

# ***COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT***

***for the***

***City of Stone Mountain, Georgia***

Submitted for Review: August 2005

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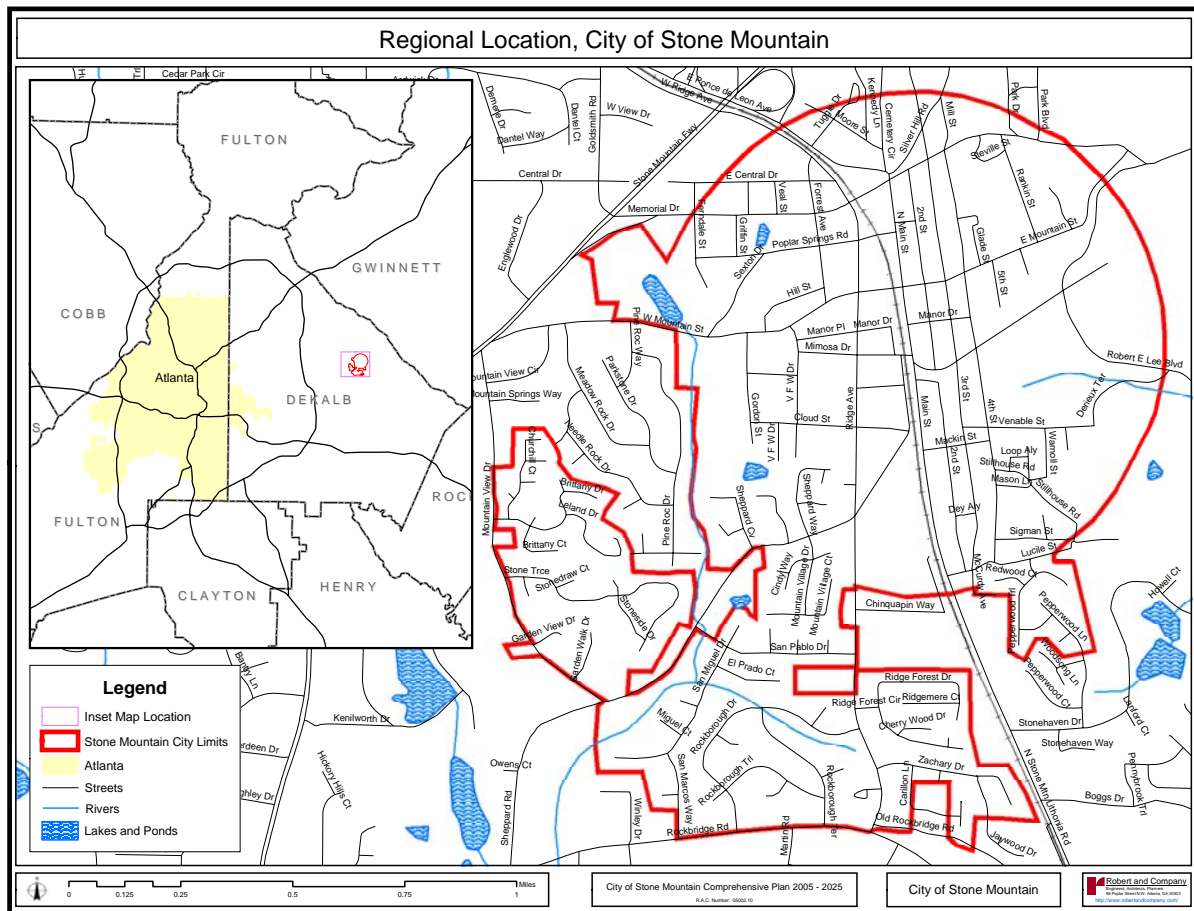
## Introduction

The Community Assessment is the first phase in Stone Mountain's 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update. The document is an objective assessment of data and information about the city that was prepared without direct public participation. The assessment provides a list of potential issues and opportunities present in the city based on the analysis of the data inventoried in the document. The document also presents an analysis of the city's existing land use patterns and identifies geographic areas in the city with unique characteristics or development issues that will require special attention during the planning process. The community assessment is intended to present a basis of information that will serve as the foundation for the second part of the city's plan, the Community Agenda.

## Community Profile

The City of Stone Mountain is located in central DeKalb County and is a member of the ten-county Atlanta Regional Commission. The city is located approximately ten miles east of Atlanta and approximately five miles northeast of Decatur, the county seat. Stone Mountain encompasses approximately 992 acres (1.5 square miles). The city's 2000 population of 7,145 residents as reported by the U.S. Census ranks it fifth amongst DeKalb County's seven municipalities, excluding the City of Atlanta. The 2003 Census Bureau estimate for the city's population show a slight decrease to 7,097.

**Figure 1: Location of Stone Mountain, Georgia**



## ***Issues and Opportunities***

There are a number of significant issues facing the City of Stone Mountain. The purpose of the following section is to provide a list of potential issues and opportunities that may warrant further study during the planning process. This list may be modified and revised through subsequent public participation sessions. A final, locally agreed upon list of issues and opportunities the city intends to address during the 2005 – 2025 planning period will be included in the Community Agenda produced at the conclusion of the planning process.

### **Population**

- The changing racial structure of the city may present the need for more diverse retail and services in the village.
- The low-income level of city residents may necessitate additional publicly supported programs, which could impose a burden on the tax base.

### **Economic Development**

- There is a lack of retail to serve the local community.
- The business association needs to recruit additional members to more effectively promote the downtown retail district.
- The city's office/professional market is underdeveloped.
- Some local officials are resistant to economic development and revitalization efforts.
- There is a persistent and unsubstantiated notion that city's retail market is tourist driven.
- There is a lack of uniform and consistent business hours for city shops and restaurants.
- There is the perception that the city's current sign ordinance hinders business owner's ability to adequately advertise their businesses.

### **Housing**

- There is a disconnect between local housing costs and the household and per capita incomes of city residents making it difficult for many residents to obtain affordable housing in the city.
- "High-end" housing is very scarce in the city.
- The city's housing market may be too skewed towards rental versus owner-occupied properties.
- Many housing units in the city are overcrowded.
- Some of the larger multi-family rental properties in the city have the potential to convert to condominiums to promote home ownership and community investment of residents.

### **Natural & Cultural Resources**

- There are a number of historic structures in need of restoration/rehabilitation.
- There is opposition to historic preservation in some communities.
- The "shed's" state of disrepair gives the historic Main Street commercial district a dilapidated appearance.

### **Community Facilities & Services**

- City Hall, the Historic Depot, is inadequate space for fulfilling the city's government functions.
- The uneven or damaged sidewalks in some neighborhoods pose safety issues for residents.

- There is the potential for development of additional parks, recreation facilities and community gathering spaces.
- There are numerous undeveloped/vacant sites in town that could be used to accommodate facility needs.

### Transportation

- The 5-point intersection at Main Street/ East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Silver Hill Road and Memorial Drive needs improvement.
- In Shermantown, traffic-calming measures are needed at the intersections of 3rd Street and Mackin Road and 4th Street and Venable Road.
- Traffic signal improvement is needed at Main Street and East/West Mountain Street intersection. Queuing across the railroad is a concern.
- A traffic signal is needed at the intersection of 3rd Street and Memorial Drive.
- There are problems with the CSX railroad bridge
- There is poor roadway drainage near Memorial Drive and Ridge Avenue.
- The city needs a identifiable, aesthetically pleasing gateways at its borders.
- An city policy concerning traffic calming measures is needed to address cut through traffic issues in many city neighborhoods
- A pedestrian demand exists beyond the study area because of Stone Mountain Park, so connections across the study area boundary to adjacent neighborhoods should be made where appropriate.
- Roadway cross-section and intersection treatments should reflect the functional classification of the roadway and relative needs for access and pedestrian flow versus circulation.
- Pedestrian crossing treatments should be provided at signalized intersections and other locations, where needed. The type of crossing protection (crosswalk, crosswalk with median, or signalized crossing) should be determined based on the pedestrian demand, intensity of vehicle traffic, and intersection geometry.
- Traffic from the side streets and regional through traffic congest Main Street during the AM and PM peak periods between Rockbridge Road and Memorial Drive. Regional improvements need to be made to improve traffic operations on Main Street.
- A large majority of the community, commercial, and recreational facilities are located within ¼ mile of the downtown Stone Mountain. Improving and expanding upon the sidewalk network will greatly enhance pedestrian mobility to these pedestrian generators.
- The PATH trail is currently the only bicycle facility in Stone Mountain. While this trail connects Stone Mountain to downtown Atlanta, additional bike routes would be beneficial. Providing connectivity to the existing and proposed PATH trail, schools and recreational facilities would provide local residents an alternative mode choice.
- While the majority of roads in the city do not provide enough right-of-way for a dedicated bike lane, designating a road as a bike route with appropriate signage would be beneficial along 4th Street and Mimosa Street.

### Land Use

- Some neighborhoods are in need of revitalization.
- There is a lack of mix of uses in the city, like offices and lofts over Main Street retail
- There is currently no zoning category for mixed-use development.
- Developers may be frustrated with the city's outdated zoning and may consider the current development approval process cumbersome.

- There is some local opposition to new development, innovative development and higher density development.
- The churches and other non-commercial establishments located in storefronts promote the perception that Main Street is in a state of decline.
- There are a number of vacant properties scattered throughout the city that could be used for infill development

#### Intergovernmental Coordination

- The city does not access or make adequate use of the numerous county and regional economic development agencies and resources that could be used to the city's advantage.

## Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

By assessing the existing land use, the current pattern of development within the City has been determined. The existing land use data for the study was gathered through the analysis of aerial photographs, data supplied by the DeKalb County Planning Department and windshield and walking surveys of the city.

The predominant land use within the City of Stone Mountain is single-family residential. Single-family homes are concentrated in neighborhoods to the east and west of Main Street and also in the historic Shermantown neighborhood located between Venable and Lucille Streets east of Main Street. Additionally, the southern portion of the city is nearly exclusively developed with cul-de-sac residential neighborhoods. New single-family housing has been developed as part of an infill project along Third and Fourth streets between Memorial Drive and East Mountain Street.

Figure 2 showing the existing Land Use follows the detailed descriptions of each category.

Existing Land Use 2005, City of Stone Mountain		
Land Use	Acres	%
Single-Family Residential	551.0	55.5%
Multi-Family Residential	92.0	9.3%
Commercial	48.1	4.8%
Office/Professional	1.6	0.2%
Public/Institutional	63.4	6.4%
Transportation/Utilities (Excluding Road R.O.W.)	10.5	1.1%
Transportation/Utilities (Road Right of Way)	77.3	7.8%
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	134.6	13.6%
Vacant/Undeveloped	13.6	1.4%
TOTAL	992.0	100.0%

### Residential Land Uses

As seen on the existing land use map, the prevalent residential land use type within the Stone Mountain Village area is single-family, which accounts for 56% of the acreage. Multi-family residential accounts for only 9% of the acreage in the study area. The relative density of the multi-family residential is evident in that, according to the 2000 Census, 31% of the housing in the City is attached housing (duplexes, apartments, etc.).

Recent single-family housing development in the city is an infill project along 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets south of Memorial/James B. Rivers Drive. New multi-family residential development has included a group of quadplexes on East Ponce de Leon Avenue northwest of the Five Points intersection.

### Commercial Land Use

Commercial activity in Stone Mountain is centered in three nodes; the first of which is the historic Main Street core that takes in Main Street from just north of Mountain Street to Poole Street and is characterized by traditional ground level storefronts. The second commercial area is the Memorial Drive Corridor, which is a mix of strip commercial centers and light industrial uses such as auto body and auto repair shops. The third commercial node within the City is South Main Street from Poole to Lucile streets which encompasses a mix of land uses including repair shops, antique/flea markets, single family homes, professional offices and store front churches.

### Office/Professional

There is currently very little land in the city developed for office/professional use. However, a few of the buildings in the Main Street commercial district have been converted into offices or have professional uses on their second floors. Windshield and walking surveys and information provided by city staff revealed that there are numerous office establishments within the Village. Most notable are the Village Court complex on North Main Street, and the Legacy Building and Picket Fence complexes on Main Street near City Hall.

### Parks and Open Space

There are four municipal parks within the boundaries of the city. The parks include Leila Mason Park in Historic Shermantown, Randolph Medlock Park on the south side off of Ridge Avenue, the VFW fields located behind the Post Office and McCurdy Park on West Mountain Street across from the Post Office. Additionally, there are approximately three acres of land adjacent to VFW fields and abutting the city's western border, which the city recently acquired with greenspace trust funds.

### Institutional Land Uses

Institutional land uses account for 6% of the total land within the city. This land includes an elementary school and a middle school, City Hall, the public library located behind City Hall, a fire station and a number of churches and other houses of worship. Additionally, the Stone Mountain City Cemetery located along the northern boundary of the city is considered an institutional use.

### Vacant Land

Only 1.4% of the city's total land area is currently undeveloped. One of the largest undeveloped tracts is located on Cloud Street between Ridge Avenue and VFW Drive. Despite the low percentage of undeveloped land, there are a number of sites scattered throughout the city, which could be used for small-scale infill redevelopment.





## Areas Requiring Special Consideration

Area of Consideration	Relevance in Stone Mountain
Areas where rapid development or change of land use is likely to occur	Due to the lack of undeveloped land in the city (1.4%) there is little concern about rapid development. Large-scale land use changes are not anticipated during the 2005 – 2025 planning period.
Areas where the pace of development may outpace the availability of community facilities and services	For the large part, the facilities provided by the city are adequate to provide a quality level of service to a growing population. One area of concern is the capability of the current government facilities to accommodate the staff and functions needed to adequately serve a growing population. The possibility of expanding the Main Street city government facilities should be looked at in the planning process.
Areas where development is likely to intrude upon or otherwise impact significant natural or cultural resources	There is the potential for new (infill) development to negatively impact the city's historic core area if it is of incompatible design, materials or scale. However recently developed design guidelines will help to alleviate negative impacts once adopted by ensuring that new development is cohesive with existing community.
Declining or unattractive areas, possibly in need of redevelopment	The Main Street commercial node gives the impression of depression due to a number of underutilized or closed shops. A strong economic development or revitalization effort can help combat this image by helping to recruit appropriate business to the area. Although this is more of a business issue than land use problem, adopting mixed use zoning would allow for the development of residential spaces over ground floor retail which would help bring people to the area and provide markets for new retail.
Large abandoned structures or sites.	There are no structures of this nature the city.

Area of Consideration	Relevance in Stone Mountain
Areas with infill potential	<p>There are many areas within the city with the potential to accommodate infill development, a preliminary list includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Along Cloud Street between VFW Drive and Ridge Ave.</li><li>• Along East Central Drive</li><li>• The underutilized MARTA Park &amp; Ride lot on 4<sup>th</sup> Street</li><li>• The south side of West Mountain between Gordon Street and VFW Drive</li><li>• Forrest Ave between Poplar Springs Rd and Hill St.</li><li>• The corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Venable Streets</li><li>• 4<sup>th</sup> Street between E. Mountain St. and Manor Drive</li></ul>
Other Issues for Consideration	<p>There is some concern about gentrification in the historic Shermantown neighborhood.</p> <p>The southern cul-de-sac neighborhoods are cut off from the core of the city due to the lack of connectivity in their street networks. This development pattern also exacerbates traffic congestion issues by loading large numbers of vehicles on the city's may thoroughfares at a limited number of points. Methods of expanding connections between these neighborhoods and the Main Street corridor should be explored in the planning process.</p>

## ***Recommended Character Areas***

Eight character areas have been identified for the City of Stone Mountain and are highlighted in Figure 3 below.

**5 Points Intersection** – This is an auto-oriented commercial area that lacks the historic feel of the core of the city. The heavy traffic congestion and poorly designed intersection makes the district unfriendly to pedestrians.

**Commercial Transitional** – The area along Main Street south of Mimosa Drive has a less cohesive character than the abutting Historic Core. There are numerous vacant buildings and underutilized properties in this corridor. Additionally the mix of uses does not promote vibrancy. However, this area provides a large opportunity for the development of additional community serving commercial establishments, especially those requiring larger spaces than available in the historic core area.

**Cul-de-Sac Residential** – The southwestern portion of the city is heavily developed with single-family residential units on cul-de-sacs. Due to the street configuration of the area it lacks connectivity to the other areas of the city and is more oriented to Rockbridge Road and suburban DeKalb County than the City of Stone Mountain.

**Historic Core** – This is the area bounded by Ridge Avenue on the west, Mimosa Drive to the south, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Streets to the east and a the block south of Memorial Drive on the north. This is the commercial heart of Stone Mountain and includes the shop lined Main Street and the historic train depot which currently serves as City Hall.

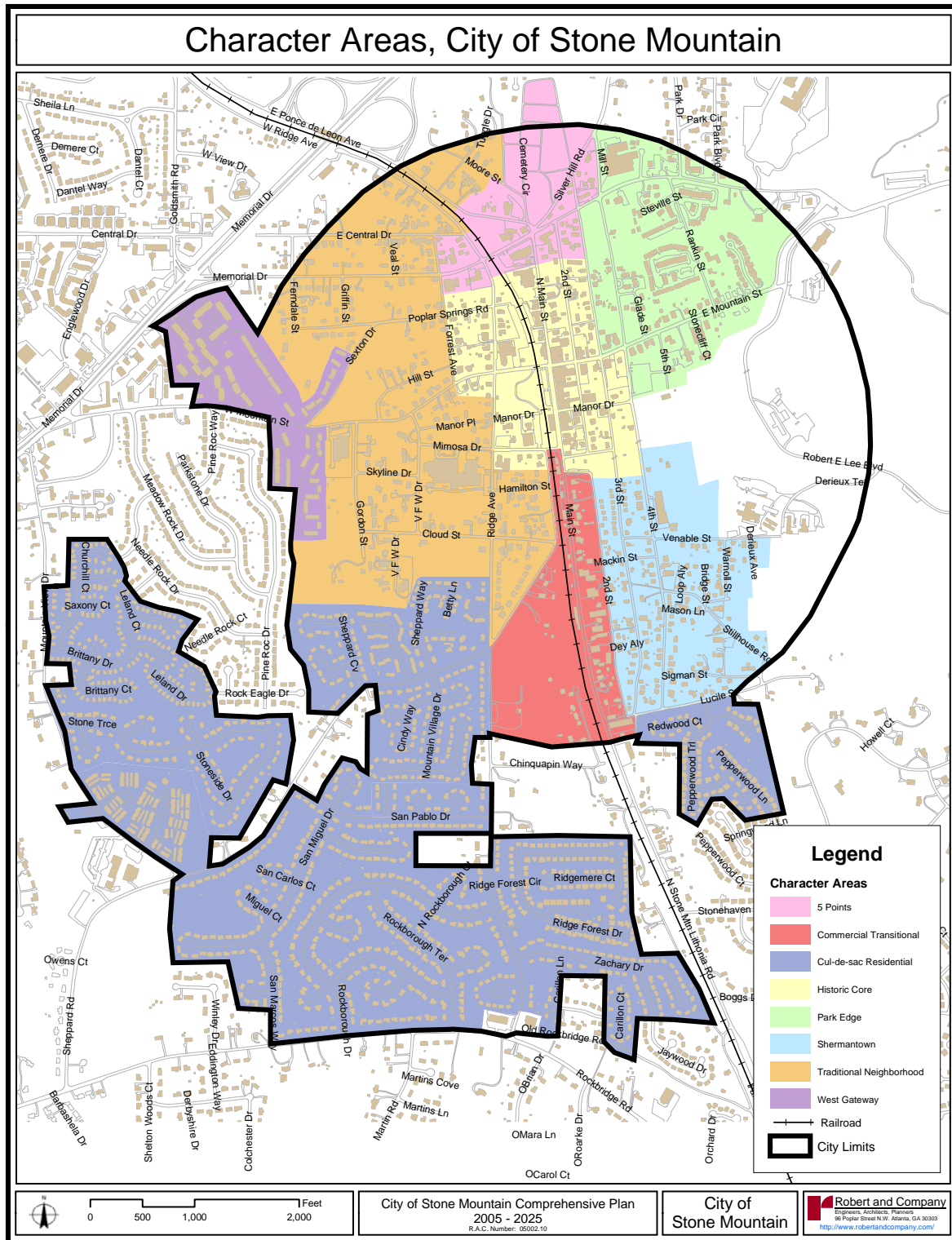
**Park Edge** – This area of the city includes a mixture of historic single-family residences with non-historic multi-family (townhouse style) housing. There are some opportunities for infill development in this area; such as the underutilized MARTA Park and Ride lot as well as some limited incidents of non-residential uses.

**Shermantown** – This is the city's historic African American neighborhood. The area is predominantly residential, with modest scale homes on smaller lots. There are a number of older homes but there has also been some infill development recently. There are a few churches located in this neighborhood.

**Traditional Residential** – This area encompasses the entire west side of Main Street down to where the cul-de-sac neighborhoods begin near Sheppard Road. A mix of traditional residential housing forms and some ancillary land uses such as churches characterize this area.

**West Gateway** – This is the entrance to the city off Memorial Drive on West Mountain Street. The area is a mix of multi-family residential properties and community uses such as a post office and park.

Figure 3: Proposed Character Areas for Stone Mountain



## Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

Quality Community Objective	Consistency with the Objective
<p><b>HERITAGE PRESERVATION</b>  The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.</p>	<p>The City of Stone Mountain has a strong commitment to preserving its heritage. In the past two decades the city has established an historic preservation commission, obtained status as a Main Street community, conducted a survey of historic resources, and designated a National Register Historic District. Most recently, the city has adopted local designation for a historic district and drafted design guidelines to direct the renovation of existing structures to insure their historic character is not compromised and to regulate the form of new development so that it is compatible with the historic surroundings.</p>
<p><b>SENSE OF PLACE</b>  Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve, as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing and entertainment.</p>	<p>The city has maintained the aesthetic of its traditional Main Street commercial district and many of its historic residential neighborhoods resulting in a strong sense of place. The community has many well-preserved focal points, foremost of which is the scenic view of Stone Mountain from the city's center. Other focal points include the historic city cemetery, which anchors the North end of Main Street, and the old Train Depot that serves as City Hall.</p> <p>The city continues to work towards increasing the vibrancy of its historic commercial core. There is presently a small core of shops, restaurants and cultural amenities in this district and recent studies have provided plans for revitalizing this area with an increased mix of uses including residential spaces and offices.</p> <p>In addition to the historic Main Street in Stone Mountain there are plans to reestablish a community focal point in the city's historic African American neighborhood, Shermantown, as well as a new mixed use development on the eastern edge of the city abutting Stone Mountain Park.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Consistency with the Objective
<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>  Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</p>	<p>The City of Stone Mountain's greatest environmental resources is Stone Mountain itself. The city has historically preserved views of this resource from the city center, however the city's current zoning and development regulations do not include building height restrictions. Such restrictions are necessary to insure the view of Stone Mountain is legally preserved.</p> <p>The city's current ordinances provide provisions for the protection of drainage areas, floodplains and vegetation, as well as erosion control provisions for development. An additional regulation that could be considered to further environmental protection is a tree protection ordinance.</p>
<p><b>GROWTH PREPAREDNESS</b>  Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.</p>	<p>In 2003 the City of Stone Mountain conducted a Livable Center's Initiative study encompassing nearly the entire area of the city. This study provided a clear vision for the type and location of growth the city wishes to attract and the infrastructure necessary to support such growth. To date the city has aggressively undertaken projects to achieve this vision, including obtaining a CMAQ grant to help relieve traffic congestion, and TEA funds for sidewalks and streetscapes.</p> <p>To further the implementation of the LCI plan the city should adopt regulations and ordinances supporting the types of development it envisions.</p>
<p><b>INFILL DEVELOPMENT</b>  Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.</p>	<p>There is very little (1.4%) undeveloped land within the City of Stone Mountain, therefore nearly all new development in the city can be considered infill development. However, the city's current zoning regulations favor traditional large tract development and lack allowances in density and form that are often required for infill projects to succeed.</p>



<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Consistency with the Objective</b>
<b>LOCAL SELF-DETERMINATION</b> Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.	The City of Stone Mountain has formed and works towards implementing its self determined vision of the future, which conforms to many state and regional planning objectives. The City has also been quite successful in obtaining fiscal assistance (in grant form) for implementing its vision. Due to the city's small size and limited staff and finances it would benefit from additional technical planning and development assistance.
<b>EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</b> Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.	There are ample and varied educational opportunities available in or within close proximity to the City of Stone Mountain. The city is home to three DeKalb County Schools, a public library and ART Station, a private cultural arts facility that provides classes and enrichment opportunities. There are numerous technical, community and four year colleges and universities located in the vicinity of the city.
<b>HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES</b> Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.	The city provides an acceptable range of housing sizes, at varying densities. Due to Stone Mountain's location and industry base there is not a high percentage of residents employed in the city; this is not unusual for a small municipality in a larger metropolitan market. However, there are a number of issues with the city's current housing stock. The city has an aging housing stock, which despite not appreciating in value at a rate comparable to the county's recent gains, is generally priced too high for the majority of city residents to afford without being cost burdened. A symptom of this cost burden is the high percentages of overcrowded housing units in the city.
<b>REGIONAL COOPERATION</b> Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.	The City of Stone Mountain is an active participant in a variety of regional forums and works with other local governments to achieve regional objectives.



<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Consistency with the Objective</b>
<b>SHARED SOLUTIONS</b> Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.	The City of Stone Mountain has diligently worked with regional authorities and DeKalb County to support shared solutions to regional issues. One issue that continues to warrant attention is the regional nature of the traffic congestion in the city.
<b>TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS</b> Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.	The City of Stone Mountain has maintained a traditional neighborhood development pattern within its historic core. New developments on the southern end of the city do not follow this pattern but one of a typical suburban cul-de-sac residential development, which is cut off from other developments and land use types. To promote traditional development in the future, the city will need to amend its development regulations to promote walkable, mixed-use development.
<b>OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION</b> New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.	The city's current development regulations do not require open space set-asides. However, the city has a history of providing public parks and has continued its commitment to openspace preservation by including plans for two to three new city parks in its 2003 LCI Study.
<b>TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES</b> Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.	There are numerous opportunities for using alternative transportation through the historic core of the city. There are sidewalks throughout much of the city and plans for their expansion and improvement as well as a PATH bike/pedestrian trail connecting the city to Atlanta and Stone Mountain Park and MARTA bus routes. The southern, cul-de-sac area of the city is not as accommodating of alternative transportation modes.

<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Consistency with the Objective</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS</b> A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.	There are few jobs available in the city and among the jobs located in Stone Mountain there is little variety. Nearly three quarters of the approximately two thousand jobs available in the city are related to retail trade or services. City residents are concentrated in educational health and social service professions.
<b>REGIONAL IDENTITY</b> Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.	The City of Stone Mountain promotes the metropolitan Atlanta regional identity in terms of its traditional architecture and historic development pattern tied to the region’s original dependence on the railroad. The city could be better tied to the region’s economy by providing additional employment and opportunities for additional office development.
<b>APPROPRIATE BUSINESSES</b> The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.	The city’s goals as expressed in its 2003 LCI plan are to expand the available office market in the city to attract more professional jobs and create opportunities for the city’s resident workforce to work where they live. To realize this goal modifications to the city’s development regulations will be required in addition to staff time dedicated to marketing the city as a business location.

## Supporting Analysis of Data and Information

### Population

#### Current and Projected Future Population

##### Existing and Projected Future Conditions:

Tables 1 and 2 show a series of demographics for the City of Stone Mountain and DeKalb County. The 2000 Census reports the resident population of the City of Stone Mountain as 7,145 while DeKalb County's population was reported as 665,865. Unlike most of the Atlanta Region, the City of Stone Mountain is not growing at an exceptionally fast rate; between 1990 and 2000 the City of Stone Mountain grew by 10%, compared to a 22% growth rate in DeKalb County.

**Table 1 City of Stone Mountain Population Projection (DCA Model)**

	Historic			Projected				
Year	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	4,867	6,494	7,145	7,715	8,284	8,854	9,423	9,993

Downloaded from DCA Planbuilder 1/24/05

**Table 2 DeKalb County Population Projection**

	Historic			Projected				
Year	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	483,024	545,837	665,865	711,575	757,286	802,996	848,706	894,416

Downloaded from DCA Planbuilder 1/24/05

It is anticipated that the City will continue growth due to the absorption of continued county growth and as a result of new housing projects undertaken as part implementation of the 2003 Livable Centers Initiative Plan for the Stone Mountain Village, the historic core of the city. Projections provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) show the city growing by 2,278 persons between 2005 and 2025, a growth rate of 29.53%, which is slightly greater than the 25.70% growth predicted for DeKalb County over the same time period. This projected rate of growth assumes interim rates of 15% (2005 – 2015) and 13% (2015 – 2025), which are higher than the city experienced in the past. If this growth was achieved the city's density would increase dramatically, for a 2000 density of 7.2 persons and 2.5 housing units per acre to 10.07 persons or 3.35 housing units per acre in 2025. For comparison the City of Atlanta had a density of 5.14 persons per acre in 2003, according to Atlanta Regional Commission estimates.

A driving force of population growth is housing development. In recent years (2000 – 2004) 39 new housing units were constructed in the city at the rate of approximately 10 new housing units per year. The average household size in the city is 2.84 persons per unit so it can be estimated that there is an addition of 28 to 30 persons added to the city's population each year through housing growth. Due to the fact that there is little vacant land in the city (approximately 14 acres) it is not anticipated that there will be a large amount of new housing development during the planning period beyond what is currently being developed and the housing projects that are part of the redevelopment plans included in the city's 2003 LCI Study. Due to these factors, the population growth projected by DCA is considered too aggressive. An alternate population projection, based on the current rate of development in the city, anticipated housing

development associated with LCI implementation projects, and the city's historic growth rate of 10% during the 1990 – 2000 decade has been produced and is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Revised Population Projection**

City of Stone Mountain Population Projections 2000 - 2025						
Category	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total population	7,145	7,287	7,642	7,997	8,139	8,281

Source: Robert and Company, 2005

**Implications:**

As noted above any population increase will have the greatest impacts on the city's housing market. It is expected that there will be an increased demand for a variety of housing products in the city. These increased needs were first identified in the 2003 LCI study. The study addresses potential increases in housing demand and provides recommendations for meeting future needs, which will be considered and incorporated into the housing policies included in the Community Agenda.

It is not anticipated that the increasing population will have substantial impacts on city services as most are provided by DeKalb County. Current city plans call for increasing green space and recreational amenities throughout the city; these improvements will also assist in meeting the needs of future residents.

### Age Distribution of Current and Future Population

#### Existing and Projected Future Conditions:

Table 4 shows the historic and projected age distributions of the populations of the City of Stone Mountain. There are no large shifts in the age distribution of the city's population expected during the planning period. Three small shifts that are anticipated are a 2.77% increase in 5 – 13 year olds, a 3.47% increase in the 35 – 44 year olds, and a 3.98% decrease in 25 – 34 year olds in the total population by 2025.

**Table 4: Stone Mountain: Population by Age**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
0 – 4 Years Old	370	458	545	573	600	621	659	698	717	736
5 – 13 Years Old	712	811	909	1,140	1,371	1,451	1,569	1,684	1,753	1,819
14 – 17 Years Old	308	290	272	302	332	319	317	316	307	300
18 – 20 Years Old	226	248	270	281	291	290	299	307	307	308
21 – 24 Years Old	428	428	428	410	391	361	344	328	306	286
25 – 34 Years Old	1,157	1,343	1,528	1,380	1,231	1,181	1,169	1,162	1,127	1,097
35 – 44 Years Old	616	884	1,151	1,232	1,312	1,403	1,531	1,656	1,734	1,808
45 – 54 Years Old	379	502	624	719	813	871	950	1,029	1,077	1,124
55 – 64 Years Old	334	325	315	361	406	400	408	415	413	411
65 and Over	337	395	452	425	398	390	396	401	396	393

Source: DCA Planbuilder 1/31/05 & Robert and Company Projections

#### Implications:

The anticipated shifts in the age distribution of city residents are not perceived as large enough to warrant any major policy changes or city improvements. The existing and continued concentration of population in child and parent or “family” age cohorts presents a continued need for programs and services that support families.

## Race

### Existing and Projected Future Conditions:

The historic racial distribution trends of Stone Mountain and DeKalb County show a pronounced shift from majority white to majority black populations during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Tables 5 and 6). One notable difference in the racial distributions to date has been the greater racial diversity at the county level.

Initial projections (Table 5) show that these two distinct trends will continue through 2025, with the City of Stone Mountain obtaining a larger and larger black majority until there is little to no white population remaining in the city by 2020, when a 92% black population is projected. The Asian population and individuals of other races not specifically categorized in the projections provided will increase in the city, but remain a distinct minority throughout the planning period.

This extreme shift of the city's racial distribution is considered unlikely to occur. A distribution that is more likely is one closely matching what is projected for DeKalb County as a whole. Table 7 provides projections based on this model.

### Implications:

The changing racial structure of the city is likely to have implications for the types of goods and services requested and provided in the city's commercial district as evidenced in the recent concentration of beauty salons catering to African American clients in the village.

**Table 5: Stone Mountain Racial Composition**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
White alone	84.59%	77.82%	72.77%	47.47%	24.49%	16.12%	8.77%	3.04%	0.00%	0.00%
Black or African American alone	13.66%	19.06%	23.11%	47.25%	69.21%	76.96%	83.74%	89.03%	91.85%	91.88%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.18%	0.25%	0.28%	0.25%	0.21%	0.21%	0.22%	0.22%	0.22%	0.21%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.86%	2.01%	2.86%	2.42%	2.00%	2.16%	2.30%	2.41%	2.45%	2.43%
Other Race	0.70%	0.86%	0.97%	2.61%	4.09%	4.55%	4.97%	5.29%	5.47%	5.48%

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**Table 6: DeKalb County Racial Composition**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
White alone	71.27%	61.87%	53.55%	43.81%	35.82%	29.81%	24.52%	19.83%	15.65%	11.89%
Black or African American alone	27.12%	35.13%	42.21%	48.82%	54.23%	58.83%	62.88%	66.46%	69.66%	72.54%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.13%	0.16%	0.18%	0.21%	0.23%	0.25%	0.27%	0.28%	0.29%	0.30%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.96%	2.03%	2.98%	3.57%	4.06%	4.59%	5.05%	5.46%	5.83%	6.16%
Other Race	0.53%	0.82%	1.07%	3.59%	5.65%	6.52%	7.29%	7.96%	8.57%	9.11%

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**Table 7: Revised City of Stone Mountain Racial Distribution Projections**

Year	2000	Projected				
		2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	7,145	7,287	7,642	7,997	8,139	8,281
White alone	2,559	2,172	1,874	1,586	1,274	985
Black or African American alone	3,875	4,287	4,805	5,315	5,670	6,007
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	16	18	21	22	24	25
Asian or Pacific Islander	290	334	386	437	475	510
Other race	404	475	557	637	698	754

Source: Robert and Company, 2005

### *Income and Poverty Levels*

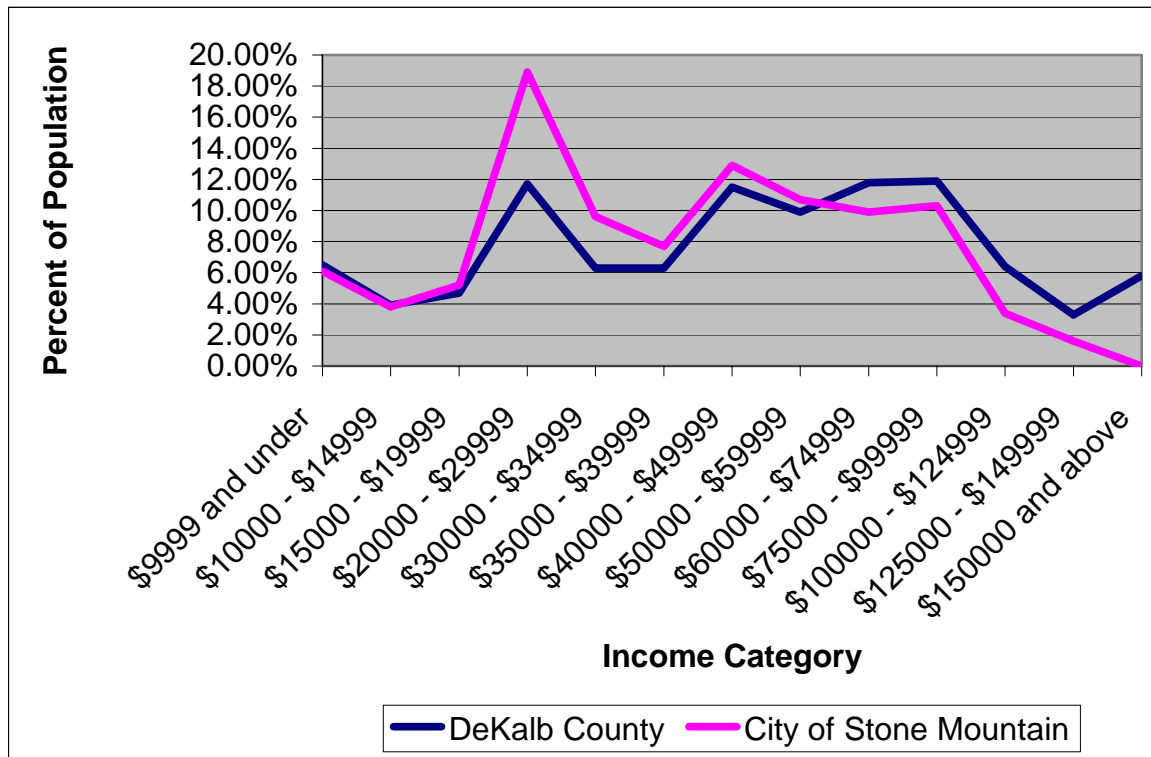
#### Existing and Projected Future Conditions:

In 2000 the median household income in the City of Stone Mountain was \$38,603 per year. This is significantly lower than the median income for DeKalb County, which was \$49,117 per year. The median income of Stone Mountain residents is also lower than the state and national medians, \$42,433 and \$41,994 respectively. The yearly per capita income was lower in Stone Mountain, \$16,130 compared to \$23,968 for the County and approximately \$21,000 at the state and national levels. A comparison of the distributions of household incomes across thirteen income categories for the city and county (Figure 4) shows that proportionally, city households are earning less than county households. However a comparison of the percent of population living below the poverty line, based on 2000 Census figures, shows the city and county to share comparable rates of population below the poverty line, 10.96% and 10.59% respectively. Further, the proportions city and county population receiving Supplemental Security Income (6.34% and 3.32%) and Public Assistance (2.49% and 2.18%) income are comparable, based on sample information from the 2000 Census.<sup>1</sup> Projections of future per capita incomes, provided by the Department of Community Affairs, (Table 8) show the income of city residents increasing by 44.24% between 2005 and 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> Census 2000 SF3, Tables P59, 63, and 64

**Figure 4: 2000 Household Income Distribution Comparison**



**Table 8: City of Stone Mountain Project Per Capita Income (in dollars)**

Category	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Per Capita Income	\$ 18,136	\$ 20,142	\$ 22,148	\$ 24,154	\$ 26,160

Original Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3). The projections are based on the average rate of change from 1980 to 2000 using a base multiplier of 1, which assumes that the same trend will continue.

#### Implications:

The low incomes of city residents, especially compared to county residents, may indicate a need for affordable housing in the city. Additionally, lower income groups are traditionally more dependant on public programs for maintaining quality of life.

As the current services provided by the city are limited, the largest opportunity may be for increased city sponsored recreation programs. Over time, the concentration of lower income households in the city may be cause for the city to consider increasing its capacity to connect citizens with appropriate service organizations. Additionally, the low-income levels in the city may create challenges in raising revenues, specifically through increased taxes, to support required improvements and services. Other options for increasing tax revenues, such as actively recruiting businesses to fill empty commercial space in the city and bolster the city's business tax revenues should be explored. The challenge facing the city is that of raising the overall per capita and household income levels of city residents while being responsive to the housing and program needs of lower income residents.



## Employment

### Economic Base – City Industries/Jobs

#### Existing Conditions:

In 2003 there were approximately 232 business establishments within a ½ mile radius of the Stone Mountain City Hall, an area approximately congruent with the City's limits. These establishments reported annual sales of \$168 million and employed 2,032 people. This accounts for less than 1% of the total jobs in DeKalb County.

**Table 9: 2003 Employment in City of Stone Mountain**

Approximate City of Stone Mountain (1/2 mile radius from City Hall)	# of establishments	% of establishments	# of employees	% of total employees
Total Establishments	231		2,032	
Agriculture	3	1%	32	2%
Minerals	1	0%	8	0%
Construction	9	4%	63	3%
Manufacturing	11	5%	40	2%
Transportation Communications and Utilities	3	1%	188	9%
Wholesale Trade	5	2%	37	2%
Retail Trade	64	28%	346	17%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	20	9%	93	5%
Service Industries	111	48%	1,148	56%
Public Administration	5	2%	77	4%
Other	0	0%	0	0%

Data provided by Claritas, Inc.

The largest employment sector in the City of Stone Mountain is service industries. As of 2003 the service sector was reported to employ 1,148 individuals, providing 56% of the jobs within the City. Retail trade jobs are the second greatest source of employment within the City, accounting for 17% or 346 jobs. This employment distribution mirrors that of DeKalb County and the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area where the services sector holds the majority of employment followed by retail trade sector.

As with employment, the largest concentration of businesses is in the service industries. These businesses are divided mainly between personal and business services, however membership organizations also account for a significant portion of these establishments. The second largest business sector in the City is retail trade; eating, drinking and miscellaneous retail establishments account for the bulk of these 64 businesses.

## Resident Labor Force

### Existing Conditions:

The occupations of the working resident population of Stone Mountain have historically, and continue to be, concentrated in the retail trade, educational, health, and social services sectors. There have been some fluctuations in the percent of employed residents working in each industry category over the past two decades, as shown in Table 10, however these fluctuations do not produce a discernable pattern that can be assumed to continue in the future.

Due to the varied commute patterns of city residents; less than 10% of city residents work within the city or DeKalb County, (Table 11), a correlation between a resident's occupation and their choice to live in the City of Stone Mountain cannot be drawn.

**Table 10: Employment by Industry in Stone Mountain**

Category	1980	1990	2000
Total Employed Civilian Population	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	0.80%	1.50%	0.00%
Construction	6.60%	6.60%	5.80%
Manufacturing	15.50%	10.30%	7.70%
Wholesale Trade	5.10%	4.40%	3.80%
Retail Trade	16.70%	19.30%	12.20%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	6.60%	9.60%	7.50%
Information	NA	NA	5.50%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	7.10%	8.80%	5.10%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	10.10%	7.50%	9.20%
Educational, Health and Social Services	16.00%	16.00%	22.80%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	4.80%	1.70%	8.30%
Other Services	3.40%	9.00%	5.00%
Public Administration	7.30%	5.40%	7.00%

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**Table 11: Stone Mountain Labor Force Place of Work**

Category	1990	2000
Worked in State of residence	3,301	3,284
Worked in county of residence	301	239
Worked outside of county of residence	3,000	3,045
Worked outside of state of residence	0	0

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Preliminary unemployment statistics for December 2004, available from the Georgia Department of Labor, show unemployment rates for the metropolitan Atlanta area (the ARC region) and the state are the same, 4.1%. The rate for DeKalb County was slightly higher at 4.9%. Statistics specific to the City of Stone Mountain are unavailable, however it is assumed that the city's rate is comparable to the county and regional rates and is between 4% and 5%. For comparison, the national unemployment rate for this period was 5.4%.

Wage data, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is unavailable at the city level. The most recent annual average weekly wage data (2003) shows that at \$801 per week wages in DeKalb County are significantly higher than statewide average, which was \$704.

### *Economic Resources*

The primary economic development resource for the City of Stone Mountain is the Georgia Main Street Program. Stone Mountain became a Main Street community in 1997. Main Street is a self-help community development program designed to improve a downtown's quality of life. Each designated Main Street city receives technical assistance, manager/board training, regional networking sessions and resources, aimed at assisting the local community in its efforts to build a stronger local economy through revitalization of the downtown area. The comprehensive approach of Main Street's revitalization process improves all aspects of a commercial district. It successfully integrates a practical management strategy with the physical improvement of buildings and public spaces, aggressive promotion and image building, and the economic development of the area.

An essential component of a successful Main Street community is a professional program manager to coordinate the downtown revitalization program. The executive director of Main Street Stone Mountain has traditionally been intimately involved with the city in revitalization, recent projects include providing project management to the city's LCI study and obtaining over one million dollars in grant funds to improve roadways, traffic signalization, and streetscaping throughout the city. In the past the city has provided financial support for this Main Street staff position, however the city has recently voted to discontinue this support. The lack of funding for Main Street staff to manage city development and improvements projects could present a challenge due to limited city staff availability to manage these projects and may require the city to hire additional staff to carry out these duties or abandon these projects.

## *Economic Trends*

It is expected that the retail and services sectors of Stone Mountain's economy will continue to grow during the planning period. This expectation is based on past industry trends and the development patterns of the city. Stone Mountain is a residential enclave and not an industrial or business center. This is mostly due to geography and the city's location removed from the region's major business centers and lack of direct, uncongested, transportation routes to these centers. However, there is significant opportunity for the development of small offices and businesses within the city. As commutes through the region become longer, those workers who can will seek to set up offices close to home. Additionally, the residential nature of the city is attractive to personal and household service agencies and businesses that locate close to residential customers.

One needed shift in the economy of Stone Mountain is a repositioning of the city's retail market away from the tourist market and towards resident serving services and retail. This need is supported by surveys conducted during the 2003 LCI study, which showed that a negligible amount of the city's retail shoppers are tourists (2.59%)<sup>2</sup>. Despite this the city's downtown has largely positioned itself as a shopping district for tourists visiting nearby Stone Mountain Park. The lack of visibility of the city to park goers and the development of shopping districts within the Stone Mountain Park in recent years has presumably hastened the decline in tourist related shopping. This decline is evident in the closures of a number of Main Street tourist related retail stores during the past decades.

Instead of tourist-focused retail, the city has the opportunity to shift towards a community serving shopping and entertainment district. The location of the theater and arts venue ArtStation in the city draws many potential customers for local shops and restaurants, as do the city's numerous residential neighborhoods. The LCI related surveys showed that most of the Village's customers (65%) reside in the Stone Mountain area. Additionally, the Main Street area draws shoppers from the nearby areas of Avondale, Clarkston, Decatur, Lithonia and Snellville<sup>3</sup>. Recent additions to the city's business community support this trend, with new retail shops and restaurants opening in the past year.

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<sup>2</sup> Stone Mountain Village LCI Plan, 2003. Page 40.

<sup>3</sup> Stone Mountain Village LCI Plan, 2003. Page 39.

## Housing

### Type & Mix

Tables 12, 13 and 14 provide information on the current (2000) and historic mix of types of housing in Stone Mountain and the occupancy characteristics of the city's housing market. Table 12 shows that there has been a steady increase in the percentage of single-family units, both detached and attached, over the past two decades. Factors leading to this trend may include increased emphasis on homeownership over rental housing as a means of stabilizing community tax base, the advent of zoning and more restrictive land use regulations limiting development of multi-family housing, and the trends toward increasing housing unit size experienced at the national, regional, and local levels in the recent past.

Despite this shift of the city's housing stock away from multi-family properties, the percentage of renter households has increased. This increase indicates that the number of single-family homes used as rental properties has grown. A comparison of Census data from 1990 and 2000 confirms this assumption, Table 12.

**Table 12: Types of Housing Units by Tenure**

Type of Unit	1990		2000	
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Total	59.62%	40.38%	56.05%	43.95%
Single Units (detached)	86.49%	13.51%	85.25%	14.75%
Single Units (attached)	59.87%	40.13%	46.21%	53.79%
Multifamily	4.71%	95.29%	7.21%	92.79%
Mobile Home	0.00%	100.00%	24.24%	75.76%
other	100.00%	0.00%	n/a	n/a

Sources: U.S. Census 2000 SF3, Table H32 and U.S. Census 1990 SF3, Table H22

**Table 13: Types of Housing Units in Stone Mountain 1980 - 2000**

Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Housing Units	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Single Units (detached)	46.50%	59.10%	55.40%
Single Units (attached)	5.30%	6.50%	11.80%
Double Units	3.30%	6.90%	5.50%
3 to 9 Units	14.60%	19.20%	15.00%
10 to 19 Units	17.40%	4.60%	6.30%
20 to 49 Units	7.80%	2.50%	1.40%
50 or more Units	3.90%	0.00%	3.20%
Mobile Home or Trailer	1.00%	0.40%	1.30%
All Other	0.00%	0.70%	0.00%

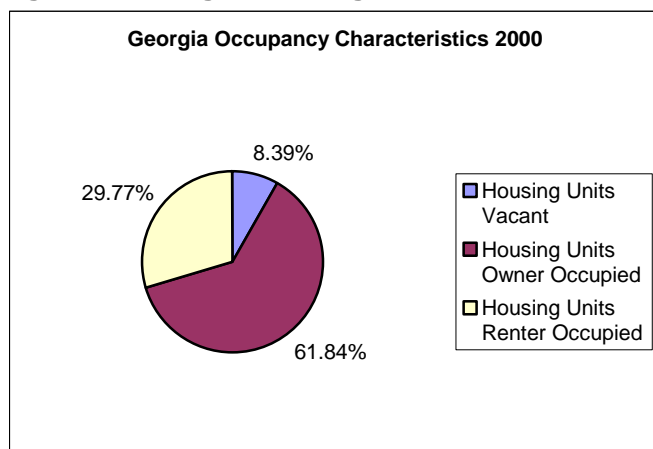
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3) Downloaded from DCA PlanBuilder 2/1/04

**Table 14: Housing Occupancy Characteristics in Stone Mountain 1990 - 2000**

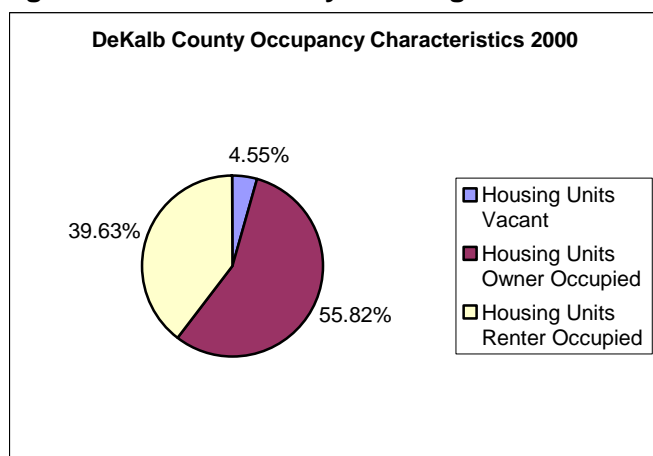
Category	1990		2000	
TOTAL Housing Units Built	2,584		2,561	
Housing Units Vacant	219	8.48%	140	5.47%
Housing Units Owner Occupied	1,410	54.57%	1,357	52.99%
Housing Units Renter Occupied	955	36.96%	1,064	41.55%

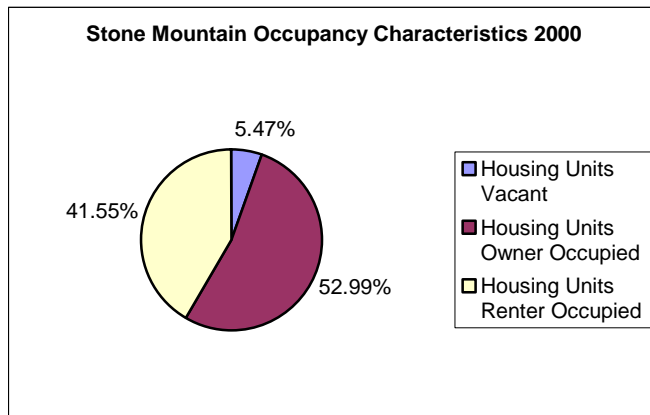
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3) Downloaded from DCA PlanBuilder 2/1/04

**Figure 5: Georgia Housing Tenure 2000**



**Figure 6: DeKalb County Housing Tenure 2000**



**Figure 7: Stone Mountain Housing Tenure 2000**

### Housing Cost

The median property value in Stone Mountain increased 20% between 1990 and 2000 (Table 15). In comparison median value property values in DeKalb County increased 49% and at the state level they increased 59% (Table 16). The difference in increase between Stone Mountain and DeKalb is unexpected, given that the city is located within DeKalb County, which is part of the Metropolitan Atlanta area and tends to have higher rates of appreciation. More startling is the difference in the actual median values; as of 2000 Stone Mountain's median property value was 42% lower than DeKalb County and 17% lower than the state. Causes for this difference in value may include a lack of new housing construction in Stone Mountain and existing homes not being maintained. Other causes of the differential may be the city's difficult location, removed from the metropolitan area's major employment centers, lack of significant and direct transit connections to employment areas and the high level of congestion on the areas roadways. In contrast the 2000 median rent in Stone Mountain was fairly comparable, (3% lower), than the median for DeKalb County and nearly 18% higher than the state median.

**Table 15: Housing Cost (in dollars)**

Category	1990	2000
Median Property Value	\$ 79,400	\$ 95,400
Median Rent	\$ 563	\$ 746

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3) Downloaded from DCA PlanBuilder 2/3/05

**Table 16: Comparison of Housing Costs**

Category	1990	2000
<b>State of Georgia</b>		
Median Property Value	\$ 70,700	\$ 111,200
Median Rent	\$ 433	\$ 613
<b>DeKalb County</b>		
Median Property Value	\$ 90,900	\$ 135,100
Median Rent	\$ 552	\$ 767
<b>Stone Mountain</b>		
Median Property Value	\$ 79,400	\$ 95,400
Median Rent	\$ 563	\$ 746

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, SF3, Downloaded from DCA PlanBuilder 2/3/05

### Age & Condition of Housing

As of 1990 a third (33.97%) of the city's housing stock was built during the 1970's (Table 17). According to the 2000 Census sample counts this percentage remained steady over the decade. Comparing data from 1990 and 2000 shows that there was a marked reduction in new housing in the city, with only 139 units built between 1990 and March 2000, versus 1019 in the preceding decade (1980 through March 1990). The high level of construction in the 1980's is due to the expansion of the city and the building of a number of cul-de-sac subdivisions inside its southern edges.

The high percentage of housing built in the 1970's may also be a contributing factor to the high percentage of renter occupied housing in the city. Older units lacking additions and/or updated amenities tend to be less attractive to home buyers, especially upwardly mobile households, and therefore often transition into rental status.

**Table 17: Stone Mountain Housing by Year Built 2000 & 1990**

Total: 2000	2,561		Total: 1990	2,584	
Built 1999 to March 2000	0	0%	1989 to March 1990	92	4%
Built 1995 to 1998	23	1%	1985 to 1988	550	21%
Built 1990 to 1994	116	5%	1980 to 1984	377	15%
Built 1980 to 1989	972	38%	1970 to 1979	870	34%
Built 1970 to 1979	868	34%	1960 to 1969	339	13%
Built 1960 to 1969	257	10%	1950 to 1959	127	5%
Built 1950 to 1959	72	3%	1940 to 1949	38	1%
Built 1940 to 1949	101	4%	1939 or earlier	191	7%
Built 1939 or Earlier	152	6%			

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Census 2000 SF3, Table H34 & U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990, SF3, Table H025

The number of housing units lacking complete plumbing and kitchen facilities is a typical measure for substandard housing conditions. In 1990, 16 housing units, or less than 1% of the total housing stock in the city, lacked plumbing facilities. At this time there were 16 units lacking complete kitchen facilities as well (Table 18). It cannot be determined if the units lacking plumbing are the same as those lacking kitchen. By 2000 there was a slight reduction in the number of units lacking plumbing, however the number of units without complete kitchen facilities increased by 10 units. Despite the increase in units without complete kitchen facilities, the condition of housing, based on these measures, is not considered to be a significant issue in the City of Stone Mountain.

**Table 18: Condition of Housing in Stone Mountain**

Category	1990		2000	
Total Housing Units	2,584		2,561	
Complete Plumbing Facilities	2,568		2,548	
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	16	0.62%	13	0.51%
Complete Kitchen Facilities	2,568		2,535	
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	16	0.62%	26	1.02%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3) Downloaded from DCA PlanBuilder 2/1/04



## Household Size

Table 19 shows that in 2000 the City of Stone Mountain had a larger average household size than the county or region. For owner-occupied housing the city's average household size was comparable to the region's, but significantly larger than the state average. Renter households in Stone Mountain were much larger on average than those households in the county or region in 2000. The presence of large households in rental units is counter to expectations as it is usually assumed that families tend towards owner-occupied housing. However, the presence of families or larger households in rental units is not surprising when the city's low household incomes are considered. This situation is indicative of a lack of affordable housing within the city; a situation that often leads to overcrowded housing units.

**Table 19: Average Household Size Comparison**

Jurisdiction	Atlanta MSA	DeKalb County	Stone Mountain
All Occupied Housing Units	2.68	2.62	2.84
Owner Occupied Housing Units	2.79	2.66	2.78
Renter Occupied Housing Units	2.48	2.55	2.92

U.S. Census Bureau Census 2000, SF1, Table H12

## Overcrowding

Overcrowding is another factor used to determine the adequacy of housing conditions. The Census defines an over crowded housing unit as one having 1.01 or more persons per room, severely overcrowded persons is defined as 1.51 or more persons per room. In 2000 Stone Mountain had a higher incidence of overcrowding than DeKalb County or the state (Table 20). The rate of server overcrowding in the city's housing units is comparable with the state and county rates for owner-occupied housing and lower than the county for renter occupied housing.

**Table 20: Comparison of Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000**

Occupants Per Room	State of Georgia		DeKalb County		City of Stone Mountain	
	Owner Occupied Housing Units	Renter Occupied Housing Units	Owner Occupied Housing Units	Renter Occupied Housing Units	Owner Occupied Housing Units	Renter Occupied Housing Units
1.01 to 1.50 Occupants per Room (overcrowded)	1.16%	5.48%	1.05%	6.87%	2.07%	7.33%
1.51 or More Occupants per Room (severely overcrowded)	0.49%	4.29%	0.46%	6.97%	0.45%	5.17%

U.S. Census Bureau Census 2000 SF1 Table H20

## Cost Burden

The Census defines "cost burdened" as paying more than 30% of income for housing and "severely cost burdened" as paying more than 50% of income for housing. Analyzing the incidents of cost burdening in a community helps to identify the need for affordable housing and other supportive programs for low-income households. 2000 Census data shows that

regardless of owner or renter status, households in Stone Mountain paid significantly more of their income for housing than the average DeKalb County or Atlanta region household in 1999.

**Table 21 Comparison of Cost Burden by Tenure**

Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	Specified Owner- Occupied Housing Units	Specified Renter Occupied Housing Units
<b>Stone Mountain</b>		
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	62.36%	53.57%
30% to 49% (cost burdened)	21.93%	32.24%
50% or More (severely cost burdened)	15.71%	10.90%
Median selected monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income in 1999 --	23.30%	27.50%
<b>DeKalb County</b>		
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	76.39%	58.00%
30% to 49% (cost burdened)	15.03%	21.19%
50% or More (severely cost burdened)	8.10%	16.75%
Median selected monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income in 1999 --	19.50%	25.70%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>		
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	77.82%	58.34%
30% to 49% (cost burdened)	14.32%	20.66%
50% or More (severely cost burdened)	7.25%	15.99%
Median selected monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income in 1999 --	19.40%	25.20%

Census 2000, SF3, Tables H69, H70, H94 and H95

**Table 22: Community Income and Housing Balance**

Income Range	# of Households	Midpoint of Income	Approximate Maximum Affordable Monthly Rent	Rent Range	Rental Units in Range	Deficit or Surplus of Rental Units	Approximate Affordable Ownership Housing Value Range	Ownership Housing Units in this Price Range	Deficit of Ownership Units in Price Range	Total Deficit or Surplus for Income Level
less than \$9999	148	\$ 9,999	\$ 250	up to \$249	16	-132	\$10,000 - \$19,999	0	-148	-132
\$10000 - \$14999	92	\$ 12,500	\$ 312	\$250 - \$299	0	-92	\$20,000 - \$29,000	0	-92	-92
\$15000 - \$19999	127	\$ 22,499	\$ 562	\$300 - \$549	99	-28	\$30,000 - \$39,000	15	-112	-13
\$20000 - \$29999	462	\$ 25,000	\$ 625	\$550 - \$599	77	-385	\$40,000 - \$59,999	35	-427	-350
\$30000 - \$34999	234	\$ 32,500	\$ 812	\$600 - \$799	500	266	\$60,000 - \$69,999	102	-132	368
\$35000 - \$39999	188	\$ 37,500	\$ 937	\$800 - \$899	223	35	\$70,000 - \$79,999	101	-87	136
\$40000 - \$49999	315	\$ 45,000	\$ 1,125	\$900 - \$999	108	-207	\$80,000 - \$89,999	257	-58	50
\$50000 - \$59999	262	\$ 55,000	\$ 1,375	\$1000 - \$1249	18	-244	\$90,000 - \$124,999	580	318	336
\$60000 - \$74999	243	\$ 67,500	\$ 1,687	\$1250 - \$1499	13	-230	\$125,000 - \$149,999	129	-114	-101
\$75000 - \$99999	253	\$ 87,500	\$ 2,187	\$1500 - \$1999	0	-253	\$150,000 - \$174,999	23	-230	-230
over \$100000	121	\$100,000	\$ 2,500	\$2,000 or more	0	-121	\$175,000 - \$199,999	12	-109	-109

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3 Tables P52, H62, H74,

One primary cause of cost burdening is a lack of affordable housing or a mismatch between the cost of housing in a community and the incomes of the community's residents. Table 21 analyzes the balance between incomes and housing costs in Stone Mountain based on 2000 Census data. This analysis shows that greatest need for units is at the lower end of the rental range, with units renting under \$625 per month. There is also a marked lack of higher cost housing units. In this sector the demand would most likely be for ownership units, thus more construction of these units could be warranted in the future. However, it should be noted that there is a surplus of units in the moderate rental and mortgage ranges. This suggests that more affluent households could be choosing housing that is more than affordable for their income level, a trend which could continue as other household costs such as transportation and healthcare continue to rise and detract from household income available for meeting housing needs.

### *Special Housing Needs*

Generally, the housing stock in the City of Stone Mountain caters to families and individuals interested in single-family detached homes for purchase or multi-family apartments for rent. While there are no housing authority administered public housing units located in the city there are a number of rental units that are made available to low income households through the Section 8 voucher program. Homeless or women and children's shelters area also absent in Stone Mountain, however there are a number of facilities serving these populations located in the greater area of DeKalb County. Facilities include the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence and the International Women's Housing in Decatur and the Hardwick-Hood Transitional Home run by Saint Phillip's AME church.

Currently, there are no nursing or assisted living facilities located in the City of Stone Mountain, but again, a large number of these facilities are located in nearby areas of surrounding DeKalb County and can be easily accessed by citizens of the city. The city's elderly population is anticipated to remain steady at 5% of the total population during the planning period so there is not an immediate need for the development of housing specifically for this population segment. However, the development of smaller, lower maintenance units such as condominiums within the city would provide additional housing options for this group, perhaps allowing greater numbers to age in place. At this time there are no know group homes or residential facilities for the mentally or physically disabled adults in the city. Gables Academy, a private school specializing in education for disabled students does provide some onsite living accommodations for students. The city's current zoning ordinance does provide for the development of nursing, convalescent, detriment and rest homes in a number of its zoning district, therefore it is considered that the city is accommodating of special housing needs.

### *Jobs Housing Balance*

As the employment data presented in previous section shows, there are few jobs located in the City of Stone Mountain. Due to the city's small size (1.5 sq. miles), historic nature, location adjacent to a large state park and tourist attraction and the predominance of residential land use, it is not surprising that the focus of the area's economy is in the retail and services sectors opposed to industrial employment.

There is little land available for large-scale development within the city. The largest opportunity for expansion of the city's job base is continued growth of the retail sector, specifically through the continued revitalization of the Main Street historic commercial district, and the addition of new retail good shops. One large retail establishment desired by the city, as evident in the 2003 LCI Study, is a grocery store, which would generate a number of jobs, albeit mainly with low wages. For higher wages jobs there is the opportunity for the development of additional office based, professional services establishments in the city. These offices could be located over retail establishments in the Main Street commercial area as the second stories of district's buildings are largely vacant. Another opportunity for attracting professional jobs to the city is the development of live-work infill projects within the city, such as what is recommended in the 2003 LCI study for the underutilized MARTA Park & Ride lot on the edge of Stone Mountain Park. The development of additional professional jobs will help with the jobs housing balance allowing local residents who direct small firms or would be interested in starting their own small offices to locate in the city and reduce their daily commute. Furthermore, the development of live-work space that is relatively affordable for the Atlanta real-estate market will has the potential to draw entrepreneurs and small business owners to Stone Mountain.

## Projections

The set of projections for housing units presented in Table 23 is based on a number of variables: including the number of units needed to house the projected population based on the historic ratio of population to housing units. These projections also take into consideration 193 units of infill housing development anticipated as part of the implementation of the city's 2003 LCI study. Increases in housing units due to the future annexation of residential areas adjacent to the city have not been considered.

**Table 23: Housing Unit Projections 2005 - 2025**

Historic Counts of Housing Units & Population					
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total Population	4,867	5,681	6,494	6,820	7,145
Total Housing Units	1,824	2,204	2,584	2,573	2,561
Projected Housing Units					
Year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Projected Population	7,287	7,642	7,997	8,139	8,281
Projected Housing Units	2,612	2,739	2,866	2,917	2,968
Net Increase in Housing Units	51	178	305	356	407

Source: Robert & Company, based on Census 2000 information downloaded from DCA PlanBuilder 2/15/05

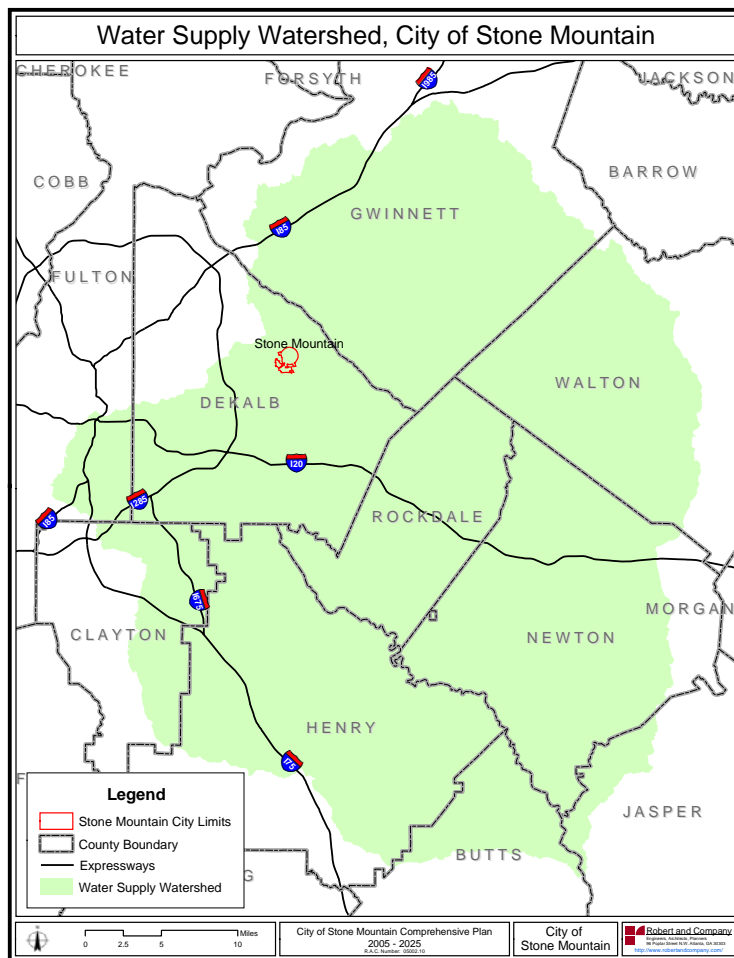
## Natural and Cultural Resources

### Environmental Planning Criteria

#### Water Supply Watershed

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources defines a water supply watershed as the area where rainfall runoff drains into a river, stream or reservoir used downstream as a source of public drinking water supply. By limiting the amount of pollution that gets into the water supply, local governments can reduce the costs of purification and help guarantee public health. The protection criteria for water supply watersheds vary depending on whether the watershed is large (>100 sq. miles) or small (<100 sq.miles). The City of Stone Mountain falls within the Ocmulgee River basin, a large water supply watershed located above the public water intake is for the Butts County Water Authority located on the Ocmulgee River. The entire watershed above this intake point is 1,408 sq. miles as pictured on the map (Figure 8). The City of Stone Mountain is outside the seven-mile radius of the water supply intake and therefore there are no specified minimum criteria for protection to which the city must adhere.

**Figure 8: Water Supply Watershed**

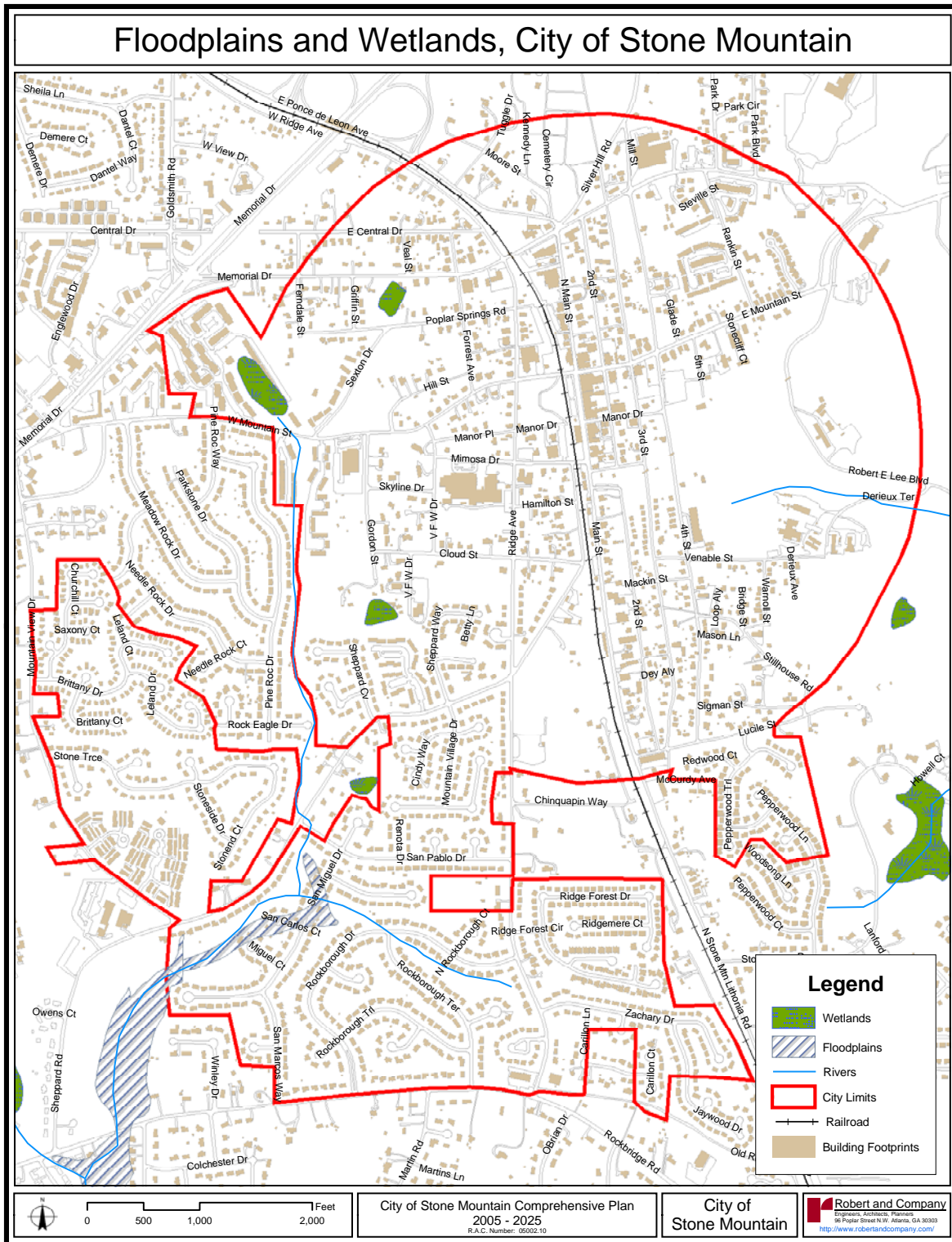


### Wetlands

Five categories of wetlands are identified in DNRs Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria as requiring protection through ordinances: open water, non-forested emergent wetlands, scrub/shrub wetlands, forested wetlands, and altered wetlands. Wetlands are areas that are flooded or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to grow vegetation adapted for life in water-saturated soil. Wetlands provide many important benefits including: Flood Control - Wetlands act as natural sponges, they absorb and gradually release water from rain to groundwater and streams, Water Quality Improvement - Wetlands act as natural filters and remove sediment, nutrients and pollution from runoff, Groundwater Recharge - Water migrates downward through wetlands to maintain groundwater levels, and Recreation - Many recreational activities take place in and around wetlands - hunting, fishing, hiking, birding, and photography.

According to maps based on data from the National Wetlands Inventory, four small wetland areas, all associated with a lake or pond, have been identified in Stone Mountain (Figure 9). At this time the city has not formally adopted wetlands protection measures. However given the small size of the wetlands present in the city an extensive protection ordinance is considered unnecessary.

Figure 9: Floodplains and Wetlands

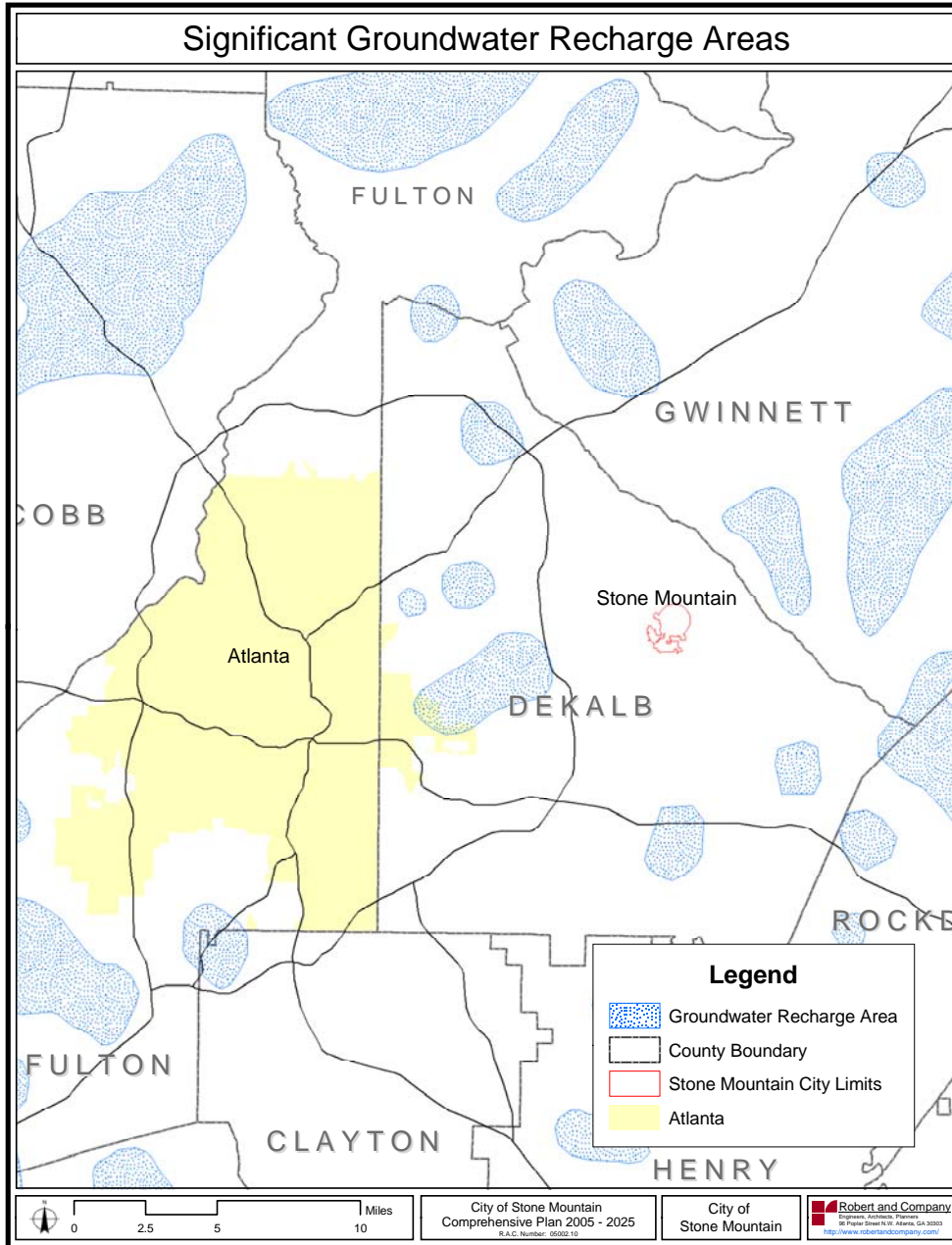




### Groundwater Recharge Areas

The United States Geological Survey has mapped the recharge areas in the state. A map of the recharge areas in the Atlanta region (Figure 10). There are no groundwater recharge areas located within the city boundaries of Stone Mountain.

**Figure 10: Groundwater Recharge Areas**



### Protected Rivers

The City of Stone Mountain is not located within a state-defined protected river corridor. (1995 Plan)

### Protected Mountains

No land areas within the corporate limits of Stone Mountain fall within DNR's definition of a "protected mountain." A portion of Stone Mountain Memorial Park is located in the City. As a state park, it is protected by state environmental criteria for protected mountains.

### *Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas*

### Public Water Supply Sources

Water for the City of Stone Mountain is provided by DeKalb County. The county's water supply source is the Chattahoochee River.

### Steep Slopes

There are no steep slopes within the city limits of Stone Mountain.

### Flood Plains

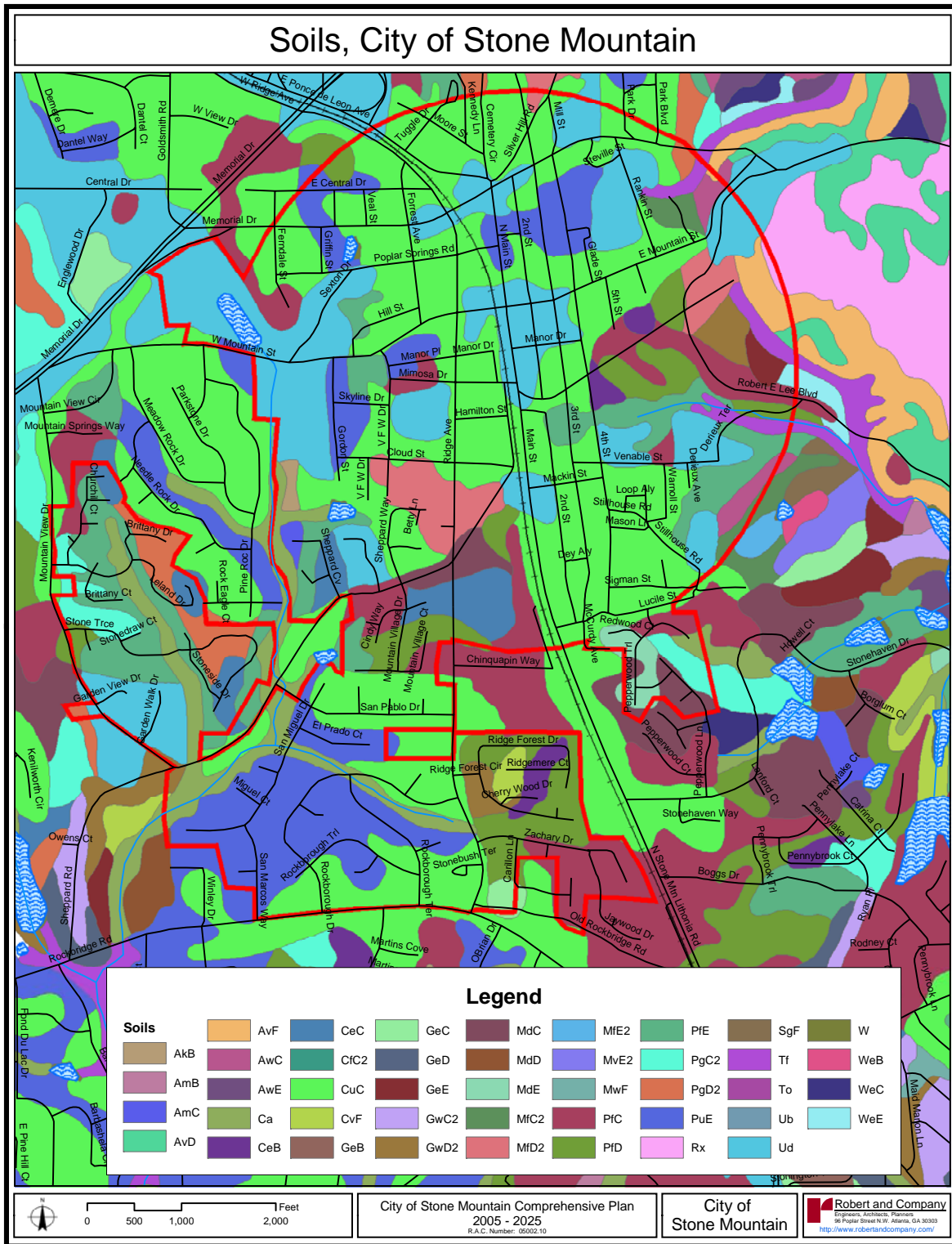
Floodplains serve three major purposes (1) natural water storage and conveyance; (2) water quality maintenance; and (3) groundwater recharge. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified and mapped areas in Stone Mountain that are prone to flooding, based on the 100-year, or base flood (Figure 9). The 100-year flood is the national standard on which the floodplain management and insurance requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program are based. Floodplains in Stone Mountain are found primarily along Barbashela Creek. The city actively regulates development within floodplains through the application of a flood damage protection ordinance.

### Soils

The predominant soil type in Stone Mountain is Urban Land (symbol Ud – Figure 11). Urban land accommodates uses such as business districts, shopping centers, schools, parking lots, motels, industries and residential developments. This soil type is characterized by gently to strongly sloping urban land areas in which the landscape is commonly modified by cuts and fill material.

Urban Land soils have a low suitability for farming, a medium suitability for use as pasture and woodlands and high suitability for urban use. However, erosion during construction and reconstruction presents severe hazards where soils have been modified. The City has adopted a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance.

Figure 11: Soils



### Plant and Animal Habitats

The Federal Government uses two classifications for critical plant and animal species. The term "threatened species" means any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The term "endangered species" means any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the state of Georgia uses a four tiered classification systems, including:

**Endangered:** A species, which is in danger of extinction throughout all or part of its range. They are protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and Georgia's Rules for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) beginning at 391-4-13.02. These rules authorize the state to acquire land or conservation easements on land for preservation of these species and to manage it for this principal objective and to cooperate with other agencies, including local governments to accomplish this goal. It prohibits capture, sale, killing or causing the death of these species except as specifically authorized by the DNR. Destruction of their habitats on land owned by local, state or federal government is prohibited.

**Threatened:** A species that is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future throughout all or part of its range.

**Rare:** A species which may not be endangered or threatened but which should be protected because of its rarity.

**Unusual:** A species that has special or unique features that entitle it to special consideration to ensure its continued survival

Endangered and threatened animals that are known to exist in the DeKalb County as of May 2004 as reported on the states Fish and Wildlife Service website, [http://athens.fws.gov/endangered/counties/dekalb\\_county.html](http://athens.fws.gov/endangered/counties/dekalb_county.html) are include:

**Bald Eagle** (*haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Listed as Threatened on the Federal list and endangered by the State of Georgia. Bald eagles usually live in inland waterways and estuaries, Major factor in their initial decline was lowered reproductive success following use of DDT. Current threats include habitat destruction, disturbance at the nest, illegal shooting, electrocution, impact injuries and lead poisoning.

**Bluestrip Shiner** (*cyprinella callitaenia*). A fish that is found in brownwater streams. It has no Federal status but is listed as threatened by the State of Georgia.

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<sup>4</sup> Other than a species of the Class Insecta determined by the Secretary to constitute a pest whose protection under the provisions of this Act would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to man.

Endangered and threatened plants that are known to exist in the DeKalb County area are:

Bay Star Vine (*schisandra glabra*): This vine has no Federal status and is listed as threatened at the state level. The vine is typically found twinning over understory trees and shrubs in rich, alluvial woods and on lower slopes near streams.

Black Spored Quillwort (*Isoetes melanosporo*): The habitat of this plant listed at the Federal and state levels as endangered is restricted to the shallow, flat-bottomed depression pools of granitic outcrops is closely associated with the Pool Sprite-Snorkelwort.

Flatrock Onion (*allium speculae*): This plant has no Federal status and is listed as threatened by the State of Georgia; its habitat is seepy edges of vegetation mats on outcrops of granitic rock.

Granite Rock Stonecrop (*sedum pusillum*): This plant has no Federal status and is listed as threatened at the state level. The habitat of this small plant is among mosses in partial shade under large, open-grown eastern red cedar trees on granitic outcrops.

Indian Olive (*nestronia umbellula*): This plant has no Federal status and is listed as threatened at the state level. The habitat of this plant is dry upland forests of mixed hardwood and pine.

Piedmont Barren Strawberry (*waldsteinia lobata*): This plant is listed as threatened at the state level, but lacks a Federal status. The plant's habitat is rocky acidic woods along streams with mountain laurel. It is also rarely found in drier upland oak-hickory-pine woods.

Pool Sprite – Snorklewort (*amphianthus pusillus*): This plant is listed as threatened on Federal and state levels. The habitat of the plant is shallow, flat-bottomed depression pools (or solution pits) of granitic outcrops. These pools are usually less than a foot in depth, entirely rock-rimmed, and are dry in the summer after the spring rains have evaporated.

## *Significant Natural Resources*

### Scenic Areas

Scenic areas in the City of Stone Mountain include the historic downtown area with its views of Stone Mountain. Many elevations within the city have distinctive views of the mountain and the city's historic commercial district. The view from Ridge Avenue looking eastward that includes the railroad, the depot and historic storefronts is illustrative of this scenic area.

### Prime Agricultural Land & Prime Forest Land

There are no agricultural land use areas or major forested areas in the City of Stone Mountain.

### Major Parks

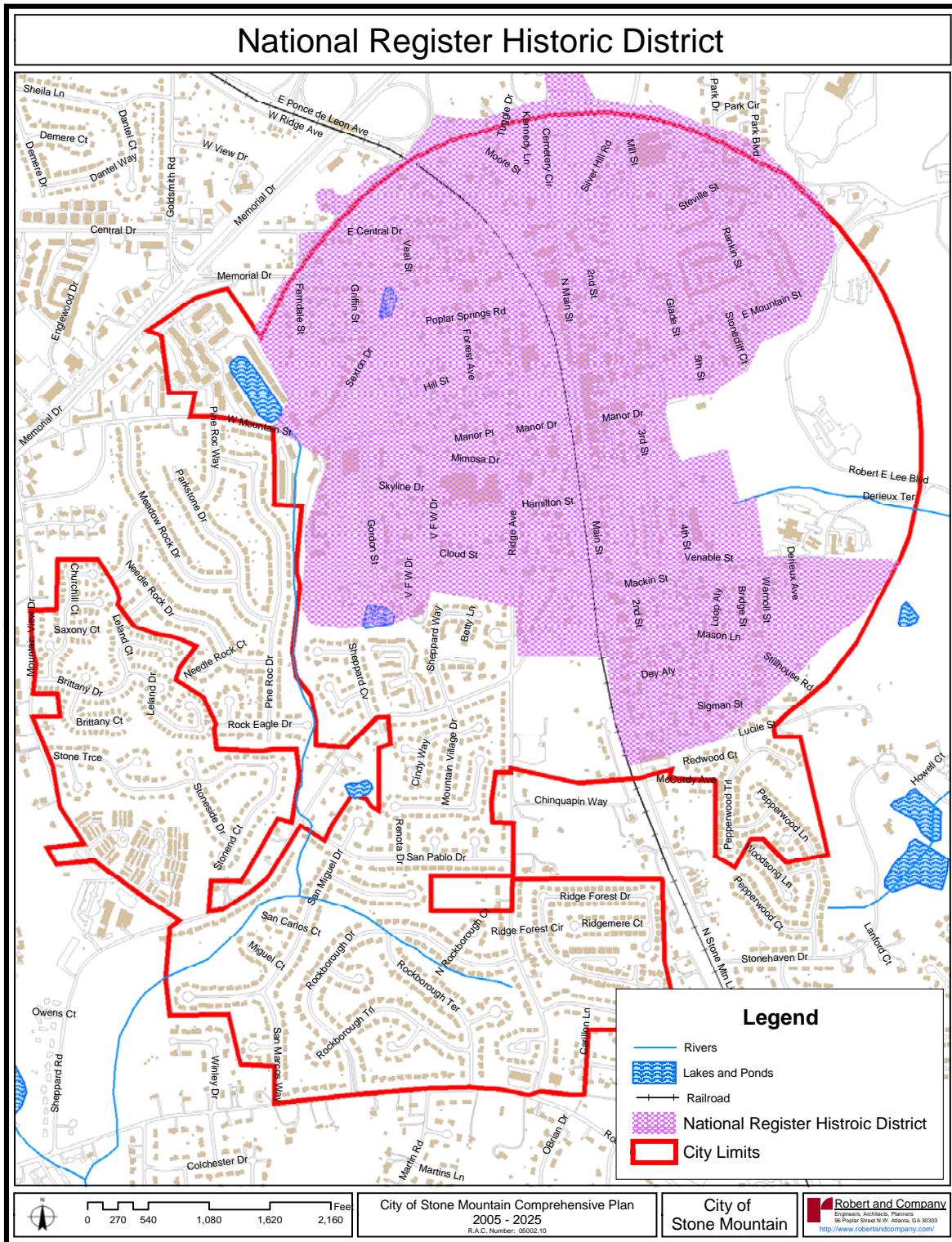
A portion of Stone Mountain Memorial Park is located within the city and there is direct access into the park from the city via a gate on East Mountain Street. The park has historically served as a significant recreational resource for city residents.

## *Significant Cultural Resources*

In 1993-4 the City of Stone Mountain undertook a historic resources survey that resulted in the nomination and establishment of the Stone Mountain Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. The district boundaries are shown in Figure 12.



Figure 12 Historic District Map



The historic district is comprised of approximately 270 contributing domestic, commercial and community structures. These structures are located in four primary areas. The historic commercial core extends north to south along Main Street starting just north of Mountain Street and extending to Poole Street. There are three main residential areas. The first, with houses dating from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and early-20<sup>th</sup> century is east of the rail line on Main, Second, Third and Fourth Streets between Memorial and Poole. The second area is the historically African-American neighborhood of Shermantown, located between Venable and Lucille Streets, where structures date from 1880. The third historic residential neighborhood is located west of the railroad from the north end of Ridge Avenue to Cloud Street, structures in this area date from the mid-1800.

Despite the historic nature of the Stone Mountain area, no archaeological sites have been recorded; no properties had been listed as of 1993 on the National Register of Historic Places. Two cemeteries are located in Stone Mountain. The City Cemetery located at the north end of Main Street has been in use since the nineteenth century. In addition to its use by city residents since it was established, it contains a section devoted to Confederate soldiers who died in skirmishes in the area. A second cemetery that has historically served the city's African American community is located near Leila Mason Park.

### *Residential Resources*

The city's residential architecture is mostly vernacular. Some of the city's notable domestic architecture is discussed below.

#### **Malbert House or Alexander Hotel**

Location: Corner of Mimosa and Sheppard Streets.

Constructed in the 1830's and believed to be once owned by Andrew Johnson, the father of Stone Mountain, this building was built using cavity wall construction. It was used during the Civil War as a Confederate Hospital and later converted into a hotel known as the Malbert House or the Alexander Hotel. This resource is considered the oldest within the city and it has played a role within all its major developments.

#### **Stillwell House**

Location: Southwest corner of Mountain Street and Ridge Avenue.

This building, an I-house with a saltbox roof, was constructed prior to the Civil War as an inn and was best known for its use by Reverend Stillwell and his family.

#### **The Wells House**

Location: Ridge Avenue

This is an excellent example of a two-story central hall plan house constructed in the 1870's. This historic home has been conveyed to as a gift to the Stone Mountain Historical Society.

#### **The Benefield House**

Location: Mason Lane in Shermantown

This resource is an excellent example of a late nineteenth-century, pyramid roof cottage.



### **The Rhodes House**

Location: Main Street

This circa 1910 bungalow has distinctive architectural details rendered in granite. It is one of the city's best examples of the bungalow house type.

### **The Joiner House**

Location: East Mountain Street

A nicely rendered example of an English Vernacular Cottage, a style that was very popular in Stone Mountain in the 1930's and 1940's.

### **Commercial Resources**

Twenty-six commercial buildings were surveyed as part of the city's national register district survey work. The majority of these buildings date between 1890 and 1930 and a number of types are represented including an arcaded block type, and one and two part commercial buildings constructed of granite and brick. These cluster along Main and East Mountain Streets and on Manor Drive. Notable examples include the Old Stone Mountain Inn, a two part commercial block, brick building at the corner of Mimosa and Main Streets constructed in 1911; the Main Street "Bank" building and the arcaded block building at the corner of Mountain and Main Streets.

### **Community Resources**

#### **The Depot/City Hall**

Location: 922 Main Street

This building is the oldest granite building in the city. Its original section was constructed in 1857; the north section was added in 1914. It is the heart of the city and is a key building within the city's proposed National Register District

#### **Rock Gym/Stone Mountain Auditorium**

Location: Ridge Avenue

Constructed in 1936 under a New Deal Program, this is a fine example of a granite ashlar building constructed by local stonemasons. J.A. Wilson, a Stone Mountain resident, is credited as its architect.

#### **A.R.T. Station/Trolley Barn**

Location: Manor Drive

This brick utilitarian building was originally constructed as a trolley barn. It has since been converted into an art gallery and theater and serves as the city's cultural center.

### **Religious Resources**

The City of Stone Mountain also has four historic churches. Two are built of Stone Mountain granite, namely, Stone Mountain United Methodist Church at the corner of Mountain Street and Ridge Avenue and Bethsaida Baptist Church on Fourth Street in Shermantown. The First Baptist Church at Mimosa Street and Ridge Avenue and St. Paul A.M.E. on Third Street in Shermantown are of brick construction. Each church property exhibits distinctive architectural traits and as a group they show a strong ecclesiastical vernacular tradition.

The establishment of the Stone Mountain Main Street Program in 1998 exhibited the City's commitment to preserving and encouraging the revitalization of its historic downtown core. The mission of Main Street Stone Mountain, which is affiliated with the National Trust for Historic

Preservation's National Main Street Center, is to plan, organize, produce and encourage community programs and services which will revitalize, beautify and insure the long term stability of an economically healthy business community.

The identity of the Stone Mountain is synonymous with its historic structures. The National Register Historic District provides recognition of the importance of the district but very little actual protection for the structures or the integrity of the area. To better protect the city's historic resources, the city locally designated a historic district with boundaries a bit larger than those of the previously designated National Register district on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2005. The city's historic preservation commission is currently undertaking the task of devising and promoting for adoption a series of design controls to ensure that changes made within the area enhance the qualities that make the city a special place to live, work, and play. Under the design review process, property owners must obtain a certificate of appropriateness prior to making material changes to the exterior of a property considered to contribute to the historic character of the district.

## ***Community Facilities***

### ***Water Supply and Treatment***

DeKalb County provides water and sewer service within Stone Mountain. All the city's households and businesses are served. It is anticipated that these services will remain in place and be sufficient throughout the planning period.

### ***Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment***

DeKalb County provides water and sewer service within Stone Mountain. All of the city's households and businesses are served. It is anticipated that these services will remain in place and be sufficient throughout the planning period.

### ***Solid Waste Facilities***

Stone Mountain contracts with a private vendor (BFI) for residential and commercial solid waste services. In addition to contracted collection service, the City provides frequent pick-up of large household items such as appliances, furniture and yard trimmings. Solid waste services are considered good and should prove adequate during the course of the planning period. In accordance with the Solid Waste Management Act of 1990, Stone Mountain adopted a Solid Waste Management Plan in 1993. The city is working to update this plan and anticipates submitting an updated document to DCA in advance of its update deadline.

### ***Stormwater***

Stormwater in the City of Stone Mountain discharges into Stone Mountain Creek in the northeast and east, and Barbashela creek to the south. The City files a storm water report with the Environmental Protection Department each year and have also been included in DeKalb County's report, as the city is a co-permittee with DeKalb County for the discharge permit. The city's most recent report was approved and its next report is due June 15, 2005. The city does not currently have a map of its stormwater drainage system, however it recognizes the need for the development of a map of its system and hopes to complete this project with funding from its newly approved Stormwater Utility.

The city has made many improvements to its stormwater infrastructure over the past few years, including improving drainage in McCurdy Park into Barbashela Creek in 2002, drainage projects along W. Mountain Street at Barbashela Creek and San Marcos Drive at Barbashela Creek in 2003, and projects along W. Mountain at VFW Drive, Fourth Street and Griffin Street at JBR Drive in 2004. The City adopted storm water management and sedimentation and erosion control ordinances in accordance with state requirements in April 2005. The city issues Land Disturbance Permits under the sedimentation and erosion control ordinance. The adoption of these ordinances was a follow up action to the city's December 2004 adoption of a storm water utility ordinance and intergovernmental agreement with DeKalb County for storm water services.

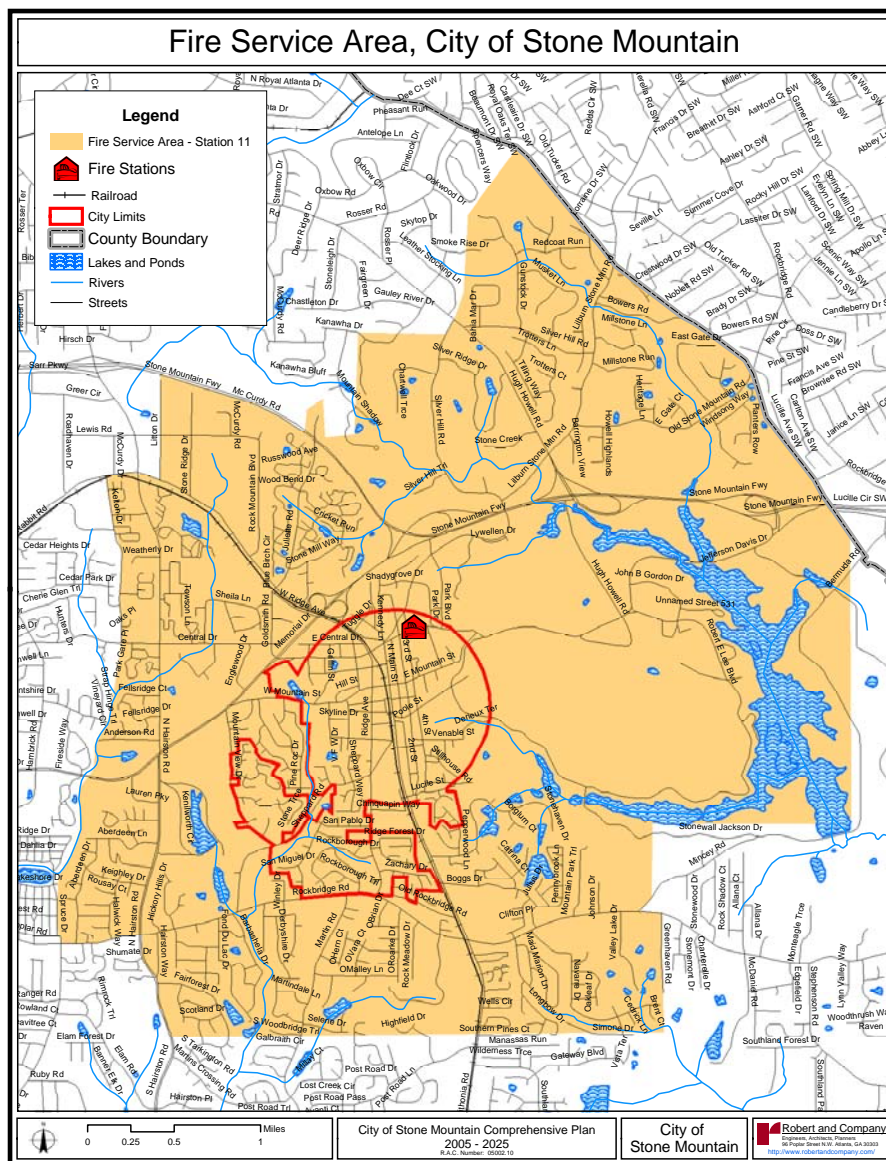
The city is currently in the initial stages of organization for this utility. Part of these organizational efforts include adopting impervious surface standards matching those in effect in DeKalb County and developing a database of billing information for the utility. It is anticipated that revenue from the utility will be \$134,000 in 2005. With the storm water utility enterprise, storm water management ordinances and an intergovernmental agreement with DeKalb County, the City is confident it will meet all EPD requirements and will continue to improve its infrastructure throughout the planning period to better serve the needs of the city's residents and business owners.

## Public Safety

### Fire and EMS

Fire and emergency medical services are provided to the City of Stone Mountain by DeKalb County Fire Station 11 located at 6715 Memorial Drive. The service area for Station 11 is depicted in Figure 13. In the event that additional support is required, assistance is provided by companies from DeKalb Fire Stations in the surrounding service areas of stations 3, 5, 13, 23, 24, and 25.

**Figure 13: Service Area for DeKalb Co. Fire Station 11**



Fire Station 11 is 2,900 square feet in size and equipped with an advanced life support engine and an advanced life support rescue vehicle. Twenty-one personnel, including three captains, nine medics and nine firefighters serve at the station on rotating twenty-four hour shifts. The station averages a fire response time of 5.13 minutes and has a goal to reduce this to under 5 minutes within the 2005 – 2025 planning period. In 2004 the station's engine company responded to 2350 calls for service and the rescue company responded to 1322 calls. The city's ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating is a 3. ISO ratings range from 1 to 10 with 10 being the most susceptible to fire loss.

The level of service provided to the City of Stone Mountain by Fire Station 11 is considered adequate and is anticipated to remain so during the planning period. At current staff levels the station has three fire fighters on duty available to respond to emergencies on any shift. The national average for protected populations between 5,000 and 9,999 is 3.6 firefighters. With the additional support available for surrounding fire stations, this average is obtainable. However, as the city's population increases during the planning period to a projected 8,281 in 2025 additional fire fighters may be needed. Although, at this time the DeKalb County Fire and Rescue Department reports there are no plans for expansion of the stations physical plant, equipment or personnel in the short term.

### Police

The Stone Mountain Police Department is located adjacent to City Hall on Main Street. The department is staffed with twenty-one full time members including a chief, communication officer, dispatch/receptionist, two investigators, a lieutenant, three sergeants, eleven patrol officers, a code enforcement officer and one part-time patrol officer. The department has primary responsibility for all law enforcement functions with the city.

The department operates three shifts daily: the day shift 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM, evening shift 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM and morning 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM. The day and morning shifts are staffed with two to three officers while the evening shift has three to four officers on duty. The department receives assistance from DeKalb County and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) on an as needed basis, typically for high crimes such as murder. The department operates one special purpose unit, a patrol funded by a contract with WestCare and DeKalb County DFACS. This unit specifically deals with problems arising from the WestCare juvenile treatment facility located in the city.

The department is currently in a two year plan to place nine patrol vehicles on three year lease terms. Three vehicles were acquired in 2004 and an additional three acquire din 2005. After three years the vehicles are retired or placed into non-patrol service. There are no specialized vehicles assigned to the police department.

The city's police department does not maintain a jail facility. This service is provided to the city by DeKalb County through an intergovernmental agreement. The city does maintain two holding cells within the police station. The city transports prisoners to the Dekalb County jail within four hours of arrest. In addition to the police station, the department has use of the City Hall Annex building, for storage purposes..

The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) compiled annually by the FBI provides data related to the incidence of major crimes for jurisdictions throughout the nation. The most recent UCR statistics (2003) for the City of Stone Mountain, the Atlanta MSA and the nation are provided in Table 24. These statistics show that the city's over all crime rate is higher than the national

rate, which is to be expected for metropolitan suburbs like Stone Mountain, however the city's rate is lower than the regional rate. In most of the specific crime categories Stone Mountain also fares better than the national or regional rates. The City does appear to have a higher incidence of murder, however this statistic is skewed due to the city's relatively small population, there was only one murder in the city in 2003. The city's rate of burglaries is slightly higher than the regional rate; a factor that the police department is aware is working to combat.

**Table 24: Comparison of UCR Statistics for City, Region & Nation**

<b>Comparison of Stone Mountain Crime Rate in 2003 to Nation and Atlanta MSA Rates</b>				
<b>Crime</b>	<b># of Crimes in Stone Mountain 2003</b>	<b>Stone Mountain Rate per 100,000 people</b>	<b>Comparison to National Rate</b>	<b>Comparison to MSA Rate</b>
Overall Crimes	342	4701.0	13.56%	-2.80%
Murders	1	13.7	58.53%	36.71%
Forcible Rapes	1	13.7	-133.53%	-92.06%
Robberies	3	41.2	-244.84%	-423.07%
Aggravated Assaults	17	233.7	-26.24%	-11.99%
Burglaries	69	948.5	21.93%	2.59%
Larceny/Thefts	117	1608.2	-50.13%	-69.95%
Vehicle Thefts	41	563.6	23.10%	-17.61%
Arsons	1	13.7	N/A	N/A

Source: FBI

A comparison of 2002 and 2003 UCR statistics for the city (Table 25) shows that overall crime increased in the city during this time period. However, there were significant declines in the rates per population of forcible rape, robberies and burglaries.

**Table 25: Comparison of 2002 & 2003 UCR Statistics for Stone Mountain**

<b>Comparison of Stone Mountain Crime Rate in 2003 &amp; 2002</b>				
<b>Crime</b>	<b># of Crimes in Stone Mountain 2002</b>	<b>Rate per 100,000 in 2002</b>	<b>Rate per 100,000 in 2003</b>	<b>Change in Rate 2002 - 2003</b>
Overall Crimes	260	3480.1	4701.0	25.97%
Murders	1	13.4	13.7	2.59%
Forcible Rapes	2	26.8	13.7	-94.75%
Robberies	17	227.6	41.2	-451.81%
Aggravated Assaults	14	187.4	233.7	19.81%
Burglaries	88	1177.9	948.5	-24.19%
Thefts/Thefts	114	1525.9	1608.2	5.12%
Vehicle Thefts	24	321.2	563.6	43.00%
Arsons	0	0.0	13.7	100.00%

Source: FBI

With a 2000 population of 7145, Stone Mountain employs 2.65 full-time officers per 1,000 population. This is slightly above the 2003 average of 2.5 officers per 1,000 for suburban areas as reported in the FBI's UCR. To maintain the current level of service (2.65 officers per 1,000 population) the Stone Mountain Police Department will need to add two officers by 2015 and possibly another officer between 2015 and 2025. The department currently hopes to add three to four additional officers to its ranks in the future. The department's current response time for calls for service is between three and four minutes from the time the call is received from

dispatch. The International Association of Chiefs of Police has an established standard of four minutes. The department's goal is to reduce this to a consistent three minutes.

### ***Recreation***

There are four parks owned and operated by the City of Stone Mountain. A summary of each park follows:

Leila Mason Park: Named after the donor, this park is located in the Historic Shermantown neighborhood next to Stone Mountain Park. Facilities at this park include a fenced baseball field, outdoor basketball court, playground equipment for kids, and covered pavilion with picnic tables. Restroom facilities and limited parking are also provided at this park.

McCurdy Park: McCurdy Park is named after the prominent local family who donated the land for the park. McCurdy Park is home to the Stone Mountain Youth Athletic Association baseball program. There are three little league fields, including T-Ball. There are four covered picnic areas between the ball fields and the fantastic Fortress Playground for kids, "JIM'S PLACE". A paved walking path connects each end of the park. Parking is located off West Mountain Street across from the Post Office and on the north end of the park next to the playground on Poplar Springs Drive. Permanent restrooms are located next to the ball fields.

Medlock Park: Named after former Mayor Randolph Medlock, this park is currently the home field for the Ray of Hope Jaguars Little League Football Teams. The regulation football field has a field house with concession stand and permanent restroom facilities. There are four tennis courts, a large picnic pavilion, and an outdoor basketball court. Parking is located at the entrance off of Ridge Avenue.

VFW Fields: The VFW fields have three little league baseball fields sized to serve all ages. Named after the Veterans of Foreign Wars, these fields are found off Gordon Street behind the Post Office on West Mountain Street. Permanent restrooms and a concession stand are located on the premises.

In addition to these active park facilities, the city has recently purchased a 2.6 tract of land adjacent to the VFW Fields with greenspace funds. The city hopes to develop this area for passive recreation in the future. Additionally, the city is located next to Stone Mountain Park a 3,200 acre state park a large portion of the park (approximately 87 acres) is located within the city's borders. This recreational amenity may be accessed for free by city residents on foot via the west gate located at the end of E. Mountain Street.

A total of 134.6 acres are reserved for public parks and recreation facilities in the City of Stone Mountain. With an estimated 2003 population of 7097 this equals a park land ratio of 18 acres per 1,000 residents when the 87 acres of Stone Mountain Park located in the city are included in the calculation and a ratio of 6.7 acres when the acreage is excluded. These ratios are both considerably higher (271% and 31% percent respectively) than the ratio of parkland per resident in DeKalb County, which is 5.10 acres per 1,000 persons, based on 2003 census bureau population estimates for the county and 2004 Parks and Recreation Department parks acreage information.

Based on population projected included in this document, the city will need 7.9 acres of additional park land to maintain the current ratio of acreage to population through the end of the 2025 planning period. The city's 2003 LCI study includes recommendations for two additional city parks; a town square located adjacent to the Historic Depot and a gathering place in the

Shermantown neighborhood. If completed, these projects would provide an additional 5 acres of park land.



## ***Transportation***

### ***Study Area Transportation Network***

The City of Stone Mountain is a relatively small area (1.5 square miles), with a 2003 population estimate (U.S. Census) of 7,097. The transportation system in the City includes a full array of transportation modes: roadways, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit. There are no airport facilities within the City. The downtown Stone Mountain Village is primarily oriented along the north-south Main Street. Community facilities served by the transportation network include the City Hall, Police Department, DeKalb Fire Station No. 11, DeKalb Library-Sue Kellogg Branch, Stone Mountain Elementary School, and Gables Academy, as shown in Figure 14.

To fully understand the transportation system within the City, it is essential to consider the connections to the much larger area of unincorporated DeKalb County dubbed Stone Mountain. The City lies between two major thoroughfares: Stone Mountain Freeway/U.S. 78 on the north and Rockbridge Road on the south. Stone Mountain Park is immediately east of the City. The following provides an inventory of the existing transportation system and assesses current and future needs for the City.

### ***Existing Inventory and Conditions***

#### **Roadways**

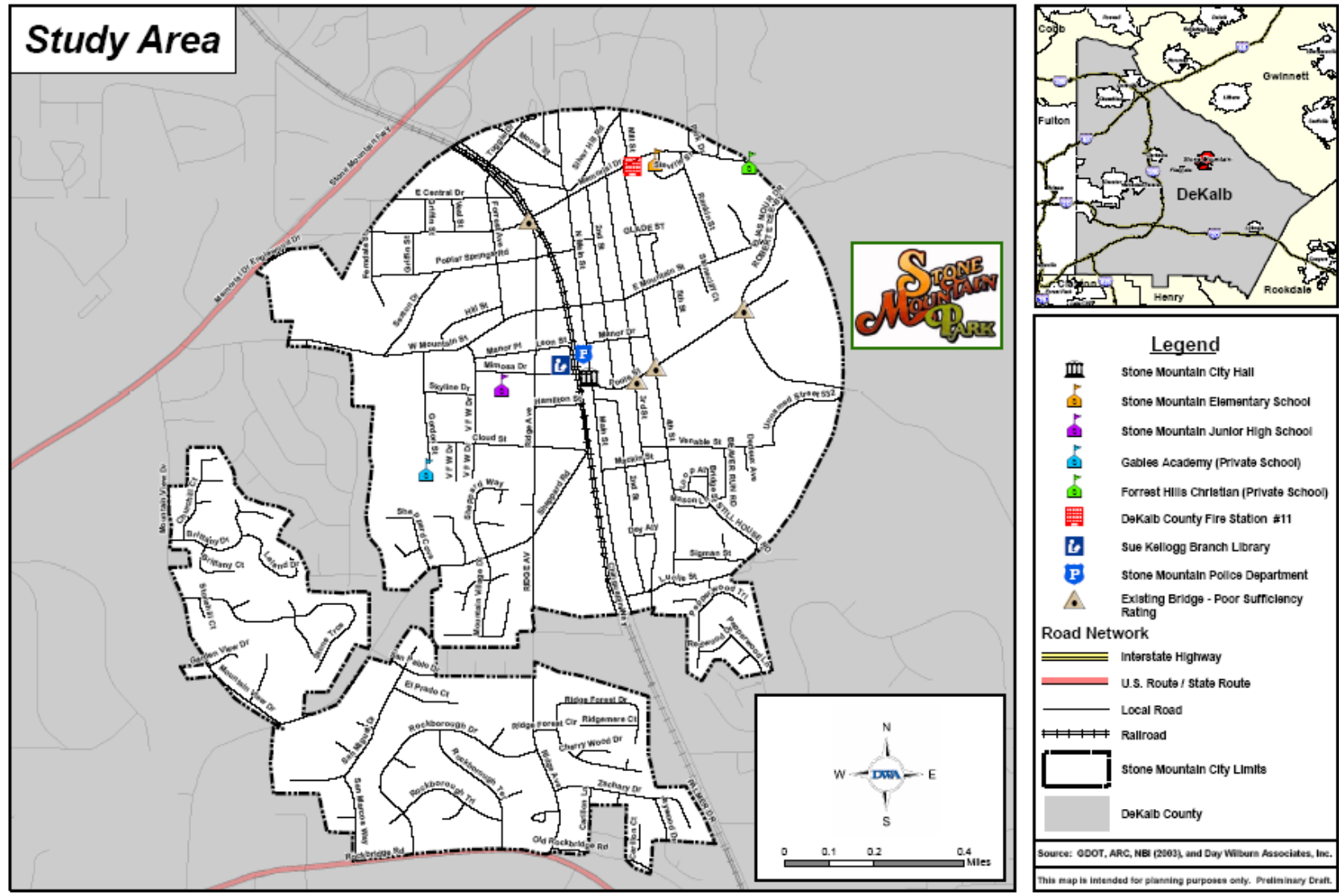
##### **Major Roads**

The existing road network within the City of Stone Mountain is comprised of a grid network with Main Street serving as the backbone of the system. Main Street traverses north-south through the center of the City, providing access to numerous local roads. A rail line parallels Main Street immediately to the west. Second Street, 3rd Street and 4th Street parallel Main Street to the east and Ridge Avenue parallels Main Street to the west. Memorial Drive, East/West Mountain Street, and Mimosa Street and serve as the major east-west link accessing Main Street and the City of Stone Mountain. These major roadways provide connections to the regional roadway network.

##### **Jurisdiction and Functional Classification**

The City of Stone Mountain contains approximately 26.2 centerline miles of roadways. The roadway jurisdiction or ownership of roads is shown in Figure 15. Most of the roadways in the City are owned by the City (66%). The remaining roads are DeKalb County roads (25%) or public roads (9%). There are no state routes or US Routes in the City of Stone Mountain; however Main Street provides direct access, via East Ponce de Leon Avenue, to the Stone Mountain Freeway (SR 10/US 78).

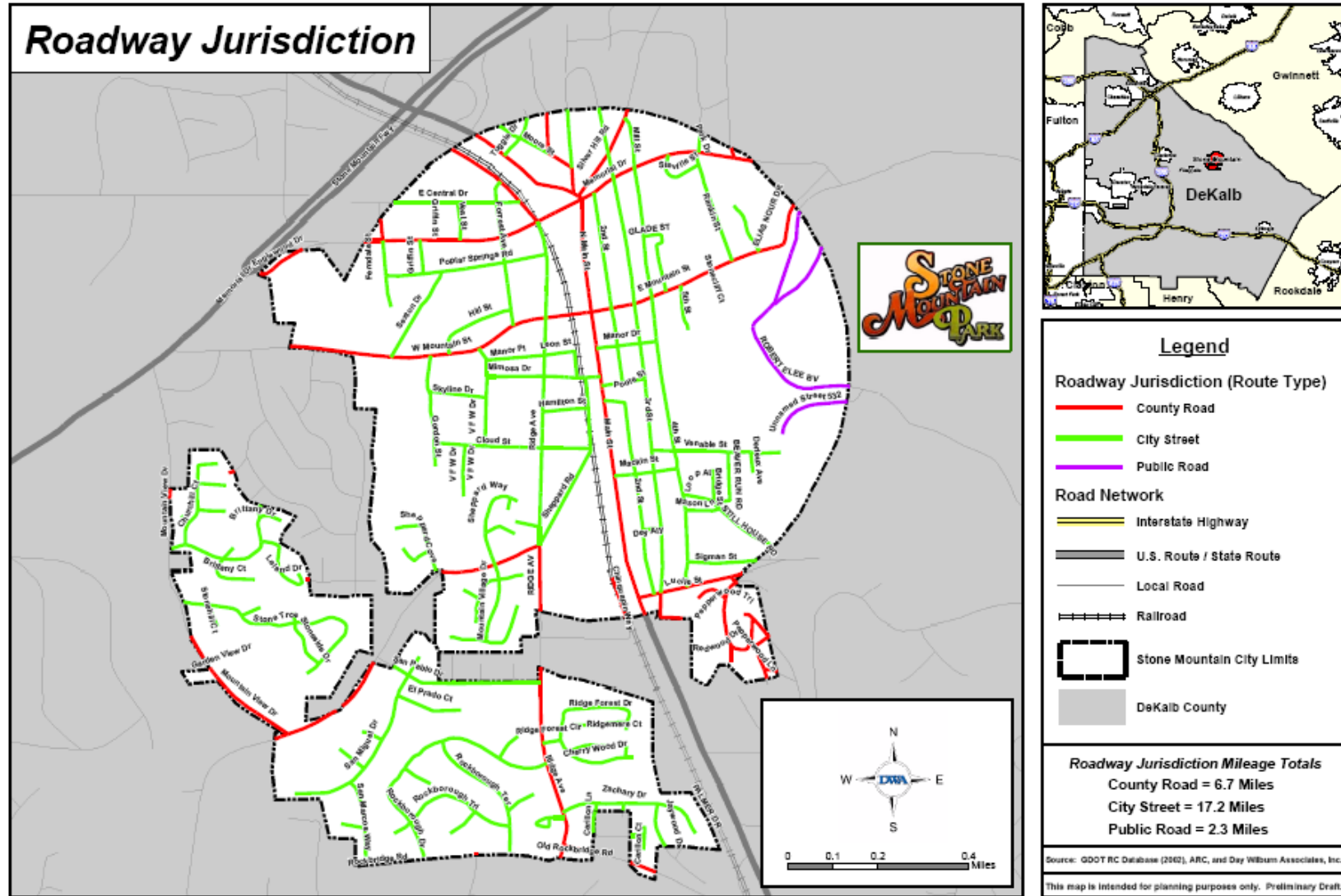
Figure 14: Transportation Study Area



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Figure 15: Roadway Jurisdiction



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In order to determine the adequacy of a roadway network, it is necessary to inventory roadways according to the service they are intended to provide: movement of traffic and access to property. By assessing the degree to which a particular roadway serves each of the two basic functions, a functional classification can be determined. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is responsible for classifying all roads in the public road system by their geographic location in rural, small urban or urban areas according to their character of service, based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines. The functional classification for roadways in Stone Mountain area is shown in Figure 16 and is summarized as follows:

**Arterials** - Classified as principal or minor, these roads connect activity centers and carry large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. Main Street/East Ponce de Leon Avenue is functionally classified as an Urban Minor Arterial. The arterial system in the City area totals approximately 1.2 centerline miles or 5% the system. The arterial system is significant because it accommodates a substantial share of the traffic volume yet constitutes only a small share of the existing roadway system.

**Collectors** - Typically allow access to activity centers from residential areas. Their purpose is to collect traffic from streets in residential and commercial areas and distribute it to the arterial system. Memorial Drive is classified as an Urban Collector Street. The collector system in the City is only 0.4 centerline miles, or 1% of the system.

**Local Roads** - Feed the collector system from low volume residential and commercial areas. Most roads in Stone Mountain are classified local, 24.6 centerline miles, comprising 94% of the system.

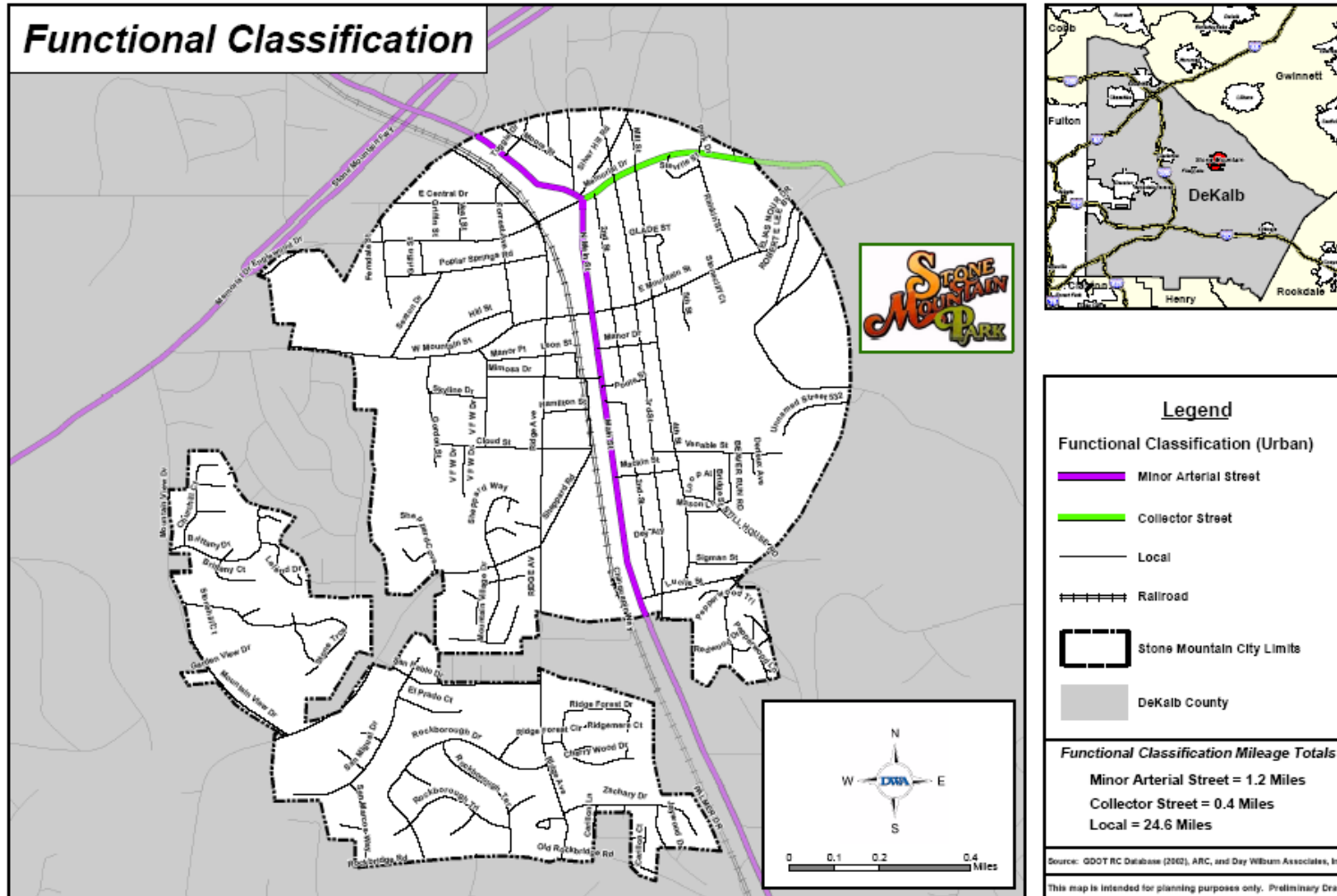
#### Number of Lanes

As shown in Figure 17, nearly every roadway within the City of Stone Mountain is a two-lane facility (99%). The remaining one percent is one-way roads.

#### Safety

Crash rates by functional class for GDOT crash data 2001 through 2003 were developed for Stone Mountain and DeKalb County streets. As compared to countywide averages for the similarly classified facilities, Memorial Drive from N. Main Street east to the City boundary; W. Mountain Street from Memorial Drive to Main Street; and Lucille Avenue from Main Street to Sigman Street have experienced higher crash rates.

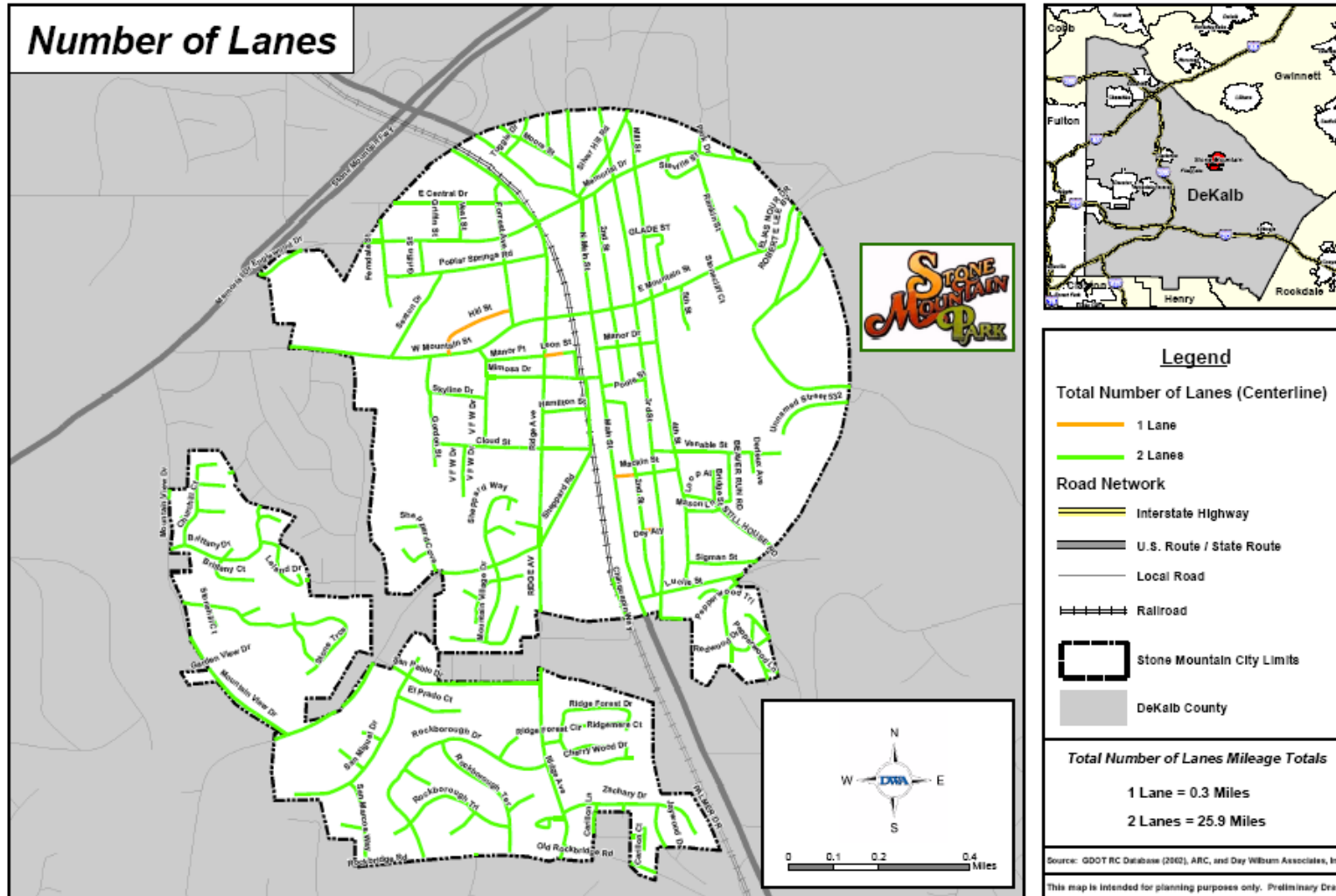
Figure 16: Functional Classification r



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Figure 17: Number of Lanes



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## Existing Signalization and Signage Inventory

### Signals

There are three traffic signals along Main Street in the City at Memorial Drive, East/West Mountain Street, and Mimosa Street and these traffic signals are not coordinated. These three roadways serve as the major east-west link accessing Main Street and downtown Stone Mountain.

## Existing Bridge Inventory and Conditions

There are three roadway bridges and one railroad bridge within the City of Stone Mountain. The roadway bridges are on Poole Street at Third Street, Fourth Street and Robert E. Lee Boulevard. The railroad bridge is at Memorial Drive. All four bridges have been rated with a poor sufficiency rating in the National Bridge Inventory. The bridges are shown in the study area map (Figure 14).

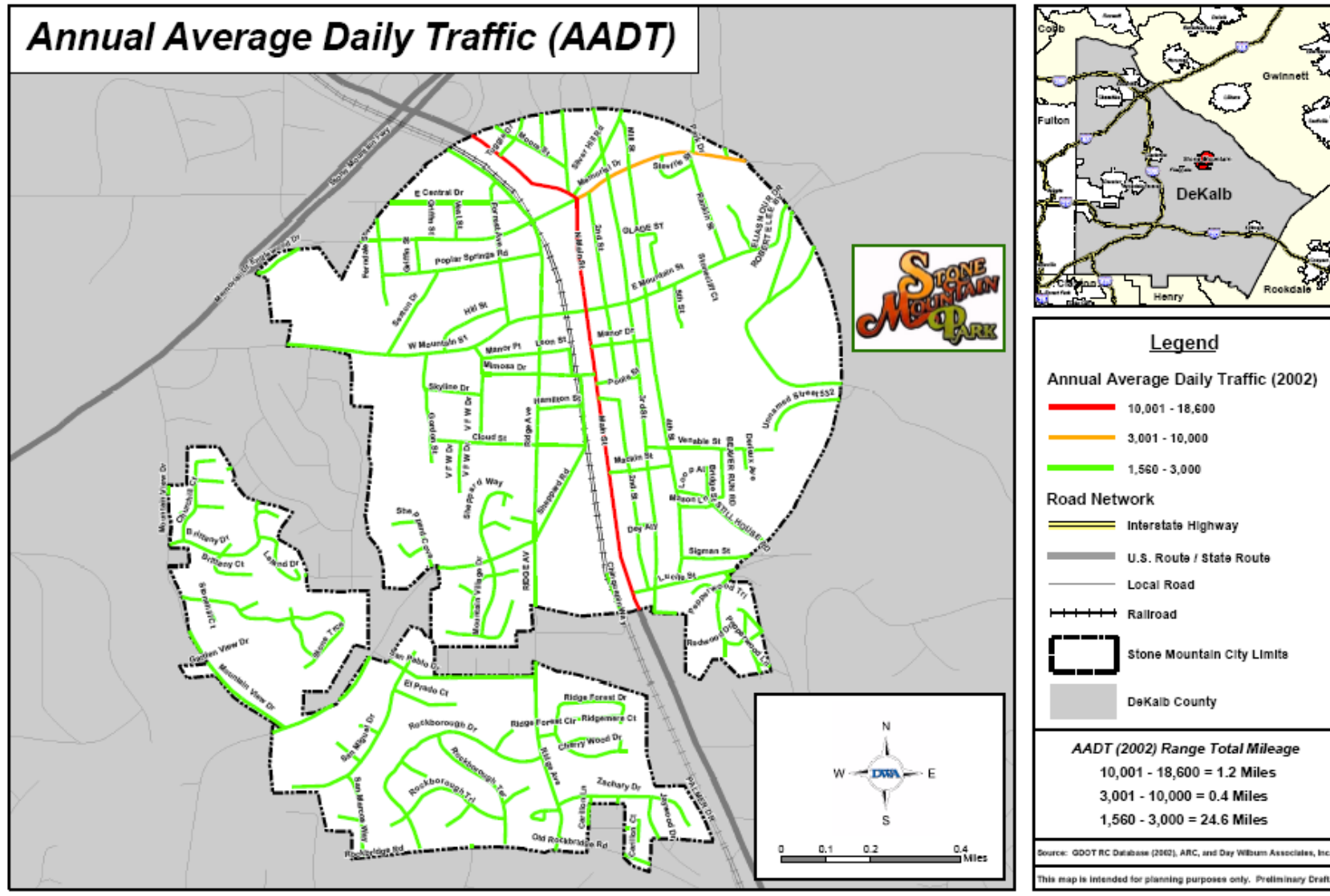
## Roadway Utilization

### Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

Most of the roads in the City of Stone Mountain are local, residential roads that experience traffic appropriate for their functional classification. As is expected, the greatest traffic volumes in the City occur on the two facilities which are classified arterial or collector, Main Street and Memorial Drive, as shown in Figure 18. During the *Stone Mountain Livable Centers Initiative Study*, traffic counts were collected in September 2003 to supplement GDOT counts. Table 26 summarizes traffic on roadways in downtown Stone Mountain.



Figure 18: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)



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**Table 26: Stone Mountain Village 2003 Traffic Volumes**

Roadway	2003 Traffic Counts
Main Street Between Lucile Street and Mimosa Street	29,150
Main Street Between Mimosa and Mountain	23,150
Main Street between Memorial Drive and Mountain	19,740
East Ponce de Leon Avenue	18,630
Memorial Drive (east of Main Street)	3,580
Memorial Drive (west of Main Street)	3,110
Ridge Avenue between West Mountain and Memorial Drive	4,770
West Mountain Street	5,200
East Mountain Street	5,170
Poole Street	1,170
Mimosa Street	6,360

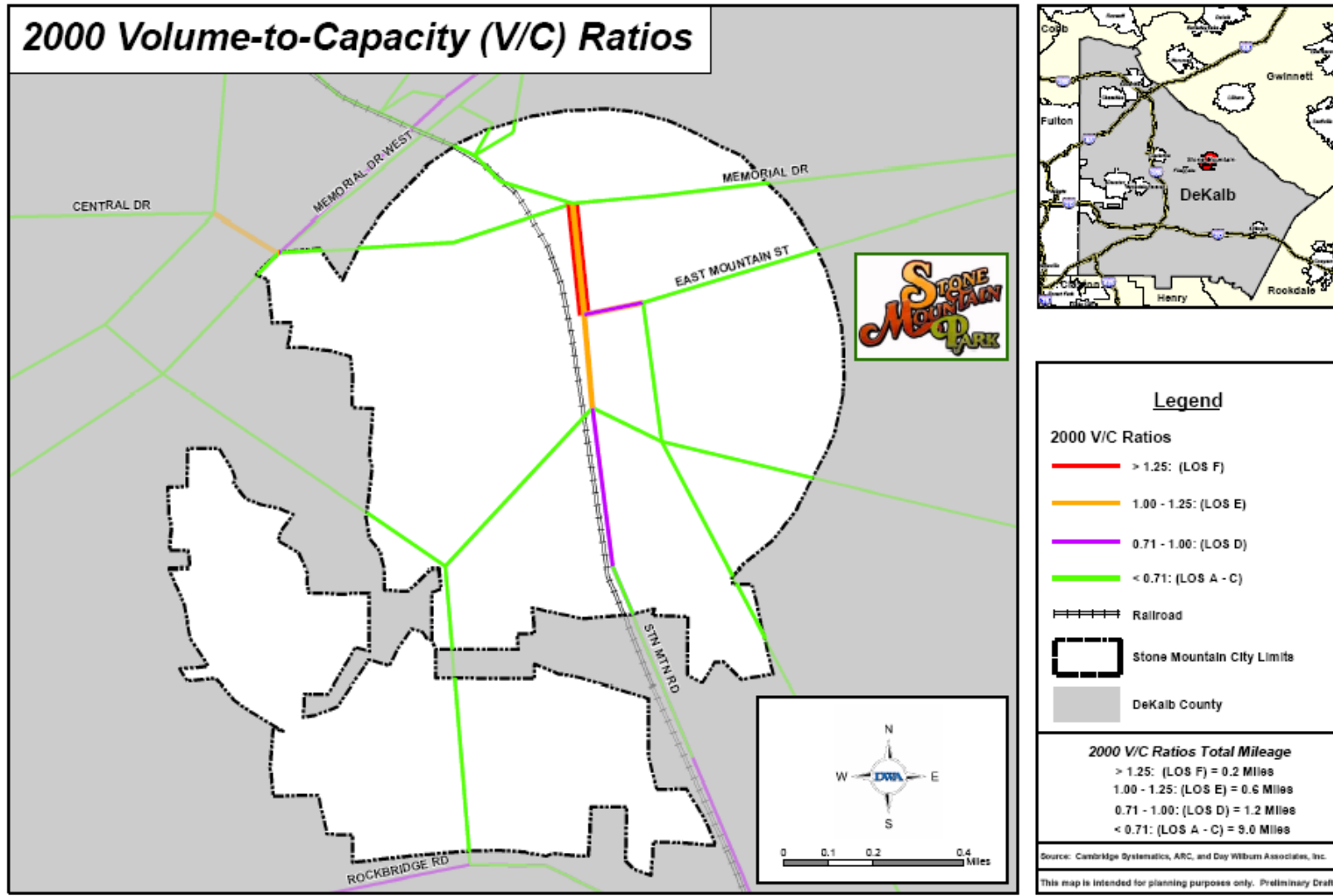
Source: Stone Mountain Village LCI, 2003

Based on these traffic counts, the number of vehicles traveling during a 24-hour period on Main Street ranges between 19,740 to 29,150 vehicles per day (vpd), this is higher than the design function of this roadway. Based on the traffic volumes, the same is true for East Ponce de Leon Avenue and Ridge Avenue. The *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM2000) stipulates that the carrying capacity of a two lane roadway is approximately 16,000 vpd. Thus, the primary access through Stone Mountain is over capacity. Severe congestion is experienced on Main Street due to the high traffic volumes, but capacity deteriorates further because of the five point signalized intersection of Main Street/East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Silver Hill Road, and Memorial Drive.

#### Volume-to-Capacity Ratios (V/C) and Level of Service (LOS)

Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) and level of service (LOS) are two roadway capacity and service performance measures used to assess how well the roadway network is functioning. The travel demand model from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) was used to assess the transportation network for base year 2000 and future year 2030. Figure 19 shows the existing 2000 V/C and respective LOS and Figure 20 shows the forecast 2030 V/C and LOS for the network with the existing plus committed (E+C) projects (*Note: E+C projects are those that are currently underway or included in the ARC 2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*). The existing model shows that the primary capacity need is on Main Street, south of Memorial Drive. The model data mirror the traffic volume analysis which also indicated that Main Street is operating below capacity. The 2030 model indicates that congestion on Main Street will continue and worsen by year 2030.

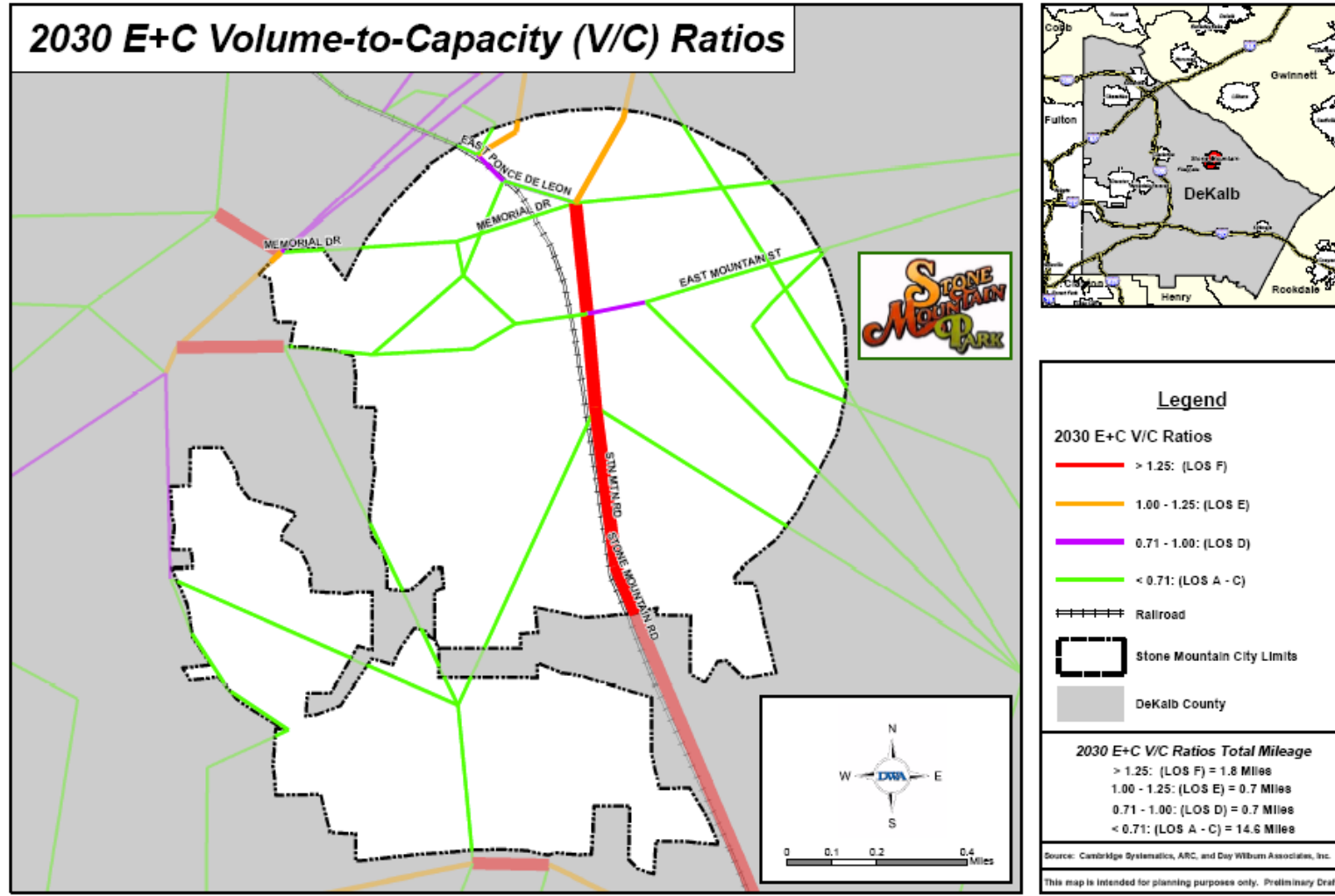
Figure 19: 2000 Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) Ratios



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Figure 20: 2030 E+C Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) Ratios



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Table 27 provides an overall comparison of V/C change between 2000 and 2030 in the model networks. Though improvements are planned for the Stone Mountain area, a greater percent of the network is forecast to experience poor LOS or conditions over capacity by 2030.

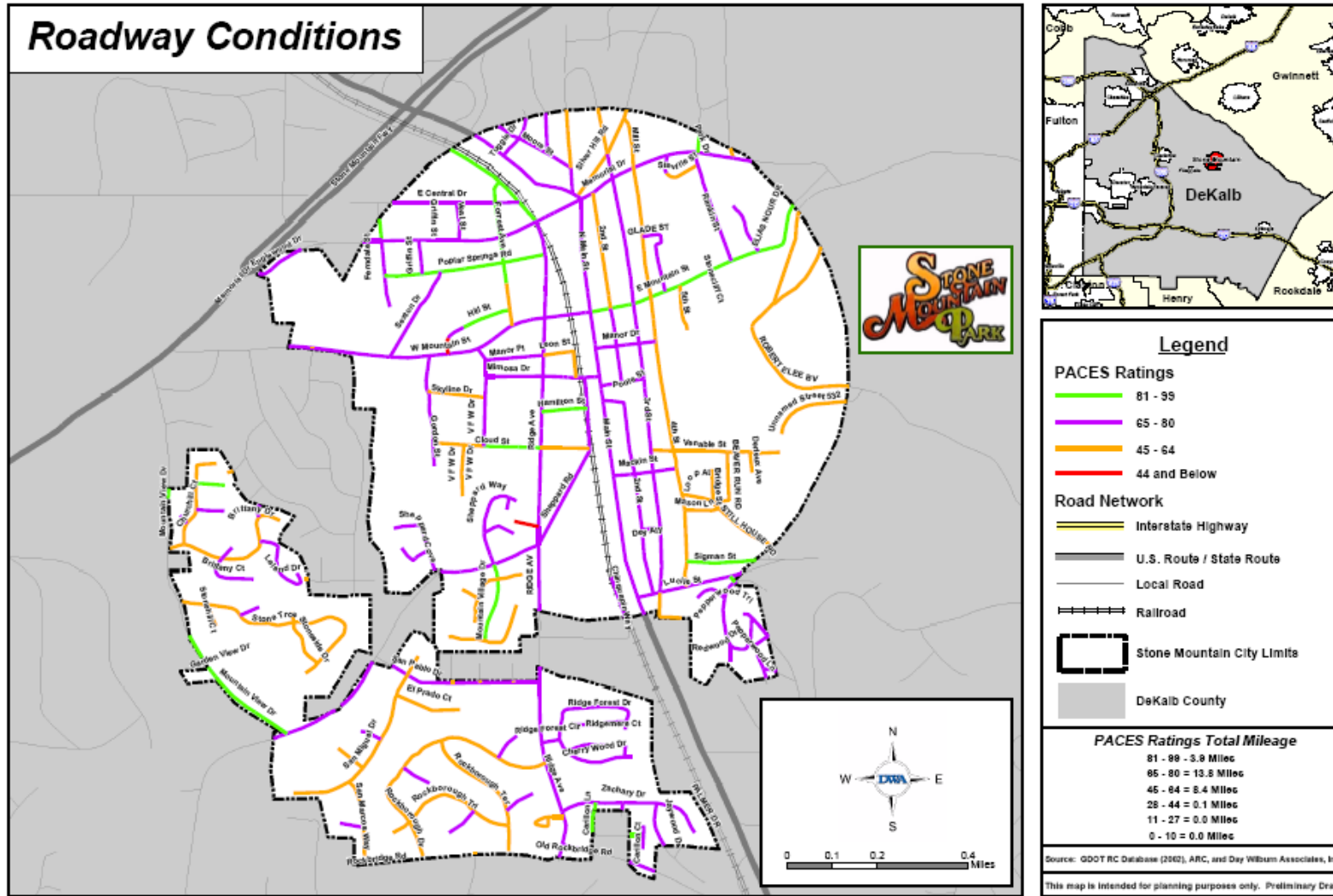
**Table 27: LOS and V/C Comparison 2000 to 2030**

LOS and V/C	2000		2030	
	Total Mileage of Model Network	Percent of Model Network	Total Mileage of Model Network	Percent of Model Network
LOS F V/C >1.25	0.2	2%	1.8	10%
LOS E V/C 1.00 to 1.25	0.6	5%	0.7	4%
LOS D V/C 0.71 to 1.00	1.2	11%	0.7	4%
LOS C V/C <0.71	9.0	82%	14.6	82%

#### Pavement Condition

The Georgia Department of Transportation inventories roadway pavement condition with a Pavement Condition Evaluation System (PACES). The PACES scale ranges from 0 to 100, where a rating of 27 and below is very poor and 81 and above very good. Pavement data from the GDOT road characteristics inventory was mapped for the streets in the City of Stone Mountain, shown in Figure 21. Sixty-eight percent of the roadways in Stone Mountain received a PACES rating above of good or very good, 32% have a fair rating, and less than 1% have a poor or very poor rating.

Figure 21: Pavement Condition Placeholder



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### Bicycle and Pedestrian Ways

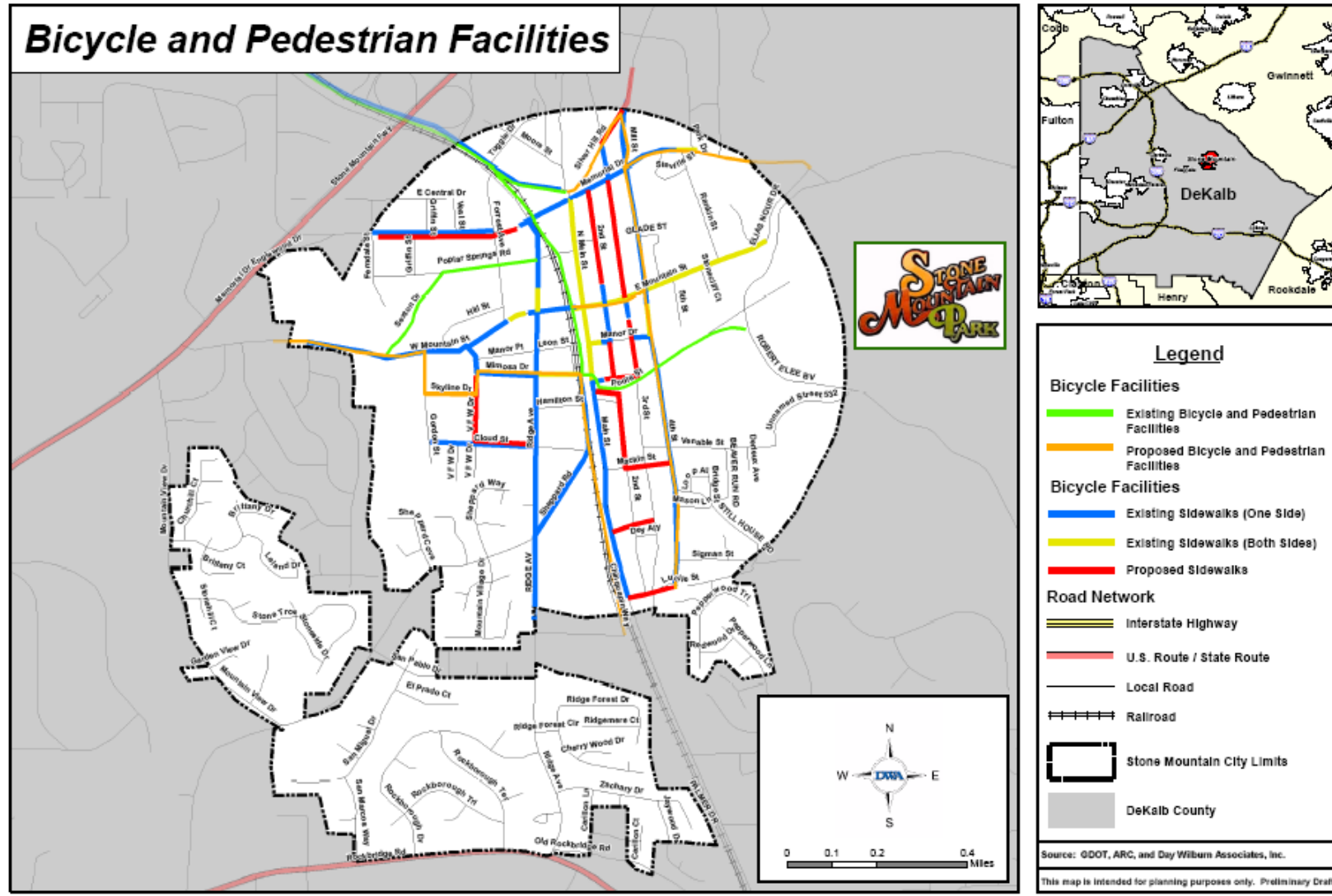
Figure 22 depicts the existing sidewalk network in Stone Mountain. In most cases, sidewalks were found on one side of the roadway only, with typical widths approximately 2 to 4 feet. The structural condition of the sidewalks varies between very good to poor. Several gaps in the sidewalk network require pedestrians to walk along the edge of the roadway. Several streets within the study area do not provide pedestrian sidewalks. Major streets in Stone Mountain without sidewalks include parts of 2nd Street, 3rd Street, East Mountain Street between New Gibraltar Street and the entrance to Stone Mountain Park, Memorial Drive between Rankin Street and the entrance to Stone Mountain Park, and Memorial Drive between Forest Road and Main Street/East Ponce de Leon Avenue.

The City of Stone Mountain is also served by the PATH system of multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails. These trails are maintained by the PATH Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to developing a regional system of multi-use trails throughout greater Atlanta. Stone Mountain is served by PATH's Stone Mountain trail, which connects the Stone Mountain area with Decatur and downtown Atlanta, running through the heart of Stone Mountain. The trail approaches Stone Mountain along East Ponce de Leon Avenue, where an off-street multi-use trail was recently constructed. In addition, an extension to this trail from Stone Mountain into the Stone Mountain Park was recently completed, running alongside an abandoned branch of the CSX railroad that was formerly used by excursion train service into the park. The trail extension connects with an existing bicycle/pedestrian loop around Stone Mountain Park.

### Parking Facilities

There are approximately 69 on street parking spaces and 819 off-street public and private parking spaces in the downtown Stone Mountain for a total of 888 parking spaces (Table 28). Local officials and residents note that both on- and off-street parking is used to access businesses and government facilities in Stone Mountain and the supply of parking spaces currently meets the demand.

Figure 22: Existing Bicycle and Sidewalk Network



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**Table 28: Stone Mountain Existing Parking Supply**

Public Lots	Type	Total Spaces
Main Street	On-Street Parking	20
Main Street - Central Lot	Lot	44
Back Lot - City Hall / Library	Lot	52
Rock Gym	Lot	140
Poole Street	Lot	15
Visitors Center	Lot	20
St. Michael's Thrift Store	Lot	15
MARTA Park and Ride Lot	Lot	133
East Mountain and 2nd Streets	On-Street	21
West Mountain (N. side of Park)	On-Street	14
South Side of Park	On-Street	14
Total On-Street Parking		69
Total Off-Street Parking		419
Total Public Parking Spaces		488
Private Lots	Type	Total Spaces
Sun Trust	Lot	31
Methodist Church	Lot	150
Adjacent SunTrust Lots	Lot	39
Baptist Church	Lot	80
Other	Lots	100
Total		400
TOTAL Public and Private		888

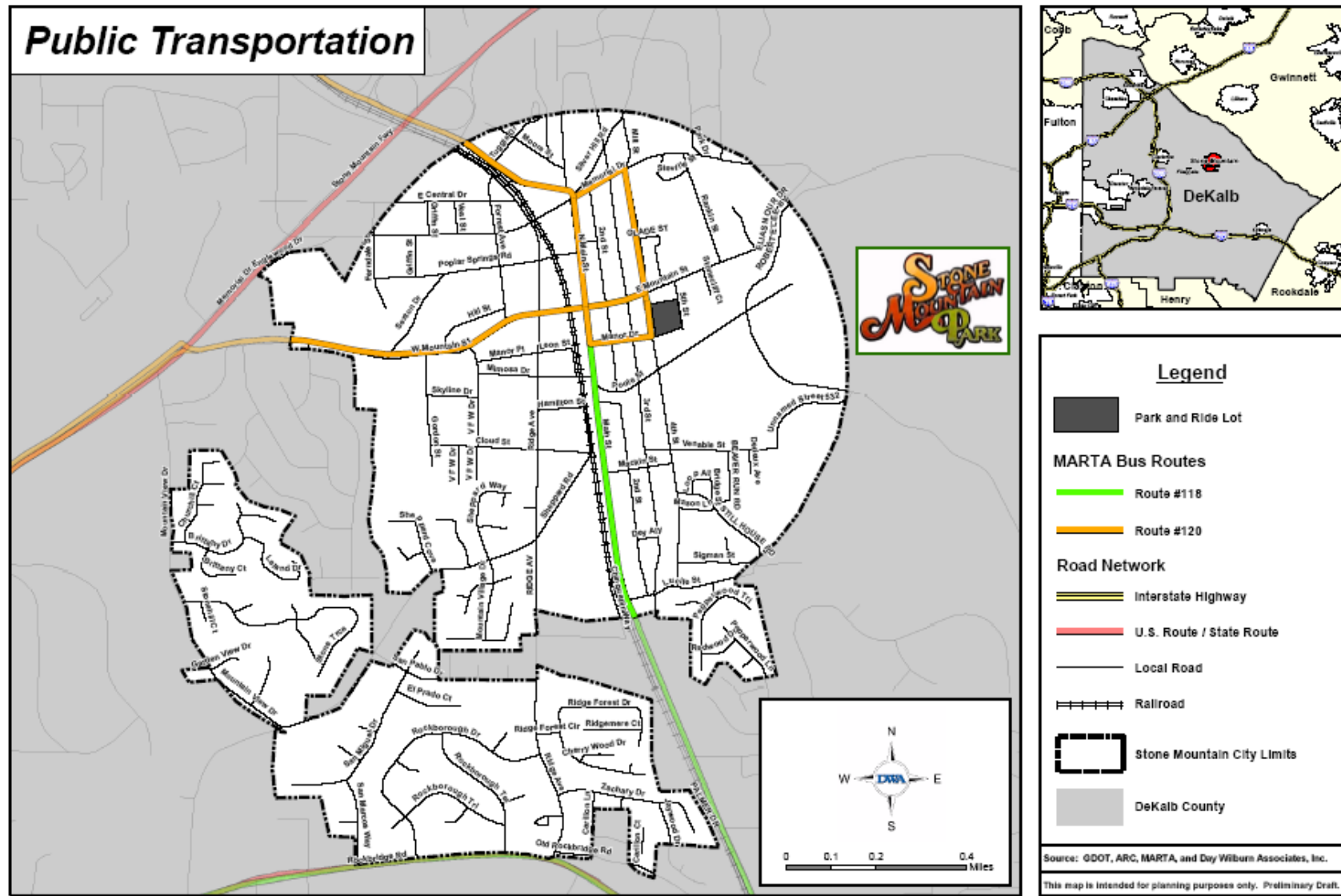
Source: Stone Mountain Village LCI, 2003

**Inventory of Public Transportation and Services**

As shown in Figure 23, two MARTA bus routes serve the City of Stone Mountain. Route 120, the busier of the two, provides service from the 133-space MARTA park-and-ride lot in Stone Mountain to the Avondale station on the East-West heavy rail line, which in turn provides service to downtown Atlanta and other regional destinations. The route travels along North Main Street and East Ponce de Leon Avenue, with a scheduled travel time of 32 minutes between the park-and-ride lot and Avondale. Weekday service is provided from 4:35 AM to 12:33 AM, with a peak-hour headway of eight to ten minutes, making the 120 one of the most frequent routes in the MARTA bus



Figure 23: MARTA Bus Routes



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system. Headways increase to 24 minutes during midday service, 35 minutes during evening service, and 30 minutes on the Saturdays and Sundays.

Additional bus service is provided by route 118, which connects the MARTA park-and-ride lot with the Kensington station on the East-West rail line via Stone Mountain-Lithonia Road, Rockbridge Road, and Memorial Drive. Scheduled travel time between Stone Mountain and Kensington station is 30 minutes. Weekday service is provided from 5:00 AM to 11:48 PM, with headways of 25 minutes, 40 minutes, and 65 minutes for the peak hours, midday hours, and evening hours, respectively. Saturday and Sunday service is also provided with 60-minute headways.

### Railroads, Port Facilities and Airports

One rail line traverses through the City of Stone Mountain. Owned and operated by CSX Transportation, the rail line parallels Main Street between the northern and southern city limits. The rail line is part of a main line that connects Atlanta to Augusta. The nearest intermodal terminal is at Hulsey Yard, west of Stone Mountain in the City of Atlanta.

Data from the GDOT Intermodal Rail Program indicates an average of 5 to 14 trains use this line each day. Data from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Crossing Inventory indicates 19 daily trains. There is one separated grade crossing at Memorial Drive and two at-grade crossings at Mimosa Street (crossing no. 279714N) and West Mountain Street (crossing no. 279715V). The maximum train speed through Stone Mountain is 25 MPH, however typical speeds indicated in the crossing inventory range between 40 and 45 MPH. Bells, lights and gates are provided at both at-grade railroad crossing. Only two train/vehicle crashes have been reported to the FRA for the crossing at Mimosa Drive, in 1979 and 1982. Three train/vehicle crashes have been reported for the crossing at West Mountain Drive, in 1982, 1989, and 1995.

There are no airports in the City of Stone Mountain. The closest facilities are the DeKalb Peachtree Airport and the Hartsfield - Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

### *Assessment of Current and Future Needs*

Current and future needs are identified through two processes: a quantitative effort by examining transportation performance measures and determining deficiencies and needs and through qualitative efforts, primarily public outreach through meetings with stakeholders and the general public.

The recent *Stone Mountain Livable Center Initiative Study (2003)* and the ongoing *DeKalb Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2003-2005)* have generated significant input the public and community leaders regarding transportation needs and potential solutions. During the public involvement process, local citizens noted the following traffic issues:

- The 5-point intersection at Main Street/ East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Silver Hill Road and Memorial Drive needs improvement.
- Consider closing Silver Hill Road from 5-points intersection to 3rd Street intersection with Memorial Drive.
- In Shermantown, traffic-calming measures are needed at the intersections of 3rd Street and Mackin Road and 4th Street and Venable Road.

- Traffic signal improvement is needed at Main Street and East/West Mountain Street intersection. Queuing across the railroad is a concern.
- Traffic signal needed at intersection of 3rd Street and Memorial Drive.
- Consider making Mill Street (west edge of Stone Mountain Elementary School) one-way in north direction to facilitate school traffic and reduce cut through traffic.
- Fix problems of low clearance CSX railroad bridge and poor drainage near Memorial Drive and Ridge Avenue.
- Intersection of Main Street and Lucile Street needs to be improved as a gateway and needs traffic calming and signal.
- Establish gateway and traffic calming measures at Memorial Drive and Ferndale Street.
- Establish an appropriate policy concerning traffic calming measures (speed humps or other) to address cut through traffic problem on Ridge Avenue, 3rd and 4th Street, Mimosa Street, and East/West Mountain Street.

Overall transportation network operations in Stone Mountain were examined to determine existing system deficiencies and potential future needs. The assessment focused on opportunities to improve traffic operations and pedestrian access within the study area. The following findings aided in the identification of appropriate infrastructure features for implementation in Stone Mountain, as follows:

- A pedestrian demand exists beyond the study area because of Stone Mountain Park, so connections across the study area boundary to adjacent neighborhoods should be made where appropriate.
- Roadway cross-section and intersection treatments should reflect the functional classification of the roadway and relative needs for access and pedestrian flow versus circulation.
- Pedestrian crossing treatments should be provided at signalized intersections and other locations, where needed. The type of crossing protection (crosswalk, crosswalk with median, or signalized crossing) should be determined based on the pedestrian demand, intensity of vehicle traffic, and intersection geometry.

### Traffic

Traffic from the side streets and regional through traffic congest Main Street during the AM and PM peak periods between Rockbridge Road and Memorial Drive. Due to this severe congestion and the existence of a grid system, streets parallel and that intersect Main Street serve as a “cut through” to access Memorial Drive and the five point intersection of Main Street/East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Silver Hill Road and Memorial Drive. The bulk of the cut through traffic is experienced Ridge Avenue which terminates at Memorial Drive west of the five point intersection. Cut through traffic accesses Ridge Avenue from Main Street via Mimosa Street and West Mountain Street.

### Parking

Stone Mountain recently converted the angle parking on Main Street to parallel parking. While this reduced number of parking places in downtown, safety on Main Street has been improved with the removal of cars backing into oncoming traffic on Main Street. There are currently an adequate number of parking places available in Stone Mountain.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian

A large majority of the community, commercial, and recreational facilities are located within ¼ mile of the downtown Stone Mountain. Improving and expanding upon the sidewalk network will

greatly enhance pedestrian mobility to these pedestrian generators. Separating vehicles and pedestrians within the study area is important, especially on roadways providing access to schools, libraries, commercial, and recreational facilities. Pedestrian travel is also limited by the existing placement of crosswalks and lack of pedestrian signalization. Improvement in these three areas will greatly enhance pedestrian access and improve safety within Stone Mountain.

The PATH trail is currently the only bicycle facility in Stone Mountain. While this trail connects Stone Mountain to downtown Atlanta, additional bike routes would be beneficial. Providing connectivity to the existing and proposed PATH trail, schools and recreational facilities would provide local residents an alternative mode choice. While the majority of roads in the city do not provide enough right-of-way for a dedicated bike lane, designating a road as a bike route with appropriate signage would be beneficial along 4th Street and Mimosa Street. Bicycle facilities, including route signage, should be put in place to provide a connected on-street and off-street system that will serve both transportation and recreational trips. Other facilities identified in past studies as good candidates for bicycle improvements include West Mountain Street to McCurdy Park, Gordon Street, Skyline Street, and Mimosa Street, which would provide connections from the PATH trail to Stone Mountain Middle School.

### Public Transportation

MARTA is responding to the need for improved transit service to Stone Mountain. Specifically, bus service to the area will see significant improvements upon completion of MARTA's Memorial Drive enhanced bus project. This project will result in new service between downtown Stone Mountain and the Kensington rail station along Memorial Drive, a more direct route than the existing service provided by the 118 and 120 routes. The initial phase of the project will consist of a series of bus enhancements along the corridor, including traffic-signal priority, queue-jumper lanes at selected major intersections, advanced passenger information systems, and fare card vending machines at the stops along the route. The improvements will allow for several levels of service on the corridor, including conventional local bus service as well as "rapid" bus service featuring limited stops and separate bus equipment. Long-range plans call for additional upgrades, including the creation of dedicated bus-only lanes along Memorial.

### Rail

Local residents are concerned with the speed of the train as it passes through Stone Mountain. Local officials have noted that train speeds through Stone Mountain have recently increased to 45 MPH.

Based on the close proximity of the railroad to Main Street there are no opportunities to provide a railroad grade crossing location. Based on field observations, it appears that the trains do exceed the maximum speed of 25 MPH as they travel through Stone Mountain.

Currently, commuter rail is planned between the cities of Atlanta and Athens, but the commuter line is north of Stone Mountain.

## ***Intergovernmental Coordination***

The boundaries for use of community facilities and transportation corridors as well as the effects of land use often go beyond the legal boundaries of a county or municipal government. The purpose of this section is to inventory the existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes between the city of Stone Mountain and DeKalb County as well as between the city and other governmental entities and programs that have the potential of impacting the successful implementation of the Community Agenda.

### ***Adjacent Local Governments and the Service Delivery Strategy***

*Stone Mountain is one of nine municipalities within DeKalb County. DeKalb County provides many services to the residents of the City of Stone Mountain, as they are also residents of the County. The Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) is designed to serve as the primary coordination mechanism between these city and county governments.*

In 1997 the State passed the Service Delivery Strategy Act (HB489). This law mandates the cooperation of local governments with regard to service delivery issues. Each county was required to initiate development of a Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) between July 1, 1997 and January 1, 1998. Service Delivery Strategies must include an identification of services provided by various entities, assignment of responsibility for provision of services and the location of service areas, a description of funding sources, and an identification of contracts, ordinances, and other measures necessary to implement the SDS.

The Service Delivery Strategy for DeKalb County was adopted in June 1999. The City of Stone Mountain did is not a signatory of this document, but, rather has shared services with the county through other intergovernmental agreements executed prior to 1999 and a number of agreements executed since 2002. The City is joining with DeKalb County to revise and update the county's Service Deliver Strategy in the summer of 2005. The provision of services in the city is discussed in detail in the Community Facilities section. The major intergovernmental agreements between DeKalb County and -Stone Mountain Service are summarized here. As the local governments meet to review and update the current DeKalb County Service Delivery Strategy, each of the existing agreements listed here will be examined and evaluated.

### **Fire Protection**

The intergovernmental agreement establishes DeKalb County as the provider of fire services in the city of Stone Mountain. The City agrees to provide Stone Mountain Police to assist in securing the area around a fire when necessary.

### EMS & 911

DeKalb County provides emergency management services and 911 service to the city of Stone Mountain, as established by the intergovernmental agreement. The county will notify the city when 911 calls go directly to DeKalb County. The city will assist the county EMS whenever a natural emergency occurs within the city.

### Jails

DeKalb County provides jail services to the City of Stone Mountain.

### Emergency Management

The intergovernmental agreement establishes DeKalb County as the provider of emergency management services within the City of Stone Mountain.

### Animal Control

DeKalb County provides animal control services to the City of Stone Mountain. The agreement includes responding to calls from both the city and residents of the city; and it is the city's responsibility to notify the county animal control when calls are received from residents.

### Roadway Construction and Maintenance

DeKalb County provides roadway construction and maintenance to the City of Stone Mountain. The services include re-paving (except LARP) and pothole repair.

### Building Inspection/Permit Services

The county and city have an agreement that establishes a joint effort in conducting building and permit inspections within the City of Stone Mountain. The city has the responsibility to provide the county with relevant licensing and permitting records.

### Economic Development

The current Service Delivery Strategy does not include an agreement between the city and the DeKalb County Economic Development Authority for the provision of economic development and redevelopment coordination services. The City currently is responsible for its own economic development efforts.

### *School Board*

The DeKalb County Board of Education oversees the DeKalb County Public Schools, which serve the entire county and the majority of the municipalities, including Stone Mountain.

## *Regional and State Entities*

### Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) serves as the regional development center for metropolitan Atlanta area including the City of Stone Mountain. The ARC provides a variety of services to governments in its region, such as land use and transportation planning coordination, services for the elderly and workforce development. The ARC is responsible for serving the public interest of the state by promoting and implementing the comprehensive planning process among its ten county region and with involvement in local and regional planning related to land use, transportation, recreation, historic preservation, natural resources, and solid waste. The city is represented on the ARC's Board of Directors. The existing mechanisms of coordination between Stone Mountain and the Atlanta Regional Commission are considered adequate and expected to remain constant through the planning period.

### Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

With a finite water resource and a population of nearly 4 million and growing, the need to carefully and cooperatively manage and protect Metropolitan Atlanta's rivers and streams has become a priority. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District was signed into law on April 5, 2001 (2001 S.B. 130) and is developing regional and watershed specific plans for stormwater management, wastewater management, and water supply and conservation in a 16 county area which encompasses Clayton, Bartow, Cherokee, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale and Walton Counties. Local governments within the District that do not substantially adopt the model ordinances will be ineligible for state grants or loans for stormwater related projects. This decision may be appealed to the District Board with a majority vote required to overturn. Those governments that do not implement plans that apply to them would have their current permits for water withdrawal, wastewater capacity or NPDES stormwater permits frozen.

The city adopted the required watershed, wastewater, and water supply conservation measures in April 2005.

### Georgia Department of Transportation

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) maintains and improves state and Federal highways in DeKalb County and provides financial assistance for local road improvements. Stone Mountain coordinates with DeKalb County and is closely tied with GDOT through the county's Transportation Department. This coordination is expected to continue throughout the planning period.

### Georgia Department of Natural Resources

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is available to provide assistance and guidance to the city in a number important areas including; water conservation, environmental protection, wildlife preservation, and historic preservation.

### Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has overall management responsibilities for the State's coordinated planning program and reviews plans for compliance with minimum planning standards. DCA provides a variety of technical assistance and grant funding opportunities to the city.

### *Private Entities*

#### DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce

A non-profit membership organization, the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce provides assistance to new businesses wishing to locate their establishments in the county. The agency's activities are focused in the areas of business recruitment and retention.

#### Georgia Power Company

Georgia Power is a utility company servicing customers throughout the State of Georgia. There is little coordination required between the city and Georgia Power except for issues related to electric utility hookups.