



City of Grayson

475 Grayson Parkway
P. O. Box 208
Grayson, GA 30017
(770) 963-8017

November 20, 2018

Atlanta Regional Commission
229 Peachtree Street #100
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Grayson has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan<s> covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Steve Sappington, City Planner at 740ss@ppi.us or 770-338-8149.

Sincerely,


Allison Wilkerson
Mayor
City of Grayson

Enclosures

COUNTY OF GWINNETT
STATE OF GEORGIA

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF
THE GRAYSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040 – 2018 UPDATE TO THE ATLANTA
REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT PURSUANT TO STATE OF
GEORGIA LOCAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS**

WHEREAS, a Comprehensive Plan is required for municipalities and counties in Georgia in order to maintain their Qualified Local Government Status; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan must be updated from time to time per State law; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grayson has prepared a Comprehensive Plan Update with the assistance of the citizens and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Community Affairs requires that the City of Grayson submit the Comprehensive Plan Update for regional and state review; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grayson held an advertised public hearing on November 19, 2018, the purpose of which was to obtain input on the Update and notify the community of when the Update will be transmitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission for review;

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Grayson that the Grayson Comprehensive Plan 2040 – 2018 Update shall be submitted for regional and state review.

RESOLVED this 19th day of November, 2018.



Allison Wilkerson, Mayor

ATTEST



Laura Cone, City Administrator



GRAYSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040

CITY OF GRAYSON, GEORGIA | 2018 UPDATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Allison Wilkerson
Laurie Anderson
Bob Foreman
James Gillespie
Linda Jenkins

STEERING COMMITTEE

Suzanne Adams	Richard Parker
Blake Hawkins	Reginald Pearson
Chip Mitchell	Gene Ussery
Rodger Naugle	

CITY STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Laura Cone, City Administrator
Steve Sappington, City Planner
Joe Walter, AICP, Principal Planner

DRAFT

FOR COMMENT

11/15/18 DRAFT FOR ARC SUBMITTAL & REVIEW



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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Planning is a process required by the state of Georgia to ensure that all communities achieve minimum planning standards and procedures, especially as they relate to physical infrastructure. A Comprehensive Plan becomes a decision-making guide for local government officials and community leaders. This guide is based on input from the public and a steering committee, and it identifies needs and opportunities, goals and policies, land use practices, and an implementation framework for key programs.

This document is the latest major update to the City of Grayson's Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda that was adopted in 2009. This document affirms the city's big picture vision, defines goals and lays out a task list for city leaders, staff and citizens to address issues and to position the City of Grayson to be a more complete city by 2040. The Comprehensive Planning process was managed with the guidance and involvement of a Steering Committee, City Staff, Precision Planning, Inc., and the residents of Grayson.

The Steering Committee members were appointed by the Grayson City Council from the business community, civic leaders, residents, and other community involvement. The Steering Committee was instrumental in overseeing the planning process and guiding the development of the plan through public hearings and an Open House.

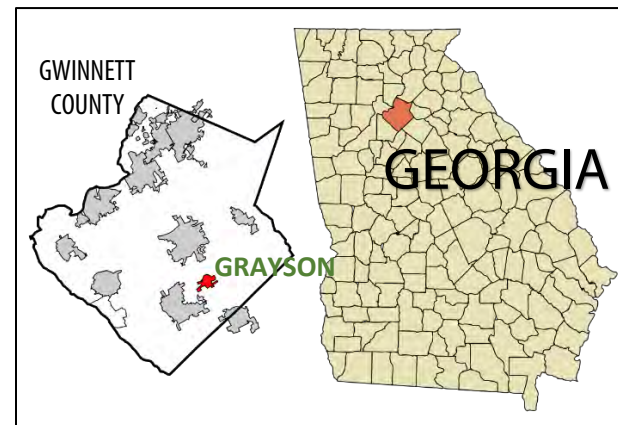
The Steering Committee members and Open House participants focused on the challenges and opportunities for the City of Grayson moving forward, as well as defining the key

assets and strengths of the City and, finally, why Grayson is a special and desirable place to live, work, and play. These challenges, opportunities, and assets are discussed in detail throughout this document.

This Comprehensive Plan and the planning process follows the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2014.

The Comprehensive Plan is organized by the following state-mandated elements:

- Community Goals
- Need and Opportunities
- Community Work Program
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing



BRIEF HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF GRAYSON

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.



Bell from Grayson United Methodist Church

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.

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 9th 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.



McConnell-Webb House



Stone livery stable converted to a dance studio

In 1956 Grayson High School was consolidated into South Gwinnett High School; the present Grayson 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.



Grayson School

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.



Old Post Office and town shops

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.



Kennerly-Cox House (a.k.a. Arts & History Center)



Chestnut Grove Baptist Church



Whispering Firs

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.

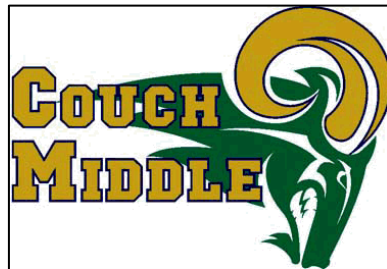
This brief historic overview of Grayson is taken from City of Grayson, GA Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda, 2009.

THE CHANGING FACE OF GRAYSON

2009-2018

As a part of the 2009 Comprehensive Planning process, a limited marketing analysis was conducted to analyze the future land use and growth outlook in Grayson. Since the writing and adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda in 2009, there have been many advances in Grayson towards maturation into a complete livable small town and a great expression of the City's policies, goals, and vision. To accommodate Grayson's population increase since the last plan update, several new private and capital projects and land use improvements have developed:

Public Projects



- Starling Elementary School and Couch Middle School opened in 2009
- Grayson Arts & History Center Parking Lot
- Bennett Road Realignment
- SR 20 Median Landscaping



- 438 Grayson Parkway City Building renovated in 2012
- Rosebud Road @ Grayson Parkway Intersection Improvement
- Neighborhood Street Resurfacing Program



- Grayson Park Porous Paver Parking Lot completed in 2017



o Clock Tower & Streetscape on SR 20



o Grayson Ampavilion completed in 2018



o Rosebud Road @ Grayson Parkway Intersection - 2015



o Rosebud Road @ Grayson Parkway Intersection - 2018

Commercial / Retail Projects



○ The Benton House



- Dogwood Forest of Grayson
- Parkside at Grayson buildout
- Grayson Industrial Park Sanitary Sewer Installation
- Atlanta JayHawks Gymnasium



○ Beverage Superstore of Grayson



- Champion Storage Addition
- Gwinnett School of Dance Building
- Dunkin' Donuts

Housing

The following single-family neighborhoods were in various stages of development prior to the Great Recession of 2007-2009, and have completed housing buildout after a sluggish recovering housing market:

- Sawyer Farms
- Olde Town Grayson
- Madison Park
- Georgetown Commons Phase 2
- Georgetown Commons Phase 1 (nearing buildout)
- Windsor Creek Reserve (nearing buildout)
- Arbors of Grayson
- Wilshire Manor
- Pine Grove Village



○ Wilshire Manor



○ Pine Grove Village



Georgetown Commons Phase 1 near buildout, Georgetown Commons Phase 2 at buildout, The Arbors of Grayson at buildout, and Madison Park at buildout - 2018

GRAYSON AT A GLANCE

4,195 persons LIVE in Grayson in 2017, a 57% increase from 2010	MEDIAN AGE 42.3 years in 2016	POPULATION makeup Whites 63% Blacks 26% Asians 8%	961 HOUSING UNITS/98% OCCUPANCY
14.5% of RESIDENTS are FOREIGN born	18.2% of RESIDENTS are 19 and UNDER	46% of EMPLOYED residents WORK in MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS, SCIENCE or the ARTS	77% OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS
17.8% of residents are 65 and OLDER	26% of EMPLOYED residents WORK in SALES and OFFICE occupations	14% of EMPLOYED residents WORK from HOME	94% of RESIDENTS GRADUATED from HIGH SCHOOL
14% of EMPLOYED residents WORK in SERVICE occupations	5% of Grayson RESIDENTS are VETERANS	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME \$84,514	67% of EMPLOYED residents WORK in GWINNETT County

COMMUNITY INPUT

The City of Grayson established several different means for the public to provide input on the Plan Update, including forming a Steering Committee, which held regular meetings; conducting an online survey, conducting an Open House on August 20, 2018 and holding the two mandated Public Hearings on March 19, 2018 and November 19, 2018.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was made up of local residents, business owners, retired citizens and provided a good cross section of interests within the community. The Steering Committee was comprised of:

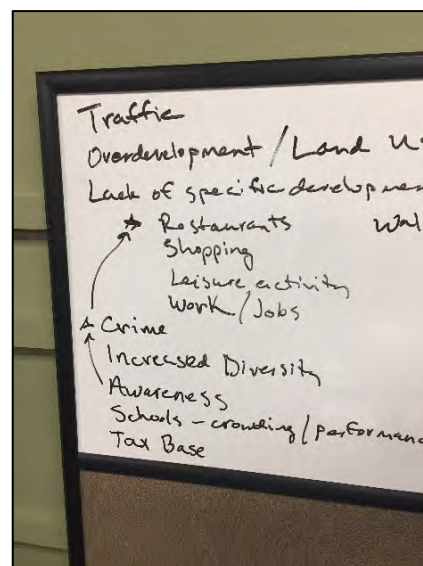
- **Suzanne Adams**, Local businessperson and former resident
- **Chip Mitchell**, Grayson DDA Chairperson, resident and realtor
- **Blake Hawkins**, Grayson resident and senior services advocate
- **Rodger Naugle**, Grayson resident
- **Richard Parker**, Grayson resident and local business owner
- **Reginald Pearson**, marketing professional and travel blogger
- **Gene Ussery**, Grayson resident and retired Georgia Power Vice President (and incoming Councilmember)

The Steering Committee met on the following dates:

- **June 18, 2018** – topics included a general introduction and purpose of the project. Committee members dove right in to the discussion about what makes Grayson special and what forces of change are at work in the area. Discussion topics included “What does Grayson want to be when we grow up?”, “Is Grayson still a retirement community?”, “How do we make Grayson more walkable?”, and “Proposed Growth, where will it grow?”
- **July 16, 2018** – Review of demographics and population characteristics and follow up discussion on the topics raised at the June meeting. Discussion was also held about the policies from the current Comprehensive Plan and how well did they “stand up” over the last ten years. The current plan indicated the desire for Grayson to become a more retirement-oriented community and there have been several developments that are primarily geared towards senior citizens. There was significant discussion about was it a good idea to continue promoting Grayson as a retirement-type community.
- **August 20, 2018** (Open House)
- **September 17, 2018** – The results of the online survey were discussed in great detail and common themes were drawn out from the survey answers. There was considerable discussion about the perception of crime in

Grayson (from the survey) and the fact that statistics show otherwise. There was also discussion about traffic through Grayson, walkability and connectivity in the community, the lack of identity of the area and how does the City retain the small town charm while growing. The Committee members also reviewed several maps and drew out some sandbox scenarios for future development in the Uptown Grayson area of the City.

- **October 1, 2018** – Steering committee members continued to clarify proposed policies and defined a future vision for the City – to become a “complete city,” one that has all the aspects of a traditional small town. Other policy aspects to arise out of the discussion include: retaining small town charm; improved connectivity; increase mixed use development (similar to the Railyard) in the Uptown Grayson area; promote diversification of retail base and promote increased office uses within the City. The committee also reviewed the proposed Land Use Character area descriptions.
- **November 1, 2018** – The final meeting of the Steering Committee involved a wrap up discussion about the planning process and a review of the Short Term Work Program Report of Accomplishments and the proposed new work program. The members offered their input on the draft work items and helped refine the language to tie back into the stated goals and policies.

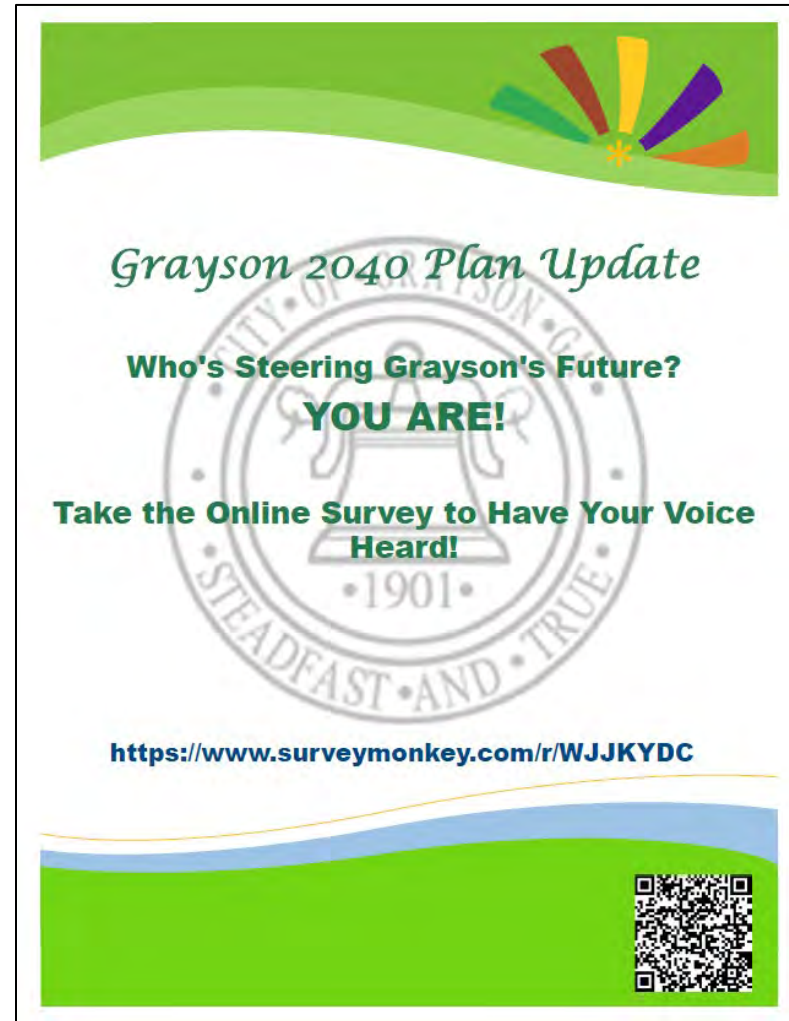


ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey tool was used to gather input from the community about a variety of subjects. The survey tool was launched in August 16, 2018 and ran for about 45 days. The survey was publicized through:

- Postcards with the survey link and QR code were handed out at the Open House and were available at City Hall
- Signs were posted in 13 locations in and around Grayson
- The survey link was emailed out to the Homeowners Associations (HOAs) in the City
- The link was posted on several social media platforms

The survey contained 16 questions and was structured similar to online surveys for adjoining communities. The survey yielded 627 responses. The preliminary results were presented at the September 18, 2018 Steering Committee meeting. One caveat is that the survey was open to all, so roughly 60% of the respondents live in the Grayson area but could not be positively identified (through checking their neighborhood location) as a resident of the City of Grayson. Therefore, many of these answers should be construed to represent the Grayson area more so than the City of Grayson.



SURVEY RESULTS

The questions asked about a number of subjects, from the location of the respondent and the neighborhood they lived in; what they liked about Grayson; what they would like to change and the obstacles facing Grayson in the future. Here is a summary of some of the questions and how they were answered:

Residents - 538 (86.5%) responded that they were a resident of Grayson. (Note that many of the responses came from residents with a Grayson zip code, but not a City resident).

Age Groups – The largest category of survey respondents fell into the 45-54 age group (167, or 26.9%), followed by the 35-44 age group (138, or 22.2%) and the 55-64 age group (131, or 21.1%).

How Long Living in Grayson? – The responses varied from 1945 to 2018, with most of the responses falling into the 2010s, which mirrors the significant growth of the City between 2010 and 2017.

Staying In Grayson in 20 years? – The responses were roughly even (311, or 50.3% yes and 307, or 49.7% no), for those indicating that they would still be in Grayson in 20 years. The reasons for leaving in the future were varied, with the responses dependent upon the age of the survey taker. Many older residents indicated that they didn't expect to live that long; middle aged residents indicated the growth and congestion of the area and the younger residents generally

indicated that there were other communities that offered more opportunities.

[illegible]

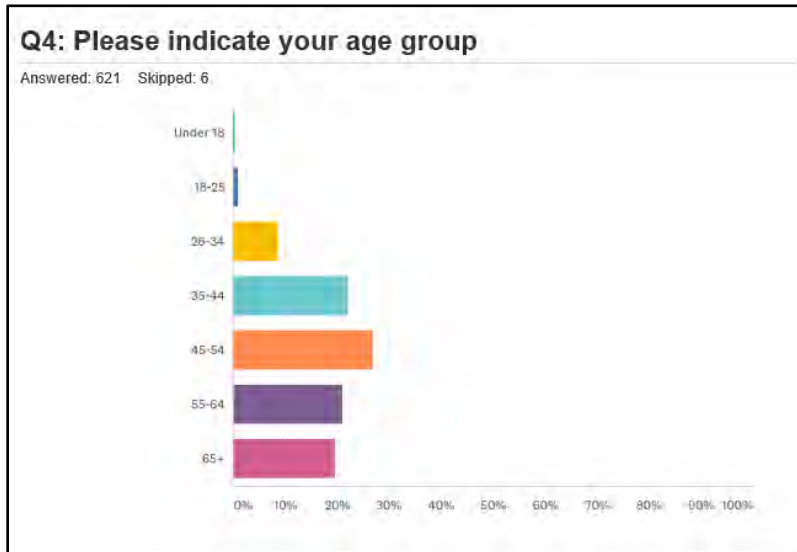
Why Did You Move to Grayson?_– This question allowed the respondents to select from several answers. Small town charm was the top vote getter with 419 total votes (69% of the respondents), followed by quality of the public schools (311 votes, or 51%), affordable housing (213 votes, 35%) and parks and recreation opportunities (206 votes, or 34%).

Biggest Obstacle Facing Grayson today (besides traffic)? –

598 respondents answered this question with their opinion. The types of answers varied, but several comments were mentioned multiple times:

- Crime (too much crime, high crime, etc.)
- Growth (too fast, wrong type, etc.)
- Schools (poor quality, overcrowding of schools)
- Crowded, or overcrowded
- Lack of shopping opportunities

- Vibrant downtowns
- Retail (malls, shopping centers, etc.)
- Cultural events
- Restaurants (diversity, many answers said Grayson lacked enough choices in eating establishments)
- Trails, parks and connected spaces



Quality of Life – 623 respondents rated several items as to how they related to the quality of life in Grayson. The question asked the survey takers to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (not important to very important) eight different factors. The highest rated factor was strong public safety (weighted average of 4.74 out of 5), followed by quality of public schools (4.48/5) prosperity of the community (4.33/5), parks and recreation (4.2/5) and a sense of place 4.15/5)

Q16: From a score of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important), please rank the items below in how they relate or could relate to your quality of life in Grayson:

Answered: 623 Skipped: 4

What kinds of places do you visit in other communities, but do not exist in Grayson? –

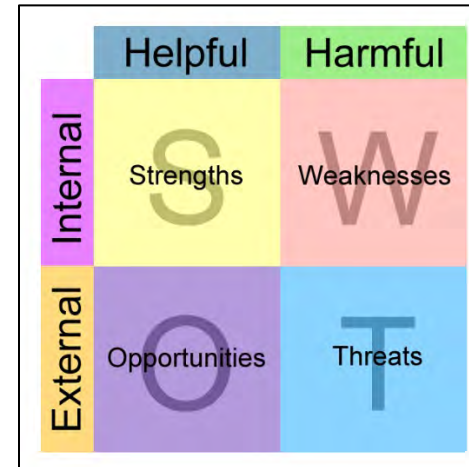
559 responses were collected for this answer with a wide variety of places. Common answers included:

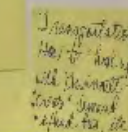
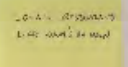
If there was one thing that you could change about Grayson, what would it be? – 569 survey takers answered this question and provided a wide range of answers. Many respondents were concerned about the pace of growth in the area and were also worried about traffic, apartments, overcrowding of schools, signage and infrastructure. There were also a number of comments about more varieties of places to eat and shop.

	NOT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Availability of walkable communities	4.19% 26	10.65% 66	26.29% 163	23.06% 143	35.81% 222	620	3.76
Quality of public school system	5.66% 35	1.13% 7	9.39% 58	6.96% 43	76.86% 475	618	4.48
Sense of place	1.14% 7	3.09% 19	22.64% 139	25.41% 156	47.72% 293	614	4.15
Prosperity of the community	0.32% 2	1.46% 9	18.51% 114	24.19% 149	55.52% 342	616	4.33
Parks and recreation	0.81% 5	1.95% 12	19.16% 118	32.63% 201	45.45% 280	616	4.20
strong public safety (police, fire, EMS)	0.32% 2	0.32% 2	6.79% 42	9.85% 61	82.71% 512	619	4.74
Proximity to jobs	8.20% 50	15.74% 96	29.84% 182	24.75% 151	21.48% 131	610	3.36
Proximity to shopping	3.72% 23	9.39% 58	29.29% 181	29.61% 183	27.99% 173	618	3.69

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

A Public Open House was held on August 20, 2018 at the Grayson Senior Center from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Consultants presented the framework of the planning process and led the attendees through several exercises including a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) analysis, where residents were given sticky notes to answer four questions about their community.







Obstacles That Grayson Faces

Threats

The City of Grayson is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. As a part of this update, it is important to understand what the citizens of Grayson find to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the City of Grayson. Understanding these points is the foundation for developing policies for a successful future.

What elements should the City of Grayson consider that could cause trouble for a success future?

LOSING
SENSE OF
PLACE

I would like to see more thoughtful growth in the city. Not just more buildings, but more thoughtful growth in the type of buildings we build and the way we build them.

1. Better and more thoughtful growth in the city.
2. More thoughtful growth in the type of buildings we build and the way we build them.
3. More thoughtful growth in the type of buildings we build and the way we build them.

IDENTITY
we are losing
our sense of
place and
our identity

City economy
Unemployment

Understanding that each person has their own perspective on the city. But we need to understand the city as a whole and the way we build it.

Connect neighborhood

Demographic shift to post



Things To Improve About Grayson

Weaknesses

The City of Grayson is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. As a part of this update, it is important to understand what the citizens of Grayson find to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the City of Grayson. Understanding these points is the foundation for developing policies for a successful future.

What characteristics does the City of Grayson have that place it at a disadvantage relative to other communities?

LACK OF
LARGE
INDUSTRY

Add a Recycling
Center with
change bins

Reduction in
government

4. More and better housing
5. More and better housing
6. More and better housing
7. More and better housing
8. More and better housing
9. More and better housing
10. More and better housing

Decrease
Flow
Traffic

1. Traffic
2. Traffic
3. Traffic
4. Traffic
5. Traffic
6. Traffic
7. Traffic
8. Traffic
9. Traffic
10. Traffic

More office
space, as well
as residential
and commercial

Street and
Road layout
especially along
20

More and better housing
5. More and better housing
6. More and better housing
7. More and better housing
8. More and better housing
9. More and better housing
10. More and better housing

RESULTS OF COMMUNITY INPUT

The effort to gain input from the community and interested parties yielded some important information to build on for the preparation of the Plan Update. The Steering Committee reviewed the results of the input gained from the Open House and the online survey. The Steering Committee spent several sessions reviewing the input from the Open House and the surveys and used the information to form the goals and policies outlined in this plan.

GRAYSON'S STRENGTHS (FROM OPEN HOUSE)

- SMALL TOWN CHARM
- CLEAN, QUIET PARK
- VERY QUIET
- LOW CRIME
- CONVENIENCE
- "CENTRALIZED" DOWNTOWN DISTRICT (LIKE MONROE/ROSWELL)
- UNIQUE, NON-FRANCHISE DEVELOPMENT
- THE BENCHES AND CITY LIGHTS
- LANDSCAPING ON MEDIANS OF SR 20
- LOCAL RESTAURANTS LIKE SAM'S ON MAIN

GRAYSON'S CHALLENGES (FROM OPEN HOUSE)

- LACK OF LARGE INDUSTRY
- NO RECYCLING CENTER THAT CHARGES
- THRU TRAFFIC
- DIRTY, FILTHY, JUNKY CURBS AT THE LIGHTS AND "ISLANDS" DOWN THE HIGHWAY.
- TRAFFIC CHALLENGES
- LACK OF WALKABILITY – RISK OF WALKING
- NO OBVIOUS PLAN FOR GROWTH
- BETTER COMMUNICATION
- MORE INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP
- MORE OFFICE AND RETAIL, AS WELL AS RESIDENTIAL CONDOS/TOWNHOMES
- NO WALKING PATHS AND TRAILS

GRAYSON'S OPPORTUNITIES (FROM OPEN HOUSE)

- THRU TRAFFIC – STOPPING AND SHOPPING!
- SIDEWALKS ARE GREAT WAYS TO IMPROVE WALKABILITY
- HAVE MORE EVENTS AND THINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OR THEY MOVE AWAY (THE POPULATION LOOKS VERY OLD)
- "FIND WAYS" TO ACCOMMODATE JOBS
- HAVE GRAYSON NEIGHBORHOODS WORK CLOSER TOGETHER
- COMPACTNESS – MAKES IT EASIER TO IMPLEMENT WALKABILITY
- PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AT ROSEBUD AND HWY 20
- IDENTITY MARKERS AT CITY LIMITS
- MONITOR DEVELOPERS – INSURE THAT THEY COMPLY WITH THE PLANS THEY SUBMIT
- ALDI/COSTCO
- "CONSIDER BUSINESSES OR OFFICES FOR MEDICAL AND PHARMACY ENVIRONMENT – THIS IS GROWING AND HIGH TECH"
- MORE PARKS (SMALLER)/POCKET PARKS/ WALKING TRAILS!
- DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION – CREATE TO MEET AND TRADE INFO FOR SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENTS
- OFFICE/RETAIL TOWNHOMES/CONDOS
- TRANSPORTATION – HOW TO HOOK UP WITH GWINNETT: CREATE DEMAND AND "EXTEND BUS, ETC."
- A FEW MORE ATTRACTIVE (OR A) LATE NIGHT DINING PLACE – MOST PLACES CLOSE AT 10PM
- REVAMP STANDARDS FOR WATER MANAGEMENT – REQUIRE STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

GRAYSON'S CHALLENGES (FROM OPEN HOUSE)

- LOSING SENSE OF PLACE
- CITY BECOMING UNKEMPT
- DISREPUTABLE DEVELOPERS
- CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS
- I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE THOUGHTFUL GROWTH IN THE CITY OF GRAYSON. RESTRICTIONS ON THE TYPE OF BUSINESS SO WE DON'T HAVE UNDESIRABLE BUSINESSES SUCH AS THE VAPOR STORE.
- UNDERSTANDING THAT BRICK AND MORTAR BUSINESSES ARE NOT PART OF THE FUTURE. ONLY PERSONAL SERVICES WILL BE HOUSED IN BUILDINGS.
- IDENTITY – NO ONE KNOWS WHEN THEY DRIVE THROUGH GRAYSON THAT THEY ARE IN GRAYSON!
- BUILDERS THAT FAIL TO DELIVER
- NEIGHBORHOODS THAT LACK SUPPORT FROM COUNCIL
- FRESH IDEAS ON COUNCIL
- NO OBVIOUS LEADERSHIP – GLAD HANDING IS NOT LEADING

COMMUNITY VISION

THE CURRENT CONDITION

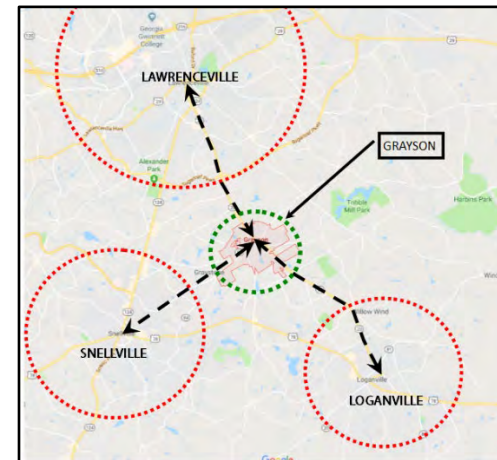
The City of Grayson is an older, established city that has seen rapid growth in the last ten years within the City limits. Grayson's unofficial nickname has been **"Gwinnett's Best Kept Secret!"** Grayson sits in a unique spot between Lawrenceville, the County seat, Snellville and Loganville, which straddles Gwinnett and Walton Counties. Lawrenceville and Loganville are connected by SR 20, which passes through Grayson. SR 20 is a vital part of the area because of the access to larger markets, employment and opportunities for Grayson residents and businesses. SR 20 is also the source of many headaches due to the through traffic congestion. The long term plan is to widen SR 20 from four to six lanes through Grayson, so the residents and businesses will continue to cope with increasing levels of traffic congestion.

Additionally, in recent years, the extension of sewer into the area has opened up the area between Grayson and Loganville along SR 20 for some larger scale developments (Independence, Bay Creek Park and other County facilities, and Grayson High School - to name a few). As growth continues to push outward from Lawrenceville and Loganville along SR 20 and along SR 84 from Snellville, Grayson stands a good chance of getting swallowed up in the "suburbia." As mentioned in several steering committee meetings, the "best kept secret" is out in the open.

THE VISION

The public input obtained during the planning process was clear along several fronts: Grayson should have the amenities

and opportunities for residents and businesses to "live and shop" locally; that the City should be better connected for people to access locations without having to fight traffic every time; that the City have more opportunities for public gatherings and unplanned encounters so that the residents feel a part of the City; that the City should be welcoming to all age groups. In other words, a "Complete City." The goals and policies outlined in the following sections will highlight steps that the City can take to enact this vision.



THE VISION - Grayson should have the amenities and opportunities for residents and businesses to "live and shop" locally; that the City should be better connected for people to access locations without having to fight traffic every time; that the City have more opportunities for public gatherings and unplanned encounters so that the residents feel a part of the City that the City should be welcoming to all age groups. In other words, a "Complete City."

COMMUNITY-WIDE GOALS

COMMUNITY GOALS

Through the plan update process, the Steering Committee and stakeholders identified several community wide goals that the City wishes to work toward as to fulfill the overall vision for the City of Grayson to become a “Complete, self-sustaining city.” The Community-wide Goals identified in this Plan Update are:

Retain Small Town Charm While Growing: Grayson has been known as “Gwinnett’s Best Kept Secret” for many years, but the secret is out. Grayson wishes to grow into a more complete city while retaining the small town feeling that residents and businesses enjoy.

Encourage Continued Growth of Uptown Grayson outside of the “Triangle”: To help promote a sense of identity and build upon the idea of a complete community, Grayson needs to expand mixed use and “downtown”-type growth beyond the triangular area between (and adjacent to) SR 20, Rosebud Road and SR 84.

Improve Walkability and Connectivity: Grayson has many neighborhoods with no real connection to the town center and public amenities. Grayson needs to improve walkability from residences to the growing town center while working with County and State partners to improve connectivity of local roads.

Maintain a Healthy Balance of Age Groups in the Community: The 2009 Comprehensive Plan placed an emphasis on Grayson being a great location for senior housing and retirement communities. Grayson has seen several successful senior developments come to the City, but there is a concern that the opportunities for school age children and millennial residents may be reduced.



COMMUNITY POLICIES

NATURAL RESOURCES

1. **Environmentally Sensitive Areas.** Prevent development from occurring in, or significantly encroaching upon environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains and wetlands.
2. **Water Quality.** The location and intensity of development should be sited so as to minimize the negative effects of that development on water quality. The City should continue to promote and encourage Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development (GI/LID) techniques for storm water management on public and private developments.
3. **Pervious Surfaces.** Encourage use of pervious surfaces whenever possible, to increase groundwater infiltration, such as the City Hall/Park parking lot expansion.



4. **Wetlands.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or mitigate wetland loss through wetland mitigation banking.

5. **Flood Ways and Flood Plains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains.
6. **Flood Insurance Program.** Continue the City's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
7. **Conservation Subdivisions.** Where opportunities exist, encourage conservation subdivision development to retain green space within the City.
8. **Street Trees.** Require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
9. **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.
10. **Open Space.** Require a certain percentage of land be set aside for green space in new land developments.
11. **Sustainability and Energy Efficiency.** Promote sustainable and energy-efficient development.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

1. **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. This policy is especially important to apply to the Uptown Grayson character area.

2. **Protect Historic Resources.** Provide strategies to preserve and enhance historic resources. Older residential structures within the City should be preserved and renovated where practicable, instead of demolition.

HOUSING

1. **Mixed Use Development.** Grayson should promote mixed use development for vacant properties and areas where redevelopment is feasible. A variety of uses within one area, connected by pedestrian improvements, would improve the connectivity and walkability of the community while offering a variety of housing choices.
2. **Accessible Senior Housing.** Houses should continue to be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways.
3. **Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.



4. **Single-Family Residential Character.** Maintain the low-density character of Grayson's existing single-family residential neighborhoods.
5. **Incompatibilities.** Protect existing residential development from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
6. **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.
7. **Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Provide opportunities for traditional neighborhood development in locations between Uptown Grayson and established, low density, detached, single-family neighborhoods.
8. **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.
9. **Location of Attached Housing.** Limit attached housing to the Uptown Grayson area, preferably as a part of a mixed use project through stacked flats, granny flats or other types of attached houses.
10. **Apartments.** Freestanding apartments are discouraged as there are numerous apartment complexes around Grayson in the County.
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. **Rebranding.** Grayson should engage in an effort to develop a new civic “brand” or identity as a part of drawing attention to the special qualities that the City possesses.
2. **Gateway and Identification.** Together with the new branding effort, Grayson should install new gateway and wayfinding signage with a common theme to mark the city limits and to guide visitors.
3. **Market Analysis Study.** Grayson should conduct a market study to identify potential retail and office/service employment needs/demand for the City. Public input has been strong for more locally-flavored restaurants.
4. **Employment Options.** A range of job types should be encouraged in Grayson to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce and to offer the opportunity to work locally.
5. **Educational Opportunities.** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in and around the City – to permit City residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.
6. **Office Spaces.** Grayson should encourage the continued development of office space in the community to offer more residents the opportunity to work locally.
7. **Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the City.
8. **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.

9. **Downtown Development Authority.** Continue to support the efforts of the Downtown Development Authority.
10. **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 Character Area Map as a guide to decision-making.
2. **Uptown Grayson.** New mixed use, pedestrian friendly development opportunities should be encouraged in the Uptown Grayson area. These opportunities should connect to neighborhoods and other public spaces in Grayson through sidewalks and trails.
3. **Commercial and Offices.** Encourage commercial and office development where appropriate in the City.
4. **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.
5. **Light Industry.** Discourage light industrial development

outside of Grayson Industrial Park area.

6. **Update Planned Unit Development Requirements.** Update the Planned Unit Provisions (PUD) of the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the desire for more mixed use development within the City.
7. **Code Enforcement.** Increase code enforcement activities within the City. (The City is weighing the possibility of creating a City Marshal post that would be responsible for code enforcement, among other activities.)

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. **Streetscapes and Aesthetic Enhancements.** Improve the visual quality of local streets and state routes through streetscape improvements (e.g., sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, etc.).
4. **Streetscape Standards.** Streetscape lighting, furniture and other standards should continue to be required to promote walkability and interconnectivity.
5. **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.



6. **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.
7. **Lighting.** Continue to require lighting standards from the Zoning Ordinance that enhance pedestrian safety.
8. **Beautification.** Support community-based partnerships for streetscape beautification.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. **Parks and Recreation.** Investigate areas around the Uptown Grayson area to expand or improve upon Grayson City Park as an additional amenity for citizens that is connected to neighborhoods and commercial opportunities.
2. **Ampavilion.** Continue to support the marketing and use of the new Ampavilion at Grayson City Park as an entertainment destination.
3. **History and Cultural Resources.** Continue to support historic preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the City of Grayson by continuing to provide a history center.



4. **Civic Space/City Hall.** Consider the long term needs for administrative space for city government functions.
5. **Public Safety.** Continue to coordinate with Gwinnett County on law enforcement within the City. Support a new City Marshal's position through adequate funding.

6. **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.



7. **Sewerage.** Coordinate with Gwinnett County to expand sewerage services, promoting increased opportunities for desired types of development, especially in the Uptown Grayson area.
8. **Solid Waste Management.** Implement the City's comprehensive solid waste management plan.
9. **Stormwater Management.** Continue to work with Gwinnett County on MS4 compliance and through the implementation of a new 5 year stormwater management plan.

10. **Broadband Access.** Support the provision of broadband and internet access throughout the community. Review Development Regulations for any policies that need updating to support broadband infrastructure on public rights-of-way.

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. Expand an accessible pedestrian network throughout the City. Connect “missing” sidewalk sections on public streets.
4. **Multi-use Trails.** Pursue opportunities to construct multi-use trails within designated greenways in the City as outlined in the City’s Pedestrian Improvement Plan.
5. **Connectivity and Inter-parcel Access.** During site plan and development permit review, measures should be made to connect compatible land developments through inter-parcel access.
6. **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.



7. **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.
8. **Public Transportation.** Monitor the implementation of the Gwinnett County Transit Plan and, where possible, work to set aside areas for future transit stops.

ANNEXATION

1. **Opportunities.** Consider municipal boundary expansion opportunities as appropriate, including properties identified as potential annexation areas and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation.
2. **Relation to Small Town Character.** Annexation should

not take place if it would substantially transform the City or detract from the desire to retain small town charm.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

1. **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. **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.
5. **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.
6. **Resolution of Land Use Conflicts.** Work with the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to avoid potential land use conflicts and service delivery issues in the areas surrounding the city limits.
7. **Water, Sewer, and Stormwater.** Work with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District to

implement its adopted plans.

8. **Educational Support.** Continue to support local school in Grayson through participation/sponsorship in school activities.



LAND USE

FUTURE LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

While all components of the Comprehensive Plan are central to implementation of the City's vision and policies, it is the land use element that is the most influential in terms of everyday decision-making. The land use element is most often cited in support or denial of zoning and other land use changes. In lieu of a more conventional Future Land Use Map, the City of Grayson introduced its first Character Area Map in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. It has since been assessed by the steering committee and refined for use in the 2019 update.

CHARACTER AREAS

A Character Area is defined as a specific geographic area or district that:

- has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced,
- has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance, or
- requires special attention due to a unique development issue.

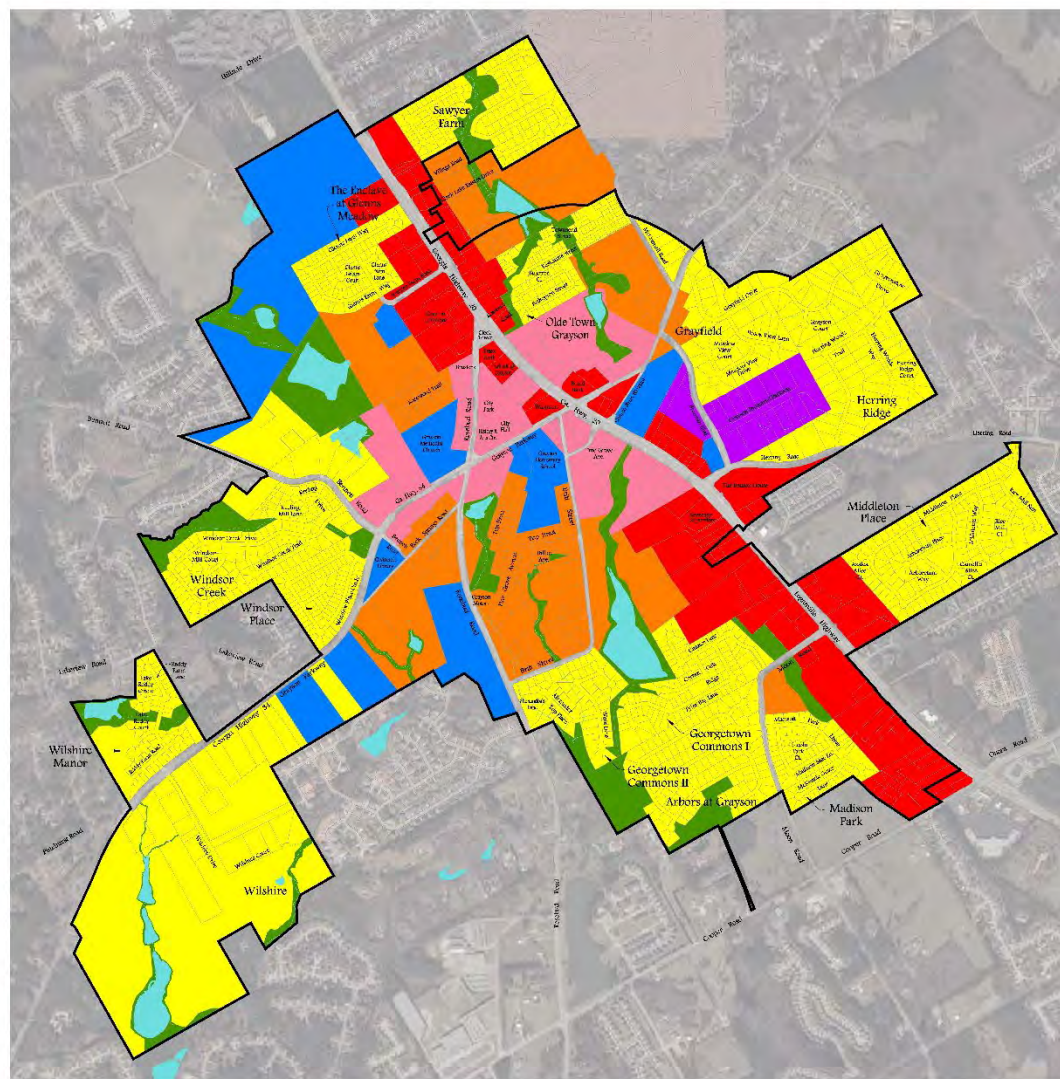
Each Character Area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, focused planning and implementation of certain policies, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community goals.

Grayson's Character Area Map is presented on the next page, and the remainder of this section presents the individually updated Character Area. For each Character Area, a description of the area is provided including a section for Vision, Uses and Intensities, Major Features, Implementation Measures, and Policies.










The unique purpose of geography is to seek comprehension of the variable character of areas in terms of all the interrelated features which together form that variable character.

- Richard Hartshorne -



LEGEND

-  Conservation
-  Suburban Residential
-  Traditional Neighborhood
-  Institutional Campus
-  S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor
-  Uptown Center
-  Industrial Campus

Date: September 26, 2018
Prepared by:

[illegible]

Character Area Map

City of Grayson, Georgia

September 21, 1975

CONSERVATION

VISION

A system of open space, environmentally sensitive lands and riparian corridors that protect the environment, enhance water quality, and provide active and passive recreational opportunities.

USES & INTENSITIES

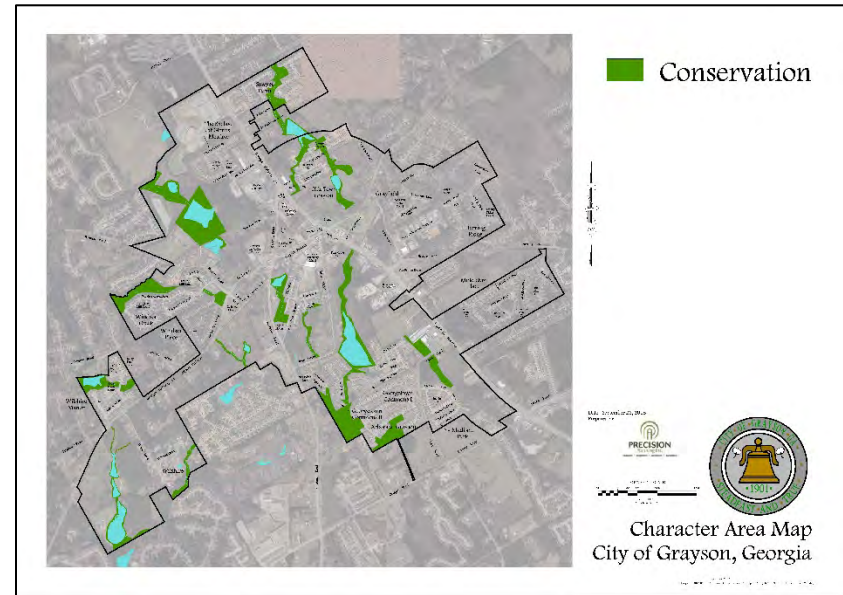
Since these are lands that are or should be set aside for open space, uses are limited to preserve natural features such as parks, recreation, and conservation uses. Access and development are limited to conservation-compatible activities and may include trails and greenways in natural areas. Intensity and impervious surface limitations should remain low.

MAJOR FEATURES

Neighborhood parks and open spaces, environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands or riparian corridors, connected to facilitate habitat movement and providing for maximum water quality enhancement. Access is limited to conservation-compatible activities and may include trails, 8-12' wide, in natural areas.

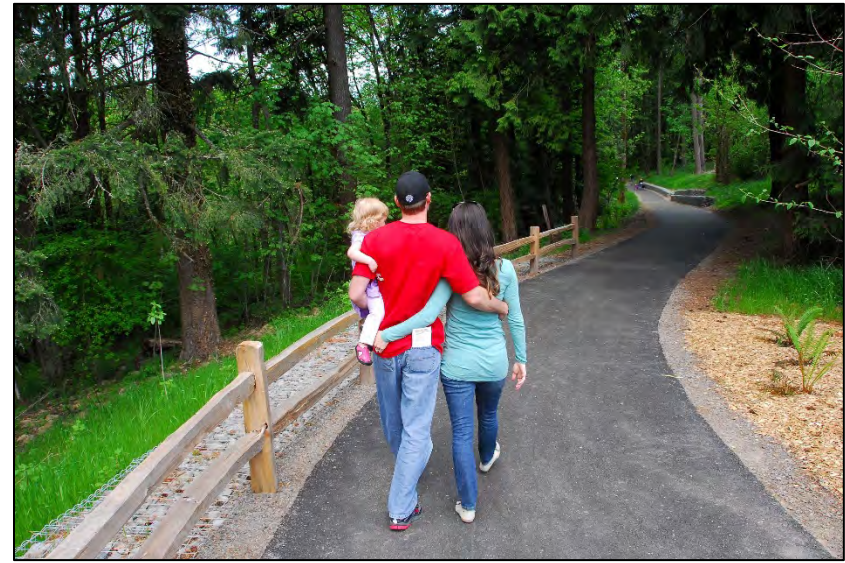
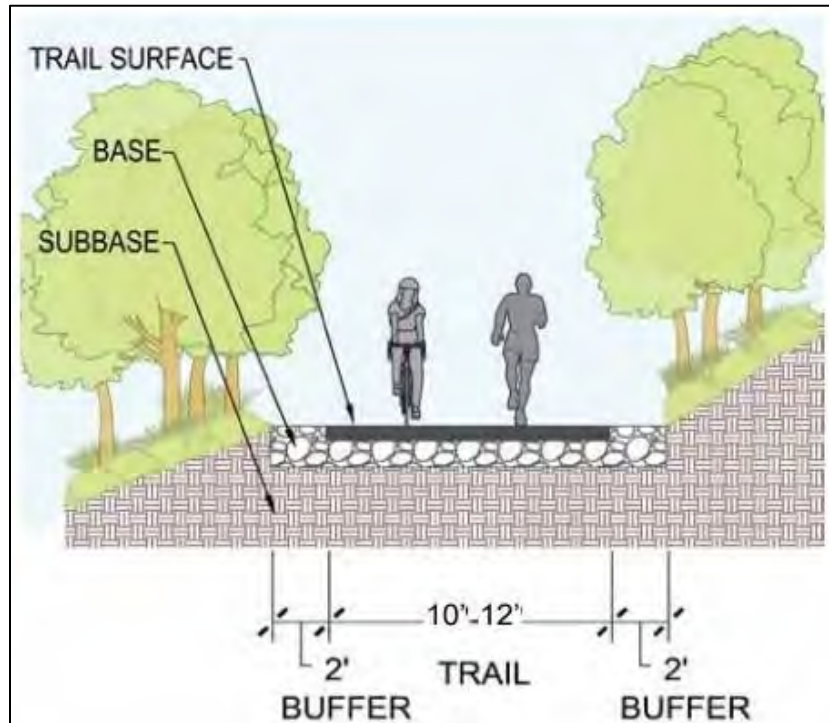
IMPLEMENTATION

Stormwater management ordinance, relevant portions of zoning ordinance, flood plain management regulations, acquisition of land; stream bank stabilization and repair programs; low impact development and green infrastructure programs.



CONSERVATION CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. Lands are set aside for open space and recreation.
2. Land uses are limited to those that preserve natural features and provide for trails and greenways.
3. Acquisition of land or protection through conservation easement.



Develop a Comprehensive Greenway Plan that will provide a framework for the City of Grayson and project partners to successfully establish a network of greenways through the community.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

VISION

Conventional Suburban Neighborhood is predominantly single-family, detached housing within protected neighborhoods. Most neighborhoods are less than three dwelling units per acre, and are designed with cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets. Lots vary in size based on whether they are connected to public water and sanitary sewer.

USES & INTENSITIES

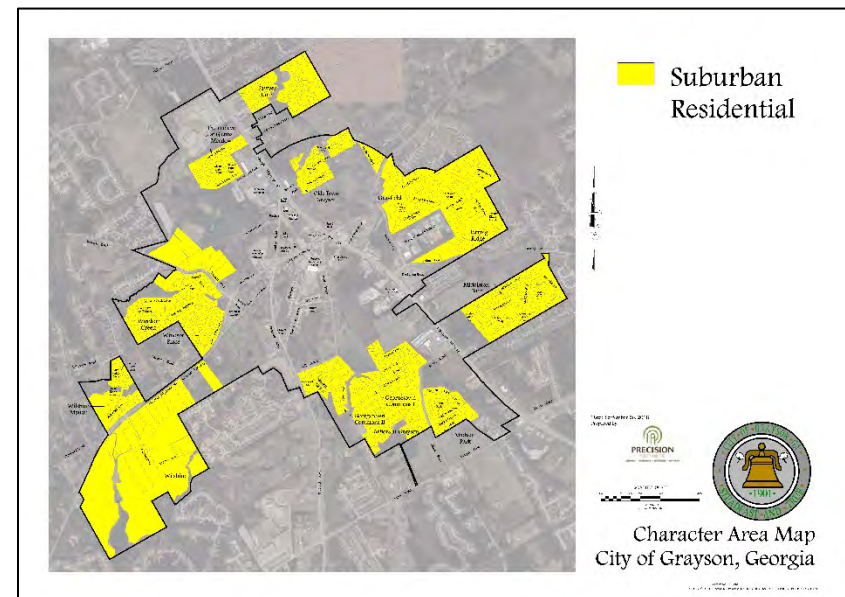
Conventional Suburban Neighborhoods uses are almost exclusively single-family detached residences, though some civic and recreational uses integrated into subdivision plans may be acceptable. Townhouses, multi-family, and accessory apartments are not permitted. Densities are in the range of 1-3 units per acre.

MAJOR FEATURES

Conventional Suburban Neighborhoods have houses setback from streets. Transportation is dependent on automobile access. Most homes have front or side entry garages that are typically visible in the street scene. Most neighborhoods are designed with swimming and recreational amenities exclusively for that neighborhood's residences. Improved pedestrian connectivity is a goal.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following zoning districts: R-100 Single-Family Residence, R-100 Modified Single-Family Residence, CS Conservation Subdivision Single-Family Residence, and PUD Planned Unit Development (formerly R4).



SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. Maintain and preserve stable neighborhoods.
2. Applications for Special Use Permits and Home Occupation Licenses should be carefully considered and monitored to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood's residential character.
3. New residential neighborhoods should provide for recreational opportunities such as swimming pools, nature trails, green space and outdoor/indoor community gathering spaces.
4. New and established neighborhoods should have improved pedestrian connectivity throughout the neighborhood and with the surrounding community as a goal.



Grayson's Existing Suburban Residential Character

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

VISION

Higher density, urban living environments limited to existing locations and/or as shown on the Character Area Map.

USES & INTENSITIES

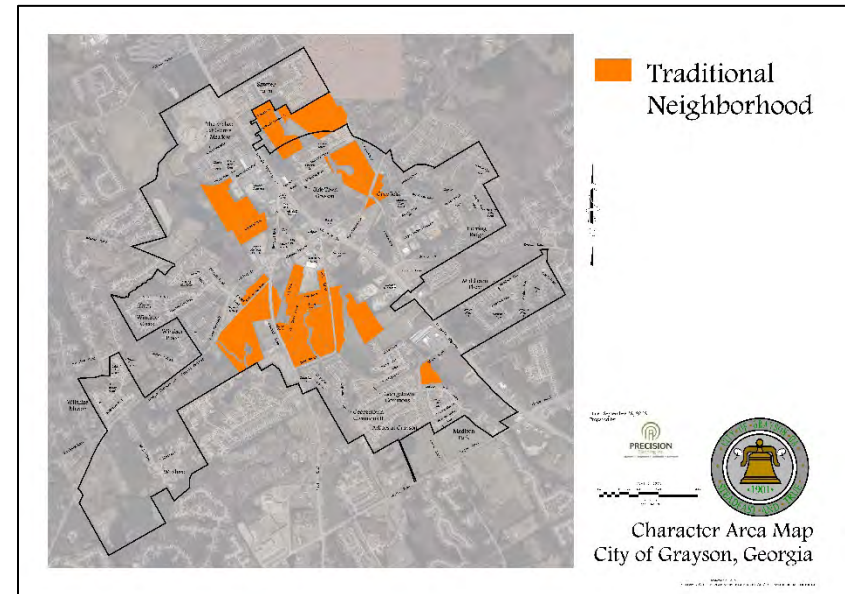
Predominantly detached and attached, single-family dwellings, neighborhood shops and offices, supportive civic, institutional, and recreational uses. Densities to 6 units per acre and perhaps higher as city policies and marketing trends toward living closer to the developing uptown center increases.

MAJOR FEATURES

Master planned communities with high quality architecture, landscaping, and amenities, both recreational and supportive.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following zoning districts: PUD Planned Unit Development, O-I Office-Institutional, and C-1 Neighborhood Business.



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. Homeownership shall be a primary goal when considering Traditional Neighborhood land use decisions.
2. Housing is to be predominantly detached single-family residences with a gridded and connected street pattern that are generally smaller lots with houses built closer to the street than those in suburban subdivisions. Streets are to be lined with sidewalks and shade trees. Most houses are to have front porches and rear-entry garages.
3. Traditional Neighborhoods may have a mixture of housing types and land uses if part of a PUD Planned Unit Development. These mixtures are to be located within convenient walking distance to the Uptown Center and are to be self-contained neighborhoods that have neighborhood shops and offices, supportive civic, institutional, and recreational uses that provide a sense of place for its residences.
4. Traditional Neighborhoods have higher densities than suburban subdivisions and should be aligned with multiple transportation options such as automobile, walking, biking, and transit.
5. Traditional Neighborhoods should have high and clear design standards to maximize and protect the value of both public and private investments.
6. Amenities such as neighborhood convenient stores, coffee shops, bakeries, offices, and recreational facilities should support the density of the neighborhood.



Pine Grove Village



Typical traditional cottage



Traditional Neighborhood with local shops



Graft: food, wine & community



Traditional cottage and close proximity to sidewalk & street



Graft: food, wine & community



Example of a Traditional Neighborhood market



Grayson Coffee House



Example of a Traditional Neighborhood with housing, shops & open space

INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

VISION

The need for this Character Area is grounded in the existence of large schools, places of public assembly, worship, and their supporting uses in the City helping to anchor residential neighborhoods.

USES & INTENSITIES

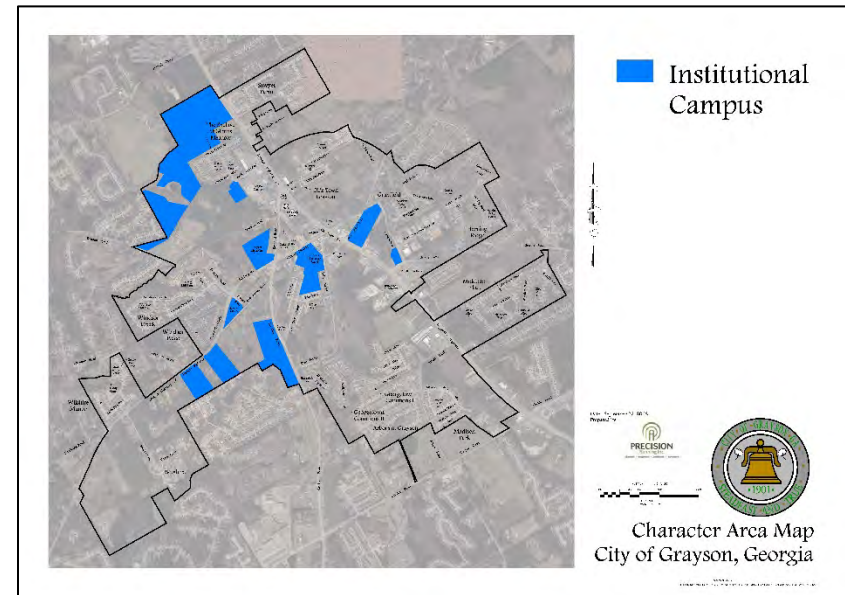
Places of public assembly, libraries, religious institutions, public and private schools, post offices, fire stations, and other public or institutional uses. The uses are generally single-function uses and are usually separated from other uses. Offices are appropriate as a secondary or supporting use. Intensities in the range of 0.22 to 0.34 FAR, not to exceed a height limit of 40 feet.

MAJOR FEATURES

This area recognizes the existing and evolving uses and accommodates new public and institutional developments that are compatible with abutting residential neighborhoods and that provide greater interconnections and pedestrian access.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following zoning districts: O-I Office Institutional, C-1 Neighborhood Business, and to some extent with a Special Use Permit, R-100 Single-Family Residence.



INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. The character of this area is compatible for places of public assembly, public service, and supporting uses.
2. Grayson should continue coordination with Gwinnett County School System, Library System, and Fire Services in the City to promote and foster their continued success.



Gwinnett County Fire Station 8, Grayson, GA



S.R. 20 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

VISION

Accessible centers of businesses, services, and complementary uses. This may include mixed-use developments (with residential as a secondary or supporting use) in an activity center pattern concentrated in a linear pattern along State Route 20, and contributing extensively to the economic base of the City. Exclusively commercial shopping centers that already exist may be redeveloped as mixed-use activity centers during the planning horizon. Such areas will eventually be transformed into less automobile reliant and more pedestrian-friendly places, with better connections to neighborhoods.

USES & INTENSITIES

Dominated by commercial uses but also intended to accommodate business parks, office parks, and mixed-use developments. A wide range of uses is contemplated in this Character Area, except for heavy industry and suburban single-family residential. Commercial intensities are within a range 0.34 to 0.85 FAR, not to exceed a height limit of 40 feet.

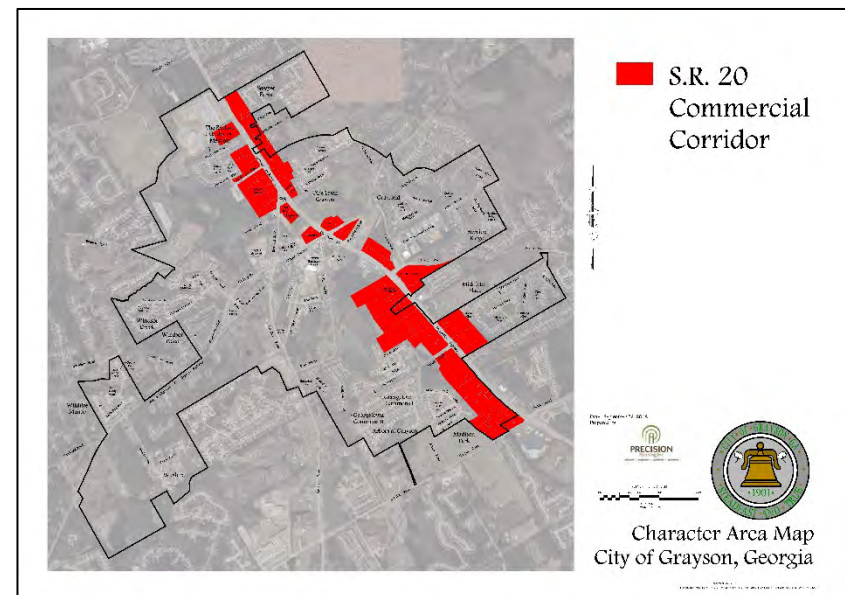
MAJOR FEATURES

Developments are served by a state highway route and a network of collector roads. Pedestrian accessibility is promoted, although most activity is via the automobile for access. Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying monument signs. Open space for large developments is provided via plazas and greens. Inter-

parcel access is required to encourage pedestrian and automobile flow from development to development without the need for getting back on the highway.

IMPLEMENTATION

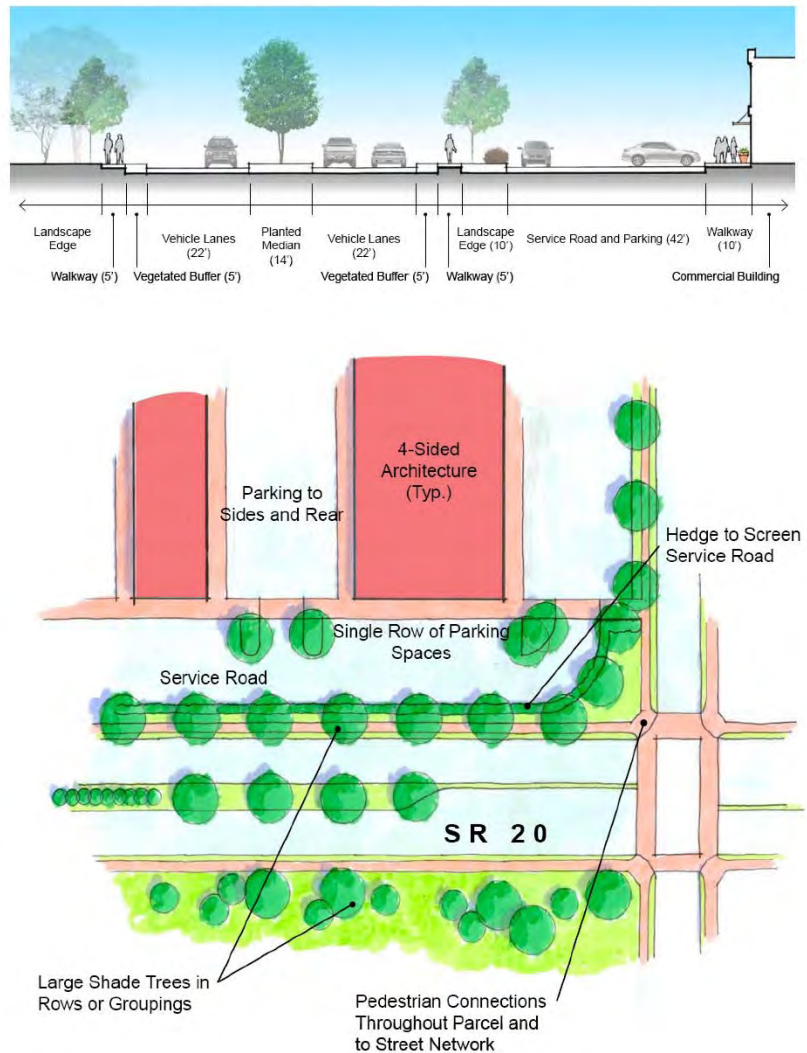
The following zoning districts: C-1 Neighborhood Business; C-2 General Business; C-3 Central Business; PUD Planned Unit Development; O-I Office Institutional; and M-1 Light Industry with a Special Use Permit. Corridor-specific quality development regulations such as the Grayson/Highway 20 Overlay and Uptown Grayson Overlay.



S.R. 20 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. Within an activity center along the S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor, a logical hierarchy of building forms should be created. Building heights and masses should be greatest in the focus area and inner portion of the support area (the part closest to the focus area), and should transition to lower heights and less mass outward from the focus area to the outer edge of the support area. Building massing should be varied to create a logical hierarchy of building forms, to break up long expanses of façade, and to create shade and shadow. Buildings at the outer edge of an activity center's support area should be comparable in height and mass with the surrounding neighborhood beyond the support area.
2. As far as practicable, buildings along the S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor should not be separated from fronting streets by large parking lots. At a minimum, placement of outparcel buildings between a large parking lot and the street should be used to help define the streetscape, and lessen the visual impact of the parking lot from the street.
3. Auto service facilities should not have their service bays facing the street, and parking for all uses should be located to the side or rear of the building rather than in the front yard. Regardless, service areas and/or service bays should be screened or sited so they are not visible from the street. Auto serves should be limited to areas outside of the Uptown Grayson Overlay District.
4. Perimeter and security fencing, when needed, should be constructed of attractive materials which are compatible with the design and materials used throughout the project. Razor wire or electric fencing should not be used, and chain link fencing is discouraged but if used should be vinyl coated. Separate structures (canopy, car wash, cashier's booth, etc.) on the site should have consistent architectural detail and design elements to provide a cohesive project site.
5. All areas devoted to the outside storage of vehicles, merchandise, and/or equipment not intended for display for public rent, lease, or sale, should be screened from view from the right-of-way of the highway or public road along the entire property frontage, except in areas where access crossings have been approved.
6. As far as practicable, activity centers along the S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor should provide inter-parcel access with similar adjacent uses. The inter-parcel access include a landscape zone along the highway for softening and screening drives and parking areas, a vehicular zone that has a service drive and single staggered row of storefront parking, a pedestrian zone between the vehicular zone and storefront that has walkways, site furnishings, and landscaping.

SR 20 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR



Typical activity center frontage along the S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor

SR 20 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR - CHARACTER IMAGES



(Top Left) Avoid landscape that is out of scale with development and corridor. This results in blocked signage of commercial buildings and little shade for large surface parking lots.



(Top Right) New landscape enhancements within developments along the corridor should emphasize large trees to provide shade relief, minimize the scale of both large paved areas and allow visibility to storefronts.



(Middle & Bottom Left) Landscape treatments along the roadway of the SR 20 corridor should utilize large trees to minimize the scale of wide roadways yet maintain visibility. Where smaller ornamental trees are used, they should be tightly spaced to make a strong visual impact.

(Bottom Right) Minimal parking (drive aisle plus one side of parking) should be located in the front of new development. Large parking areas should be located to the rear and sides.

Desirable landscaping along the S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor



Benton House Assisted Living



Dogwood Forest Assisted Living



Beverage Superstore



Parkside Grayson



Example of desirable modern shopping center with emphasis on walkability



Example of desirable modern shopping center with emphasis on open space & connectivity



Grayson Clock Tower Plaza in center of S.R. 20 Commercial Corridor

UPTOWN CENTER

VISION

Compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area corresponding with the City's historic and revitalizing center of town along Grayson Parkway, S.R. 20, and Rosebud Road. The design and land use of this area should be generally consistent with preserving and reestablishing the center of town as a community focal point for social interaction and a commerce destination.

USES & INTENSITIES

Acceptable uses include residential uses vertically or horizontally mixed with other uses in the same building, offices, retail and services, restaurants, civic/institutional, and open space or recreation areas. Residential densities up to 6 units per acre and perhaps higher as city policies and marketing trends toward living closer to the developing uptown center increases, not to exceed height limits of 40 feet. The Uptown Center is to be mostly comprised of commercial, civic, office, public open spaces, and residential mixed uses that attract citizens to the core of the City. Additional uses, intensities and densities as described in the Planned Unit Development section of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

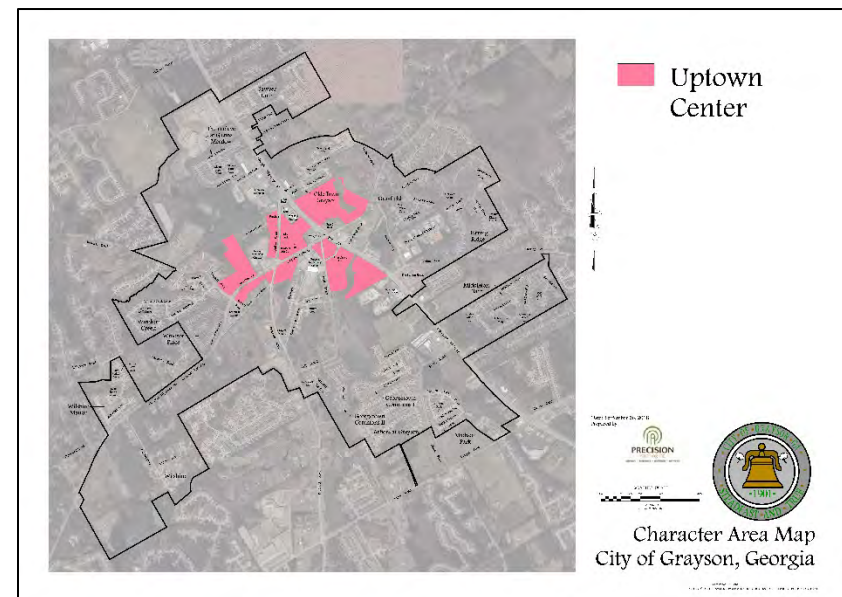
MAJOR FEATURES

Grid block pattern, narrow streets with inter-parcel access where possible, sidewalks and streetscapes with site furnishings, pedestrian light, and trees, distinctive materials

(e.g., stamped concrete) with variable widths. Developments are at a pedestrian-friendly scale and include open space. Open space is typically provided in the form of landscaping and public gathering plazas.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following districts: C-1 Neighborhood Business; C-2 General Business; C-3 Central Business; PUD Planned Unit Development; and O-I Office Institutional.



UPTOWN CENTER CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. Land use and zoning decisions within the Uptown Center Character Area should be generally consistent with the current Grayson Uptown Concept Plan that was developed in 2011; however, much attention should be placed on updating this plan since new development patterns have emerged in this area.
2. The updating of the Grayson Uptown Concept Plan should be the outcome of a real estate market analysis program.
3. The Planned Unit Development section of the City's Zoning Ordinance should provide the basis parameters for land use mixes and development regulations.
4. The Railyard PUD that is currently being developed in the Uptown Center. This development is a great example of reestablishing a vibrant Uptown Center, and The Railyard Development Proposal and associated Master Plan provides a good ratio of land use mixes to consider while further developing the Uptown Center. The Railyard land use ratios: 4% existing historic commercial remodel space, 13% restaurants, 18% retail space, 21% office space, and 44% residential lofts. Within this mix is project dedicated parking, shared parking, and 46% of the land area is open space.



The Railyard restaurants & open space plaza



The Railyard commercial building & open space plaza

Town Homes



Aerial View From Southwest



Senior Living



Lifestyle Center



GRAYSON
UPTOWN
CONCEPT
PLAN



Legend

- Existing Building (Orange)
- New Building (Red)
- Water Feature (Blue)
- 1. Roundabout Intersection with Landscaping and Statue
- 2. 2-3 Story Office Building
- 3. 1-Story Cottage Style Businesses
- 4. Parking Deck with Retail at Ground Level
- 5. 1-Story Wooden Chapel
- 6. 2-Story Town Homes
- 7. 2-Story City Hall Addition
- 8. Town Green and Amphitheater
- 9. Train Shops
- 10. 2-Story Retail / Office
- 11. 5-Story Hotel
- 12. 3-Story Assisted Living
- 13. 2-Story Senior Living
- 14. 2-Story Main Street Mixed-Use
- 15. 1-Story Lifestyle Center with Green Space
- 16. Garden Center and Community Gardens
- 17. Splash Fountain
- 18. Amenity Pond

Hotel



Assisted Living



Parking Deck



Amenity Pond



Splash Fountain





Grayson Ampavillion & City Park public open space



Example of desirable Uptown Center streetscape



Example of desirable housing (Cornerstone in Lawrenceville)



Example of desirable Uptown Center "Main Street"



Example desirable Uptown Center "Main Street" with on street parking



Example desirable Uptown Center "Main Street" with on street parking

INDUSTRIAL CAMPUS

VISION

This character area corresponds with existing industrial properties and manufacturing uses and surrounding parcels that have a similar potential use. This character area functions as a concentration of employment and job activity, contributing to the economic base of the City.

USES & INTENSITIES

This Character Area is intended for light and heavy industrial, manufacturing, transportation, communication, and utility facilities. Building intensities are within a range of approximately 0.34 to 0.6 FAR, not to exceed a height limit of 40 feet.

Although places of public assembly are not directly compatible with industrial uses, several ministries, churches, and gymnasiums have found homes within this character area, largely due to the large individual lots that do not share parcel-to-parcel interconnection. Many of these uses do not require general population exposure that comes with traditional commercial districts along busy roadways, and settling within an industrial campus setting has served these uses with their basic low-intense needs.

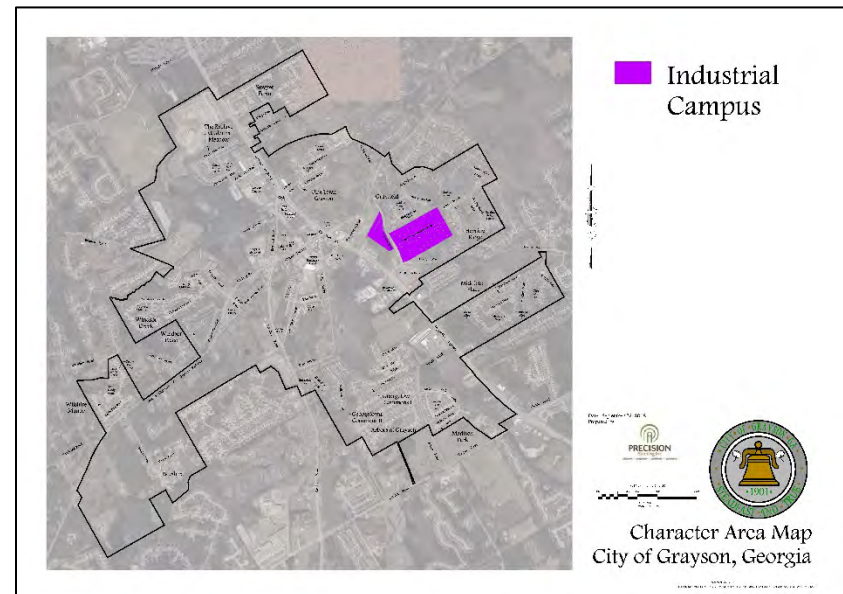
MAJOR FEATURES

Truck traffic is frequent, and individual manufacturing establishments are not necessarily connected with one another. Driveways and curb radii are designed to

accommodate large trucks. Pedestrian accessibility is generally not anticipated, though pedestrian access is required along road frontages. Entrances, frontages, and building façades are softened with landscaping and low-lying identification signs.

IMPLEMENTATION

M-1 Light Industry District. Recent public sanitary sewer service has been installed to this district with the anticipation of converting existing uses from individual septic systems to public sewer as their systems age.



INDUSTRIAL CAMPUS CHARACTER AREA POLICIES

1. Light industrial land uses should be limited to the Industrial Campus Character Area that offers relatively level topography, adequate water supply, easy access to arterial roads, across from a fire station, and currently provides public sanitary sewer.
2. New industrial operations should be limited to the Industrial Campus Character Area, and should be limited to light industrial uses that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions.
3. Grayson's Industrial Campus Character Area is not conducive to heavy industrial uses since it is surrounded by single-family residential uses.



Grayson Industrial Park & potential undeveloped industrial land along Brannan Boulevard



Grayson Industrial Park

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of Grayson's consulting City Planner is the primary administrative agent responsible for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council must approve funding at levels appropriate to carry out programs called for in the community work program.

The Grayson Planning and Zoning Commission provides overall support for plan implementation and should periodically investigate the progress of plan implementation. Other agencies also have roles in plan implementation. Ad-hoc committees can be formed, such as the Steering Committee created for preparing the current Grayson 2040 Comprehensive Plan – 2018 Update, as needed to help guide the process of implementation. At any time, a particular program, task or project may rise in level of importance such that the Mayor and City Council address the program particulars directly, or through committees.

The following table reflects the Community Work Program accomplishments over the past five years, and provides the specific actions needed to implement programs, tasks or projects that have been identified in this current update as important to implement over the next 5 years (2019-2023).



2014-2018 WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE	PROJECT STATUS				REFLECTS 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2014-2018
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	COMPLETE	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	DISCONTINUED	STATUS NOTES
NATURAL RESOURCES					
Retention of tree canopy					Continuing implementation of tree bank
HISTORIC RESOURCES					
Ordinance to protect historic properties & landmarks					Main Street Program responsibility not fulfilled since Grayson's program was discontinued
Add properties to National Register of Historic Places					Main Street Program responsibility not fulfilled since Grayson's program was discontinued
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES					
Expansion of City Hall					City Hall was renovated in 2016 with no need for expansion
Establish Code Enforcement procedures					Discussions of establishing a City Marshal position began in 2018
Park Master Plan					Schematic master plan prepared by PPI
Regional Storm water Mgt. study for DDA Area					
URBAN DESIGN & AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENT					
Clock tower & gateway features at SR 20 & Rosebud Road					Transportation Enhancement Activities completed in 2014

2014-2018 WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE	PROJECT STATUS				REFLECTS 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2014-2018
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	COMPLETE	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	DISCONTINUED	STATUS NOTES
Additional gateway features & way-finding signage at select locations					To be continued in new work program
Landscape median of SR 20					Gateway Grant Program completed in 2014
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT					
Establish Main Street Program & promote growth along SR 84					Grayson's Main Street Program was established in 2014 & discontinued in 2017
Continue Local Business Incubator Program					No action from DDA on this since 2015
LAND USE					
Amend City Zoning Ordinance & codes					Incremental upgrades will continue
Additional regulations to reserve land for future roads & greenways					To be added to new work program
Annexation of commercial property along SR 20					Underway as annexation requests come in to the City
TRANSPORTATION					
Capital plan for sidewalk/walkway installation					Will be added to new work program
Acquire designated greenways for recreation					Will be added to new work program

2014-2018 WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE	PROJECT STATUS				REFLECTS 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2014-2018
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	COMPLETE	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	DISCONTINUED	STATUS NOTES
Road surfacing program (LMIG)					Continue repaving & striping existing streets
Implement connection concept plan for new roads & greenways					New work program will incorporate elements of the "connection concept plan"
Impact fee establishment for implementing connection concept plan					Council will pursue other funding sources for road improvements
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION					
Strategies with Gwinnett Board of Education					Continue to new work program
Update plans & ordinances recommended by Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District					Update ordinances as needed
Update intergovernmental agreements					Continue updating as necessary – Stormwater IGA updated in 2017

2019-2023 SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM	SCHEDULED TIMEFRAME					
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	RESPONSIBILITY AND COSTS
NATURAL RESOURCES						
Retention of tree canopy						Continue tree bank program – City staff
Preserve greenspace through conservation developments and mixed use developments						Costs will vary
Continue to promote Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development (GI/LID) stormwater policies for new public and private projects in the City.						Costs will vary – City staff
HISTORIC RESOURCES						
As a part of the development of a Unified Development Ordinance, review the architectural requirements of the Uptown Grayson overlay district to ensure that infill development in this district will respect the historical character of the area.						Costs will vary – City staff
HOUSING						
Adjust PUD regulations in the Zoning Ordinance to promote more mixed use development, including denser housing options						\$5,000 – City Planner

2019-2023 SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM	SCHEDULED TIMEFRAME					
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	RESPONSIBILITY AND COSTS
Continue to support the development of senior/accessible housing in Grayson, similar to Benton House and Dogwood Forest						City Council/staff
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES						
Install new sidewalk segments to improve connectivity within Grayson						\$50,000/yr. – LMIG and SPLOST
Design and install first phase of the multi-use trail system						\$125,000 - SPLOST
URBAN DESIGN & AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENT						
Conduct a rebranding program						\$25,000 - Graphic Consultant
Additional gateway features & way-finding signage at select locations						\$100,000 – Graphic Consultant
Continue streetscape program (based on directions from updated Grayson Uptown Concept Plan)						\$300,000 – Consultant & City Council
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT						

2019-2023 SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM		SCHEDULED TIMEFRAME					
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	RESPONSIBILITY AND COSTS	
Appoint or hire an Economic Development Officer to manage database of available properties in the City and to work with business and development community						City Council – cost will depend on extent of duties	
Conduct a real estate market analysis for the uptown Grayson area						\$25,000	

LAND USE & CHARACTER AREAS					
Update Grayson Uptown Concept Plan					\$25,000 – Steering Committee & Consultant
Rewrite City's ordinances & codes into a modernized Unified Development Ordinance					\$125,000 – City Planner & City Council
Annexation of commercial property along SR 20 as requests come in from owners					No City costs- City Planner & City Council
Draft microbrewery ordinance					\$5,000 - City Planner & City Council
TRANSPORTATION					
Identify parcels to acquire/obtain easements for greenways/multi-use trails					Costs will vary – General fund

2019-2023 SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM	SCHEDULED TIMEFRAME					
PROGRAM, TASK OR PROJECT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	RESPONSIBILITY AND COSTS
Further develop and implement greenway master plan as initially begun by Jimmy Adams						\$50,000 – SPLOST & General fund
Continue Road surfacing program (LMIG)						\$100, 000/yr. – SPLOST & LMIG
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION						
Continue to support local schools through partnerships and participating in school events						City staff- costs may vary
Update plans & ordinances recommended by Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District						City staff- costs may vary
Update intergovernmental agreements						City staff- costs may vary

APPENDIX

The Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs require specific elements within the update to the Comprehensive Plan. For ease of review, these elements are called out in this appendix.

Housing Element – As a municipality with a HUD Entitlement Community (Gwinnett County), the City of Grayson is required to have a housing element. The Gwinnett County Consolidated Plan fulfills this requirements and the Community Work Program has a housing element to address future needs. .

Transportation Element – The City of Grayson is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization of Atlanta. The PLAN 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, prepared by ARC and incorporating the Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), meets this requirement.

Regionally Important Resource Map - The City of Grayson is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization of Atlanta. The ARC has prepared a Regionally Important Resource Map, which meets this requirement

