

# COMMUNITY AGENDA

FEBRUARY 2010

## PALMETTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Prepared for The City of Palmetto  
By Urban Collage, Inc.  
in association with  
Noell Consulting Group and Keck & Wood



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## 1.1 : COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

As previously detailed in the Public Participation Plan Report, the City and Planning Team actively engaged local residents, business owners and other various stakeholders to ensure that public participation and input provided the foundation for this Comprehensive Plan Update. The following key stakeholder groups and events played a significant role through this process:

- *Stakeholder Interviews*
- *Steering Committee Meetings (6 total)*
- *Public Kickoff Meeting*
- *Public Design Charrettes (2 total)*
- *Final Public Hearing*

### 1.1a: Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the recent LCI planning effort, Urban Collage conducted dozens of one-on-one stakeholder interviews with key players in Palmetto including Palmetto City Council members, local developers, local historians, the South Fulton Chamber of Commerce, a Fulton County Commissioner, Palmetto Community Association, CSX Railroad, MARTA, neighboring jurisdictions, several local business owners and a range of residents. As part of this planning process, additional interviews were conducted with the director of Public Works, key service providers and various residents. Together, those interviewed represent a wide cross section of the city and the information gathered was instrumental in shaping this Comprehensive Plan Update's long-term vision.

### 1.1b: Steering Committee

A Steering Committee of community leaders and stakeholders met approximately 6 times throughout this process in order to review and comment on materials prior to each public workshop, assist the consulting team in affirming input from each workshop, discuss planning elements and strategies at a more detailed level, and formalize plan recommendations for review and approval by City Council. In addition to regularly scheduled Steering Committee meetings, most committee members also attended the general public workshops and design charrettes. In addition to Planning Team consultants, Steering committee members included the Mayor, the City Administrator, several City Council members, the City Clerk, the Director of Public Works, the Police Chief, and the Fire Chief.







All workshops were broadly advertised on the City's website, through e-mail distribution lists maintained by the City and other partner organizations and in local media. Detailed meeting/charrette findings and documentation can be found in Section 4: Supporting Data and Documentations.

### 1.1f: Media

In addition to the stakeholder groups and public meetings just described, City staff and Planning Team members utilized a series of promotional tools for public input and participation opportunities. Flyers unique to each public meeting / charrette were designed by the Planning Team and circulated to steering committee members and City staff. Copies were made and posted at key civic locations, activity spots and destinations throughout the city. The City also prominently featured the development of the Comprehensive Plan and the four public workshops on the City's website (www.citypalmetto.com). Meeting announcements were also circulated through the Mayor's e-mail distribution list. Citizens and stakeholders were added to the distribution list for Comprehensive Plan bulletins upon attending any recent Comprehensive Plan meeting, past LCI Study meetings or by request. Media outlets such as The South Fulton Neighbor, the Coweta Citizen, and the Newnan Times-Herald were alerted early in the process regarding the overall plan schedule and regular meetings. City staff also alerted other media outlets as needed regarding Comprehensive Plan events and milestones in order to gain exposure for the plan and increase input opportunities.

## 1.2 : THE PALMETTO VISION

### 1.2a : Planning Context

Through a variety of recent stakeholder discussions, council meetings and public forums, a consistent theme emerged of a city on the verge of significant growth, yet struggling to hold on to its small-town character. Although Palmetto will likely see major changes in the coming decade, recent planning efforts are acknowledgements by city leaders of the need to act aggressively to shape Palmetto's long-term sustainability instead of hastily reaping short-term economic gains. While the slow economy and foreclosure crisis have stagnated economic development, the pause is a welcome chance to take stock of the future, recommit to what is important to preserve, and plan accordingly. Over the past two years, efforts such as this Comprehensive Plan Update as well as the Downtown LCI Study have allowed opportunities for robust public input and exhaustive discussions regarding how future development should be allowed to shape Palmetto's future.

The culmination of these recent planning efforts reveal a vision for Palmetto that looks backward and forward simultaneously. On one hand, Palmetto will work to

preserve aspects of its past such as its rich natural features, its rural heritage and its abundance of historic homes and structures. On the other, it will plan progressively for its future by catering its growth to the changing market and household makeup, reinvesting in its historic downtown activity center, rethinking the commercial development status quo and striving to provide a better balance of transportation modes to the area.

### 1.2b : The Vision

From a development and economic growth point of view, the Palmetto vision is organized around a healthy, commercially-vibrant, mixed-use Downtown core that seamlessly integrates new construction with existing historic neighborhoods and "main street" retail buildings. North of downtown along Highways 29 and 154, a mix of commercial, civic and multifamily residential uses would develop around key "nodes," with a sensitivity to stream corridors and key scenic areas. The city's main employment area would be concentrated along the Weldon Road corridor near its intersection with Interstate 85, incorporating a mix of commercial/retail with office, industrial and warehousing uses. Aging industrial/commercial sites to the northeast at Williams Road would also be repositioned to ensure their economic vitality. The Foxhall Village masterplan would be realized, creating a large new neighborhood

The screenshot shows the City of Palmetto website. At the top, there's a header with the city logo, name, address (509 Toombs Street, P.O. Box 190, Palmetto, Ga. 30268), phone number (770.453.3377), and navigation links (Home, About, Questions & Answers, Contact Us, Links, In the News!, Employment Opportunities). Below the header, there's a date (December 17, 2009) and a navigation bar. The main content area features a large headline "Green space, blue skies, great people!" and a sub-headline "A NEW PALMETTO". Below this, there's a date (Wednesday, July 2, 2008 1:26 PM EDT) and a link to "Email this story | Printable Version". The article text begins with "By LaTria Garnigan, South Fulton Neighbor Senior Writer" and discusses the city's population, size, and the mayor's vision. It mentions Mayor John Miller's excitement about the city's growth and the participation received from many groups. It also mentions the mayor, council and city staff, who apply call themselves a "management team," have been working hard operating style of the city. For the first time in the city's history, they held town hall meetings where there were open forums for the citizens to respond and have instituted a Web site: www.citypalmetto.com. The article continues with quotes from City Manager Terry Todd and Councilwoman Lorraine Allen, discussing the city's future and the importance of public input. At the bottom left, there's a sidebar with links to various city services and information, including Mayor's Welcome, City Officials, History of Palmetto, Events, City Documents, Code of Ordinances, Photo Gallery, LCI Study, Property Tax Info, Employment Application, Zoning Map, and FAQs (Questions & Answers). At the bottom right, there's a section for City Hall, City of Palmetto, 509 Toombs Street, Palmetto, Ga. 30268, and Business Hours.



within the northwestern quadrant of the city and setting a “green” precedent for other growth patterns throughout the city. Finally, natural/agricultural areas to the east along Johnson Road and to the west around the reservoir would remain largely undeveloped, providing key thematic linkages to the area’s rural heritage.

### 1.2c : Vision Statements

The overall economic climate, desired character and development approach described above was the subject of a “vision statement” group exercise facilitated as part of the October 8, 2009 Public Design Charrette. The following fill-in-the-blank statements were given to each group to discuss and complete. Their results encapsulate the both the community’s desire to celebrate Palmetto’s rural past and their desire for goods, services and amenities that can come with quality economic growth.

#### Currently, Palmetto is best described as...

- ... a small, family-oriented historical town.
- ... a rural small town in the path of growth.
- ... a quaint small town with big town amenities.

#### In 20 Years, Palmetto will best be described as...

- ... a small historic town that is safe and inviting.
- ... a small town with modern conveniences and historic charm.
- ... a town you can grow with.
- ... progressive and green.
- ... inviting for families.
- ... still quaint, but larger and more pedestrian-friendly.
- ... a destination

#### In the future, Palmetto will lead South Fulton...

- ... by attracting new businesses and jobs.
- ... by focusing on quality growth.
- ... in quality of life and innovation.



## 2.1 : FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

The *Future Development Map* on the following page represents a composite of both the parcel-specific Future Land Use Plan and the proposed character areas, as refined through the Community Agenda planning phase. Land uses shown represent the ideal long-term uses for each land parcel within the City of Palmetto, as per Steering Committee working sessions and general consensus through Public Design Charrette groups. The map is meant as a conceptual blueprint for future development within Palmetto, embracing ‘smart growth’ principles, displaying a sensitivity to the area’s rich natural and historic features, and focused around desired economic investment within the Historic Downtown area. The future land uses shown do not automatically change overlying zoning districts or regulations; rather, they are meant as a guide for city decision-making over time, based on an overall desire to improve the city’s long-term quality of life and minimize the effects of sprawling development patterns.

As mentioned previously in the Community Vision (section 1.2b), perhaps the most critical focus for increased activity and economic focus is within the Historic Downtown, as represented on the map as a mixed-use core. Other mixed-use areas are shown along Main Street/Highway 29 at the current Spurlin Industrial site, within the “Downtown North” area around its intersections with Highway 154 and Phipps Road, and at the activity center of Foxhall Village on Cochran Mill Road. Although smaller-scaled commercial uses are shown within the Downtown and Downtown North areas, the largest commercial designation is envisioned at Weldon Road, capturing activity associated with I-85. Although much of the area would need to be annexed, other future commercial, office and industrial job uses may be shown along Weldon Rod, extending from I-85 to Highway 29. Additional industrial-based job growth would occur on the northern portion of Highway 29 near its intersections with Hobgood and Williams Roads. The majority of single-family residential growth would occur as infill development adjacent to downtown and on the periphery of the Foxhall Village site. The bulk of new multifamily growth would ideally occur along Highway 154 near Carlton Road as part of the Downtown North development node. Key agricultural, natural and conservation areas are shown around the Reservoir to the southwest, clustered around the Johnson/Tatum crossroads to the east, and within areas along the northern fringe of the city.

## 2.2 : CHARACTER AREA PRINCIPLES

Character Areas are defined by DCA as “special geographic areas that... have unique or special characteristics; have potential to evolve into a unique area when provided specific and intentional guidance; or require special attention due to unique development issues.” They are roughly equivalent to Small Area Plans in terms of scale and detail, but prepared in the context of a larger comprehensive discussion of the future of the city or county. The advantage of character area planning is

that stakeholders are usually familiar with the geography and related issues, and can engage much more effectively to create visions for future growth and public investment. It is a bottom-up versus a top-down process. All character areas were vetted throughout the process with the steering committee and the public, and changed only slightly from the Assessment to the Agenda.

In Palmetto, seven character areas define the city. They were chosen based on the following principles:

- *Clear physical or political boundaries (streams, roads, railroads, city limits)*
- *Similar existing physical or land use characteristics;*
- *Degree of susceptibility to change;*
- *Current strategic policy goals;*
- *Alignment with established DCA categories; and*
- *Recent or ongoing planning areas (Downtown LCI, Foxhall Village)*

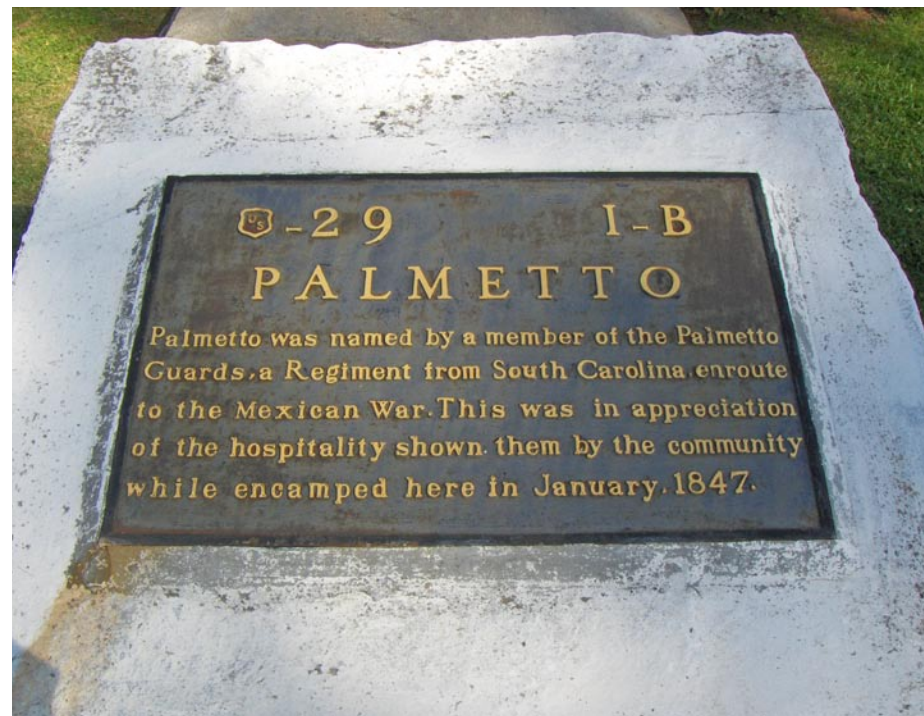
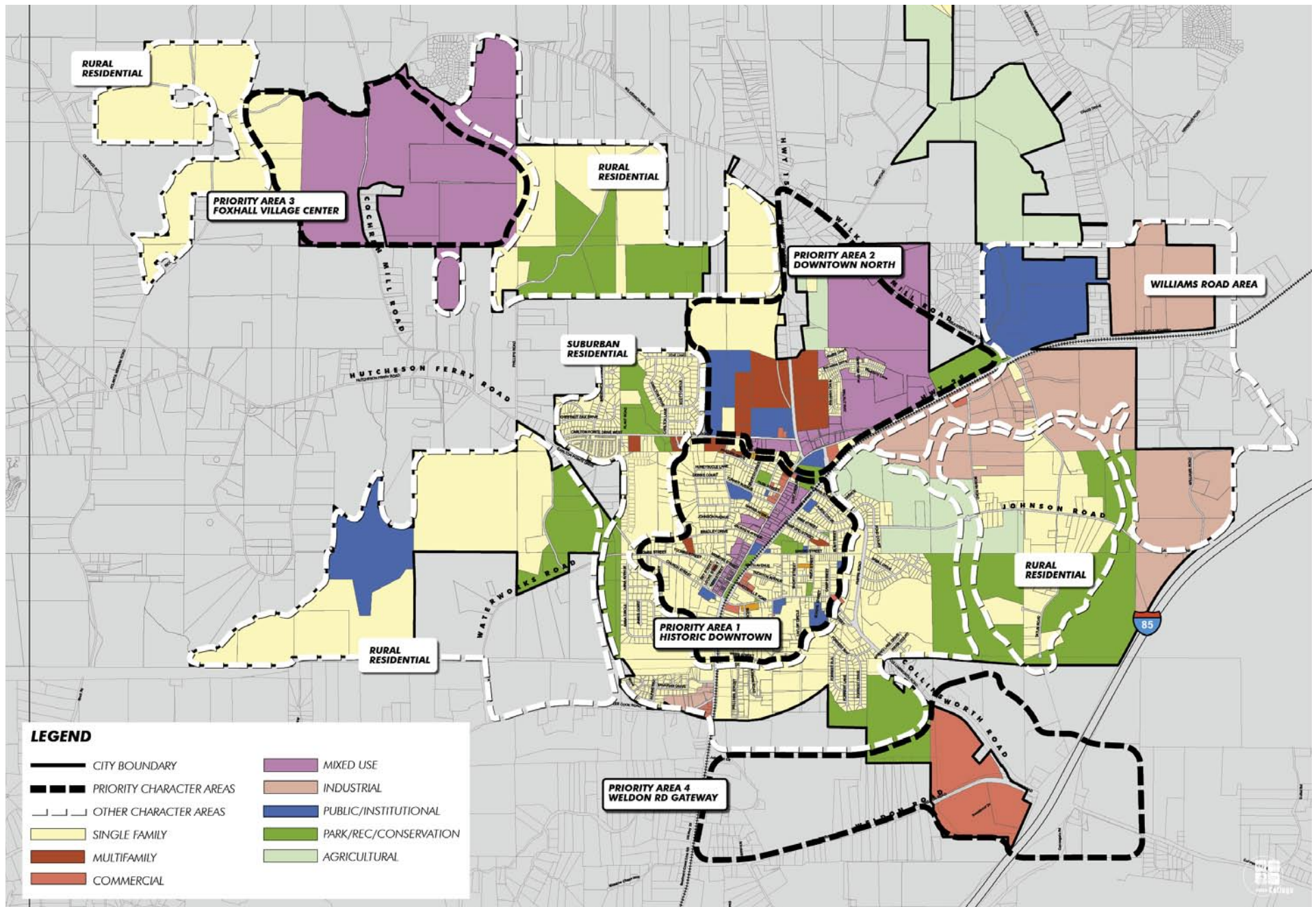




Figure 2A : Future Development Map (Future Land Use + Character Areas)



The seven character areas fall into two groups – priority character areas that require focused attention over the short term, and additional areas that are important to the long-term future but not likely to change significantly for some time. The priority character areas – Historic Downtown, Downtown North, Foxhall Center, and Weldon Gateway – were selected for reasons of strong public preference, impending development activity, concentrated capital improvement projects, or pressing second-stage planning analyses. The majority of implementation actions in the short-term work program address these four areas.

## 2.3 : PRIORITY CHARACTER AREAS

### 2.3a : Historic Downtown Character Area

Palmetto's downtown is envisioned by the LCI plan (completed in January of 2009) as a place where the railroad corridor, Main Street, and the marginal properties in between would be renewed as a dynamic and impressive series of public spaces bookended by the historic train depot and the community center, and graced with a new city hall and formal plaza. With preserved historic storefront buildings and new mixed-use infill development lining Main Street in either direction, future townhouses would both provide additional downtown residents and physically transition to the beautiful historic homes just west of downtown. Compatible single-family infill development and historic preservation would provide new housing opportunities without sacrificing the small-town character that is dear to the residents. The same holds true east of the railroad, where Cobb Street is envisioned as the historic residential equivalent of Main.

Given the broad scope of this comprehensive plan, the currency of the LCI study, and the central position of the downtown, issues that were paramount during the LCI should were reviewed as part of this process. Although overall LCI recommendations were not repealed, strategies to strengthen the relationship between downtown and the balance of the city were revisited and refined in the context of growth visions for adjacent character areas. While smaller than the LCI area, the Historic Downtown character area still includes three subareas outlined in the LCI strategy: the mixed-use districts flanking Main Street; the preservation-based traditional neighborhood; and the selective residential infill areas.

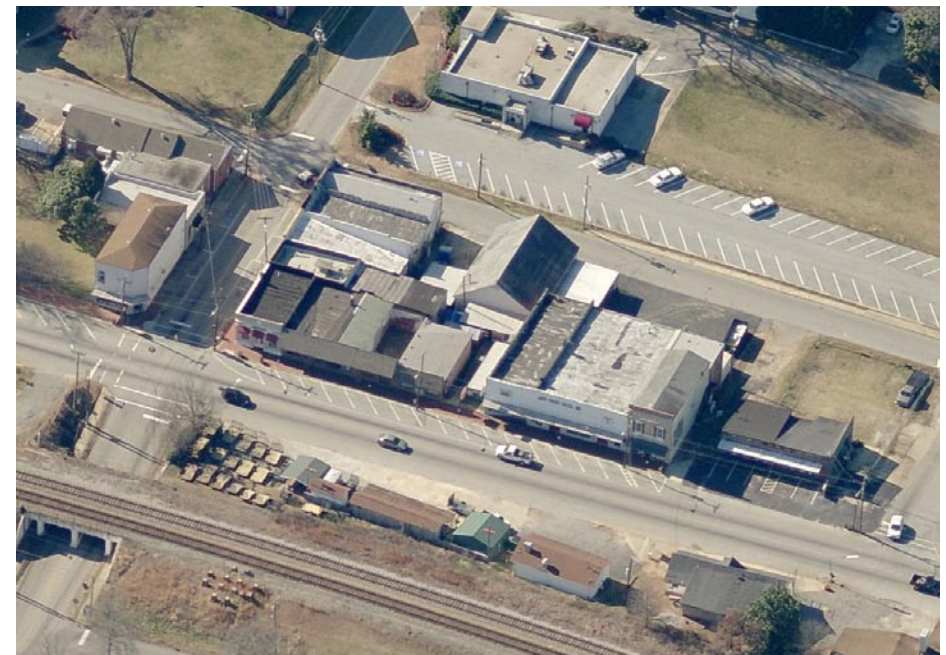
HISTORIC DOWNTOWN : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods	X		LCI Study recommendations for the downtown area include aspects of traditional neighborhoods such as sidewalks, connected street patterns, and historically-compatible architecture
Infill Development	X		There are a number of vacant and underutilized parcels within the area, providing numerous opportunities for historically-compatible infill development
Sense of Place	X		As the historic commercial and activity center in Palmetto, the area embodies the unique characteristics of the region
Transportation Alternatives	X		MARTA Bus Route 180 runs through the area and has several stops within the downtown. The area also plays host to a number of regional bicyclists.
Regional Identity	X		The identity of the historic downtown is consistent with many other small towns in Metro Atlanta in that it has a historic "Main Street" that is the focus of the community.
Heritage Preservation	X		Given that the downtown has the largest concentration of historic resources within the city, there are many opportunities for historic resource preservation. The historic train depot is also currently undergoing a TE grant renovation
Open Space Preservation		X	Although there is little open space within the downtown area to be preserved, the creation of new public spaces is at the heart of recent LCI plans
Environmental Protection	X		Appropriate "green" planning and development aspects will need to be incorporated as part of future development (LEED, etc.)
Growth Preparedness		X	Adequate development regulations are underway but not yet established
Appropriate Businesses	X		A business recruitment and retainment strategy is key to ensuring a sustainable commercial environment within the downtown area
Employment Options		X	Although may be limited employment options as part of future downtown commercial uses, the area is not envisioned as an "employment center"
Housing Choices	X		The vision for the area includes a range of housing types, sizes and price points





Educational Opportunities	X	<i>Although somewhat limited, educational opportunities do exist through activities and programs associated with the Palmetto Community Center and Palmetto Senior Center</i>
Regional Solutions	X	<i>Redirecting future growth within underutilized downtown areas will reduce sprawl in the region</i>
Regional Cooperation	X	<i>Since Main Street (Highway 29) runs through neighboring jurisdictions, issues such as truck traffic will need to be addressed collaboratively</i>

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate mixed-use as an allowable use, either as a new category in the existing zoning ordinance, or as part of a new quality-of-life ordinance</li> </ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare design guidelines for future downtown development</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore ways of Incentivizing housing development in downtown</li> </ul>
Natural & Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare historic survey and preservation strategy</li> <li>• Undertake a city-wide greenway plan to protect and enhance stream corridors while improving connectivity, especially as a key component in PATH's planned South Fulton trail</li> </ul>
Community Facilities & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a needs assessment for future growth in municipal services to determine the size and program for a potential new city hall on Main Street</li> <li>• Formalize a capital improvements program to support recommended LCI improvements</li> <li>• Pursue streetscape funding for Main Street, as per the LCI plan</li> <li>• Identify funds for purchase of land along Main Street for future public space</li> </ul>



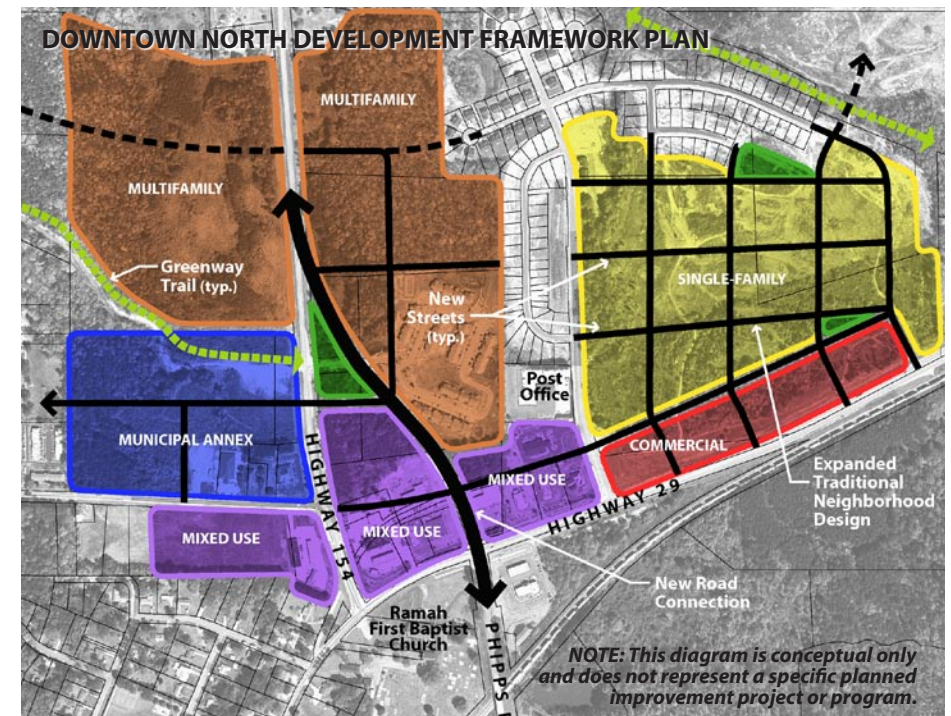
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a bicycle facility to Cobb Street to tie into the regional bicycle network</li> <li>• Prepare an alternate truck facility study in concert with ARC's Strategic Regional Truck Route Master Plan</li> <li>• Prepare study for one-way pairs on Church and Toombs streets</li> </ul>
Intergovernmental Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with South Fulton Regional Water and Sewer Authority to improve intergovernmental relation and water infrastructure</li> </ul>

### 2.3c : Downtown North Character Area

During the LCI process, the area around the offset intersections of Carlton Road, Highway 154, and Roosevelt Highway was identified as both an important emerging commercial development node and major problem area. The area is an indication of market favorability in a city where few new retail businesses have taken hold. Given the LCI study's concentration on the immediate historic downtown area, this so-called "Downtown North" area was not studied extensively as part of the LCI process; instead, it has been the subject of much discussion throughout this comprehensive planning process. The area currently exhibits problematic intersection geometries, an increasingly auto-oriented retail bias, the potential for future widening of Highway 154, and a position as a gateway to Main Street. Overall, the confluence of transportation facilities at this location guarantees that commercial development pressure will only grow, and that careful planning and land use control is key to diversification and greater accessibility.

Downtown North is envisioned as a northern equivalent of downtown, linked by key pedestrian improvements on Main Street and perhaps accommodating development types and land uses that don't fit on Main Street. Significant greenfield sites as well as the presence of multifamily housing here point to a development future different from the small-scale preservation-based envelope of downtown. Through various steering committee discussions and public design exercises, the vision for Downtown North evolved as a complement to downtown, where uses that are essential to the city but difficult to insert into downtown's mature framework could find a place and still be accessible and sustainable. It is also the location of a planned Fulton County branch library and a recently-located public safety building. Given the presence of these civic uses, the area's adjacencies to Palmetto Elementary School and possible multifamily and mixed uses, it has potential to evolve as a "municipal annex" where city facilities that don't have the room to expand or locate downtown can find a home.

The framework plan shown below illustrates a long-term conceptual development scenario for future growth within the Downtown North area. Although its implementation involves significant property challenges and commercial retrofits, as a concept it represents both a model of smart growth and a reversal of existing sprawling development patterns. The realignment of Highway 154 to Phipps Road (thick black line) would remedy the traffic "snag" currently existing at that intersection, providing a direct link between South Fulton Parkway and I-85 via Highways 154 and Phipps Road, a circulation pattern that is anticipated to increase significantly in the coming years. Relieving both Highway 29 and portions of Highway 154 of these traffic loads would also foster improved street character, pedestrian circulation and a mixed-use environment. As mentioned previously, potential new civic uses near the intersection of Carlton Road and Highway 154 could provide synergy with the existing public safety complex and planned library to create a "municipal annex" campus. This annex would be in walking distance of Palmetto Elementary School, the new mixed use district, adjacent multifamily development and access to a new greenway trail paralleling the stream corridor. Given recent economic and market shifts, the masterplan of Princeton Village could be revisited and eventually expanded as a traditional neighborhood design, including a network of walkable streets, pocket parks and compact development patterns.





DOWNTOWN NORTH : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods	X		<i>The community's vision for the area is to rework it as a more walkable area. As such, areas such as the undeveloped areas within Princeton Village could be built out as more compact neighborhoods</i>
Infill Development		X	<i>Since the bulk of development opportunities within the area are "greenfield" sites, there are no significant infill opportunities</i>
Sense of Place	X		<i>Future development is envisioned as a mix of various housing types, a mix of uses and of unique character.</i>
Transportation Alternatives	X		<i>MARTA Bus Route 180 runs along the frontage of Roosevelt Highway. Connections to this service should be enhanced and stop amenities improved.</i>
Regional Identity	X		<i>Open space enhancements, improved access to stream corridors and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections will enhance the area's natural identity</i>
Heritage Preservation	X		<i>Designation of Wilkerson Mill Road as a scenic byway would help preserve the area's rural legacy</i>
Open Space Preservation	X		<i>There are many open space preservation and enhancement opportunities in this area including Farris Park, greenway trails and neighborhood pocket parks.</i>
Environmental Protection	X		<i>Scenic byway designations, preservation of stream corridors and zoning regulations for open spaces within new development will help preserve environmental resources.</i>
Growth Preparedness	X		<i>Growth framework plans designate specific areas that would accommodate the bulk of new growth</i>
Appropriate Businesses	X		<i>The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is currently pursuing business recruitment and retainment strategies</i>
Employment Options	X		<i>The area has potential to offer future civic, office and commercial jobs.</i>
Housing Choices	X		<i>The area is envisioned to include a wide array of housing types, sizes and price points (single-family, townhomes, and multifamily)</i>
Educational Opportunities	X		<i>The existing Palmetto Elementary School, planned Fulton library and potential future municipal uses include educational opportunities</i>



Regional Solutions	X	Concentrating growth within this development “node” will take pressure developing other greenfield sites north on Highway 29
Regional Cooperation	X	Resolving traffic issues associated with Highway 154 and access to I-85 will take cooperation from a number of regional parties

DOWNTOWN NORTH : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a subarea plan for an area approximately one-half mile from the Carlton Road / Highway 154 intersection, considering land use / development strategies to promote a walkable, mixed-use activity center complementary to the historic downtown</li> <li>• Create a mixed-use zoning district for the subarea above, either as a new category in the existing zoning ordinance, or as part of a new quality-of-life ordinance</li> <li>• Control potential strip commercial development along Highway 29 with an access management strategy, corridor overlay or other regulatory mechanism</li> </ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study the potential for small office development and other business recruitment strategies as part of the subarea plan described above</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the construction of good quality, affordable multifamily housing in the area around the Carlton Road / Highway 154 intersection</li> <li>• Reassess the development plan for Princeton Village to determine the feasibility of improving connections to the surrounding areas and diversifying the housing product as part of the subarea plan described above</li> </ul>
Natural & Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a city-wide greenway plan to protect and enhance stream corridors while improving connectivity, especially along Little Bear Creek and its linkage to Farris Park</li> <li>• Pursue designation of the Wilkerson Mill Road corridor as a scenic byway, and explore the feasibility of a conservation easement program to preserve its rural character</li> </ul>
Community Facilities & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a needs assessment for future growth in municipal services to determine future facilities that might be added to create a municipal campus around the public safety building and planned library</li> </ul>

Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a traffic planning / engineering study for the Carlton Road / Highway 154 / Roosevelt Highway intersection area to influence GDOT improvements, as part of the subarea plan described above</li> <li>• Expand the street / sidewalk network to support a walkable environment in the southern portion of the character area</li> <li>• Create a road connection to the eastern part of Foxhall Village from Highway 154 - ideally by extending Petersburg Road - that would mark the transition between more urban (south) and more suburban / rural (north) development patterns</li> </ul>
Intergovernmental Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement an annexation plan for areas to the north of the city limits</li> <li>• Initiate a dialogue with Fulton County to determine potential expansion and improvements to Farris Park</li> </ul>

### 2.3c : Foxhall Center Character Area

If built as envisioned, Foxhall Village would be a major resource to Palmetto, providing support to downtown businesses and cultural amenities, balancing existing housing stock with a range of residential types and sizes and adding significant resources to the city’s overall tax base. Despite the project’s loss of momentum due to a depressed residential market, it remains a major benefit to the city in the long term but will require sustained attention if it is to realize its full potential without overwhelming both its rural context and Palmetto’s historic core. As a overall plan, Foxhall Village incorporates many fundamentals of traditional neighborhood design and sustainable development practices, striking a common note with Palmetto’s desire to retain aspects of its rural past.

Given the recent Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process and associated conditions, the Foxhall Village plan did not warrant extensive re-examination through this plan update. Instead, the plan was reviewed and considered in its overall relationship with the rest of the city – particularly in the way it engages it and responds to the concern for maintaining its small-town existence.





As noted in the Community Assessment Report, the Foxhall Village masterplan is organized around three development zones – village core, village general, and village edge – and at full buildout is proposed to have approximately 4,500 residential units; 600,000 square feet of commercial and office space; and almost 400 acres of community green space and parks. As a character area in and of itself, its sheer size suggests division into at least two subareas, with the Village Core and Village General districts combined into a Village Center that has design and development attributes different from the Village Edge. At its Village Center, the area should be built to include compact, neighborhood-serving commercial/retail uses surrounded by more intense residential uses, all oriented around Cochran Mill Road as a preserved rural corridor. At its Village Edge, the project should be implemented as a less-intense single-family neighborhood with a sensitivity to connectivity throughout and appropriate natural buffers along its periphery.

Employment Options		X	Although limited employment job opportunities may exist as part of planned commercial development, the area is not envisioned as an “employment center”
Housing Choices	X		The masterplan includes a variety of housing types
Educational Opportunities	X		DRI requirements include accommodations for a new elementary school
Regional Solutions	X		The masterplan embodies many aspects of “smart growth,” contributing to preservation of the region’s natural / rural character
Regional Cooperation	X		Planning has been and will continue to be subject to collaboration of many agencies and jurisdictions

FOXHALL CENTER : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods	X		The Foxhall Village masterplan incorporates many aspects of traditional neighborhood design
Infill Development		X	There are no infill opportunities since almost the entire area is currently a “greenfield” site
Sense of Place	X		The neighborhood is envisioned as a compact, pedestrian-friendly development with unique architectural features, all of which greatly contribute to a sense of place
Transportation Alternatives	X		The City of Palmetto and developers of Foxhall Village have continued to coordinate with MARTA regarding potential bus route expansions. Accommodations for bicycle routes are included as part of plans
Regional Identity	X		The plan’s sensitivity to the surrounding context supports the area’s regional identity
Heritage Preservation		X	There are no historic resources in the area
Open Space Preservation	X		Appropriate buffers along the periphery of the property and designations for 46% of site for open space contribute greatly to its natural preservation
Environmental Protection	X		See above
Growth Preparedness	X		Provisions for a new Elementary School, a police station and fire station area are included in plans
Appropriate Businesses	X		Appropriately-scaled neighborhood-serving businesses are included in plans



FOXHALL VILLAGE : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a new zoning ordinance to address the desired development program, the valuable rural context, and the relationship to adjoining parts of the city</li> </ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine existing plan to minimize cul-de-sacs in Village General areas</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the number of single-family residential units west of Cochran Mill Road to no more than 600 (per DRI)</li> </ul>
Natural & Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake greenspace plan for the entire site</li> <li>• Reserve a minimum of 46% of the entire site area as open space, with 40% of the area west of Cochran Mill preserved as open space following conservation subdivision practices (per DRI)</li> <li>• Determine and implement appropriate natural / scenic buffers around the development periphery (DRI)</li> <li>• Preserve Cochran Mill Road as a scenic byway</li> </ul>
Community Facilities & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserve enough land in the Village Center to erect one elementary school, one police station and one fire station (per DRI)</li> <li>• Formalize open space in each Village General 'cluster' as a neighborhood park</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a transportation implementation plan to address timing and coordination of roadway and intersection improvements (per DRI)</li> <li>• Improve portions of Cochran Mill Road as part of the first phase of development</li> </ul>
Intergovernmental Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARC has conditionally approved the DRI for the plan</li> </ul>

### 2.3d : Weldon Road Gateway

Currently, the interchange of Collinsworth / Weldon Roads at Interstate 85 is relatively undeveloped beyond a few filling stations and fast-food restaurants. However, significant greenfield development opportunities along Weldon Road coupled with the area's inevitable intensification over time and high level of interstate access suggest that the entire corridor from the I-85 to Highway 29 could evolve as an employment center focused on office and supporting commercial. This potential growth would also serve to complement the growing light industrial uses within the northeast portion of the city.



Although construction of the Weldon Park commercial development (SW quadrant of I-85/Weldon interchange) has proceeded slowly, its implementation would add thirty acres of development to the commercial inventory and fifty-five acres of planned industrial. This will undoubtedly create additional growth pressure on the remaining greenfield sites around the interchange, since the nearest major interstate commercial nodes are almost 10 miles to the north and south.

Since job-oriented office, commercial, warehousing and industrial growth along Weldon Road require extensive annexation north of Weldon Road, the character area could reflect two phases – an initial expansion around the I-85 interchange to control and take advantage of short-term growth, and a later phase at the corridor's west end to support the employment investment but move it away from light industrial and into office. Significant topographical changes, stream corridors and forested areas currently prevalent along Weldon Road will also need to be carefully considered as development plans are implemented to ensure preservation of key natural areas.



WELDON GATEWAY : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods		X	Significant residential uses are not envisioned for the area
Infill Development		X	No infill opportunities exist since the majority of the area is comprised of "greenfield" sites
Sense of Place	X		Forthcoming zoning ordinance revisions would ideally include regulations for landscaping, signage and architectural character for new development, contributing to sense to place
Transportation Alternatives		X	Since the area is not on an existing or planned transit route, no major transportation alternative options exist
Regional Identity	X		It is important that the city draw businesses to the area that contribute to regional identity.
Heritage Preservation	X		Sensitivity to rural / natural areas along Weldon Road will help preserve its rural character
Open Space Preservation	X		Forthcoming zoning regulations should consider provisions for development buffers along Weldon Road
Environmental Protection	X		Preservation of key forested areas and stream corridors should be considered.
Growth Preparedness	X		The city is currently developing strategies for potential sewer and water extensions to the area.
Appropriate Businesses	X		It is essential that the city focus on attracting industries consistent with the vision for this area as a hub of job growth.
Employment Options	X		The area is envisioned as Palmetto's core employment area.
Housing Choices		X	Significant residential uses are not envisioned for the area.
Educational Opportunities		X	No significant educational opportunities are anticipated for the area.
Regional Solutions	X		Planned growth will contribute to the long-term economic sustainability of the I-85 corridor
Regional Cooperation	X		The city will need to pursue potential annexations along Weldon Road in collaboration with Coweta County.

WELDON GATEWAY : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a infrastructure development plan for the undeveloped land around Johnston Circle to encourage sustainable office development</li> </ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a local economic development analysis to evaluate the city's assets and deficiencies against current and future investment in the I-85 corridor, possibly with the assistance of Georgia Tech</li> <li>Create design guidelines for development that include regulations for landscaping, building aesthetics, signage, and sustainability measures</li> <li>Work with business owners to improve their properties following future design guidelines</li> <li>Create wayfinding / gateway signage program to better link I-85 to downtown</li> </ul>
Housing	Not applicable
Natural & Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute development buffer along Weldon Road</li> </ul>
Community Facilities & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate challenges of sewer extensions</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage inter-parcel connectivity between future commercial sites to minimize traffic congestion on Weldon / Collinsworth</li> </ul>
Intergovernmental Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an annexation plan in coordination with Coweta County</li> </ul>

## 2.4 : OTHER CHARACTER AREAS

Aside from the previously mentioned priority character areas, there are a range of other geographic areas where land use or development patterns exhibit similarities to such an extent that they could be considered minor character areas or character overlays. Some of these reflect sizeable suburban housing developments or distinct growth periods in the city's history; others relate more to the natural and cultural landscape and continuing traditions of rural Georgia. These areas discussed below generally follow classifications outlined under DCA guidelines, and are indicated on the Future Development Map (see Figure 2A) as both existing and proposed districts in the city.



### 2.4a : Williams Road Area

Although perhaps not as short-term or as accessible to I-85 as the Weldon Road area, the Williams Road area presents a significant opportunity for new job growth within Palmetto. The city has made an investment in industrial development sites at and around the intersections of Roosevelt Highway at Hobgood and Williams Roads (see Community Assessment Report for inventory/description of sites). The privately-owned South Fulton Skyport along the north side of Roosevelt Highway is also a unique and underutilized asset, although limited in size due to physical constraints and F.A.A. restrictions. Additionally, the city shares a border with Fairburn paralleling Williams Road and is included in the western reaches of the South Fulton CID.

A major opportunity for the area is the prospect of an I-85 interchange at Gullat Road - a proposition that the South Fulton CID is currently pursuing. Such access would serve to relieve transportation pressures associated with Highway 154 and Phipps Road as well as providing much-needed economic support to the west end of the CID and in particular supporting the substantial investment in the CSX Fairburn Intermodal Facility. Treating Gullatt Road as an extension of surrounding industrial parks (Oakley, for instance) would not only stimulate industrial investment in Palmetto, but might broaden the role the recycling facility could play in area waste streams and provide a mechanism for improving the South Fulton Skyport as a CID asset.

WILLIAMS ROAD AREA : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods		X	<i>Residential uses are not envisioned for the area</i>
Infill Development	X		<i>Reuse of underutilized commercial and industrial sites should be encouraged</i>
Sense of Place		X	<i>Industrial developments do not typically contribute to a sense of place</i>
Transportation Alternatives	X		<i>MARTA Bus Route 180 runs through the area. Bus stops and other amenities should be improved.</i>
Regional Identity	X		<i>It is important that the city attract businesses that contribute to a sense of regional identity</i>
Heritage Preservation		X	<i>Not applicable for this area.</i>
Open Space Preservation	X		<i>Open spaces should be incorporated as part of redevelopment of aging sites.</i>
Environmental Protection	X		<i>Growth other than redevelopment should be sensitive to adjacent stream corridors and floodplain areas</i>
Growth Preparedness	X		<i>Targeting appropriate industries to locate to this area will help the City provide employment opportunities to accommodate anticipated growth</i>

Appropriate Businesses	X		<i>See above</i>
Employment Options	X		<i>Industrial areas provide employment options to people with a variety of educational backgrounds</i>
Housing Choices		X	<i>Residential uses are not envisioned for the area</i>
Educational Opportunities	X		<i>Industrial uses sometimes offer opportunities for coordination with higher educational facilities that provide training</i>
Regional Solutions	X		<i>Uses planned will add available job opportunities to the region</i>
Regional Cooperation	X		<i>Implementation of the area will require coordination with organizations such as Fairburn and the South Fulton CID</i>

WILLIAMS ROAD AREA : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	• <i>Create an industrial master plan for the area</i>
Economic Development	• <i>Conduct a market analysis / positioning study for the intensification of the Skyport</i> • <i>Market the vacant industrial park sites to developers</i>
Housing	<i>Not applicable</i>
Natural & Cultural Resources	• <i>Work to expand the landfill recycling facility in a safe and sustainable way</i>
Community Facilities & Services	• <i>Support the landfill recycling operation so that it may help to manage area-wide waste demands</i>
Transportation	• <i>Lobby GDOT for improvements to Gullat Road, including an interchange at I-85</i>
Intergovernmental Coordination	• <i>Coordinate planning efforts for area with both The City of Fairburn and the South Fulton CID</i>





### 2.4b : Suburban Residential Areas

Contemporary suburban single-family residential areas in Palmetto fall into two categories: ranch-style housing built in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s inside the boundary of the Historic Downtown Character Area; and small subdivisions built from the late 1960s through 2008, in a ring encircling the older core. Aside from architecture and materials, the main difference between the two is the treatment of the street pattern: housing in the historic core generally extends the connected street grid of the original town plat, while the newer subdivisions, built as speculative investments, rely on one or two external connection points with internal streets dominated by culs-de-sac or loops. Even in more recent subdivisions that trend toward smaller lots and more compact and dense housing (Princeton Village, Carlton Pointe), the street patterns follow the cul-de-sac formula.

Community input has confirmed the local desirability of cul-de-sac development and maintaining a “difference” between the newer ring and the historic core; but stakeholders are also concerned about the need for better pedestrian connections to downtown. At a minimum, major streets and roads such as Toombs, Waterworks, Carlton, Fayetteville, Johnson and Phipps should have sidewalks installed on at least on one side to address the issue. Additional pedestrian connectivity can be accomplished through the development of a city-wide greenway system.

The Suburban Residential Character Area encircles Historic Downtown on three sides, and bookends Downtown North on the east and west. It encompasses the residential developments mentioned above, as well as stalled projects and vacant land. Because of the staggered pattern of older, more stable areas balanced against greenfields or projects in flux, it offers an opportunity to build denser, better-connected and better-serviced developments in the future that can provide both linkages and amenities that are lacking in the existing subdivisions. In some cases, steep topography and wetlands separating subdivisions from undeveloped land can be improved and incorporated into a greenway park system that would offer connections to key Palmetto destinations as well as other places in South Fulton.

The vision for the Suburban Residential Character Area, therefore, balances a more conventional subdivision approach - emphasizing moderately-priced housing and (limited) culs-de-sacs appealing to young families – with a tightly-integrated secondary street grid; richer amenities like fitness centers and function spaces; denser lots; and more diversified single-family products such as duplexes and townhouses. New developments should be of high quality without pricing entry-level buyers out of the market, and premiums placed on efficient “green” design and construction over architectural embellishments. Stalled projects represent a unique opportunity to redirect development energy in a more sustainable way, as pilot neighborhoods that match market repositioning strategies to community needs. Finally, because



much of the Suburban Residential Character Area abuts rural preservation, special attention should be given to boundary conditions and related implementation of buffers, forest / habitat protection, sustainable stormwater practices, and transitional development density.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods	X		<i>Traditional-style neighborhoods are encouraged for these areas</i>
Infill Development	X		<i>Architecturally-compatible infill housing is encouraged for these areas</i>
Sense of Place	X		<i>New historically-compatible development will contribute to a sense of place</i>
Transportation Alternatives	X		<i>Efforts should be made to connect to regional trail systems</i>
Regional Identity	X		<i>The identity created by appropriate new construction is consistent with other small towns throughout Georgia</i>
Heritage Preservation	X		<i>Historically-compatible new housing is essential</i>

Open Space Preservation	X		<i>New neighborhoods in these areas should set aside land for neighborhood pocket parks and other open spaces</i>
Environmental Protection	X		<i>Appropriate “green” development should be incorporated into new construction</i>
Growth Preparedness	X		<i>The city will need to consider necessary infrastructural and utility services for new neighborhoods</i>
Appropriate Businesses		X	<i>Commercial uses are not envisioned for the area</i>
Employment Options		X	<i>Job-oriented uses are not envisioned for the area</i>
Housing Choices	X		<i>New construction should include housing in a variety of sizes and price points</i>
Educational Opportunities		X	<i>Education-oriented uses not envisioned for area</i>
Regional Solutions	X		<i>Infill of vacant housing sites helps reduce regional residential sprawl patterns</i>
Regional Cooperation	X		<i>Future neighborhoods in these areas may be planned for parcels outside the city limits</i>

### 2.4c : Rural Residential Areas

Farming and small-town life are part of Palmetto’s DNA; and even though active agriculture has declined since the 1960s, the desire to remain a rural community is very much alive in many of today’s residents. South Fulton’s slow growth compared to Atlanta’s “favored quarter” to the north has allowed Palmetto to remain a small town in a rapidly-expanding metro region. The land use policy that led to Foxhall Village is another validation of the unique landscape that surrounds Palmetto and area-wide commitments to preserve it.

Through a combination of large institutional landowners, existing country lots and hobby farms, rural environments can be found literally blocks away from Main Street. This land pattern is more reminiscent of 1959 than it is of 2009, and it is a hallmark of the city that should be treasured and protected. Rural Residential Character Areas do this by stipulating large minimum lot sizes or cluster development; allowing light agriculture, truck farming and limited livestock; restricting commercial or industrial land uses; and encouraging conservation or scenic easements in targeted areas, among other things.

Four overall Rural Residential areas are proposed for Palmetto: one encompassing the land between the two existing creeks flanking Johnson and Tatum roads; one surrounding the city’s water supply reservoirs; and one on either side of the Foxhall Village core (two total at Foxhall). While the Foxhall Village land is largely unimproved, the other two areas have existing agricultural uses or characteristics that are valued by the community – the vast and highly-visible fields at the Georgia Baptist Children’s Home to the west, and the pastures and barns along Johnson Road west of the Tatum Road intersection. Several pristine agricultural landscapes along Phillips Road are also preserved in the Foxhall Village concept plan – the existing farm to the west, the tree farm to the east, and the bottomland fields along Bear Creek at the center. These are all tangible reminders of Palmetto’s heritage and key elements of their character areas. As such, they should be treated with deference in any future development plans.

Finally, with the exception of the property owned by the Georgia Baptist Children’s Home, all other land is agriculturally-zoned (or in undevelopable floodplains). This regulatory foundation preserves by-right uses compatible with the concept of urban farming, while opening the door to enhancements for public benefit that can be negotiated along with development incentives. To maintain the character area intent, any new residential development should be sensitive to the agricultural context and encourage both farmettes / ranchettes and conservation subdivision practices as minimum standards.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	• <i>Revise zoning ordinance to allow smaller lot sizes</i>
Economic Development	• <i>Suggest compatible architectural styles that maintain regional character and mandate high-quality construction</i>
Housing	• <i>Encourage medium-density, traditional-style neighborhoods for new construction</i>
Natural & Cultural Resources	• <i>Connect to local and regional trail and open space systems, wherever possible</i>
Community Facilities & Services	• <i>Retrofit existing suburban neighborhoods with sidewalk linkages</i>
Transportation	• <i>Create a street network that links to other parts of the city and minimizes barriers to access</i>
Intergovernmental Coordination	• <i>Work with neighboring jurisdictions to expand areas outside of city limits</i>





RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods		X	<i>Rural residential patterns do not follow TND guidelines</i>
Infill Development		X	<i>No significant infill opportunities exist</i>
Sense of Place	X		<i>The character of rural residential contributes to the area's agricultural history and overall sense of place</i>
Transportation Alternatives		X	<i>No transportation alternatives exist</i>
Regional Identity	X		<i>The character of rural residential is consistent with many rural areas throughout the region</i>
Heritage Preservation	X		<i>The area's rural character is an important aspect of the city's history that needs to be preserved</i>
Open Space Preservation	X		<i>A greenspace / preservation plan will ensure that appropriate open spaces are set aside</i>
Environmental Protection	X		<i>Preservation of rural residential uses is essential to ensuring a high level of environmental protection</i>
Growth Preparedness		X	<i>Rural residential areas are not anticipated to see a significant amount of growth since development will be directed to more appropriate areas</i>
Appropriate Businesses		X	<i>Outside of agricultural-oriented uses, other commercial uses are not envisioned for the area</i>
Employment Options		X	<i>Outside of agricultural-oriented jobs, large job-oriented uses are not envisioned for the area</i>
Housing Choices		X	<i>The rural vision for the area is not conducive to providing a range of housing choices</i>
Educational Opportunities		X	<i>No educational opportunities are anticipated</i>
Regional Solutions	X		<i>Preservation of key rural / greenspace areas are important in ensuring regional solutions to combat sprawl</i>
Regional Cooperation	X		<i>Maintaining/preserving key rural areas should be planned in coordination with plans of neighboring jurisdictions</i>

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase the amount of open space requirements in ordinances</i></li> </ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Encourage conservation-oriented types of development</i></li> </ul>



Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>New housing should be built that is consistent with the area's rural, agricultural legacy</i></li> </ul>
Natural & Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Formalize a greenspace / preservation plan</i></li> </ul>
Community Facilities & Services	<i>Not applicable</i>
Transportation	<i>Not applicable</i>
Intergovernmental Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Engage in discussions with neighboring cities when planning for key rural areas</i></li> </ul>

#### 2.4d : Wetland / Conservation Areas

Palmetto's location along the A&WP / CSX railroad ridge line means that the city straddles two watersheds – the Chattahoochee on the west, and the Flint on the east. Some of the tributary creeks come within a block of Main Street, and their forested banks foster the sense of the city coexisting with nature. Several impoundments add another dimension to the landscape; and the biggest – the city's supply reservoir – has feeder creeks that create rich wetlands along Waterworks Road.

All of these elements contribute to the identity of Palmetto, and to its quality of life for residents. Keeping the watersheds and forests natural but accessible was a priority for participants in both the LCI and Comprehensive Plan processes; and a citywide greenway plan that turns the creek lands into linear parks was one of the top near-term projects for stakeholders. Therefore, the floodplains, reservoirs



and at least 100' of undisturbed buffer on all sides should be reserved as future city conservation areas.

Palmetto's conservation greenspaces could be considered as more of an overlay than a distinct character area, because they include varied landscapes and preservation strategies, and must respond to different edge conditions as they penetrate into the heart of downtown. In some cases large, undeveloped private land with unique natural qualities can be permanently protected through owner participation in the Georgia Land Conservation Program. In other areas where existing development closes in, a more intentional strategy of park creation with stream restoration as a formal design theme could apply. As examples, the reservoir and its wetlands or the pastures and fields along Little Bear Creek could be easement candidates; creek sources near Locke Street and Smith Avenue might be future city parks.

The spirit of the Conservation Character Area Overlay should privilege the natural environment over all else. While best tailored to the surroundings, the first issues that should be addressed are how the natural resources can be stabilized and strengthened; how the Palmetto public can engage them without damaging them; and how they can be maintained and protected into the future.

WETLAND/CONSERVATION AREAS : QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES			
Category	Yes	No	Comments
Traditional Neighborhoods		X	Significant residential uses are not envisioned for these areas
Infill Development		X	Significant development opportunities are not envisioned for these areas
Sense of Place	X		Preservation of key conservation areas help preserve the area's legacy and contribute to a sense to place
Transportation Alternatives		X	No opportunities for transportation alternatives exist
Regional Identity	X		The natural character is consistent with the rest of the Chattahoochee area
Heritage Preservation	X		Preservation of key conservation areas help preserve the area's rural legacy
Open Space Preservation	X		Preservation of key open spaces is essential in planning for future growth
Environmental Protection	X		Conserving natural/rural areas and maintaining existing wetland areas is one of the most important strategies in ensuring the protection of environmental resources

Growth Preparedness		X	Significant growth is not planned for these areas
Appropriate Businesses		X	Businesses are not envisioned for these areas
Employment Options		X	Job opportunities not anticipated for these areas
Housing Choices		X	Significant residential uses are not envisioned for these areas
Educational Opportunities		X	Educational opportunities not anticipated for area
Regional Solutions	X		Preservation of key conservation areas is important in ensuring regional solutions to combat sprawl
Regional Cooperation	X		Maintaining/preserving key conservation areas should be planned in coordination with neighboring jurisdictions

WETLAND/CONSERVATION AREAS : IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	
Goals	Implementation Measures
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set aside key natural areas as part of future land use plan and adopt protection measures through zoning ordinance</li> </ul>
Economic Development	Not applicable





Housing	<i>Not applicable</i>
Natural & Cultural Resources	• <i>Formalize a greenspace/preservation plan</i>
Community Facilities & Services	• <i>Work to amenitize key natural features such as water bodies and stream corridors</i>
Transportation	• <i>Provide access to key natural features noted above</i>
Intergovernmental Coordination	• <i>Engage in discussions with neighboring cities when planning for key conservation areas</i>

## 2.5 : SCENIC CORRIDORS

DCA guidelines include strategies for preserving valuable natural, cultural, historic or scenic attributes while keeping road functionality and some development flexibility. Strategies include development regulations; access management; rural road standards (shoulders, swales); landscaping recommendations or controls; appropriate signage; and other methods. Many of these can also apply to a scenic overlay, which recognizes the urban context but modifies the underlying character area accordingly.

Palmetto is fortunate to be on the doorstep of one of Georgia's twelve scenic byways that were established to acknowledge and support the natural and cultural heritage of the state. The South Fulton Scenic Byway is a 29-mile loop that takes in some of the most historic farming landscapes left in the Georgia Piedmont. It includes Hutcheson Ferry and Cochran Mill roads, crossing the city limits at the future Foxhall Village. Georgia's Scenic Byways program is administered through GDOT; and while the program is voluntary, it does offer the advantage of state-sponsored signage and marketing.

Hutcheson Ferry and Cochran Mill are not unique in their scenic qualities; other Palmetto roads such as Wilkerson Mill, Phillips, Johnson, and Waterworks are equally impressive. Because of strong public interest in drawing the rural surroundings closer to downtown to reinforce the city's traditional relationship with the land and farming, the physical characteristics of these roads should be protected through scenic corridor overlays. Palmetto should also consider initiating an expansion of the South Fulton Scenic Byway to include the full length of Phillips Road, the remainder of Hutcheson Ferry Road, and Wilkerson Mill Road to Highway 29. This would have the benefit of making the city a stop for scenic tourists, and would provide a measure of separation between "old" Palmetto and Foxhall Village, helping to strengthen the distinct identities of both.



The following sections highlight community issues that arose through stakeholder input, community meetings and previous LCI study forums. Potential opportunities are also highlighted that have presented themselves through assessment findings, design charrettes and steering committee discussions.

### 3.1 : POPULATION GROWTH

**Major trend:** Palmetto is a diverse community predominated by moderate income levels, a large older population and an increasing Hispanic population.

#### Issues

- Palmetto citizens desire to keep the “small-town” feeling, even though a significant amount of growth is projected in coming years
- Recent growth has largely occurred on the outskirts of the city, with little investment in the downtown area

#### Opportunities

- “Baby boomer generation” households that historically chose where they lived based on schools are now looking to live in more convenient, accessible locations
- Palmetto’s affordability and close-in location make it attractive and attainable for a broad section of Atlanta’s residents
- Palmetto’s small-town character and diversity will increasingly play well to both younger and more mature households - those who value authenticity, walkability and diversity

### 3.2 : ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Major trend:** Choices for local retail, restaurants and other goods and services are limited within Palmetto, especially within the immediate downtown area.

#### Issues

- Downtown is largely “hidden” from activity associated with the I-85 corridor - no signage or intuitive route exists between the interstate exit and Downtown Palmetto

#### Opportunities

- Recent changes in city staff and leadership have set new economic plans in motion
- Recent successful Downtown LCI Study makes Palmetto eligible for more funding opportunities
- Downtown Development Authority in place



### 3.3 : HOUSING

**Major trend** Palmetto is oversupplied with a large amount of low- to mid-priced single-family housing.

#### Issues

- Several large “starter home” single-family neighborhoods have been built within the last 7-8 years, which have potential to bring down area property values
- Like many local communities, Palmetto has seen foreclosure rates multiply within the last 12-18 months
- Several recent housing developments have stalled mid-construction within or on the outskirts of the city
- Language within the current zoning ordinance is not conducive to ensuring quality housing development,
- There is an increasing market for affordable senior housing that needs to be captured
- Very little variety in housing types or prices



- Local stigma against multifamily due to recent low-quality multifamily development

### Opportunities

- Rewriting of zoning ordinance provides opportunity to strengthen residential development regulations through design guidelines, new zoning districts and reworked open space / lot size requirements
- Foxhall Village masterplan proposes a variety of quality housing types and prices
- Recent conceptual development plans include senior living, active adult and multifamily components

## 3.4 : NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

**Major trend:** Palmetto has many natural and historic resources, but little documentation or regulatory protection

### Issues

- Development pressures exist along existing scenic / rural corridors such as Cochran Mil and Wilkerson Mill Roads
- Majority of recent new development is out of character with the area's history

### Opportunities

- Potential to pursue scenic byway designations for key corridors
- Rewriting of zoning ordinance provides an opportunity to create architectural guidelines for historically-compatible development

## 3.5 : COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

**Major trend:** Palmetto's civic uses have become geographically decentralized over the last decade.

### Issues

- Local public schools are perceived as poor quality
- Lack of active recreation space for youth
- Pedestrian amenities are severely lacking throughout the city
- Extending sewer and other city services to potential growth along Weldon Road may be a challenge

### Opportunities

- Potential for a "municipal campus" around existing public safety building and planned library
- City is eligible for LCI funds to implement downtown pedestrian improvements
- LCI plan envisions long-term strategy for integrated new civic center in immediate downtown, including new plaza / open space and city hall
- Foxhall Village masterplan includes provisions for new elementary school and police station

## 3.6 : LAND USE & ZONING

**Major trend:** Growth in Palmetto has historically been mostly market-driven and has not been subject to careful land use planning or strict development controls.

### Issues

- Existing land use plans and zoning ordinance do not provide the regulatory controls needed to ensure high-quality and sustainable growth
- No mixed-use zoning or land use categories exist



- Precedent for strip commercial has been set along Highway 29 within “Downtown North” area
- Development pressures exist in areas that are important to the city’s rural legacy and character

#### Opportunities

- Potential rewriting of zoning ordinance provides opportunity to significantly strengthen development regulations
- Foxhall Village masterplan helps provide a template for desired zoning and other regulatory controls
- Recent changes in city staff and leadership have led to an increased awareness for proactive planning

### 3.7 : TRANSPORTATION

**Major trend:** Truck traffic on Main Street poses a serious quality-of-life issue for residents and businesses

#### Issues

- Traffic safety and connectivity issues exist at railroad underpasses
- Overall pedestrian amenities are severely lacking throughout the city
- At railroad underpasses, structures are in disrepair; topography and lack of pedestrian accommodations are issues
- Lack of access between Highway 154 north of Highway 29 and I-85 via Phipps Road is a problem
- Bicycle riders are an underutilized asset and there are little to no dedicated routes or amenities for them

#### Opportunities

- Short-term LCI projects have been identified, including bicycle facility on Cobb Street, Main Street Streetscape and Church / Toombs one-way pairs
- City is eligible for LCI funds to pursue supplemental transportation studies
- Recent ARC regional freight study may provide guidance regarding truck issue
- Potential rewriting of zoning ordinance provides opportunity to ensure inter-parcel connectivity within new commercial development on Weldon Road, reducing traffic congestion around the I-85 gateway
- Potential for Palmetto to be integrated into ongoing PATH plans for the region

### 3.8 : INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

**Major trend:** The amount of new and expanded neighboring jurisdictions in the area require a greater level of communication and coordination between municipalities.

#### Issues

- Anticipated transportation issues along Highway 154 associated with growth along South Fulton Parkway corridor
- Desired changes to Fulton County-associated facilities and services including water, schools, parks and recreation centers
- Potential annexations along neighboring jurisdictional lines

#### Opportunities

- South Fulton Municipal Regional Water and Sewer Authority provides an opportunity to improve governmental relations and water infrastructure
- Forthcoming library being planned in collaboration with Fulton County
- Potential for capital improvements spanning jurisdictional lines such as South Fulton CID improvements and interstate access at Gullat Road





## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES MATRIX

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	HOUSING	NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES	TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION	COMMUNITY FACILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Mixed-Use Zoning Category</li> <li>• Revise ordinance so that “neo-traditional” development is easier to build “by right”</li> <li>• Create a “development guidebook”</li> <li>• Increase regulations on building aesthetics and signage</li> <li>• Utility lines should be buried in downtown</li> <li>• There is a visual blight along the railroad side of Main Street from vacant buildings and retail clutter</li> <li>• The Carlton Road / Highway 154 area should be studied to accommodate future growth</li> <li>• If realized, the Foxhall Village development can be a major asset</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enact policies that support more local goods and services in Downtown area</li> <li>• Create annexation plan</li> <li>• Choices for local retail, restaurants and other goods and services are limited in Palmetto</li> <li>• Although growth is anticipated, Palmetto needs to retain its “small-town” feeling</li> <li>• Downtown Palmetto should be an attraction for other cities or areas in the region</li> <li>• Bicycle riders are an underutilized asset</li> <li>• There is a lack of clear definition to Main Street in downtown - curb cuts are excessive and uncontrolled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enact policies that allow wide range of housing types and price points</li> <li>• Revise zoning to allow “small lot” homes (smaller than 5k SF)</li> <li>• Quality of housing needs to improve</li> <li>• Housing foreclosures are a problem that needs to be addressed</li> <li>• Some apartment complexes are poorly maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct historic survey, designate historic resources, establish historic district(s)</li> <li>• Increase regulations to ensure historically-compatible development</li> <li>• Create an open space/ land conservation plan</li> <li>• The railroad underpasses are important components, but they need to be fixed up</li> <li>• Restoration of the Train Depot should be a precedent for other preservation projects</li> <li>• Palmetto should be marketed as a historic destination</li> <li>• Rural characteristics give a sense of place, but many are disappearing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with ARC on freight study to help inform issue of truck traffic</li> <li>• Enact policies that ensure pedestrian amenities and connections as per LCI recommendations</li> <li>• Revise zoning to allow for shared parking between adjacent uses</li> <li>• Work with MARTA on bus stop upgrades and improve accessibility to stops</li> <li>• Maximize the connectivity potential of the proposed Hill Country greenway</li> <li>• Connections between the two sides of the railroad need to be improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Elementary School’s facility and accessibility to surrounding neighborhoods</li> <li>• Create a capital improvements program</li> <li>• Work with Fulton County on design standards for new Library</li> <li>• Explore sites for future fire station</li> <li>• There is a lack of active recreation space for youth</li> <li>• Crime is a problem in some areas of town</li> <li>• Community facilities, gathering spaces and civic uses need to be more centrally-located to Downtown</li> </ul>



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM						
Project	5 year goal	10 year goal	10+ year goal	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
POPULATION CHANGE						
In order to accommodate shifts in market and population demand, revise zoning ordinance to include a regulatory framework conducive to a wide range of residential types and sizes	X			Can be done as part of zoning study	City	City
Initiate a dialogue and work with Fulton County to plan for shifts in local school districts		X		N/A	City, Fulton County	City, Fulton County
LAND USE						
Rewrite zoning ordinance to include a mixed-use category, incorporate a design guidelines package, adjust minimum-allowed residential lot sizes, reevaluate open space requirements and include any zoning overlay areas	X			\$75,000	City	City
Prepare a detailed subarea plan for and area approximately one-half mile from the Carlton Road / Highway 154 intersection, considering land use / development strategies to promote a walkable, mixed-use activity center complementary to the historic downtown area	X			\$40,000	LCI, GDOT, City	City, GDOT
Control potential strip commercial development along Highway 29 with an access management strategy, corridor overlay or other regulatory mechanism		X		Can be done as part of subarea plan	LCI, GDOT, City	City
Prepare an infrastructure development plan and design guidelines package for the undeveloped land around Johnston Circle, to encourage sustainable office development		X		Staff Time	City	City
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
Prepare a design guidelines package that includes recommendations for building aesthetics, single-family infill housing, landscape buffers, signage and sustainability measures	X			\$25,000	City	City
Study the potential for development (small office, commercial, multifamily, mixed-use) and recruitment strategies as part of the "Downtown North" subarea plan described above	X			Can be done as part of subarea plan	LCI, GDOT, City	City
Work with developer to refine Foxhall Village masterplan to minimize cul-de-sacs in Village General areas		X		Staff Time	City, Merrill	City, Merrill
Undertake a local economic development analysis to evaluate the city's assets and deficiencies against current and future investment in the I-85 corridor, possibly with the assistance of GA Tech		X		Staff Time, Student Time	City, GA Tech	City, GA Tech
Work with business owners to improve the conditions of their property following the recommendations of the design guidelines		X		Staff Time	City	City

*\*Items in grey are long-term implementation efforts*





Project	5 year goal	10 year goal	10+ year goal	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
Create a wayfinding / gateway signage program to better link I-85 to downtown (design and implementation)	X			\$25,000	City	City
Implement/install wayfinding/signage		X		\$125,000	LCI, City	City
<b>HOUSING</b>						
Explore ways of incentivizing housing development within immediate downtown area			X	Staff Time	City	City
Promote the construction of good quality affordable housing in the area around the Carlton Road / Highway 154 intersection		X		Staff Time	City	City
Reassess development plan for Princeton Village to determine the feasibility of improving connections to the surrounding areas and diversifying the housing product		X		Can be done as part of subarea plan	City	City
Work with developers of Foxhall Village to minimize number of single-family residential units west of Cochran Mill to no more than 600 (per DRI conditions)		X		Staff Time	City, Merrill	City, Merrill
<b>NATURAL &amp; CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>						
Prepare a historic properties survey and preservation strategy	X			Staff Time, Volunteer Time	City	City
Undertake a city-wide greenway/greenspace plan to protect and enhance stream corridors while improving connectivity, especially as a key component in PATH's planned South Fulton trail	X			\$30,000	City, County, PATH	City, PATH
Pursue designation of Wilkerson Mill Road and Cochran Mill Road corridors as scenic byways, and explore the feasibility of conservation easements to preserve their rural character	X			Staff Time	City	City
Work with developers of Foxhall Village masterplan		X		Staff Time	City	City
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES &amp; SERVICES</b>						
Conduct a needs assessment for future growth in municipal services to determine future facilities that might be added to create a municipal campus around the public safety building and planned library	2012	X		Staff Time	City	City
Conduct needs assessment for future growth in municipal services to determine the size/program for a potential new City Hall on Main Street			X	Staff Time	City	City
Formalize capital improvements program for recommended LCI projects	X			Staff Time	City	City

*\*Items in grey are long-term implementation efforts*



Project	5 year goal	10 year goal	10+ year goal	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Responsible Party
Pursue streetscape funding for Main Street, as per LCI plan	X			Staff Time	LCI, Local Match	City
Identify funds for purchase of land on Main Street for future public space		X		N/A	City	City
Work with developers of Foxhall Village to incorporate an Elementary School, Police Station and Fire Station into the masterplan		X		Staff Time	City, Merrill	City, Merrill
Formalize a plan for extending sewer extensions to potential growth areas to the south, especially along Weldon Road	X			Staff Time	City	City
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>						
Pursue funding for a bicycle facility on Cobb Street, as per LCI plan	X			Staff Time	LCI, City	City
Prepare an alternate truck route facility study		X		N/A	City, ARC, GDOT	City, ARC, GDOT
Prepare a study for one-way pairs on Church and Toombs Streets	X			\$60,000	LCI, City	City
Undertake a traffic planning / engineering study as part of recommended "Downtown North" subarea plan to influence GDOT improvements	X			Can be done as part of subarea plan	City	City
Create new road connection to Foxhall Village from Highway 154			X	N/A	City, Merrill	City, Merrill
Improve portions of Cochran Mill Road in concert with first phase of Foxhall Village implementation.			X	City, Merrill	City, Merrill	
Encourage inter-parcel connectivity between future development sites along Weldon Road to minimize long-term traffic congestion in the area	X			City	City	
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>						
Implement a citywide annexation plan		X			City	City
Continue to work with South Fulton Municipal Regional Water and Sewer Authority to improve area water infrastructure	X				City, neighboring jurisdictions	City, neighboring jurisdictions
Initiate a dialogue with Fulton County to determine potential expansion and improvements to Wilkerson Mill-Farris Park, including potentially expanding Farris Park to Highway 29			X		City, Fulton County	City, Fulton County

*\*Items in grey are long-term implementation efforts*

