

6. LAND USE

6.1 PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE ELEMENT

The land use section of the Comprehensive Plan examines and details the city's current land use patterns and recommends a course of action for future development that are consistent with the city's qualities. Transportation, energy consumption, property tax rates, how land adjoining developments is used, and options for future growth can hinge on established land use patterns.

The plan looks at how land is presently being used and historical land use trends to determine the future developments needed by the community and a plan for establishing these developments. The goals for land use reinforce the economic, housing, community service, and natural and cultural policies of the plan. The Future Land Use Plan tells a city how land use patterns can be used in future growth. Though the Land Use Plan is a guideline for the city to follow for developing to its full potential, as changes occur, it can be amended if necessary as long as public hearings and justification for the amendments are presented.

When deciding where to locate public facilities or making decisions on private development proposals, the City of Palmetto will rely on the land use section of this plan. The Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for zoning and subdivision regulations and the Capital Improvements Program, which puts the Goals and Policies into action. The land use plan serves as a general and long-range policy guide regarding developing future land. Communities have to base changes to zoning or subdivision policies on land use patterns that are shown on the future land use map.

By adopting these policies, the city accepts them as the governing principles regarding land use decisions. The policy may only be changed through amendments. The plan is also used as a forecaster for future land needs. Forecasts are usually made for twenty years into the future, but the land use plan is only expected to be accurate for five to six years; therefore, it needs to be periodically reviewed and most often amended every five years, despite the state's mandate to update every ten years.

Requirements set forth by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) outlining a standard land category system shown for different land uses are outlined below.

6.2 LAND USE CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES

The Department of Community Affairs recommends that land use classification in local plans are consistent with the standard system established for the State of Georgia. Local governments are free to develop additional, more detailed categories; however they must be grouped under one of these nine standard categories. These categories are as follows:

Agriculture: This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.) or other similar rural uses such as pasture; land is not used for commercial purposes.

Forestry: This category includes land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting and woodlands not in commercial use.

Commercial: This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service, and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

Industrial: This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction facilities, or other similar uses.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation: This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, and similar uses.

Public/Institutional: This category includes certain state, federal, or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, and hospitals. Government uses in this category include City Halls or government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, and military installations.

Residential: The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single family and multi-family dwellings.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities: Also referred to as “TCU,” this category encompasses various land use types associated with transportation, communication, and utilities. This category includes major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, airports, water authority facilities and similar uses. However, it should be noted that much of the TCU acreage is accounted for in other categories, particularly roads and their right-of-ways, which are absorbed into the context of a more dominant land use.

Palmetto does not use all of these categories, as they are not applicable in all cases. For example, there is no forestry or agricultural land uses in Palmetto.

6.3 EXISTING LAND USE

6.3.1 Methodology

The Existing Land Use Map outlines current land use patterns of the city. It is a base for developing the future land use plan and zoning map. The types of land use within the City of Palmetto were verified and brought up to date by conducting an existing land use survey. The first step in this all inclusive survey of existing land uses was to review aerial photos taken in 2003, which are considered accurate. Next, data was verified by conducting a field inventory involving site visits to specific portions of land throughout Palmetto. The field work was recorded and coded on tax parcel maps and photos according to its primary land use. They were then transferred to a large base map; thus, creating an updated Existing Land Use Map. The updated map was then presented for public review and comment.

6.3.2 Existing Land Uses

The primary existing land use in Palmetto is vacant land, over 34% of the total land mass is made up of vacant land. Much of this vacant land does have development planned, but not permitted due to a long standing sewer moratorium which will be lifted in 2005. The secondary land use for the City is made up of residences; 32.05% with 29.54% Low Density Residential, .24% Medium Density Residential, and 2.27% High Density Residential. Most of the multifamily units are located in the central and northern portions of the city. Only one large multi-family development is located in the southern panhandle of the city.

The following categories are shown on the City of Palmetto Existing Land Use Map and are in accordance with State DCA guidelines:

Low Density Residential – This category includes individual homes, many of which are located within organized subdivisions.

Medium Density Residential- This category includes all attached residential buildings that are not owner occupied. Developments in this category contain a duplex.

High Density Residential – This category includes all attached residential buildings that are not owner occupied with more than 2 units per dwelling.

Commercial – This category includes basic uses such as establishments that offer goods or merchandise for sale, or rent and other commercial uses that do not operate in office settings. The primary corridor for commercial development is along Roosevelt Highway.

Public Institutional – This category includes local government uses and quasi-public institutions are included in this category. Governmental uses include: police, fire, City Hall, public works, libraries, post office, and public schools. Institutional uses include churches, cemeteries and other private non-profit uses.

Industrial - This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses. The majority of the industrial land runs along the railroad, south of Roosevelt Highway. This is one of the few areas left within South Fulton that has the possibility of a Railroad Spur.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities - This category includes such uses as power lines, transmission towers, highways, right of way along roadways, and a small private airport at the northeast corner of the City.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation - This category includes city parks, land donated to the city from Private Developers, and land acquired through the State greenspace program. These lands are owned by the local government and protected and or created for recreational enjoyment of the citizens.

Vacant/Unused – This category is largest primary existing land use within the City limits. The largest vacant parcels are owned by private citizens. Much of this vacant land has been zoned and will be developed as soon as the sewer moratorium is lifted. The primary development for the city will be for residential units.

The existing land use distribution is included below. Land use categories have been depicted in acres, and each category is expressed as a percentage of the total city area. This survey is useful for pointing out existing estimated land use acreage and potential available land for future development. In addition, a map of existing land uses is provided in Map 8.

Table 6.1 Existing Land Use Acreage Totals, City of Palmetto

Land Use Type	Number of Acres	Percentage
Low Density Residential	1,002	29.54
Medium Density Residential	8	.24
High Density Residential	77	2.27
Industrial	142	4.21
Vacant	1,178	34.72
Commercial	120	3.54
Public/Institutional	619	18.26
PRC	7	.21
TCU	238	7.01
Totals	3,391	100%

6.3.3 Historical Factors for Current Development Patterns

Like most municipalities, Palmetto's first commercial and residential developments took place adjacent to the railroad. Today, many of the structures that once lined the street along Roosevelt Highway no longer stand. The structures left standing are vibrant and are generally in good condition.

Other trends which lead to the City's current boundaries included the annexation of three large parcels at the western edge of the City that increased the amount of land within the city limits by approximately 1,300 acres. This property is now being developed Georgia Baptist Ministries to include retirement living that ranges from independent living, assisted living and medical assisted living.

Industrial Development is primarily located along the railroad, at the eastern edge of the City. This industrial area, south of Roosevelt Highway is one of the last areas in South Fulton County that has the capability of including a railroad spur. This industrial area is well placed and is placed in a transitional location that will cause fewer impacts on residential developments yet should continue to thrive as an economic base for residents.

6.4 FUTURE LAND USE

6.4.1 Purpose of the Land Use Plan

Preparing the Future Land Use Plan has two basic steps. First, decide how much of the different land use categories are needed to support expected future growth. Second, decide which areas of the city benefits best from a particular land use activity.

The Comprehensive Plan contains a future land use map that directs growth as plans for land uses mature. The future land use plan should be looked to when making decisions regarding future modifications to zoning ordinances, considering development proposals, rezoning requests, variance requests, or any other planning and development concern.

6.4.2 The Importance of the Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is a depiction of the city when it is fully developed. Development should not occur all at once, but rather in a timeframe that is agreeable with environmental policies, infrastructure capabilities and other pertinent matters.

The plan does carry legal weight because it forms the basis for zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and other implementation documents; however, it is not considered a legal tool. It also serves as a guide when deliberating on changes to the zoning ordinance, official zoning map, subdivision ordinance, public improvement programs and capital improvement budgets.

Departing from the future land use map could lead to inconsistency on planning and development matters; therefore, decisions should be made with care. The city should

avoid decisions made in direct conflict with the strategies presented in the Future Land Use Map, so as not to undermine the long term objectives of the city.

This is not to say the City can never change its course of action. Deviations from the Future Land Use Map may be appropriate if detailed information can be presented and there is no adverse affect on the overall intent or purpose of the plan. In case of proposed deviations that would significantly alter the directions set by the plan, the Future Land Use Map will have to be updated. An amendment will have to be made to approve developments that are not consistent with the adopted Future Land Use Map.

Land use forecasts are made for up to twenty years. The actual life expectancy of a Land Use Plan for a rapidly growing area is five to six years. To maintain accuracy and applicability and to deal with unforeseen events, plans should be reviewed periodically. This provides an opportunity to adjust the plan before reaching the target year.

6.4.3 Methodology

The following criteria were considered with creating the Future Land Use Map: existing land use patterns, growth trends, zoning patterns, projected future land use needs based on projected future population and employment converted to the number of acres needed to accommodate projected growth levels, flood plains, excessive slopes (over 20 percent), and soil types, location of major streets/roads and open space, public input, building permit trends, and land use policies.

It is important that these criteria are considered since this Land Use Plan will be used as a policy tool for guiding decisions on land use.

6.5 DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Based on the analysis of the existing conditions, socio-economic statistics, and public input, several planning assumptions were made and listed below indicating the anticipated and desired future land use trends and requirements for Palmetto over the next twenty years. There are several factors that will influence the land use patterns including the existing land use patterns, redevelopment opportunities, public service and facilities, environmentally sensitive areas, future growth projections, and land needs.

6.5.1 Redevelopment Opportunities

The public identified several areas as being in need of redevelopment, rehabilitation, or reuse. Residential, and Commercial land uses were identified showing areas of decline or in need of repair.

6.5.2.1 Residential

Community participation aided to help consider how residential areas of the City of Palmetto would be developed over the following twenty years. Single-family units were viewed by the public as generally well maintained. However, isolated houses do exist with the City that have substantial problems. These homes were identified as aging homes that were in need of repair or restoration. According to the Visual Preference Survey (VPS), in which the Citizens participated, it was illustrated that the most undesired types of homes were high density residential housing with no architectural character, sidewalks (not pedestrian friendly), and little lighting. Residential redevelopment areas were primarily identified to be located in aging multi-family or high density properties that met these same undesirable characteristics. These areas were primarily located along Carlton Road and Roosevelt Highway (US 29).

6.5.2.2 Commercial

Commercial development is essential in order for a City to maintain or increase its economic base. The redevelopment of the City of Palmetto's commercial areas has become a top priority. According to the VPS, the Citizens would prefer the redevelopment of commercial areas, along Roosevelt Highway (US 29) and State Route 85 to follow these guidelines: an interactive community environment, structure with a mix of uses/at least two stories, pedestrian friendly atmosphere (large sidewalks), uniform architectural design features, and zero setbacks that frame the buildings to the streets). If these commercial areas are left untouched, they can pose a loss of revenue for the City through disinvestments. However, redevelopment of these areas can lead to maximizing the resources and capitalizing on the advantages such as existing infrastructure (water, sewer, and roads) for the community at large.

6.5.2.3 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The future projections predict that by 2025 the total population of the City of Palmetto will be 10,260; thus, a tremendous increase in housing will be needed, totaling approximately 4,039 housing units by the same year. As the growth within the City of Palmetto occurs, environmental protection must be stressed. Educational awareness and the protection and allocation of greenspace must become a top priority for the Citizens and government of the City of Palmetto. Environmental protection can be utilized to enhance the quality of life for the people of Palmetto. The VPS suggests that more passive recreation amenities should be available, these include, walking and bicycle trails and the preservation of vegetation such as, trees and grassy areas, which appeal to all ages.

Watershed/Wetland Protection: There are an array of streams that run through the City that are protected by State mandates and locally mandated buffer zones. As the development and redevelopment processes begin, it is imperative that the City of Palmetto take into great consideration that the destruction of these watersheds and streams not only destroys the natural beauty of the City of Palmetto, but also removes

many essential ecosystems; thus, the environmental protection of these areas is fundamental. These ecosystems include all types of wildlife and their habitats. Most of these environmentally sensitive areas are located to the northwest region of the City. The expansion of residential, low density homes in this area poses a threat to the natural landscape. As more residential homes are constructed in this region, as suggested by the Future Land Use Map, environmental protection must be of great concern and not removed. See the Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter for these environmentally sensitive areas.

6.6 PROJECTED LAND USE NEEDS

6.6.1 Projected Residential Acreage Needs

Population projections are useful in developing quantitative recommendations for each broad land use category. Residential densities reflected in the Land Use Plan include low density of 3 or less units per acre, medium density of 4 to 6 units per acre, and high density at more than 6 units per acre. Much of this land use plan identifies areas for higher density infill development that were identified as blighted areas or are adjacent to neighborhood commercial areas.

In order to determine future residential acreage, it is necessary to use a projected person per household ratio. The projections show a decrease from 2005-2025, with the house size decreasing back to a constant number of 2.32 persons per household by 2025. One reason for this decline is that family sizes over the last two decades decreased from 1980 to 1990, and that trend is anticipated to take place again over the next decade with a constant number being recompensed over the next twenty years.

Using a projected persons per household ratio of 2.32 and applying it to the projected increase in the city's population of 6,280 from 2000 to 2025, 2,554 additional dwelling units will be needed in Palmetto by 2025. Assuming that the present citywide dwelling units per acre ratio will remain the same in 2025, this ratio (3 dwelling units per acre) is applied to the number of projected additional dwelling units (2,554) needed to accommodate the additional city population of 6,280 for 2025. Applying these numbers yields 902 additional residential acres needed in 2025 over that which exists today. The amount of land needed to accommodate the projected residential growth at current density levels is available in the city. The current level of density should increase in order to prevent sprawled growth. This increase in density per acre will also alleviate an overburdened service system (infrastructure such as water, sewer, transportation and services such as refuse collection, police and fire services) on the citizens. Most recently, the City of Palmetto has been proactive and the newest developments have all been denser.

6.6.2 Projected Commercial/Industrial Acreage Needs

Since a growth in population almost always creates a corresponding growth in employment, projections of commercial and industrial acreage needs are based upon the premise that the future need for commercial and industrial acreage is proportionate to the growth of the population of the city. The current commercial and industrial acreage is 262 acres.

The current job per acre ratio on commercial and industrial land is 5.4 jobs per acre. The projected employment growth excluding government is 485 jobs. This places the projected new commercial and industrial land needs at 89 acres. This amount of land is projected within the Future Land Use Plan.

To estimate commercial land use needs for 2025, it is necessary to determine the current ratio of commercial employees per commercial acre with the presupposition that the same ratio will apply in 2025. This presupposition recognizes the fact that percentages of different land uses tend not to vary greatly over time. The problem in calculating the employees per acre ratio is that the 2000 Census Employment by Industry Sector figures reflects only the employment of County residents; therefore, the census tract level data was extrapolated to find the estimated employment projections based on industry. However, there is no data available to determine these numbers with any degree of accuracy. For the purposes of this plan, it is also assumed that the future commercial employment needs of the population in the study area will be met within that study area.

6.7 Future Land Use Classifications

There were eight land use classifications used to describe the future land use recommendations for Palmetto. The land use classifications are represented by color coding, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map (Map 9). Pictures scored favorably in the visual preference survey conducted as part of the Palmetto Comprehensive Plan have been included as a means of illustrating the desired pattern of growth in the city. The land use classifications include:

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (yellow):
Includes single-family detached unit residential development at the lowest density within the city at less than 4 units per acre.



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (orange):
Includes single-family detached, single family attached, apartments, townhomes and condominiums within the city at 4 to 6 units per acre.



HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (brown):
Can include single family detached, single family attached, apartments, town homes, and condominiums at more than 6 units per acre. All existing multi-family dwellings were coded as high density residential.



COMMERCIAL (red): This district is intended for a variety of retail and service businesses. These businesses are primarily intended to serve city residents for all of tier service, food, and auto-oriented needs. Uses would include: banks, drycleaners, video rental shops, salons, and drug stores as well as auto dealerships, professional and medical offices, grocery stores, restaurants and large retail centers. These areas are appropriate for non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service, and entertainment facilities.

INDUSTRIAL (light gray): Includes land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.

PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL (blue): Overall, the concept for this land use category is to maintain and enhance existing public and institutional uses and facilities and provide additional uses and facilities based on anticipated needs. Appropriate uses in this category includes churches, schools, major institutional uses, cemeteries, etc. It is the intent of this Plan that these uses continue throughout the planning period.

PARK/RECREATION/CONSERVATION (green):
Includes land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses such as playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, recreation centers, and similar uses as well as floodplains, lakes, streams, and other natural resources.



TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATION/UTILITIES (brown)- This category includes such uses as power lines, transmission towers, highways, right of way along roadways, and a small private airport at the northeast corner of the City.

Table 6.1 Existing Land Use Acreage Totals, City of Palmetto

Land Use Type	Number of Acres	Percentage
Low Density Residential	1,281.6441	37.70
Medium Density Residential	198.3725	5.84
High Density Residential	135.6313	3.99
Industrial	398.9134	11.73
Commercial	363.0070	10.68
Public/Institutional	615.8715	18.12
PRC	18.5733	0.55
TCU	387.6567	11.40
Totals	3,399.6698	100.00

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element provides local governmental an opportunity to inventory intergovernmental coordination with other local governments and governmental entities that may have impacts on the success of implementing the local government’s comprehensive plan. The purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination to serve the current and future needs of the community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases involve multiple governmental entities. Entities to be addressed include: adjacent local governments; independent special districts; independent development authorities; utility companies; regional planning agencies, etc. It also includes the City’s participation in state intergovernmental programs.

7.0 Existing Conditions

7.1 Adjacent Local Governments

The City of Palmetto is located in South Fulton County and Northern Coweta County. The City shares a border with both unincorporated Fulton and Coweta Counties. In addition, the City is in close proximity to the South Fulton cities of Fairburn and Union City.

Inventory

This section catalogues the more important formal and informal intergovernmental coordination relationship that Palmetto shares with adjacent local governments.

Fulton County provides certain services within the city of Palmetto on a cooperative basis including Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) at 501 Menefee Street and operation of the Senior Citizen Center at 510 Turner Avenue. Regarding the Senior Center the County provides, programs, operates and maintains the facility. The City provides financial assistance for the Director’s salary, supplies a van and pays the van driver. The City and County work jointly to staff the Palmetto Fire Department utilizing a combination of full-time paid and volunteer firefighters. An EMS Unit provided by Fulton County staffed by two (2) Emergency Medical Technicians – (EMT) is stationed at the Palmetto Fire Station. The City provides the Fire Station and maintains same.

The City participates in the South Fulton Municipal Association which includes the cities of Palmetto, Fairburn and Union City. This organization provides an instrument and forum to jointly explore issues, policies and services of mutual interest to these communities and to communicate the same to interested parties.

The City is party, along with the other cities of Fulton and Coweta Counties, to the required Service Delivery Strategies for both Fulton and Coweta Counties. The Service Delivery Act requires counties and cities wholly or partially located therein to agree on

plans for the delivery of certain services to improve delivery efficiency and fiscal responsibility.

The City is a participant in the South Fulton Regional Jail Facility in conjunction with the Cities of Fairburn and Union City. By cooperative agreement the respective cities house their prisoners in this regional facility located in Union City on a fee per inmate basis.

The City is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) which is the regional and intergovernmental coordination agency for Fulton County and its municipalities. The agency also provides technical assistance to its member governments.

The City also has a working relationship with certain Constitutional Officers of Fulton County including:

Sheriff – The Sheriff is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of Fulton County and in that capacity must often work cooperatively with local municipal police agencies in both carry out the Constitutional responsibilities of the office and in assisting those agencies.

Tax Assessors – The Fulton County Board of Assessors assesses all real estate and tangible business personal property. The Board of Assessors also creates and maintains the tax digest for the City of Palmetto.

Tax Commissioner – Among the many duties of this office the Commissioner sells state motor vehicle license tags, collects the ad valorem on these, and processes motor vehicle title registrations and transfers. Motor vehicle taxes are collected for all municipalities in the County including Palmetto.

The City has similar intergovernmental relationships with the respective Constitutional Officers of Coweta County for that portion of Palmetto in Coweta County.

Assessment

The City of Palmetto maintains amicable and constructive working relationships with its adjacent local governments. The relationships are both formal and informal. The relationships generally contribute to a higher level of intergovernmental coordination which provides opportunities for regional cooperation in many instances.

7.2 School Boards

Inventory

7.2.1 Fulton County School System

The City of Palmetto has an on-going relationship with the Fulton County School System by means of the Palmetto Elementary School located at 505 Carlton Road. Palmetto

Elementary is a Pk – 05 school with 534 students. While the Fulton County School System oversees this school the City of Palmetto is the provider of numerous public service such as public safety, street/road maintenance, solid waste service, etc. It is essential that the School System and City maintain open lines of communication and share pertinent information relative to the delivery of the services referenced above and related matters.

Assessment

The City will continue to work cooperatively with the Fulton School System regarding the Palmetto Elementary School particularly as it relates to key services the City must provide and the impact of any policies (City or System) which may impact the delivery of these services.

7.3 Independent Special Districts

Inventory

7.31 Community Improvement Districts

A Community Improvement District (CID) is a specified geographic area whose property owners vote to assess additional property taxes for the purpose of supporting qualifying transportation and infrastructure improvements within the District's boundaries. CID's are private organizations, not a government agency.

They can be formed when a simple majority of the property owners who also represent at least 75% of the taxable value of the commercial area located within the proposed CID boundaries mutually agree to create the district. The Tax Commissioner must certify the requirements have been met and Fulton County must enact authorizing legislation creating the district.

There are a number of Community Improvement Districts in the County. The District impacting Palmetto is the South Fulton CID.

Assessment

The City of Palmetto is poised for a growth period unlike the virtual static growth status of recent years. The City has demonstrated through its participation in a number of joint and/or regional initiatives a willingness to use innovative financial tools and mechanisms necessary to support infrastructure facilities and service capacity. The Community Improvement District provides yet another tool the City will carefully consider in appropriate circumstances to meet extraordinary transportation and infrastructure needs.

7.4 Independent Development Authorities

Inventory

7.4.1 Development Authority of Fulton County

The Development Authority of Fulton County was established in 1973. The purpose of the Authority is to issue revenue bonds to finance business relocations and expansions. The Authority serves all of unincorporated Fulton County and all ten (10) municipalities including Palmetto.

7.4.2 Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Act was approved in 1965. MARTA is a public authority which serves Atlanta and the counties of Fulton, DeKalb, Clayton and Gwinnett County in the planning and operating of a public transportation system. A 1% sales tax is collected to finance MARTA in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. MARTA operates bus, rail and para - transit services.

The City of Palmetto is served by a MARTA bus line and the residents are subject to the 1% sales tax to finance the system.

7.4.3 South Fulton Municipal Regional Water and Sewer Authority

The South Fulton Municipal Regional Water and Sewer Authority was created by legislative act of the Georgia General Assembly and officially created when signed into law by the Governor in April 2000. In addition to Palmetto the member cities include Fairburn and Union City. The purpose of the Authority is to acquire and develop adequate sources of water supply including reservoirs, treatment facilities, transmission lines and the treatment of wastewater for the member cities. The Authority is governed by a Board consisting of the Mayor of each member city, a representative of each member city appointed by the local governing authority of that City and one member appointed by the majority vote of the legislative delegation representing the member cities.

The Authority has issued bonds for the development of a reservoir, treatment plant and transmission lines to serve the member cities. The project is currently in the engineering design and permit application phase.

Assessment

The City of Palmetto's relationship with MARTA is generally limited to issues related to the quality, scope and efficiency of the bus line which serves the City and many of its residents. While the Authority's staff is generally available for discussion with the City

there are a number of limited issues which are under advisement without final resolution. The City will continue to work in good faith with MARTA to address the matters.

The City is a founding member and active participant in the South Fulton Municipal Regional Water and Sewer Authority. The City believes the water and wastewater resources which may be provided through the Authority are critical to the availability of long-term adequate water and wastewater resources in South Fulton and Palmetto.

The City intends to remain an active supporter and participant in the activities of the Authority consistent with its purpose. The City is also receptive to entertaining opportunities to enhance coordination efforts with other appropriate parties not otherwise presently involved in such activities with the Authority.

7.5 Utility Companies with Condemnation Powers

Inventory

The most typical utility companies which may operate in Palmetto with the right eminent domain to the extent determined by specific laws/regulations are: Georgia Power, Coweta/Fayette EMC, Atlanta Gas Light, Oglethorpe Power, MEAG, Georgia Transmission Corporation; BellSouth, Colonial Pipeline and Plantation Pipeline.

Assessment

Generally speaking federal laws/regulations and/or state laws/regulations establish the right of utility companies engaged in interstate commerce to use eminent domain. Similarly, Georgia law generally provides the procedures for the use of eminent domain by the state and its political subdivisions (such as cities). The City of Palmetto is subject to the above.

7.6 Inter-related State Programs and Activities

Inventory

7.6.1 Service Delivery Strategy

Previously referred to in this element because it also involves intergovernmental relations with adjacent local governments the Service Delivery Act requires each County and its cities to adopt a Service Delivery Strategy by July 1, 1999. The purpose of the act is to require local governments under the guidelines to this state directive to assess current service provisions to develop a more effective and cost efficient approach to delivering services. It is also required that local governments review land use plans and procedures to minimize conflicts and improve coordination between jurisdictional plans.

The City is a party to governed Service Delivery Strategies, as governed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), for both Fulton County and its ten (10) cities and Coweta County and its eight (8) cities.

Assessment

Parties to the Service Delivery Strategy must periodically review the service provisions therein of and update the same as necessary at certain specified points one of which is the update of the County Comprehensive Plan. Fulton County is in the process of reviewing and revising as necessary their Service Delivery Strategy for presentation concurrently with the update of their Comprehensive Plan.

7.6.2 Governor's Greenspace Program

In April 2000 the Georgia Community Greenspace Program was designed to assist urban and rapidly developing cities and counties to preserve at least 20% of their geographic area for greenspace. Counties with approved plans were eligible for funding assistance to acquire land. Cities were eligible by participating in the County's plan. (A new law the Georgia Land Conservation Act was approved in 2005)

Palmetto is a cooperative participant along with the other Fulton municipalities in the Greenspace Program. The City drafted a community greenspace plan in 2001 and 2003 and the joint effort is managed by Fulton County.

Assessment

The new (2005) Land Conservation Program has not yet promulgated full participation guidelines and regulations. The new program allows cities to participate in the program independent of the counties. The City of Palmetto will evaluate the specific provisions of the new program prior to determining its participation approach. That determination notwithstanding, the City will continue to work closely with other local governments and agencies to coordinate greenspace acquisitions across jurisdictional boundaries.

7.6.3 Coastal Management

Not Applicable

7.6.4 Appalachian Regional Commission

Not Applicable

7.6.5 Water Planning District

Inventory

Palmetto is subject to the provisions of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District for applicable activities. The Authority was established in 2001. Its purposes are to establish policy, create plans and promote intergovernmental coordination for water issues in the district. The District develops regional watershed-specific plans for storm water management, waste water treatment, water supply, water conservation, and water quality to be implemented by local governments in the District's area. The District has also developed model ordinances that address stormwater management. Local governments must implement these or similar ordinances on a schedule provided by the District.

Assessment

The City of Palmetto is subject to the provisions of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. The City will participate in the planning process of the District. The City will develop and enact the required ordinances in a timely manner.

7.7 Other Organizations

Inventory

7.7.1 Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)

GRTA was created in 1999 for the purpose of addressing air pollution, traffic congestion and planning responsibilities in the Metropolitan Atlanta region including Palmetto. It has a number of policy, technical and review responsibilities involving land use and transportation activities such as reviewing Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The purpose of the review is to determine the status of state and federal funds to create transportation infrastructure and access which might serve the DRI.

7.7.2 Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Protection Division (EPD) regulates the operation of water and waste water systems in Georgia. The City of Palmetto operates both water and waste water systems subject to this regulation.

In addition DNR provide assistance and/or funding for parks/recreation and historic preservation. The City works with the agency in these areas on an as needed basis.

7.7.3 Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

DCA was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for Georgia’s local governments. It now serves as the State’s primary agency for comprehensive planning; technical and research assistance to local governments; solid waste planning/management; and economic development. DCA reviews all Comprehensive Plans and Solid Waste Management Plans for compliance with minimum standards. The City of Palmetto works with DCA in the review of the above referenced planning activities/documents and as the agency which requires multiple reporting documents in a wide range of areas (such as finance, solid waste, authorities, wage/salaries, etc.) from local governments.

7.7.4 Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) plans, constructs, and maintains the State’s road and bridge system. GDOT also provides financial and planning assistance to other modes of transportation. GDOT also provides technical, information and financial assistance to local governments. Financial assistance may be in the form of, but is not limited to, Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) resurfacing assistance; City-County contracts for street/sidewalk/curb-gutter and similar improvements; and Transportation Enhancement (TE) Federal pass-through funds for eligible transportation activities. It also provides maintenance and improvements to State roads within Cities.

The City of Palmetto participates in a number of the GDOT funding programs, has plans to participate in others and benefits from the support provided for transportation activities.

Assessment

The City of Palmetto will continue to maintain amicable and constructive working relationship with these respective agencies. The City will continue to avail itself of the opportunity to participate in the planning process of the respective agencies. The City will continue to seek the technical and financial assistance offered by the respective agencies. The City will continue to make every effort to comply with the appropriate regulatory requirements of the respective agencies.

NOTE

It should also be noted that there are a number of potential government changes potentially facing Fulton County and in time South Fulton and Palmetto. The potential creation of the City of Sandy Springs and a fundamental change in County taxing policy could adversely affect the funding base for certain services and facilities in South Fulton.

7.8 Assessment of Current and Future Needs

The City maintains generally amicable and constructive intergovernmental relationships with the wide range of other local governments, independent agencies, authorities, boards, commissions, constitutional officers, etc. These relationships have generally proven mutually beneficial to the respective parties and the constituents they serve. The City has demonstrated a willingness to participate in cooperative alliances where such participation improves the efficiency, effectiveness and fiscal responsibility of providing public services.

The City will continue to maintain positive intergovernmental coordination with its current partnering organizations and raise issues of concern in a constructive manner with a goal of resolving issues to the mutual benefit of the participants.

The City will continue to be receptive to intergovernmental relationships, formal and informal, where such participation improves the efficiency, effectiveness and fiscal responsiveness of providing public services.

8. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

8.0 Existing Conditions

8.1 Roads/Streets/Highways

Inventory

8.1.1 Functional Classification

Road systems consist of a hierarchy of roadways classified by relative purpose, traffic volume and construction standards.

Palmetto's roadways are divided into a standard classification system, dividing roadways into four categories:

Interstate Highways. These are multi-laned, limited access roadways designed for the continuous, high speed movement of traffic.

Arterials. These are designed to carry relatively large volumes of traffic throughout the community and to major trip destinations such as employment and shopping centers.

Collectors. The function of these roadways is, as the name implies, to collect traffic from local streets and carry it to arterials and other roadway types. Collectors provide a balance between rapid movement and access to property.

Local Streets. These are low volume city and subdivision streets which provide low speed access to abutting properties.

The only classification of roadway not represented within the city limits of Palmetto is the Interstate Highway. An interstate highway, I-85, is located just east of Palmetto and functions as the main link between Atlanta and Montgomery, Alabama.

The South Fulton Parkway to Georgia Highway 154 (Cascade-Palmetto Highway) is a four (4) lane limited access highway located two (2) miles northeast of Palmetto. This highway links Palmetto to Interstate 285 and Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.

Palmetto has four arterial roadways within its city limits. These include Roosevelt Highway, Cascade-Palmetto Highway, Tommy Lee Cook Road and the east-west arterial. This main east-west arterial flows throughout the City, has a total of three different names and provides access to I-85. Approaching from the east, the arterial begins as Fayetteville-Collingsworth Road. The first name change occurs at the intersection of Roosevelt Highway where the arterial becomes Toombs Street. The roadway's final name

change occurs near the City's northwest limits and here the roadway is named Hutcheson Ferry Road.

Roosevelt Highway serves as Main Street in Palmetto's central business district. This roadway provides access to Fairburn to the north and Newnan to the south. Cascade-Palmetto Highway provides access to western Fulton County where the roadway changes names to Fulton Industrial Boulevard. Tommy Lee Cook Road provides access to Roscoe.

Collector streets located in Palmetto include Phipps Road, Johnson Road, Carlton Road, Cobb Street, Church Street and Menefee Street.

The remaining streets are classified as Local Streets.

Within the South Fulton Planning area the major roadway corridors are Old National Highway, Buffington Road, Roosevelt Highway, South Fulton Parkway, Cascade-Palmetto Highway and Oakley Industrial Boulevard.

According to the Fulton County Public Works Department there are forty-two (42) miles of streets/roads in Palmetto (only 0.7 miles of streets in Palmetto are unpaved). There are 11.3 road miles per 1,000 people and 8.9 road miles per square mile of incorporated area.

8.1.2 Number of Lanes

The maximum number of lanes on a street/road in the City of Palmetto in one direction is two (2). The only two (2) lane in one direction segment consists of an approximately 1/4 mile stretch of Roosevelt Highway east of the City. With the exception of decel/excel and turning lanes all other streets in the City are one (1) lane per direction.

8.1.3 Conditions

The condition of City streets is generally fair to good overall. There are patched areas on some streets/roads primarily from utility cuts but also from repaired potholes. There is alligator cracking on some streets and occasional deterioration of street/roadway edges. The City's Public Works Department regularly repairs and improves City streets/roads. Streets/roads are also resurfaced on a priority basis by the City and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) by Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) and City Contracts.

8.1.4 Accident Frequency Data

The Office of Traffic Safety and Design at GDOT maintains accident data for the City of Palmetto. For the most recent available reporting period, 2004, a total of 80 accidents involving 152 vehicles with 27 injuries were reported within the City.

8.1.5 Design Volume Capacity

The Design Volume Capacity represents the maximum number of vehicles that can pass a given point during a specified time period with reasonable expectancy under prevailing traffic and environmental conditions. Design volume for streets, roads, and highways is also defined as the maximum feasible throughput of the facility consistent with safe operation of the facility. Design volume capacity is measured for operational and performance facility analysis.

Design Volume Capacity is available from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Travel Demand Model.

8.1.6 Average Annual Daily Trips (ADT)

The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts are used to determine current demand for service on streets/roads. GDOT provides Annual Average Daily Trip (AADT) data. *Table 8.1* which follows is from the Fulton County Comprehensive Plan Draft and lists the top 20 County roads with the highest average daily trips. None are within or immediately proximate to the City of Palmetto. Complete AADT data can be found at www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-pces/transportation_data/traffic_counts/index.shtml.

Table 8.1 – Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
Top 20 Fulton County Roads with Highest Average Daily Trips

Traffic Counter No.	Beginning Point	Ending Point	AADT	Rating
0933	On Fm SR-400 SB	Foe Killer Ck	47,340	1
0875	Medlock Bridge Rd	St Georgen Common	36,990	2
0931	Old Roswell Rd	Alpharetta Hwy	32,350	3
5378	Fairburn Rd	To I-285 (SB)	30,230	4
0824	Duluth St	Fm SR 400 (SB)	30,380	5
0823	SR-400	Rock Mill Rd	28,280	6
0935	Old Alabama Conn	Fm SR 400 (NB)	24,100	7
0864	Roberts Dr	Turner McDonald Pkwy	23,520	8
0964	Union Hill Rd	Windward Pkwy	23,350	9
0938	Holcomb Bridge Rd	Rock Mill Way	22,360	10
0862	Northridge Rd	Roswell Rd	21,890	11
0821	Turner Rd	Old Alabama Rd	21,860	12
6004	Old Alabama Rd	Old Alabama Rd	21,100	13
6016	Johnson Ferry Rd	Sandy Spgs Pl	20,850	14
0966	Peachtree Pkwy	Chattahoochee River	20,820	15
5376	Danforth Rd	Old Cascade Rd	20,590	16
5639	Peachtree Rd	Rockhaven Cir	19,740	17
5646	Old Johnson Ferry Rd	Trimble Rd	19,300	18
5386	Beecher St	Gordon St	18,830	19
0861	Northridge Rd	Spalding Dr	18,280	20

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation from Fulton County Comprehensive Plan Draft

8.1.7 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

A review of all projects included in Fulton and Coweta County STIP at GDOT website www.dot.state.ga.us.STIP found no projects within the city limits of Palmetto. The five (5) projects most proximate to Palmetto are as follows:

- Bridge improvement – SR/70 Cascade-Palmetto Rd @ Deep Creek. 7.5 miles north of Fairburn
- Bridge improvement – SR/54 Cascade-Palmetto Rd @ Bear Creek. 3.5 miles north of Palmetto
- Bridge improvement – CR629, Johnson Road @ Peaks Creek. 1 mile east of Palmetto
- Bridge improvement – CR1392, Cochran Mill Road @ Pea Creek. 7 miles northwest of Palmetto
- Bridge improvement – CR1392, Cochran Mill road @ Little Pea Creek. Northwest of Palmetto

Assessment

The vast majority of Palmetto's street/road/highway network is made up of local roadways. There are, however, two (2) major South Fulton corridors and US/State routes which converge in Palmetto (SR154 (Cascade-Palmetto Road) and US29/SR14 (Roosevelt Highway)). These corridors will be primary movers of vehicular traffic as the City and area grow and therefore subject to increased congestion and longer commute trips. The other arterial roadways, Tommy Lee Cook Road and Fayetteville-Collingsworth Road, are also likely to carry additional vehicular traffic as the population grows. These routes will receive particular attention from the City and GDOT.

In addition to the roadways referenced above congestion occurs along Main Street (downtown) primarily from traffic volume and the diagonal parking along the street. US29/SR14 south to Newnan also experienced considerable congestion on its two (2) lanes of traffic. At-grade railroad crossing and steep grades at railroad underpasses are other problem areas. The frequent trains also cause traffic delays at the City's three at-grade crossings (Harper, Sims and Vine Streets). Also, semi-truck traffic through downtown on US29/SR14 and SR154, particularly logging trucks can periodically create congestion and traffic safety concerns.

Palmetto is generally well served by its roadway network within the City and by the proximate roadway network such as I-85, the South Fulton Parkway, Fulton Industrial Blvd., SR166 and of course US29/SR14 and SR154. However, as growth occurs they will also require close monitoring and planning for needed improvements.

8.2 Existing Bridge Inventory and Conditions

There are four (4) bridges within the city limits of Palmetto. Three (3) railroad underpasses at Church Street and Main Street, Fayetteville Road and Main Street and Thornton Street at Main Street. There is also a railroad overpass road on Phipps Road. The Three (3) railroad underpasses are in very poor condition and in need of significant repair or perhaps replacement. However, replacement will be extremely difficult to complete given the limited alternative access points for vehicular traffic and maintaining rail service during replacement. The bridge on Phipps Road is in fair condition and needs routine maintenance repairs and upkeep.

Assessment

Bridges are a critical component of the overall transportation network. Unsafe bridges can restrict traffic flow, limit speeds and reduce volume. The poor condition of the railroad underpass bridges requires prompt attention.

8.3 Signalization and Signage

Inventory

The purpose of a traffic signal is to promote street and/or highway safety by providing for the orderly movement of all roadway users and the efficient operation of all parts of the traffic system.

There are two (2) traffic signals in Palmetto. One is located at Main Street (Roosevelt Highway or US29/SR14) and Toombs Street. The second is located at the intersection of Roosevelt Highway (US29/SR14) and Cascade-Palmetto Road (SR154). Both signals are owned, operated and maintained by the GDOT.

Signs (regulatory) are used to inform roadway users of selected traffic laws and regulations. Examples of such signs are speed limit, stop and yield signs. The city of Palmetto does not currently have a detailed inventory of all road signage.

Assessment

Signalization is generally adequate at present although an upgrade to provide protected left turns at the Main and Toombs Street signal should be evaluated. The City may also need to have “Warrant” evaluations in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration Standards conducted at certain locations to determine if there is a documented need for other signal locations.

Similarly, regulatory signage appears adequate although the City may want to consider establishing a routine inspection and maintenance program for signage to ensure all are in satisfactory condition, not obstructed and properly located and erected. The City may also

need to conduct “Warrant” evaluations of regulatory signage such as multi-way stops at certain locations.

The City Public Works Department responds promptly to any notice of downed, damaged or compromised regulatory sign.

8.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian Ways

Inventory

Transportation includes more than just roadways for automobiles. Additional forms of transportation include bicycle and pedestrian ways.

The City of Palmetto maintains a network of sidewalks within the city limits which provides an alternative mode of transportation. The system does not extend citywide to all locations and the system is not always well connected to destinations, goods and services. According to Fulton County there are three greenways that are in the program and design stage including the South Fulton Scenic Byway which begins at Cochran Mill Park on the north and extends south along Little Bear Creek to the City of Palmetto. The City is also a participant in an initiative by South Fulton Revitalization, Inc. to fund a Pedestrian Friendly Corridor Enhancement Plan along Roosevelt Highway from Church Street to Jackson Street. The project would improve intersections along the route (most of which are not signalized) with marked crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and ADA accessible skirts. Each intersection will receive upgraded infrastructure and connecting sidewalks installed along the corridor. Pending the approval and implementation of this plan the City is making improvements to the downtown section of Main Street (Roosevelt Highway) which are compatible with the proposed enhancement plan.

There are currently no bicycle ways within the City. However, the City is aware of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Bike and Pedestrian Plan and receptive to active participation in the same.

Assessment

The City of Palmetto is actively pursuing planning steps to enhance pedestrian access to appropriate transportation infrastructure. The City should continue maintaining and expanding its sidewalk network and consider including sidewalks as a requirement for all new development both internal to the project and external to points of goods and services.

The City should actively participate in regional planning for bicycle ways and continue its efforts with South Fulton Revitalization, Inc. for the Roosevelt Highway Corridor Enhancement. The City should also consider the Transportation Enhancement (TE) and Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) programs to provide assistance for pedestrian/bicycle transportation alternatives.

8.5 Public Transit, Railroads and Airports

Inventory

Railroads. Freight service is provided to the City by CSX Transportation, Inc., The rail corridor servicing Palmetto connects Atlanta and Mobile, Alabama and runs north-south through the central portion of the City (roughly paralleling US Highway 29). Approximately twelve freight trains pass through Palmetto each day.

Airports. The South Fulton Skyport is a privately owned, public use airport serving aerial aviation. The airport is located on the eastern side of Palmetto and presently has a 2,690-foot concrete runway.

Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is located 20 miles to the northeast of Palmetto. This airport primarily serves regional, national and international air carriers and receives minimal use from general aviation. From Hartsfield-Jackson, passengers and freight can be flown, in many instances nonstop, to any destination in the world.

Public Transit. Palmetto is the southernmost terminal for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) system. Current service is limited to a bus route on Roosevelt Highway, terminating near City Hall. Riders can make connection to anywhere in the system. Palmetto is currently not serviced by an interstate bus line.

8.6 Assessment of Current and Future Needs

The City of Palmetto is on the cusp of accelerated growth from both the anticipated emergence of South Fulton as a growth center and the City of Palmetto's re-opened growth window due to soon to be completed wastewater infrastructure improvements which will result in a multi-year moratorium on sewer connections being rescinded. While the City will have to address multiple modes of transportation for local and collector streets the heaviest carriers of traffic volume are currently, and will be in the future, major arterial routes owned, operated and maintained by GDOT.

In assessing existing transportation levels of service a letter designation is given which represents a range of operating conditions on a particular roadway. There are six (6) levels of service. They are given letter designations A-F with A representing the best range of operating conditions and F the worst.

As it relates to the level of service (LOS) for major roads in the South Fulton Planning Area proximate to Palmetto we know from the ARC Transportation Model that Roosevelt Highway receives a "B" LOS rating; South Fulton Parkway an "A" LOS rating; and Cascade-Palmetto Highway an "A" LOS rating. We also know from ARC that for roads defined as "congested" in South Fulton that only certain segments of Roosevelt Highway and SR29 from Driftwood Court to the Coweta County line meet that definition.

This indicates there is capacity for increased utilization at acceptable LOS ratings for these roadways even though congestion is an existing problem on certain segments of Roosevelt Highway.

2000 Census data tells us that in Fulton County over 86% of commuters by private vehicle drive alone. We also know from the previous Assessment of Commuting Patterns in the Economic Development Element that nearly 90% of the Palmetto residents in the workforce commutes to jobs outside the City. Clearly without astronomical increases in fuel prices or other catastrophic occurrences commuting will continue to be a dominant part of the transportation demand in Fulton County and Palmetto. Additionally, many of the area's employment centers are located in Fulton County and as a result draw large numbers of commuters from other counties.

In addition to this more overreaching look at transportation needs in the context of the City's location there are also more local transportation priorities for Palmetto. These include improvements to the railroad underpass bridges; improving congestion at the railroad grade crossings; limiting semi-truck traffic through downtown; providing left turn queuing lanes and/or protected left turns at intersections along Main Street; an additional MARTA pedestrian shelter; evaluating the need for additional signalization on arterial and collector streets; evaluating the need for a by-pass route around the City; and improving pedestrian and bicycle transportation alternatives. Some of these improvements are particularly problematic especially along the downtown portion of Main Street where the CSX rail line to one side and the unique old buildings of the area to the other side of the road limit lane expansion without endangering the historic structures.

There are no major "parking" facilities such as a Park and Ride within the city limits of Palmetto the nearest such facilities are: Campbellton at Fairburn and I-85 at Flat Shoals Road.

The City must also explore the issue of growth and land use as they relate to transportation patterns and needs. The more traditional lower density larger lot suburban development located distant from employment centers, commercial services and public/private amenities with a marginal transportation network has resulted in very automobile dependent communities which contribute to a number of environmental problems and increasing traffic congestion.

A more contemporary development model often referred to as "Smart Growth" encourages higher density; mixed-use developments; transit-oriented developments; more roadway connectivity and activity/town centers where residents can live, work, play, shop and recreate. The Livable Cities Initiative (LCI) encourages this approach. The City should apply for an LCI planning grant to develop a project incorporating this approach.

The City should protect gateways and entry corridors. The highways that provide access to and through the City shape visitors' and residents' opinions of the City. Ensuring that land uses are compatible with the desired character of the corridor, as well as with other

uses in the corridor will make the City a more attractive place to live, work and conduct business.

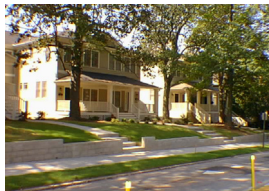
Because of its relatively small size and limited staffing the City will need to carefully evaluate the need for both external and internal staff technical resources to address transportation issues during the planning period. The City will also need to continue to rely on its favorable intergovernmental relationships with Fulton County, ARC and GDOT for technical and funding assistance in this area.

9. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

9.0 City of Palmetto Vision Statement 2005 – 2025:

The City of Palmetto, Georgia will embrace future development and growth through strategic planning initiatives and smart decision-making processes, while maintaining its small town friendliness and Southern hospitable character. By the year 2025, public participation will embody the City's future growth and represent the content of its Comprehensive Plan, which include the ideas, suggestions, and concerns of the Citizens of the City of Palmetto.

The City of Palmetto will continue to emphasize the redevelopment of its historic downtown, which will be a center of neighborhood commerce that shall promote a pedestrian friendly environment. The main thoroughfares into the city (Main Street, Toomb Street, Highway 29, and Highway 54) will be less congested, beautified, and scenic. The City will pursue new high quality commercial development that will embody family oriented restaurants and leisurely establishments that appeal to all Palmetto Citizens. The city will focus on providing better community facilities, such as recreation centers, community centers, walking/running trails, and providing public safety in order to sustain and further increase a high quality of life standard.



The City of Palmetto will have a family friendly housing atmosphere that concentrates on lifecycle housing ranging from young family to retirement home needs. The City's friendly environment and small town atmosphere shall be further enhanced by focusing on top quality development. Moreover, housing development within the City of Palmetto will provide an opportunity for all Citizens to obtain their ideal home.

Overall, the City of Palmetto will be a city that embraces smart growth while maintaining its small town friendliness and Southern community ambiance. As the city grows, it will continue to be a place where one can pursue a healthy lifestyle, sustain a working environment, and utilize leisure amenities. The City of Palmetto will continue to promote the progression of community values. Furthermore, Palmetto, as a city community, will strive to maintain public safety, environmental protection, and economic development in order to sustain a high quality of life standard for all of its citizens.



9.1 PLAN ELEMENT GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Implementation Element present goals followed by policies and implementation strategies related to the goal. Goals, policies and strategies serve different functions within the plan as outlined in the following definitions:

Goal – description of a desired state of affairs for the community in the future. Goals are the broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. Generally, more than one set of policies may be needed to achieve each goal.

Policy – statements of government intent against which individual actions and decisions are evaluated. Policies typically indicate the agency primarily responsible for implementing the policy.

Strategies – a coordinated set of ordinances, regulations, capital facility and improvement plans and other action programs that are designed to implement the Plan’s goals and policies.

Although many of the policies contained within this Plan relate to each other across topical lines, the goals, policies and strategies are provided according to their primary subject matter. For instance, a policy relating to a community facility may also relate to other community development/socio-economic issues.

9.1.1 Economic Development Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Recruit new and/or relocating businesses/industry; support existing industry expansion by improving available sites, infrastructure, marketing and coordination.

Strategies:

Provide infrastructure to existing and future industrial sites.

Work with public/private development agencies to market existing industrial/business sites.

Apply for grants, low interest loans, tax incentives, etc. to support recruitment/marketing activities.

Prepare an annexation study to include future industrial/commercial sites.

Coordinate economic development activities with development authorities, chambers, state agencies, utility companies, etc. Take advantage of regional economic development activities and strengths.

Goal: Provide economic development opportunities which include a broader diversification of the job base.

Strategies:

Assist in developing affordable housing initiatives to strengthen accessibility and proximity of workforce to available jobs.

Assist in providing a diverse housing inventory to meet workforce needs through zoning and related development regulations.

Review zoning and development ordinances to support higher quality commercial projects and business/industry diversification.

Work with Fulton County on initiatives to locate Class A office space and/or a college campus in Palmetto/South Fulton.

Goal: Develop a workforce capacity to meet the requirements of a diversified economic base.

Strategies:

Make available educational and vocational training to underemployed or unemployed residents.

Make available quality public education (K – 12), vocational training and college county-wide.

Make available advanced training, job skill enhancement and retraining opportunities for employees.

Attract a college campus to South Fulton.

9.1.2 Housing Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Promote the redevelopment of neighborhood housing that embodies pedestrian friendly amenities, such as sidewalks, trails, and bicycle paths.

Strategies:

Support infill housing development in current communities and neighborhoods.

Utilize Future Land Use Mapping capabilities to its utmost in order to identify infill housing areas, and to ensure that no barriers or restrictions will prevent infill development from occurring.

Goal: Encourage improvements and beautification processes to the appearance of all types of structures; including, homes, all varieties of buildings, and park and recreational facilities that contribute to neighborhood blight.

Strategies:

Identify areas that are currently undergoing decline and implement strategies to prevent decline.

Enforce ordinances such as, city building codes, property codes, and other ordinances on a regular basis.

Inquire about State and/or Federal funds or grants to encourage home and business owners to upgrade and upkeep their property.

Establish local educational programs that will encourage and teach homeowners the value and significance of property improvements and beautification to their community from a holistic stand point.

Goal: Provide the Citizens of the City of Palmetto with a wide range of housing options that will meet the needs of a projected growing population.

Strategies:

Promote diverse housing options that include low-density residential, medium density residential, and high-density residential style homes.

Under the City of Palmetto's zoning regulations, provide housing opportunities for the Elderly Citizens of Palmetto, which include, retirement and assisted living housing.

Provide "Executive Housing" that will attract high end professionals and aide to provide economic development opportunities that include the draw of businesses into the City of Palmetto.

Provide affordable high end housing that will appeal to first-time home buyers.

Identify special housing need providers such as Habitat for Humanity, non-profit organizations, and private and public sector funding.

Goal: Use strategic planning initiatives to develop housing that utilizes parks and

recreation as a focal point that will help maintain and improve the quality of life for the Citizens of Palmetto.

Strategies:

Promote environmental protection and awareness under the planning and development of new housing within the City limits.

Provide public hearings that enable the Citizens to decide on what types of recreational and park amenities will best suit their needs based on State regulations.

9.1.3 Natural and Cultural Resources Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Protect Water quality and water quantity within the City of Palmetto.

Policy: Protect water quality, sensitive habitats, streams/lakes and floodplain/wetland areas in the City of Palmetto.

Strategies:

Continue to develop and implement stormwater management regulations.

Continue administration and enforcement of erosion control measures.

Continue administration and enforcement of conservation subdivision overlay district and evaluate expansion of same.

Continue administration and enforcement of watershed supply protection overlay ordinance.

Continue enforcement of state mandated water conservation regulations.

Continue to participate in Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District water conservation activities and utilize model ordinances as applicable.

Goal: Protect and preserve unique land forms and ecologically sensitive plant and animal habitats.

Policy: Guard identified environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategies:

Conduct a comprehensive survey to more completely identify unique features, natural areas and sensitive habitats like steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, endangered animal and plant species, etc. so they can be more adequately protected under the City's existing ordinances and future development regulations.

Continue administration and enforcement of conservation subdivision ordinance which protects the subject land forms. Explore expanding the conservation subdivision ordinance.

Goal: Provide additional, and protect existing, greenspace/open space in the City of Palmetto.

Policy: Encourage the inclusion of greenspace/open space in new developments and preservation of existing greenspace/open space.

Strategies:

Evaluate expanding the City's existing conservation subdivision overlay district.

Revise development regulations to require open space in all new developments.

Participate in the State's new Land Conservation Program by acquiring additional greenspace property within the City.

Evaluate requiring passive park space within large scale residential developments.

Goal: Inventory and plan for the preservation of the City's historic/archaeological and cultural resources.

Policy: Protect and promote the preservation and rehabilitation of historic/archaeological and cultural resources in the City of Palmetto.

Strategies:

Conduct a comprehensive survey to identify historical, cultural, archaeological properties of significance in Palmetto.

Prepare a historic preservation plan and/or district(s) or other protection measures based on the findings of the survey.

Revise development regulations and zoning procedures to include a review of potentially historically/archaeologically/culturally significant properties in plan review and re-zoning applications.

Consider providing local preservation incentives for the protection of historic/ archaeological/cultural properties in the City's development regulations.

9.1.4 Community Facilities and Services Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Plan for new construction, expansion/renovation of existing City facilities and/or acquisition for conversion of other facilities to provide efficient access to City services. To optimize the efficiency and minimize to cost of delivery of City services through cooperative shared service associations with other agencies.

Strategies:

Support shared service agreements with the County and/or other municipalities, authorities, etc. to provide public services (e.g. water/wastewater; EMS; fire).

Support coordination of public services between and among local/state agencies where no formal shared service agreement is in place.

Monitor and periodically assess adequacy of municipal facilities.

Monitor and periodically assess the adequacy of City personnel on a departmental basis to maintain and enhance service levels as population levels grow and scope of facilities and services expand.

Goal: Make available adequate, safe and reliable water and wastewater systems to meet existing and future community needs. Ensure design, construction and maintenance promotes efficiency of cost and service.

Policy: Protect the City's watersheds to improve water quality; implement storm water management measures that are cost effective and environmentally responsive; encourage innovative environmentally friendly infrastructure design; and support water conservation.

Strategies:

Complete wastewater project to decommission wastewater treatment plant, tie to Fulton County system, purchase treatment capacity from Fulton County, upgrade pumping and collection system.

Complete water improvement project as part of South Fulton Municipal Regional Water and Sewer Authority to develop a raw water reservoir, treatment facility and transmission lines for members cities.

Develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and budget for utility facilities.

Work with Fulton County/City of Atlanta as South Fulton Municipal Water and Sewer member city to coordinate expansion of water and wastewater systems.

Continue on-going maintenance and extension/expansion of utility systems.

Seek grants, low-interest loan assistance to upgrade, improve, expand utility systems as appropriate.

Goal: Make available public safety services (Police directly by City – Fire, EMS, EMA either by shared services agreement or directly by Fulton County) adequate to meet the needs of the entire City and its residential/business communities.

Policies:

Participate in co-location of facilities where such practice results in optimum provision of the respective public safety service.

Monitor and assess adequacy of staffing to ensure adequate service levels.

Participate in joint use of equipment and personnel with adjoining jurisdictions where practice results in optimum provision of the respective public safety services.

Strategies:

Construct new 3 bay fire station.

Renovate existing fire station as needed.

Increase staff and equipment in Police/Fire Departments as needed to maintain appropriate response times and meet applicable staffing, equipment and service standards.

Goal: Make available a more diverse range of recreation/leisure service opportunities in the City including a broader scope of programs and new/updated/expanded physical facilities.

Policies:

Promote the acquisition, or donation by regulation or gift, of additional recreation property particularly open space passive recreation.

Incorporate multi-use trails in new development and upgraded sites.

Participate in joint use of facilities/programs with Fulton county and other adjacent jurisdictions.

Seek a balance between passive and active recreation opportunities.

Strategies:

Prepare a comprehensive recreation master plan for the City.

Construct a multi-use gymnasium facility.

Work cooperatively with Fulton County and other area jurisdictions on shared recreation facilities.

Revise development regulations to require recreation, park, open space in new large scale residential developments.

9.1.5 Land Use Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Provide for the coordination of planning efforts among local citizens, adjacent jurisdictions, the city and the region.

Strategies:

Participate in and support cooperative and combined efforts between the county and cities which contribute to the future development and better living conditions throughout the county.

Periodically review zoning regulations and, when appropriate, institute newer and more innovative methods and practices as have proven beneficial in other similar communities

Periodically review the status of services provided to the city by state, county and any other outside agencies. Require changes where necessary to better serve the needs of the community.

Goal: Encourage all development be located, sited, and designed to carefully fit its surrounding environment and promote health, safety and general welfare of Palmetto residents.

Strategies:

Encourage pedestrian oriented developments that promote compatible uses and focus on enhanced architectural designs which create uniformity.

Encourage the building of industrial sites retain as much of the surrounding natural environment into its design and placement.

Plan and program improvements to city recreational facilities as suitable for all age groups and interests in the city.

Encourage the provision for recreational and open space areas in new developments within the city.

Continue to require minimal disturbance of development sites and replacement of trees and vegetation where appropriate.

Discourage development in locations that would conflict with environmentally sensitive areas of the city.

Strive for a balanced distribution of land uses within the city by encouraging compatible land uses. Encourage use of transitional zones and buffers between residential and non-residential development.

Goal: Establish appropriate planning procedures and innovative planning tools to guide Palmetto's growth and development.

Strategies:

Enforce adherence to the zoning ordinances.

Provide clarity, efficiency, equity, and consistency in city department policies and procedures relating to land development review.

Actively seek the participation of residents in the planning and development process.

Goal: Promote orderly growth and development based on physical, social, economic, and environmental considerations and the ability of the city's tax base and services to supervise, support, and to facilitate this growth and development while striving to maintain the "*small town*" character of the city.

Strategies:

Provide up-to-date development regulations that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Palmetto.

Plan for growth to occur in an orderly manner within the city.

Ensure compatibility between land uses when making land development decisions.

Goal: Provide sufficiently available, safe and varied housing opportunities for existing and future residents.

Strategies:

Maintain a current database on existing housing units and proposed residential developments.

Facilitate housing development in selected areas of the city through eligible state and federal programs to meet the housing needs of households which cannot afford housing in the private market.

Adopt and enforce appropriate regulations which serve to provide for maintenance of quality housing and housing opportunities.

Encourage infill and higher density multi-family housing where appropriate.

Maintain the integrity and viability of stable single-family neighborhoods from the negative impacts of encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Facilitate mixed use (residential/commercial) development in appropriate areas by modifying current zoning codes and promoting development opportunities.

Goal: Provide for orderly, balanced, and high quality development which responds to the physical and economic conditions of the city.

Strategies:

Institute site plan standards and a review process to guide the design and construction of industrial, commercial, and all types of residential developments.

Provide for adequate and equitable administration and enforcement of the city's zoning and subdivision ordinances and other development regulations.

Preserve the single-family residential character of Palmetto's neighborhoods.

Preserve and enhance the current quality of residential life and affordability for family lifestyles within Palmetto.

Goal: Provide for the development of adequate commercial facilities in appropriate areas on both city-wide and neighborhood levels.

Strategies:

Promote a central core (downtown Palmetto) that is compact and distinct from other commercial development and that is viewed as a desirable place to provide a wide range of mixed retail, entertainment, cultural, and office uses which benefit from proximity to each other.

Promote Highway 85 as a general commercial thoroughfare that promotes retail and shopping availability for the city, county and regional needs.

Promote a Commercial attraction that will promote regional economic and cultural activities within the City of Palmetto.

Promote commercial development which contains compatible and complimentary uses, and which does not detract from the residential character of the city.

Promote safe and adequate ingress and egress from commercial development and require adequate land for off-street parking and internal vehicular circulation.

Restrict encroachment into stable residential areas.

Implement design standards for development to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent land uses.

Goal: Retain existing office and professional businesses and to provide for the development of suitable areas for business.

Strategies:

Encourage reuse and revitalization of obsolete office and commercial facilities.

Ensure that commercial developments are designed for adequate buffering, parking, and open space.

Wherever possible, promote compact and planned rather than strip commercial development.

Provide safe and adequate pedestrian access from nearby areas to commercial and other activity centers.

Locate neighborhood commercial uses in areas convenient to existing and future residential development.

Goal: Encourage industrial development in areas set aside specifically for that type of land use.

Strategies:

Encourage reuse and revitalization of obsolete industrial facilities.

Encourage the development of clean, environmentally safe industry within industrial land use zones.

Ensure that industrial sites are designed for adequate buffering, parking, and open space.

Locate industrial uses to ensure access to major thoroughfares.

Discourage industrial uses which are incompatible with surrounding uses.

9.1.6 Intergovernmental Coordination Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Maintain and enhance coordination relationships with Fulton County, Coweta County, adjacent municipal jurisdictions, member ARC and Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Center jurisdictions, state/federal agencies, authorities, special district and quasi-public entities to improve the cost efficiency and cost effectiveness of public services. Support coordination of the implementation of the City's and other interested entities respective comprehensive plans.

Policy: Support continued coordination of planning, development and service delivery activities with all applicable parties.

Strategies:

Continue to participate in mandated intergovernmental activities at every level.

Continue to be receptive to intergovernmental relationships, formal and informal, where participation improves the coordination, efficiency, effectiveness and fiscal responsiveness of providing public services.

9.1.7 Transportation Element

Goals, Policies, Strategies

Goal: Provide an efficient and cost effective transportation network that emphasizes connectivity, multi-modal choices and compatibility between transportation modes and land uses.

Policy: Maintain a level of service (LOS) “C” or better along major arterial transportation corridors, with all movements at intersections operating at LOS “D” or better. Encourage new developments to include an interconnected system of streets and appropriate connectivity to adjacent parcels.

Strategies:

- Adopt street level of service measures with those discussed in the Transportation Element Assessment of Current and Future Needs.

- Minimize individual property access directly from arterial roads.

- Adopt property access design standards that:

- Establish connectivity between adjacent commercial and industrial properties;
 - Allow or encourage shared driveway access for adjacent properties; and
 - Establish appropriate driveway separation.

- Promote the use of traffic demand management techniques among governmental entities, institutions and within large employment centers. Representative techniques include:

- Incentives for carpooling;
 - Staggered work shifts;
 - Use of company shuttles and public transportation;
 - Preferential parking for carpoolers; and
 - Other techniques that reduce peak hour trips.

- Minimize the use of dead-end streets, loop streets, cul-de-sacs and oversized blocks in favor of through-streets and shorter blocks by revising development regulations.

Goal: Promote bicycling and walking as transportation alternatives with the development of appropriate infrastructure and public information/education programs.

Policy: Provide sidewalks, walking trails, bicycle appurtenances (racks)/routes strategically through the City and interconnected to County/regional facilities where feasible.

Strategies:

Prepare a priority plan for sidewalk extensions, repairs and connectivity.

Require all new large scale residential development to provide multi-use trails on internal roadways, along proximate major walk routes from schools, parks, commercial/retail centers and other areas of congregation.

Require right-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in new developments and for new roads/streets/highways.

Submit grant applications for TE and LCI grants to facilitate alternative pedestrian modes.

Work with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) on the development of a regional bicycle-pedestrian plan.

Promote the establishment of bicycle lanes and roadway design that accommodates bicycles.

Encourage public and private investments that promote the expansion of bicycle facilities, encourage bicycling as a transportation option, and promote bicycling safety.

Goal: Coordinate local City transportation plans and projects with adjacent local municipalities, regional agencies, the County, State authorities/boards and other appropriate economic development, land use and transportation organizations.

Strategies:

Continue to work with the ARC, GDOT and County planning processes including the ARC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Identify any additional intergovernmental agencies and programs to successfully implement the City's Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Participate in long-range transportation planning with agencies/organizations/ jurisdictions with comparable and complimentary interests (chambers, development authorities, local municipal associations, Georgia Municipal Association, etc.) to establish a unified voice to communicate with regional/ state/federal transportation agencies.

Goal: Identify, plan, secure financing and implement road improvements to address existing needs and in anticipation of future needs.

Strategies:

Update citywide street design standards.

Conduct “warrant” studies to determine the need for additional signalization and regulatory signage.

Complete paving of any unpaved streets.

Continue regular maintenance of existing roads/streets and complete extensions where applicable.

Encourage State/CSX assistance in repairing and/or replacing railroad underpasses.

Establish a routine inspection and maintenance program for regulatory signs.

Work with GA DOT for necessary long-range improvements to major arterial routes serving the City.

Investigate methods to limit truck traffic in the downtown area.

Request GA DOT to evaluate a By-Pass route around the City.

Request GA DOT to evaluate protected left turns signalization or turn lanes on Main Street in the downtown district.

Revised development regulations to encourage so called “Smart Growth” and incorporate the transportation related tenants of this approach in the revised regulations.

Complete a street/road inventory to determine existing conditions, the total cost of repairs/improvements/upgrades and prioritize said repairs/improvements upgrades.

Goal: Encourage public transit utilizations and make access more convenient and safe for users in Palmetto:

Policy: Make access more convenient and safe for users in Palmetto.

Strategies:

Encourage MARTA to construct a second pedestrian waiting shelter in Palmetto on Roosevelt Highway.

Encourage the addition of additional bus routes to serve Palmetto.