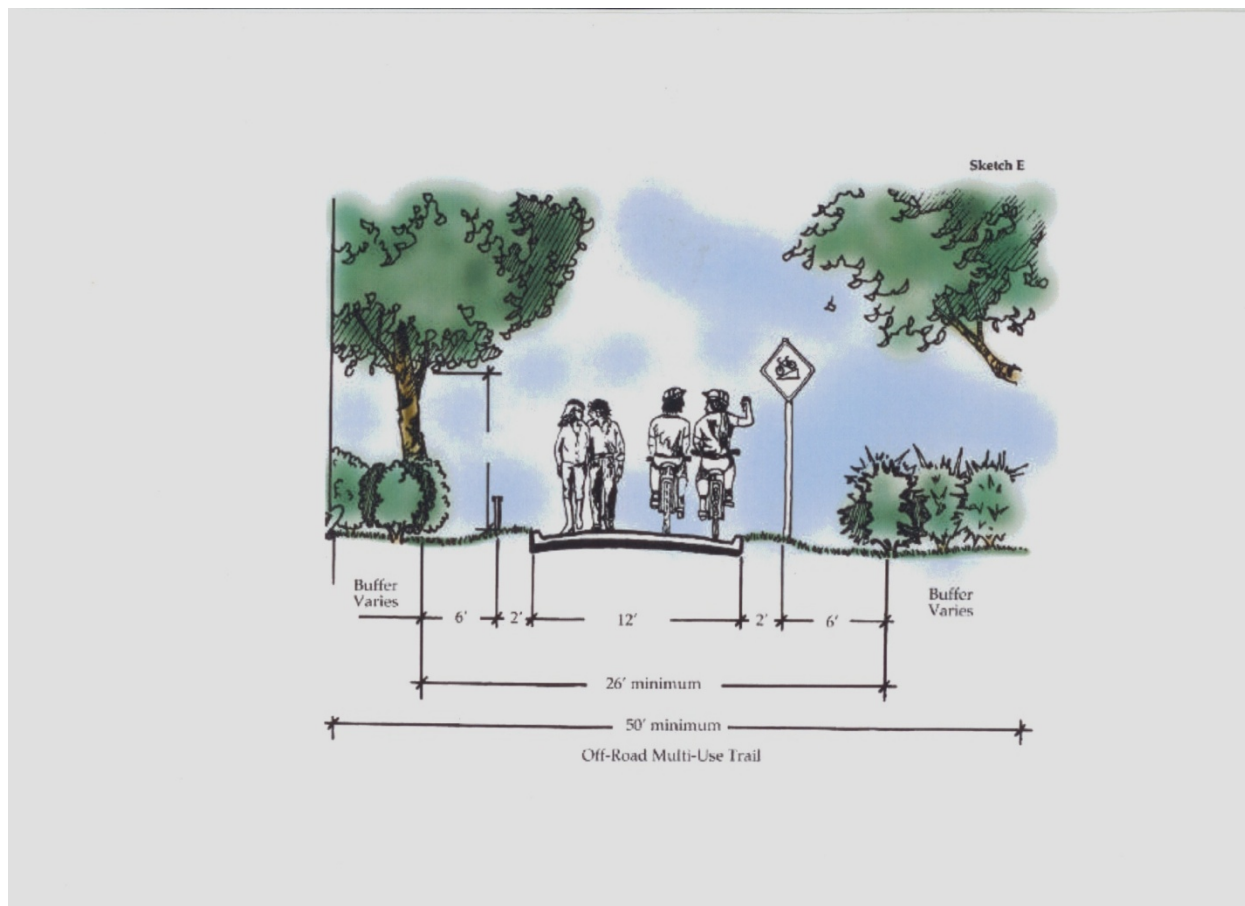
Intersection	2030 P.M. No-Build	2030 P.M. Build
SR 20 and Rosebud Road	LOS "B"	LOS "B"
SR 20 and Grayson Pkwy	LOS "F"	LOS "D"
SR 20 @ South Loop	LOS "E"	LOS "D"
Roundabout @ Rosebud and Grayson Pkwy	LOS "F"	LOS "B"

Source: Computed by Parsons Brinckerhoff and presented to Steering Committee, March 27, 2008.



## Greenway System

The Connection Concept Plan, and the city's vision for conservation areas, reinforce the notion that Grayson's residents should have safe and adequate pedestrian ways (sidewalks and off-street pathways) and bicycle paths to destinations throughout the city. The flood plains along streams and creeks provide the opportunity to create a connected greenway system, within which multi-use pathways can be constructed.



## County Greenway Concept

Source: Gwinnett County Trails Master Plan

## Implementation Challenges

While the connection concept plan sets forth an ambitious long-term proposal for a greenway system in Grayson, one must be realistic regarding the prospects that Grayson can implement such a system on its own initiative and with its own funding. Developing such a system will require extensive willing cooperation of property owners and developers, who must first be convinced such a system will increase their property values and sales in their subdivisions or land developments. They must also be enticed to donate or cooperate with Grayson for it to acquire the lands for public use. Arrangements for cost-sharing between developers,

subdividers, and property owners need to be negotiated, and the proposal will also need active financial participation by Gwinnett County with regard to special local option sales tax and other funding sources. Furthermore, since Grayson generally is not well positioned to maintain such a greenway system upon construction, but Gwinnett County has prepared for such a greenway system now for several years, it is imperative that Grayson develop a cooperative relationship relative to Gwinnett County's park and recreation department and seek co-maintenance arrangements where such potential exists.

Even those measures may not be sufficient to fund the aggressive plan for six miles of greenways in and around Grayson. If developers subdivide land without adhering to the connection concept plan, the prospects for connecting the road network and providing greenways will be lost, probably forever. Grayson formally adopts the connection concept plan as an official map, since its inclusion in the adopted Community Agenda (comprehensive plan) represents Grayson's intent to do so. Nonetheless, some additional code language will need to be developed that ensures subdivision proposals can be deferred to give the city time to consider acquisition of land in the path of particular road connection or greenway.

Also, to realize the vision, Grayson may need to do more to secure funding for the road connections and greenway system rather than hope for the best cooperation of private developers and ample contributions from countywide SPLOST funding measures. It is suggested that the city consider an impact fee for roads and also for greenway trails as a recreation measure. Such an impact fee program would be a combination of transportation and parks and recreation. The capital program provided in this Community Agenda is a significant start toward beginning such an impact fee program, but considerable additional work would be needed to make it a reality.



## CHAPTER 6 POLICIES

The Community Agenda must contain “policies” that will guide future actions of the Grayson City Council. The term “policy” is not specifically defined in the administrative rules of the state Department of Community Affairs for local comprehensive plans, but they are required “to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the community vision or addressing community issues and opportunities.” In addition, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides detailed suggestions for policies in its State Planning Recommendations, which have been considered in articulating the policies herein. Here, “policy” is interpreted as general statements of intent.

On the other hand, there is sometimes a “fine line” between policy statements and implementation measures. The term “policy” is interpreted here to include more specific “objectives” for accomplishing the city’s intended outcomes. In some cases, therefore, the policy statements included here are quite specific, and they read as if they are most appropriate in the “short-term work program.” Where such specific language is used in the following policy statements and an “action” is directly called for or implied in the policy statement, that statement is also reflected in the city’s short-term work program.

Policies in this chapter are organized by functional element or component (natural resources, economic development, land use, etc.)

### NATURAL RESOURCES

1. **Environmental Protection.** The natural environment should be preserved as much as possible.
2. **Environmentally Sensitive Areas.** Prevent development from occurring in, or significantly encroaching upon environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains and wetlands.
3. **Water Quality.** The location and intensity of development should be sited so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality.
4. **Pervious Surfaces.** Encourage use of pervious surfaces whenever possible, to increase groundwater infiltration.
5. **Wetlands.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).
6. **Flood Ways and Flood Plains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains.
7. **Flood Insurance Program.** Continue the City’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
8. **Conservation Subdivisions.** Encourage conservation subdivision development, where opportunities exist.

9. **Street Trees.** Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
10. **Tree Protection and Replacement.** Restrict the cutting of trees, and require the replacement of trees lost to development with trees of like species and value.
11. **Tree Canopy.** Consider and if appropriate implement additional regulations that encourage the maintenance, retention, or expansion of tree canopy cover in the City.
12. **Open Space.** Require a certain percentage of land be set aside for green space in new land developments.
13. **Sustainability and Energy Efficiency.** Promote sustainable and energy-efficient development (2006 Regional Development Plan Policy #10).

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

1. **Quality Community Objective, Historic Preservation.** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
2. **Protect Historic Resources.** Provide strategies to preserve and enhance historic resources (2006 Regional Development Plan Policy #13).
3. **National Register Listings.** Add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

## HOUSING

1. **Accessible Senior Housing.** Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways.
2. **Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.
3. **Single-Family Residential Character.** Maintain the low-density character of Grayson's single-family residential neighborhoods.
4. **Incompatibilities.** Protect existing residential development from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
5. **Compatible Infill Development.** The development of vacant or underutilized land in single-family residential zoning districts must be compatible in terms of existing densities, housing types, and general character.

6. **Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Provide opportunities for traditional neighborhood development in locations between Uptown Grayson and established, low density, detached, single-family neighborhoods.
7. **Quality Architecture.** Residential zoning districts that allow more density will be required to have higher levels of architectural standards than those residential districts that allow less density.
8. **Location of Attached Housing.** Limit attached housing to the Uptown Grayson area, preferably as a part of a mixed use building.
9. **Apartments.** Freestanding apartments are discouraged in Grayson.
10. **Mixed-Income Housing.** The city does not, at this time, embrace the concept of “mixed income” housing.
11. **Substandard Housing Units.** Encourage the rehabilitation and upgrade of substandard housing units, or encourage their redevelopment where it is not economical or appropriate to renovate such housing units.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business.** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in the community should be suitable in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the community or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
2. **Quality Community Objective, Employment Options.** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
3. **Quality Community Objective, Educational Opportunities.** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in the City – to permit City residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.
4. **Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the City.
5. **Partnering.** Partner with private industry and/or other agencies to promote economic development opportunities that will benefit the city, county, region, and state.
6. **Redevelopment along SR 20.** Encourage the redevelopment of single-family dwellings and older, less viable commercial buildings along SR 20, into compatible non-residential and/or mixed-use developments that are consistent with the vision for the City.
7. **Downtown Development Authority.** Operate a Downtown Development Authority to guide redevelopment and development efforts in Uptown Grayson (established in September 2008)..

8. **Home Occupations.** Home occupations, when compatible with the neighborhood, are recognized as part of the overall City economic development strategy and are encouraged, subject to compliance with applicable zoning laws.

## LAND USE

1. **Land Use Guidance.** Use the Future Development Map (Character Areas) and Future Land Use Plan Map as guides to decision-making.
2. **Incompatibilities.** Protect the city's established residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
3. **Uptown Grayson.** Development in Uptown Grayson should include mixed uses developed at a pedestrian scale.
4. **Commercial and Offices.** Encourage commercial and office development where appropriate in the City.
5. **SR 20.** The conversion of existing single-family residences fronting on SR 20 to office or light commercial land uses within the existing residential structure is considered acceptable, although redevelopment of such properties is preferable.
6. **Transitional Uses.** Development occurring between the SR 20 corridor and single-family residential subdivisions should be "transitional" in nature (i.e., office or low-impact neighborhood commercial uses within buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet per establishment), or in other words, developed to a scale and intensity that is compatible with the adjacent residential development.
7. **Light Industry.** Discourage light industrial development outside of Grayson Industrial Park.
8. **Churches and Large Institutions.** Restrict the location of new churches or substantial expansion of existing churches, and other large institutional land uses, in residential zoning districts.
9. **Innovative Techniques.** Encourage innovative land use planning techniques to be used in protecting the environment and meeting other stated policies of this Community Agenda.
10. **Code Enforcement.** Maintain a local code enforcement board.

## URBAN DESIGN

1. **Image and Character.** Enhance the City of Grayson's image as a unique community and retain that image in attractive and orderly development that preserves existing character.
2. **Architectural Theme.** Maintain the look and feel of a turn-of-the-century (1880-1930) Georgia village through architectural styles, massing, themes, and details.

3. **Quality Development Standards.** Require adherence to standards for site design, building design, landscaping, tree preservation, lighting, signage, and buffer requirements in all new land developments, to enhance the aesthetics of the community.
4. **Streetscapes and Aesthetic Enhancements.** Improve the visual quality of local streets and state routes through streetscape improvements (e.g., sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, etc.). Focus community improvement initiatives in the uptown Grayson area as well as along and within the State Route 20 corridor. This includes landscaping the median of SR 20 when complete.
5. **Streetscape Standards.** Pedestrian lighting and street furniture should be consistent throughout the City, unless varied to be consistent with character. Street furnishings and landscape elements should possess long-lasting quality and be well-maintained.
6. **Gateways.** Create gateways to the City that produce a sense of arrival. These entryways may incorporate streetscape elements, signage, and landscaping that enhance the image and function of the City.
7. **Compatible Character.** Ensure that new developments respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences, to maintain small town character.
8. **Design Guidance and Control.** Continue to implement some means of design control or guidance in new non-residential development through requirements in the zoning ordinance and other appropriate means, but balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of non-residential development with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.
9. **Lighting.** Develop lighting requirements or guidelines that promote energy efficiency and safety and reduce light pollution or "sky-glow," light trespass on adjacent properties, and glare.
10. **Beautification.** Support community-based partnerships for streetscape beautification.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. **Relationship to Development.** Limit development to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure, and ensure that new development does not cause a decline in locally desired level of service standards.
2. **Parks and Recreation.** Plan, construct and maintain municipal park and recreation facilities and open spaces in the city, to supplement countywide park and recreation facilities.
3. **History and Cultural Resources.** Continue to support historic preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the City of Grayson, by employing a city historian and continuing to provide a history center.



4. **Civic Space/City Hall.** Consider in advance the long term needs for administrative space for city government functions, and plan in advance for appropriate building additions or expansions, or a new city hall, as may be appropriate in the long term.
5. **Investment Location.** The City should confine its investment in civic buildings to Uptown Grayson, in order to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in that area.
6. **Public-Private Partnerships.** Identify, and capitalize on, opportunities for innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various city facilities and services.
7. **Stormwater Management.** Consider and if appropriate implement a regional stormwater management system, using the several lakes and ponds in the city as regional (multiple parcel) detention facilities.
8. **Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management.** Participate in preparation of disaster preparedness and emergency management plans in conjunction with Gwinnett County.
9. **Public Safety.** Monitor the effectiveness of continuing to rely on Gwinnett County for public safety and law enforcement services.
10. **Technology and E-Governance.** Make the best possible use of technology and embrace the concept of “e-governance.”
11. **Capital Improvement Program.** Prepare, adopt, and implement a capital improvement program for facilities and services provided by the City.
12. **Water Conservation.** Promote the conservation of water by residents and businesses to meet regional and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.
13. **Sewerage.** Coordinate with Gwinnett County to expand sewerage services, promoting increased opportunities for desired types of development.
14. **Solid Waste Management.** Implement the City’s comprehensive solid waste management plan. Pursue waste diversion, composting, and recycling strategies.

## TRANSPORTATION

1. **Cooperative Planning.** Maintain active involvement in transportation planning activities by Gwinnett County, the Atlanta Regional Commission, and the Georgia Department of Transportation.
2. **Parking.** Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities in Uptown Grayson, including public parking. On-street parking opportunities and shared parking opportunities should be explored and provided where appropriate.

3. **Sidewalk Improvements.** Improve the network of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks) in the city. Create a safe and accessible pedestrian network throughout the City.
4. **Multi-use Trails.** Pursue opportunities to construct multi-use trails within designated greenways in the city.
5. **Access Management.** Apply state and local standards for access management along arterial and collector streets, including but not limited to specifications for curb cut location and separation, and the installation of deceleration lanes where warranted.
6. **Connectivity and Inter-parcel Access.** During site plan and development permit review, measures should be made to connect compatible land developments with regard to pedestrian and vehicular access; this includes requirements to provide inter-parcel vehicle access points to all compatible, contiguous parcels, where possible.
7. **Context-Sensitive Design.** Provide for street designs that pay appropriate attention to concepts of compatibility, livability, sense of place, and urban design, in addition to conventional traffic engineering considerations. Utilize context-sensitive roadway design to promote streets that are built appropriately to fit the land uses surrounding them. For example, a downtown main street should be built with narrower lanes, wider sidewalks, and streetscape elements in its design, in order to encourage lower speeds and accommodate pedestrians.
8. **Roundabout.** Consider the appropriateness of redesigning the intersection of Rosebud Road and Grayson Highway with a “roundabout,” assuming the proposed local street network recommended in the Connection Concept Plan is reasonably assured.
9. **Connection Concept Plan.** Implement the recommendations of the “connection concept” (local street network) plan, which provides suggestions for new roads and private driveway connections to ensure citywide connectivity and accessibility.
10. **Retrofit for Pedestrian Access.** Strive to connect existing subdivisions with the pedestrian network which is planned to serve the city, where opportunities exist.
11. **Traffic Impact Study.** When a development proposal would be expected to generate 1,000 vehicle trips or more, or 100 or more vehicle trips during any a.m. or p.m. peak hour, a traffic study should be required and the results of that study should be mitigated by the land developer.
12. **Mast Arms for Traffic Signals.** When new traffic signals are installed, require that mast arms be used rather than cables to support the traffic signal.
13. **Bike Paths and Bikeways.** Provide bike paths and bikeways in appropriate locations in the city. Direct bicycle path and bikeway investments toward those corridors and areas best suited for foot and bicycle traffic and which have the greatest potential to provide convenient and safe mobility alternatives (see Connection Concept Plan).
14. **Public Transportation.** Consider, over the long term, the need for and provision of public transportation from Grayson to other destinations in the region. Efforts should be

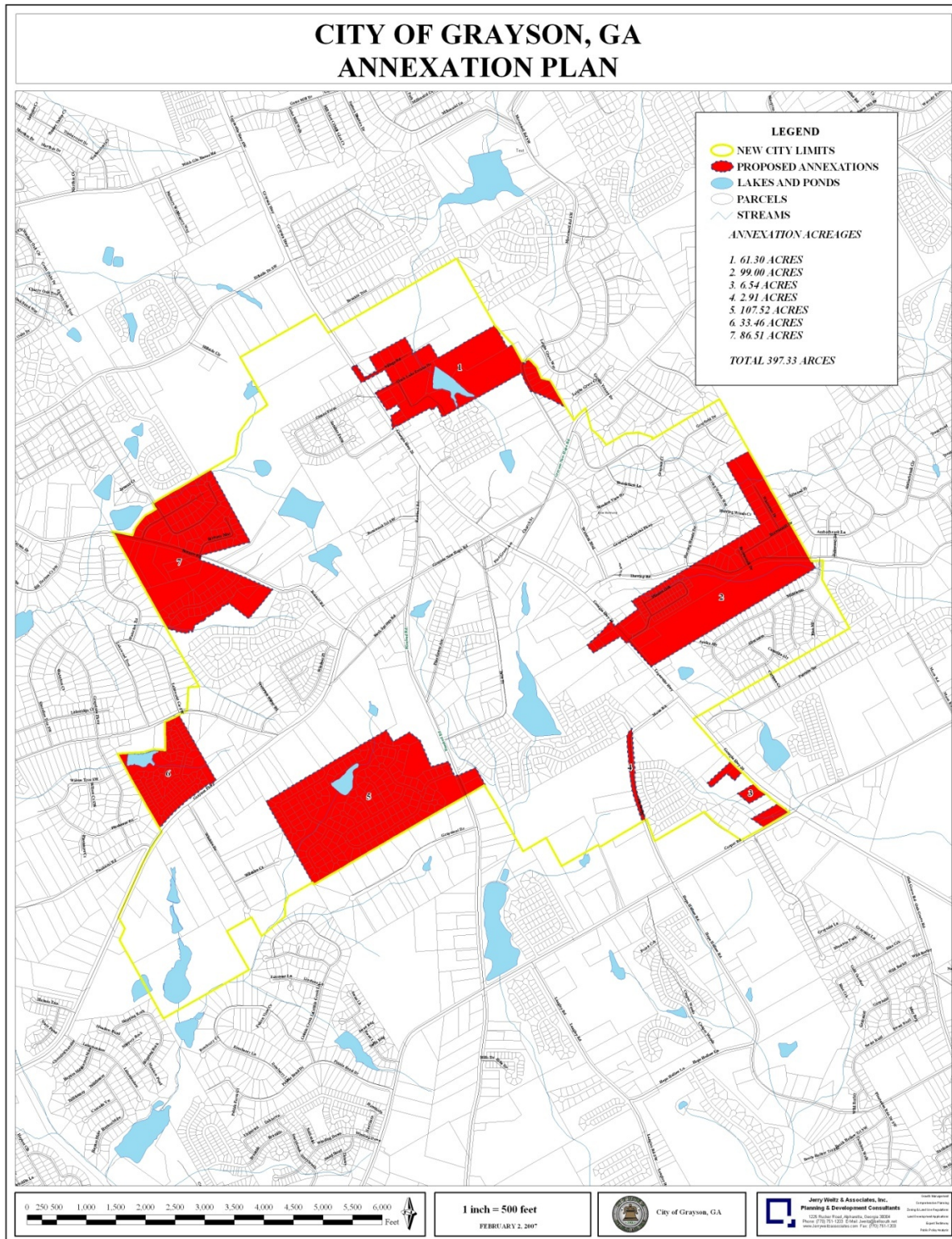
made to tie into county and regional public transportation programs, where and when they are available.

## ANNEXATION

1. **Opportunities.** Consider municipal boundary expansion opportunities as appropriate, including properties identified as potential annexation areas (see map) and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation.
2. **Relation to Small Town Character.** Annexation should not take place if it would substantially transform or threaten to overwhelm the small town character of the City.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

1. **Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation.** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.
2. **Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions.** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.
3. **Information.** Share information and resources with county government boards, agencies, departments, and authorities, as well as other local, regional, and state government agencies.
4. **Intergovernmental Agreements.** Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate, such as participating in a stormwater utility program.
5. **Board of Education.** Develop a cooperative relationship with the Gwinnett County Board of Education with regard to the development and use or reuse of properties in the City of Grayson for schools and school bus parking facilities, to ensure that mutual objectives of access, connectivity, and pedestrian safety are achieved.
6. **Reuse of School.** Work with the Gwinnett County Board of Education to consider the redevelopment or reuse of the public school in the central core of the city in a manner consistent with the city's plans for Uptown Grayson.
7. **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.
8. **Resolution of Land Use Conflicts.** Work closely with the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Department to avoid potential land use conflicts and service delivery issues in the areas surrounding the city limits.



## **CHAPTER 7 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

This chapter sets forth a summary list of “issues and opportunities” which are required to be stated and then addressed in the implementation component of the city’s comprehensive plan. The determination of what issues and opportunities were important followed an iterative process. First, preliminary issues and opportunities were identified in the Community Assessment, which was prepared in 2007 by Parsons Brinckerhoff as a part of the countywide process (with certain cities participating). The list was expanded by the city’s planning consultants and then vetted with the steering committee and stakeholders. The list of issues in this chapter represents the final, agreed upon issues and opportunities that are the primary emphases in terms of future planning. The issues and opportunities are divided into substantive areas. After each one, a statement regarding how the issue or opportunity is proposed to be implemented is provided.

#### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

##### **1. Maintaining and Enhancing Tree Canopy**

The issue of protecting and promoting tree canopy is being investigated in Gwinnett County. At issue is whether Grayson should adopt county regulations for tree canopy, or similar ones.

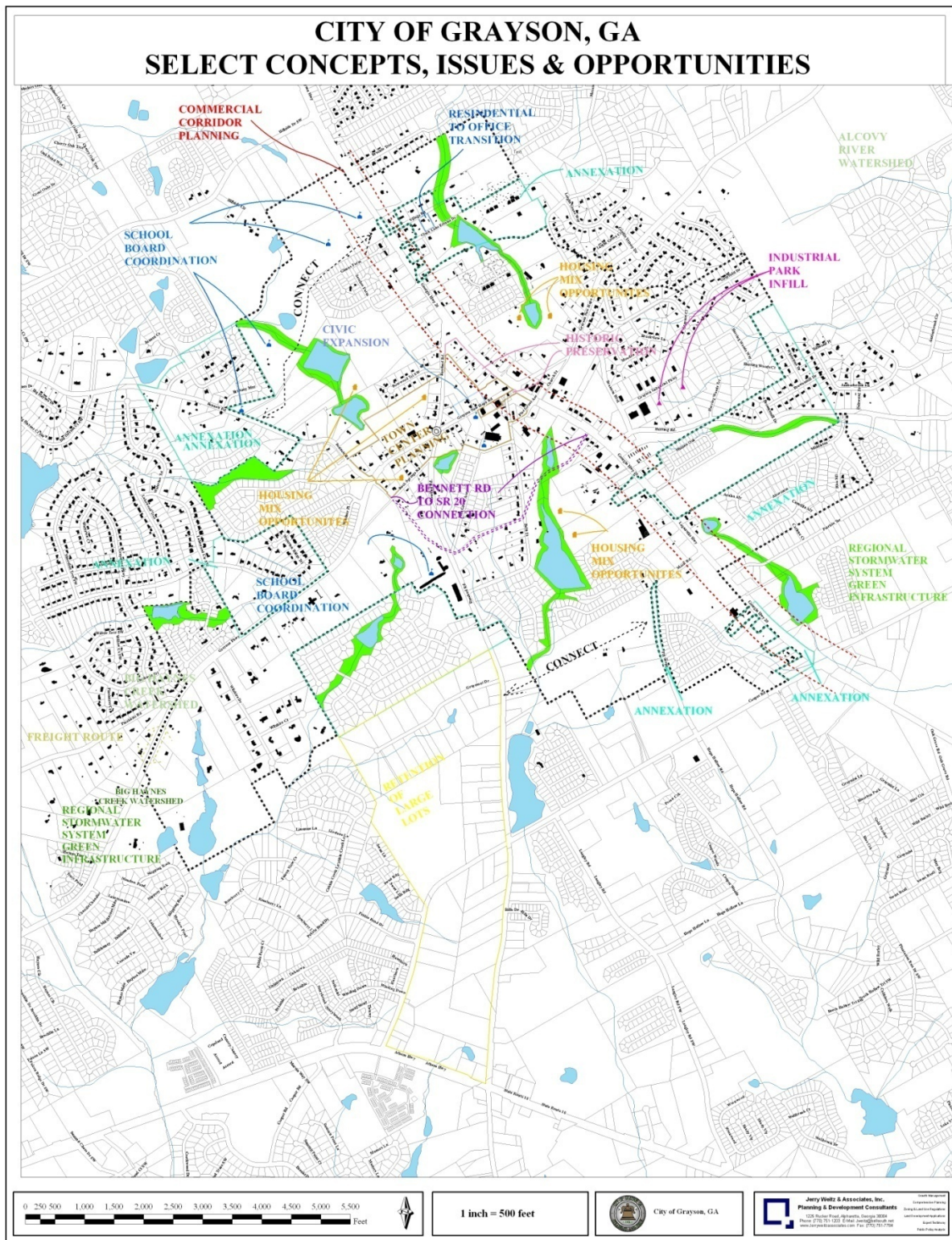
**Implementation:** Review of the city’s landscape ordinance is included in the city’s short-term work program. A policy is included that supports implementation.

##### **2. Cultural/Historic Resource Protection**

The city has an official Historian and maintains a history center on Rosebud Road. The city has a number of historic resources. In particular, the historic homes that have been converted to nonresidential uses, on the west side of SR 20 between Rosebud Road and Grayson Highway (SR 84) are particularly valued to the community, as it “shows you are in Grayson.” However, currently there are no formal regulations designed to protect historic resources from demolition. At issue is the extent to which Grayson will pursue formal efforts to preserve historic and cultural resources, beyond the current efforts of providing a history center and designating a city historian. In addition to numerous historic resources which have been inventoried, the possible preservation of the Brownlee farmland tract has been mentioned as an opportunity.

**Implementation:** Establishment of a local ordinance designating historic properties is included in the short-term work program, and the work program calls for actions to list eligible properties on the National Register of Historic Places.





## Community Facilities and Services

### 3. Expansion of Current City Staff

Current City staff is limited mostly to city management and code enforcement officer. This limits significantly what Grayson can and is likely to accomplish as a municipal government. Some facilities and services such as garbage collection and development plan review are provided via the private sector. At issue is whether the city will continue to rely on the private sector for certain facilities and services, whether it will continue to rely on other service providers like Gwinnett County for law enforcement, or whether it will need to hire its own personnel (see also police force and code enforcement below).

**Implementation:** In the short term, the Mayor and City Council will monitor facility and service needs in relation to existing personnel and intergovernmental or private service arrangements. In the meantime, existing arrangements for service delivery will be continued. Over the long term, prior to implementation, Grayson may benefit from a staffing analysis/plan along with personnel classification system, prior to adding additional staff/personnel.

### 4. Establishment of a Police Force

Gwinnett County provides law enforcement services in Grayson, and the city does not have its own police force. Crime is considered low if not non-existent altogether, but should Grayson consider establishing its own police force during the short term or 20-year planning horizon?

**Implementation:** Since there is no evidence that there is a compelling need for a municipal police force, or that Gwinnett County is unable to handle current law enforcement needs, no short-term implementation measures are called for in the plan. Gwinnett County is also planning to provide a new police precinct in the Grayson area in 2009.

### 5. Expansion of City Hall

The plan addresses whether Grayson will need to expand its City Hall or build a new city hall building. Grayson owns an undeveloped parcel adjacent to the current city hall, which might be used for expansion.

**Implementation:** Needs for municipal office space depend on future personnel decisions. Since during the short term no new personnel are specifically called for, there may not be a need to plan immediately for a city hall expansion or a new city hall. Nonetheless, this Community Agenda in Chapter 5 identifies future needs at recommended level of service standards, and the short-term work program calls for the city to begin designing for improvements during the next five years. The nature of the municipal building should be carefully considered in the context of a more detailed redevelopment plan for Uptown Grayson, so that Grayson's civic buildings will maintain prominence.

### 6. Code Enforcement

The public participation process revealed the need for additional code enforcement. The city has established its own Code Enforcement Board pursuant to O.C.G.A. 36-74.

**Implementation:** The short-term work program calls for continuation of the code enforcement board, the monitoring of code enforcement activities, and the establishment of benchmarks for performance, then if needed, the hiring of additional personnel.

## **7. Expansion of City Park**

The city has received a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant for park improvements at City Park (including expanded area). This is an opportunity to expand amenities in Uptown Grayson.

**Implementation:** This item is included in the short-term work program, to complete park improvements at City Park using the LWCF grant.

## **8. Regional Stormwater Detention with Lakes and Ponds**

Grayson has a number of lakes and ponds that collectively could form a “regional” stormwater management system. This is an opportunity that intersects with the issue described below regarding establishment of a stormwater utility in conjunction with Gwinnett County.

**Implementation:** More information is needed regarding the engineering feasibility of this opportunity. The short-term work program calls for an engineering study with participation by Gwinnett County.

## **Urban Design and Character**

### **9. Urban Design and Aesthetic Improvement**

Grayson desires to maintain and promote its image as an attractive and livable traditional Georgia “small town.” The city is currently working on implementation of a plan that will establish a small monument park at State Route 20 and its intersection with Rosebud Road. Grayson secured a TEA grant for the monument park, and Georgia Department of Transportation has agreed to lease property at the intersection for the monument park and gateway feature. This effort is an opportunity to establish a good example of what Grayson wants in the form of other “gateways” to the city. It has also been suggested that the median of SR 20 (installed as part of the road’s widening) be landscaped.

The city has also put into place a number of design-related regulations, including administrative design review of new commercial developments. As a part of the zoning ordinance, Grayson has adopted a general theme that it prefers architectural styles prominent in the 1880s to 1930s.

Yet another opportunity is the improvement of the look of signalized street intersections by installing “mast arm” traffic signals. Presently, mast arms for traffic signals have been installed at the intersection of Bennett Road and Grayson Highway (SR 84), are in process at Rosebud Road and SR 20, and are proposed at Rosebud Road and Grayson Highway (SR 84). Also at issue is what additional measures Grayson will need to undertake to ensure its character matches its vision for the future.

**Implementation:** Completion of the monument park and gateway is in the short-term work program, as the city is planning for installation of additional gateway features and landscaping of the median of SR 20.

## 10. Uptown Grayson Planning and Vision

The city desires a distinguished look, different from the rest of Gwinnett County. There is not yet a critical mass to downtown (Uptown Grayson), but the city wants to achieve a more viable downtown and promote it as a destination. In particular, the city would like to attract bigger and big name restaurants. At issue is the extent to which the city government will guide the vision and development/redevelopment of Uptown Grayson. Redevelopment prospects that have been identified include three duplexes on Rosebud Road and reuse or redevelopment of the school (Grayson Elementary) in Uptown Grayson.

**Implementation:** Grayson formally established a Downtown Development Authority in September 2008. Concepts for redeveloping and enhancing Uptown Grayson are included in this comprehensive plan (see Chapter 4). More refinement of the plan may take place through an LCI study or redevelopment plan (called for in short-term work program), or future efforts of the Downtown Development Authority. Note: this relates closely to land use, economic development and redevelopment objectives.

## Economic Development and Redevelopment

### 11. Economic Development

At issue is whether Grayson can continue to provide the services it needs while remaining primarily a residential community. As a part of the planning process, Grayson wanted to know what types of future nonresidential development it could and should target in the future. For instance, it was suggested during the public participation process that office development and unique commercial center development such as “The Avenues” would be desirable. A goal of the comprehensive plan is to attract professional office uses to the city. The city also has very limited industrial development – one industrial park which is two-thirds built out and served only by septic tank.

**Implementation:** As a part of this plan, a preliminary market analysis was conducted which determined the approximate “capture” potential of Grayson with regard to office, retail, and traditional neighborhood development. No additional measures are called for in the short-term work program, but the future land use plan has been more or less “right sized” given this market information.

### 12. Downtown Development Authority

There have been discussions about Grayson establishing a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). A map has been drafted of a possible district. At issue is whether the city will pursue the establishment of a DDA. An immediate task of a DDA might be to secure ample off-street parking facilities for the downtown (Uptown Grayson).

**Implementation:** A DDA has now been established in Grayson, as of September 2008.

### **13. Formal Program Initiatives**

At issue is whether Grayson should proceed with one or more of the various programs designed to improve the character and function of the city, including its downtown. Options include the Better Hometown Program, Main Street Program, and Signature Communities, among others.

**Implementation:** Evaluation of these programs is called for in the short-term work program.

## **Housing and Land Use**

### **14. Housing Mix and Policy**

Grayson values its current position as a desirable, low-density suburb. It only has one apartment complex (8 units), and it is seeking primarily upscale homes. Public discussion about future housing has revealed the city residents are receptive to some higher-end townhouses built in Uptown Grayson and possibly as part of new traditional neighborhoods. There is also some receptivity to senior and assisted living facilities. The residents are not receptive to freestanding apartments or mixed-income communities. The comprehensive plan is the opportunity for the city to articulate future housing policies. A preliminary market analysis, prepared as part of the comprehensive planning process, identified the opportunity for Grayson to absorb or capture a significant share of the market for traditional neighborhoods in Gwinnett County.

**Implementation:** Policies relative to desired housing types are provided in this comprehensive plan.

### **15. Land Use Trends**

The widening of SR 20 means that houses have been torn down and others are likely to transition to nonresidential uses or be redeveloped. This is perhaps the most significant land use issue Grayson faces in the short-term. A desired land use trend is the conversion of homes along Grayson Parkway, within Uptown Grayson, for offices, commercial shops, and mixed uses in accordance with the vision for Uptown Grayson.

**Implementation:** Policies relative to these land use issues are provided in this Community Agenda (see Chapter 6).

### **16. Land Use Regulatory Initiatives and Reforms**

The Grayson Zoning Ordinance was rewritten recently and continues to be revised (for instance, most recently to include a planned unit development ordinance). The city also considered a new overlay district for the Britt Street area, to encourage traditional neighborhood development. There is a need to keep the city's zoning ordinance current, and to continue to amend the zoning ordinance to meet land use objectives. The city's landscaping ordinance has also been identified as in need of review and revision. The city's sign ordinance has also been identified as needing improvement.



**Implementation:** Amendments to the zoning ordinance and landscape ordinance are called for in the short-term work program, as appropriate, pending further (continuous) study.

## **Transportation**

### **17. Disconnected Road Pattern**

Existing subdivisions that have been constructed have not provided through-street connections. A trend of cul-de-sacs in new residential subdivisions is continuing. This is an issue because, on the one hand, cul-de-sacs eliminate cut-through traffic, but on the other, significantly inhibit citywide mobility. At issue is what Grayson can and should do about its evolving disconnected pattern of streets.

**Implementation:** In response to this issue, a connection concept plan was prepared and is included as a part of this comprehensive plan.

### **18. Frontage or Backage Roads Along SR 20**

The city's regulations promote or require inter-parcel connections among compatible developments. There is an opportunity, through new development and redevelopment along the newly widened SR 20 to achieve a system of local (or private) road connections serving development along SR 20.

**Implementation:** A connection concept plan, prepared and included as a part of this comprehensive plan, illustrates desired frontage and backage roads along SR 20.

### **19. Sidewalk Improvements**

Grayson's residents desire a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly city. At issue is the ability of the city to provide for additional sidewalks given limited funds available for capital improvements. It is also desirable to have street lights and street trees at the edge of sidewalks.

**Implementation:** Included in the short-term work program are line items to prioritize sidewalk needs and to prepare and adopt a capital plan for the installation of sidewalks based on those priorities.

### **20. Off-street Trail and Greenway System**

Grayson does not yet have any sort of off-street trail or greenway system. However, residents are very supportive of developing such as system.

**Implementation:** A system of greenways is conceptually shown on the map titled "connection concept plan," which has been prepared and is included as a part of this comprehensive plan. Acquisition of land for the greenway program is called for in the plan. Also, the short-term work program calls for a "reserved corridor" ordinance that will prevent building or subdivision of land within designated greenways.

## **21. Road Ownership and Road Resurfacing**

At issue are the many city and county roads in the city of Grayson and a critical mass of roads that will soon need to be repaved. Most of the roads owned by the city now are within residential subdivisions. Road work on city streets is contracted out at this time. Gwinnett County would like to see Grayson take over ownership of some of the roads in the city now owned and maintained by the county. Like most local governments, there is not sufficient funding to meet the critical mass of road paving needs.

**Implementation:** Grayson needs to determine the extent of its road surfacing needs and place priorities on them given limited funding. This is called for in the short-term work program.

## **Intergovernmental Coordination**

### **22. Annexation Policy**

The comprehensive plan is an opportunity for the city to articulate an annexation policy and negotiate acceptance of such a plan with Gwinnett County. Through the public participation process, it was determined that Grayson should pursue a strategy of “filling in any gaps” but not to undertake an aggressive annexation policy that would begin to undermine the small town character.

**Implementation:** Future annexation areas have been identified and mapped in this comprehensive plan. Policies for annexation are also included.

### **23. School Board – City Cooperation**

Throughout the planning process, discussion circulated back to issues and opportunities for coordination between the Gwinnett County Board of Education and the city. One such issue is the reuse or redevelopment of the older, existing school in Uptown Grayson (on the south side of Grayson Highway/SR 84). That school property is considered one of the largest and best opportunities for Uptown Grayson to redevelop in a way consistent with the city’s desired vision.

**Implementation:** Appropriate policies and work program items are included.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Implementation Responsibilities**

The City of Grayson’s consulting city planner is the primary administrative agent responsible for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda. The City Council must approve funding at levels appropriate to carry out the programs called for in the short-term work program.

The Grayson Planning and Zoning Commission provides overall support for plan implementation and should periodically investigate the progress of plan implementation. Ad-hoc committees can be formed, such as the one created for preparing the comprehensive plan, as needed to help guide the process of implementation. At any time, a particular program may rise

in level of importance such that the Grayson Mayor and City Council address program particulars directly, or through committees.

**Short-term Work Program**

Table 13 provides the specific actions needed to implement Grayson's Comprehensive Plan.

**Table 13**  
**Short-Term Work Program**  
**City of Grayson, 2009-2013**

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>				
Consider and if appropriate implement additional regulations that encourage the maintenance, retention, or expansion of tree canopy cover in the City	2009-2010	\$5,000	Consulting City Planner (contract)	Operating Budget
<b>HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>				
Prepare and adopt an ordinance that protects landmarks and the most worthy historic properties from demolition	2009	\$20,000	City historian; consultant	Technical Assistance by ARC
Add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places	2009-2013	\$2,500 per nomination	City historian; consultant	Operating Budget
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>				
Prepare design(s) for expansion of City Hall	2009-2011	\$50,000	City Administrator	Operating Budget
Code Enforcement: Continue the code enforcement board, monitor code enforcement activities, and establish benchmarks for performance, then if needed, hire an additional code enforcement officer	2009-2010	Staff function; cost for additional position	Code enforcement officer and board; Mayor and City Council	Operating Budget
Parks and Recreation: Complete park improvements at City Park	2009	Per Grant	City Administrator	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
Regional Stormwater Detention: Conduct an engineering feasibility study of using various lakes and ponds in the city for regional (multi-site) detention facilities; consider participating in countywide stormwater utility	2009-2010	\$50,000	Engineering consultant	Gwinnett County; Grayson operating budget
<b>URBAN DESIGN AND AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENT</b>				
Complete monument park and gateway features at SR 20 and Rosebud Road	2009	\$75,000	City Administrator	Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA)
Design and install additional gateway features at selected locations	2010-2013	\$50,000 annually	City Administrator	TEA; operating budget
Prepare plan for installation of landscaping in the median of SR 20; implement	2009 - 2010	\$40,000	Consulting city planner	TEA; operating budget
Refine concepts in this plan for Uptown Grayson through a LCI study or more detailed redevelopment plan	2009-2010	\$60,000	Consulting city planner, steering committee	Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) of ARC
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT</b>				
Establish and operate a Downtown Development Authority	2008	Staff function	City Administrator	Operating budget
Evaluate and consider formal program initiative such as Better Hometown, Main Street, and Signature Communities	2009-2013	Staff function	Consulting city planner	Operating budget

**Chapter 7, Issues and Opportunities and Implementation**  
**City of Grayson, GA, Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda**

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<b>Description</b>	<b>Year(s) To Be Implemented</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (\$)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Possible Funding Sources</b>
<b>LAND USE</b>				
Amend the City's zoning code, landscape ordinance, and related codes, as needed	2009-2013	Staff function	Consulting city planner	Operating Budget
Prepare and adopt additional regulations to reserve lands designated for future local roads and greenways	2009	\$2,000	Consulting city planner	Operating Budget
Revise and resubmit for state and regional review this short-term work program	2013	Staff function	Consulting city planner	Operating Budget
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
Prioritize sidewalk needs, prepare and adopt a capital plan for the installation of sidewalks based on those priorities	2009	Consultant or staff function	Consulting city planner	Operating Budget
Acquire lands within designated greenways for recreation	2009-2013	To be Determined	Mayor and City Council	City Capital Budget; LWCF
Determine the extent of its road resurfacing needs and place priorities on them given limited funding	2010	\$25,000	Engineering consultant	Operating Budget
Implement the connection concept plan, including new local roads and greenways	Long Range	Per capital program	Mayor and City Council	Various city and county sources
Consider developing an impact fee program for roads and greenway trails (parks) to fund the connection concept plan	2009-2010	\$15,000 - \$20,000	Consultant	Operating Budget
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>				
Seek to implement coordination strategies with the Gwinnett County Board of Education	2009-2013	Staff function	City Administrator	Operating Budget
Participate in efforts to update master plans of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District	2009-2013	Staff function	Consulting city planner	Operating Budget
Reconsider, and revise existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate.	2009-2013	Staff function	City Administrator	Operating Budget



## Capital Cost Estimating

This Community Agenda calls for certain capital improvements to be constructed by Grayson. For instance, the Connection Concept Plan calls for a system of approximately six miles of greenway trails – many of these are inside the city but some of them are proposed for currently unincorporated lands. The plan also calls for construction of the Bennett Road Extension and some other roads that may require the assistance of the City of Grayson. At this time, reasonable cost estimates for these various projects cannot be presented with certainty, given that preliminary designs have not been accomplished. Also, the division of costs is not presently known among the city, developers and subdividers (in some cases), and perhaps Gwinnett County through the SPLOST program, and any grants that might be secured.

Research conducted for this Community Agenda suggests that there are wide variations in cost estimates available from local governments. There are many variables associated with the provision of capital cost estimates. First, there are land acquisition costs. In the case of this Community Agenda, no outright land acquisition is called for, and no research has been done for this plan to determine the typical costs of land per acre in Grayson. Furthermore, the Connection Concept Plan again suggests that greenway and roadway improvements be instituted at the time of development, with funding in whole or in part by developers and subdividers.

Second, capital costs depend on the specific project specifications and are therefore difficult to generalize. Take for instance, a sidewalk extension project, or a road improvement called for in the Connection Concept Plan. There is the cost of actually installing the sidewalk or pavement, for which estimates of cost are available. But then one usually has to include the costs of curb and gutter, as sidewalk and urban roadway projects are rarely installed without addressing drainage issues along the roadway or path (though they can be done without installing curbs and gutters). One should not assume the land is flat, and therefore, the costs of grading the land where a sidewalk or road is needed must be included. All of the incidental costs associated with grading, such as soil erosion control, must also be included. Then, the crossing of streams can require something as basic as a culvert (if the stream is small, in the case of a road or pedestrian crossing), or such stream crossings may require the construction of bridges at great expense. If a road or sidewalk project crosses another road, improvements to the intersection may be required to correctly tie in the improvement to existing infrastructure, at considerable additional costs for ADA-accessible (handicapped access ramps), or perhaps a pedestrian or traffic signal (or both). There are other incidental costs as well, such as striping and signing the road or pedestrian way.

With regard to actual sidewalk construction (just the concrete cost and installation), a recent bid opportunity in Powder Springs, GA, for a sidewalk extension project received 15 bids – the costs *per square yard* for the sidewalk itself ranged from \$15.61 all the way to \$52.00, with several in the range of \$22 to \$30 per square yard. One can translate that cost to a metric that is more informative with regard to sidewalk construction – a square yard is 9 square feet. If one uses the cost figure of \$30 per square yard, a linear foot of a five-foot wide sidewalk (five square feet) would cost \$16.50 per linear foot (5/9 or 55% of a square yard). This appears to be a reasonable, current cost estimate for constructing a sidewalk (concrete and labor alone), though readers are cautioned that again the bids on which that estimate is based had a wide range of variance, and local estimates should always be used where possible. Furthermore, like most everything else, costs are rising rapidly, almost exponentially it seems. And remember, that estimate does not include land acquisition, grading, and all the other various incidental costs. In

the case of the Powder Springs sidewalk bid mentioned above, grading cost estimates ranged from less than \$5 per linear foot all the way to \$31 per linear foot of sidewalk (5 foot wide, 4 inches thick). Total costs for the sidewalk project ranged from a low of \$29 per linear foot to \$46 per linear foot and beyond. As one can see, even when the project has specifications, there can be a wide range of cost estimates by bidders.

Shifting attention to greenway trails, if they were concrete and 10 foot in width, one could in essence double the cost estimate for a sidewalk to determine the construction costs and labor for just the trail itself (i.e., \$33 per foot or \$174,200 per linear mile). This figure is corroborated by estimates in a recreation plan for Sandy Springs, which show cost estimates of \$30 per linear foot for a ten-foot wide trail and \$40 for a twelve-foot trail. However, again one may have to consider grading costs, and other incidental requirements. If a pedestrian crossing of a road is needed, signaling may add \$50,000. Add decorative wood rail fences and there may be an additional cost of \$50 per foot. Pedestrian bridges appear to range from \$500 to \$1,000 per linear foot according to a trail plan in Hickory, North Carolina. It appears customary or at least reasonably defensible to budget for \$100 per linear feet of greenway (\$528,000 per linear mile). But again, other sources cite greenway total project costs per mile of \$264,000 and \$300,000.

With regard to roads and road paving projects, one estimate (1995) found in the literature indicated the cost for paving a 26-foot wide road was \$71.50 per linear foot, or \$377,520 per mile – inflation would make that figure much higher today. It appears that Georgia DOT uses a figure of \$270,000 per mile to repave the top surface of a road, with deep repaving to correct damage estimated at \$600,000 per mile (width not shown in source).<sup>1</sup> It can be misleading to try and present a per-linear-foot estimate of road construction, since there could be many separate items included in the linear unit cost (e.g., sidewalk, curb and gutter drainage, lighting, etc.). Also, it is not informative when the width and thickness specifications are not provided in such estimates.

When it comes to building construction, it is reasonable to assume that municipal space will cost in the range of \$180 to \$200 per square foot, though again with recently skyrocketing capital costs those figures should be used with caution. Projects with more building amenities would obviously be higher than that estimate. A fire station in Roswell was built in the early 2000s at a cost of \$225 per square foot.

It is customary for a public project cost estimate to have a contingency as high as 30 percent and to estimate the cost of inflation (assuming 6% annually is typical) since public projects often will not take place until several years into the future. Permits if required can range from 20 to 25 percent of the physical construction costs for a given project. Engineering and architectural fees typically vary between 7 and 15 percent of the total project cost, with the higher number usually being used.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Cash Woes Wipe Out 250 Road Projects.” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 29, 2007, at page E-3.

<sup>2</sup> J. Thomas Tanner, PE. “Construction Cost Estimating.” Chapter 31 in *Land Development Handbook: Planning, Engineering, and Surveying*, Second Ed. The Dewberry Companies. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.