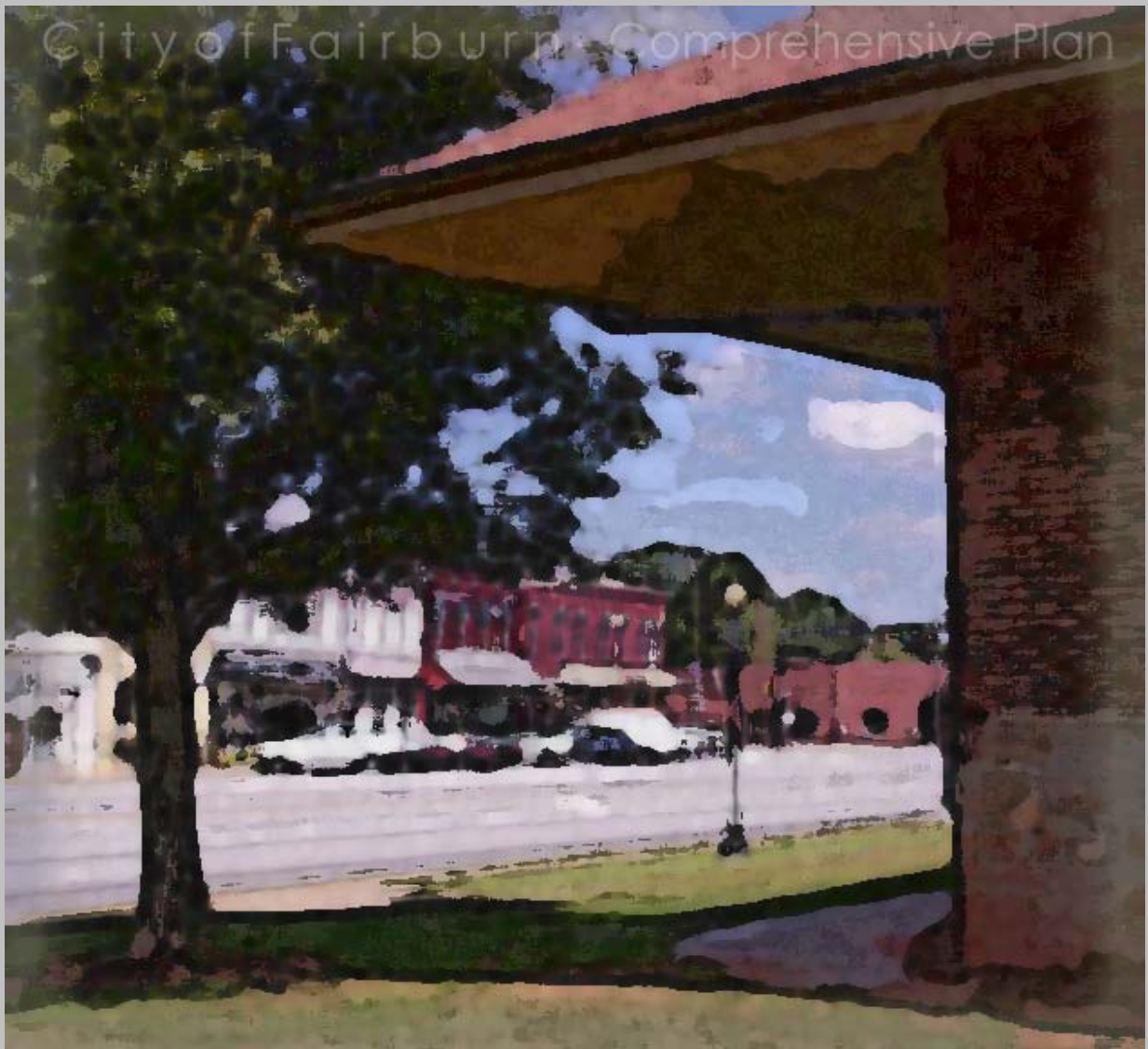


COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PLAN

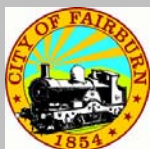


Submitted to:

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

By:

CITY OF FAIRBURN, GEORGIA



November 23, 2005



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Introduction

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers Rules for Local Comprehensive Planning for all Qualified Local Governments in Georgia. The purpose of this program is to provide guidance for long range planning that will accomplish the following goals as outlined by the DCA:

- Involve all segments of the community in developing a vision for the community's future;
- Generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community;
- Engage the interest of citizens in implementing the plan; and
- Provide a guide for decision making for use by the local government officials and other community leaders.

The Chapter 110-12-1: Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," were recently updated in May 2005. The updated guidelines require the completion of three major elements, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Community Assessment summarizes the local governments evaluation of its development patterns, issues and opportunities, and level of compliance with the DCA's Quality Community Objectives. The Community Participation Plan is a proposal for a community involvement program that will offer a wide range of opportunities to local citizens interested in participation in Comprehensive Plan development. Lastly, the Community Agenda includes an update of the material in the Assessment based on public input, as well as a short and long term work program and list of policies for land use decision making.

The Community Assessment and Community Participation Plan must be submitted to DCA for approval prior to the start of the public involvement phase and completion of the Community Agenda. Therefore, the Assessment and Participation Plan must be received by DCA well in advance of the final deadline for Comprehensive Plan submittal. Fairburn's deadline for submittal of the full plan is October 31, 2006, which is due to an extension granted by DCA to allow Fairburn to observe the new Rules for Local Comprehensive Planning.

This document represents the Community Assessment for the City of Fairburn. It is being submitted to DCA along with the Community Participation Plan and a Technical Addendum containing a detailed census and inventory data assessment. Submittal in November 2005 will allow the City the time necessary to conduct a public involvement program and finalize a Community Agenda prior to the DCA mandated deadline.

The format of this document considers the outline proposed in the State Planning Recommendations as well as Chapter 110-12-1 of the Rules.

- Chapter 1 addresses development patterns including current land use, proposed character areas, and areas requiring special attention.
- Chapter 2 identifies issues and opportunities as they relate to all of the traditional elements including, but not limited to, population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, and land use.
- Chapter 3 provides a summary of the analysis of the Quality Community Objectives and the City's implementation status.
- Chapter 4 provides a summary of the Data Assessment of the 2000 Census and community inventory, which is fully detailed in the Technical Addendum.

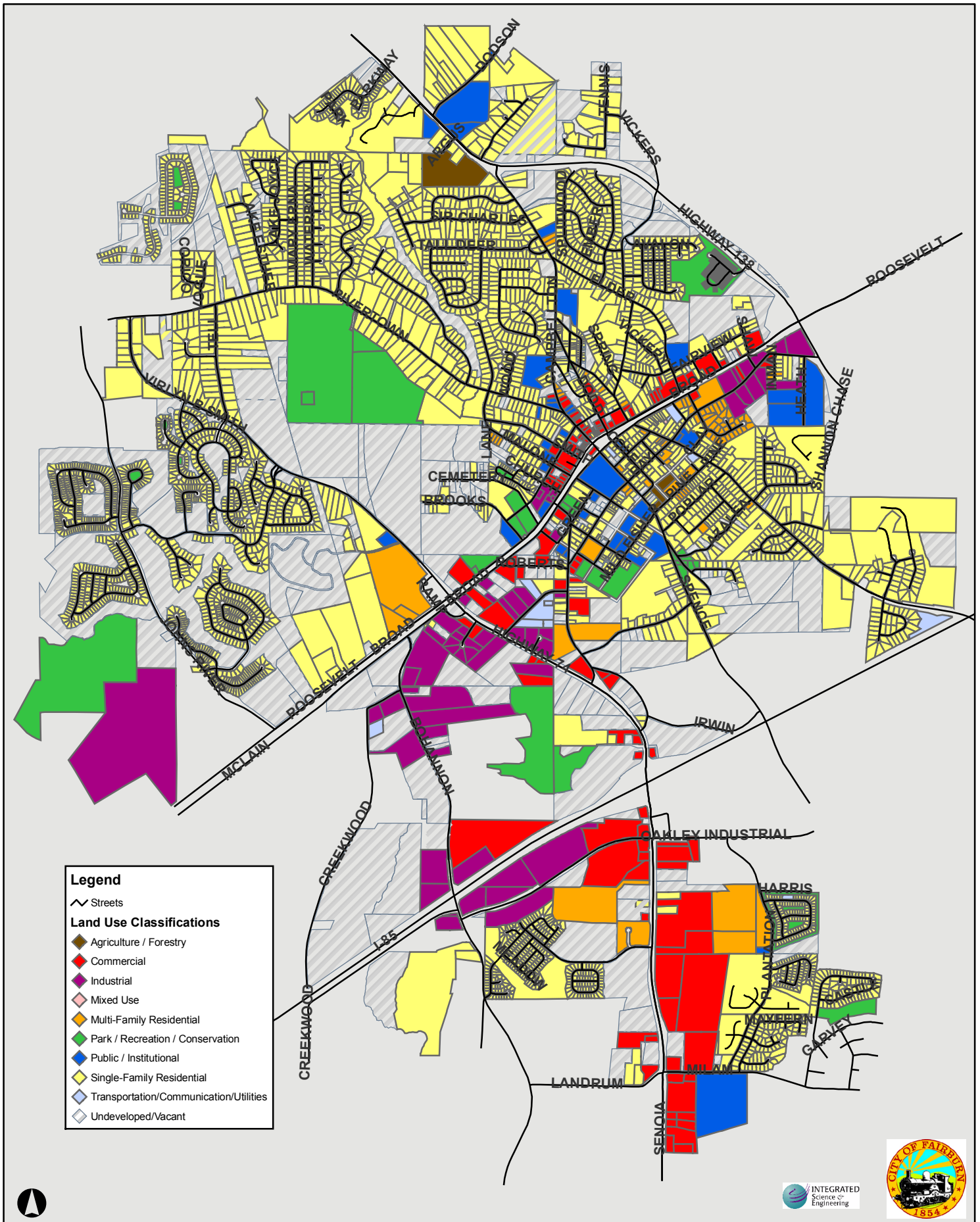
The City of Fairburn is currently contending with several issues related to a rapidly increasing population, and a need for economic development that focuses on the historic downtown area. The City is fully committed to the comprehensive planning process and is hopeful that this Plan Update will provide an outline for downtown revitalization; the development of mixed-use, traditional neighborhoods, and preservation of the City's resources and quality of life.

1. Analysis of Development Patterns

1.1 Current Land Use

The first step in defining a community vision for future growth is to assess existing development patterns and current land use. The future vision must relate to development patterns if the goals developed are to be viable and achievable. In order to have an accurate accounting of land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis, the City of Fairburn conducted a windshield survey in August 2005 to define current land use based on the following categories as defined in Section 110-12-1-.07 Data and Mapping Specifications. The definitions below are adapted from Standard Land Use categories described in the new DCA Rules for Comprehensive Planning. The survey was conducted with a field tablet equipped with a GPS and ArcGIS software. The electronic data meets the requirements set forth in the Rules and a map of current land uses is included in Figure 1. For a full-size map please see Appendix A.

- **Residential.** The residential category is for single-family and multifamily dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. The City chose to further break this category into single-family and multifamily residential categories.
- **Commercial.** This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
- **Industrial.** This category is for land dedicated to facilities involved in activities that have SIC code (Standard Industrial Classification).
- **Mixed-Use.** This category was created for those situations where more than one landuse exists on an individual parcel. For example, a parcel where the structure was upstairs residential and downstairs commercial would be considered mixed-use.
- **Public/Institutional.** This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, post offices, schools, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, hospitals, etc.
- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities.** This category includes such uses as public transit stations, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, and other similar uses.
- **Park/Recreation/Conservation.** This category is for permanently protected land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas are public and include playgrounds, public parks, golf courses, recreation centers and similar uses.
- **Agriculture/Forestry.** This category is for land dedicated to farming or silviculture. There is very little acreage dedicated to this use in Fairburn.
- **Undeveloped/Vacant.** This category is for lots or tracts of land that have not been developed for a specific use but are likely to be developed in the future.



1.2 Character Areas

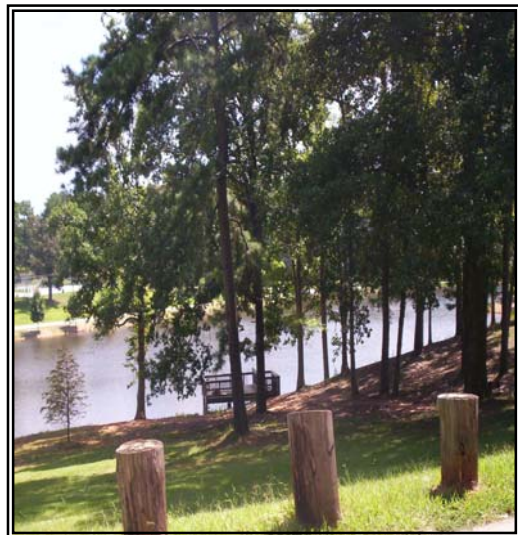
The DCA has required the development of “Character Areas” as part of the new Rules for Comprehensive Planning to acknowledge the visual and functional differences of various neighborhoods. By identifying desirable neighborhood characteristics, the City of Fairburn will be able to provide more specific guidance for future development through appropriate planning and implementation within each Character Area. The Character Areas identified in Figure 2 and defined below identify areas that presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved or have potential to evolve into unique areas. It is important to note while reviewing the Character Area map and descriptions that the identified character may not be accurate for every single parcel, but is rather the overall defining character of the entire area. The development strategies identified within each Character Area are not requirements, but recommendations for the desired types of development and redevelopment. The strategies will be utilized to help define short-term activities and long-term policies for future growth within the City of Fairburn. The Character Area descriptions below are based on the State Planning Recommendations developed by DCA.

1.2.1 Openspace

Area of protected open space established for recreation, alternative transportation, or conservation purposes. Includes ecological, cultural and recreational amenities.

Recommended Development Strategies:

- Maintain property in as natural a state as possible.
- Link greenspaces into a pleasant network of greenways, set aside for pedestrian and bicycle connections between schools, churches, recreation areas, City centers, residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Allow only for minimal development and impervious surfaces as is appropriate for recreational uses.
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations.



1.2.2 Suburban

Area where suburban residential subdivision development is occurring or has already occurred. Development within these areas should be encouraged to include high pedestrian orientation, transit and interconnection, and neighborhood-appropriate mixed-use.

Recommended Development Strategies:***New Development:***

- Promote moderate density where appropriate, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions.
- New development should be master-planned with mixed-uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, neighborhood retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips.
- Internal street connectivity and multiple access points should be encouraged.
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to:
 - Retail/commercial services
 - Adjacent properties/subdivisions
 - Regional network of greenspace and trails
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

***Existing Development:***

- Foster retrofitting developed areas to better conform with TND principles
- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.
- Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walk-ability within existing neighborhoods.
- Permit infill development with compatible architectural systems and uses.

1.2.3 Traditional Neighborhood Area

Residential area in older part of the community, developed with traditional design patterns. Characteristics include high pedestrian orientation; sidewalks, street trees; on-street parking; small, regular lots; limited open space; buildings close to or at the front property line; presence of alleys; low degree of building separation; and neighborhood-scale businesses scattered throughout the area.



Recommended Development Strategies:

- Encourage traditional neighborhoods to maintain their original character.
- Permit only compatible uses in infill development.
- Develop and implement architectural standards for infill development.
- Encourage stability within existing neighborhoods.
- Encourage continuation of roadway connectivity.
- Implement streetscape improvements to encourage continued high pedestrian orientation.
- Provide pedestrian/bike connectivity from traditional neighborhoods to other community amenities including greenspace and downtown center.
- Allow for compatible neighborhood commercial uses.

1.2.4 Downtown Historic District

This area comprises the historic central business district, immediately surrounded by commercial and mixed-use areas.

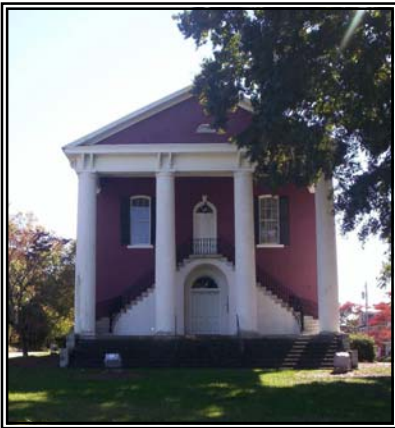
Recommended Development Strategies:

- Encourage a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment.
- Residential development should reinforce the traditional town center through a combination of rehabilitation of historic and traditional buildings in the downtown area and compatible new infill development.
- Provide a mix of housing types including townhomes, apartments, lofts, condominiums, upstairs



- residential/ downstairs commercial.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
- Downtown area should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks, installing streetscape improvements, and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to nearby neighborhoods and major destinations.

Historic Center: This sub area is unique to the Historic Downtown District and incorporates the historic row of shops and residential lofts that line the two city blocks across from the historic railway stations. Recommended development patterns should include the formation of a Historic Downtown Committee to oversee restoration of this area. Strict standards



should be developed to ensure that all redevelopment and infill projects meet with the historic style and character of this area.

Historic Sites: This unique sub area designation highlights the unique features of the downtown area including the Landmark Christian School and property, the historic railway stations, and the old courthouse. These sites should be protected and/or renovated to maintain the character of the Downtown Historic District (DHD). Efforts should be made to integrate these sites into the DHD.

1.2.5 Mixed-Use Neighborhood

Area near to Historic Downtown Center that has a mix of residential and neighborhood commercial uses.

Recommended Development Strategies:

- Residential development and commercial uses should be designed to compliment each other and create a live/work environment.
- Development should reinforce the traditional town center through a combination of rehabilitation of historic buildings in the downtown area and compatible new infill development.
- Varied residential uses should be allowed including townhomes, apartments, lofts, condominiums, upstairs residential/ downstairs commercial.



- Neighborhood Commercial should include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents day-to-day needs.
- Mixed-use area design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
- The pedestrian-friendly environment should be enhanced through streetscape improvements.

1.2.6 Neighborhood Commercial

A neighborhood focal point with a concentration of activities such as restaurants, retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses should be easily accessible by pedestrians. Absolutely no chains or big box retail should be permitted in these areas.



Recommended Development Strategies:

- Allowable uses should be compatible with neighborhood character and may include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents day-to-day needs.
- Residential development should reinforce the center through locating higher density housing options adjacent to the centers.
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
- Direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks should be provided.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment through streetscaping improvements.
- Architectural standards should reflect the local neighborhood character.

1.2.7 Regional Commercial

Concentration of regionally marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, higher-education facilities, sports and recreational complexes. These areas are characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic, and transit access. These areas typically have a low degree of internal open space and high floor-area-ratio.

Recommended Development Strategies:

- Include high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area.
- Diverse mix of higher-density housing types, including multi-family townhomes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums, including affordable housing located nearby.
- Design should encourage walkable connections between different uses.
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety. Provide bicycle parking at retail and office destinations and at multi-family dwellings.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and discourage “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Encourage the establishment of major employers, such as educational institutions, industry, sports and recreational complexes, and back-office operations.
- “Big box” retail should be limited to these areas, and designed to fit into mixed-use planned development with limited parking that is shared with surrounding uses.
- Warehousing or other industrial operations requiring heavy truck traffic should not be permitted in these areas.
- New billboards should not be permitted or subject to appropriate design standards.

**1.2.8 Downtown Commercial**

This is a commercial area adjacent to the DHD that allows for a higher intensity of development than neighborhood commercial character areas, but does not allow for

commercial development that is as intensive as the regional commercial center.

**Recommended Development Strategies:**

- Uses should reflect more of a regional market.
- Intensive commercial uses should be reserved for the regional commercial area.
- Design and architectural standards should be compatible with the DHD.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with

- parking in the rear.
- Allow for commercial uses that are compatible with the Downtown character including office, retail, restaurant, gallery, services, supermarkets, and similar uses.
- Allow for higher density housing including townhomes, apartments, lofts, condominiums, upstairs residential/ downstairs commercial.
- Discourage franchise architecture, big box development, and incompatible commercial and industrial uses.

1.2.9 Industrial

Area used in manufacturing, wholesale trade, and distribution activities.

Recommended Development Patterns:

- Develop or, where possible, retrofit as part of planned industrial park having adequate water, sewer, storm-water, and transportation infrastructure for all component uses at build-out.
- Incorporate landscaping and site design to soften or shield views of buildings and parking lots, loading docks, etc.
- Incorporate signage and lighting guidelines to enhance quality image of development.
- Incorporate measures to mitigate external impacts on the adjacent built or natural environments.



1.2.10 Office Park

This area is set aside for an office park that will provide an employment center for residents.

Recommended Development Patterns:

- Develop as part of planned office park having adequate water, sewer, storm-water, and transportation infrastructure for all component uses at build-out.
- Develop design standards for office buildings and landscaping to protect the aesthetics of the development.
- Incorporate signage and lighting guidelines to enhance quality image of development.
- Incorporate measures to mitigate impacts on the natural environment.
- Allow for higher density housing including townhomes, apartments, lofts, condominiums, upstairs residential/ downstairs commercial to create a live/work environment.
- Encourage mix of uses, such as retail and services to serve office employees and to reduce reliance on automobiles on site.

- Office park design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses within the development.

1.2.11 Smart Growth

This area is appropriate for a residential or mixed-use development that is masterplanned to incorporate New-Urbanist or Conservation Development standards.

Recommended Development Patterns:

- Residential development and commercial uses should be designed to compliment each other.
- Residential development should include various housing types including townhomes, apartments, lofts, condominiums, and detached single-family residential homes.
- Neighborhood commercial areas should be included in the development masterplan and should include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents day-to-day needs.
- The masterplan design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses within the development.
- The development in this area should provide connections to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Connections to regional networks of greenspace, multiuse trails, sidewalks should be included in the masterplan design.



1.2.12 Historic Corridor

The Historic Corridor is the developed and undeveloped land paralleling the route of Highway 29 through the Historic Center.

Recommended Development Strategies:

- Enact guidelines for new development that enhances the historic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping and architectural design.
- Provide pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential, commercial, and greenspace districts.
- Improve the pedestrian environment through streetscaping enhancements.



1.2.13 In-Town Gateway Corridor

This area includes the developed and undeveloped land paralleling major roadways leading to the downtown center including, Highway 29 (Main Street) on either side of this Historic Center.

Recommended Development Strategies:

- Gradually convert corridor to attractive boulevard with signage guiding visitors to downtown and scenic areas around the community.
- The appearance of the corridor should immediately be improved through streetscaping enhancements (street lights, landscaping, etc.).
- Enact design guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street and rear parking, to ensure that the corridors become more attractive as properties develop or redevelop.
- Provide access for pedestrians and bicycles, and consider vehicular safety measures including driveway consolidation and raised medians (which also improve safety for bike/pedestrians).
- Coordinate land uses and bike/pedestrian facilities with transit stops where applicable.

1.2.14 Major Highway Corridor

Developed or undeveloped land on both sides of designated high-volume transportation facility, such as arterial roads and highways.

Recommended Development Strategies:

- Maintain a natural vegetation buffer (at least 50 feet in width) along the corridor.
- All new development should be set-back behind this buffer, with access roads, shared driveways or inter-parcel road connections providing alternate access to these developments and reducing curb cuts and traffic on the main highway.
- Provide paved shoulders that can be used as emergency breakdown lanes.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing using directory signage to developments.
- Develop standards to control the installation of new billboards.

1.2.15 Commercial Corridor

The Commercial Corridor is the developed or undeveloped land on both sides of an arterial road or highway through the Regional Commercial area.

**Recommended Development Strategies:**

- All new development should be accessible through shared driveways and inter-parcel road connections providing alternate access to these developments and reducing curb cuts and traffic on the main highway.
- Encourage landscaped, raised medians to provide vehicular safety, aesthetics, and also pedestrian crossing refuge.
- Provide pedestrian facilities behind drainage ditches or curb.
- Provide paved shoulders that can be used by bicycles or as emergency breakdown lanes.
- Coordinate land uses and bike/pedestrian facilities with transit stops, if applicable.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing using directory signage to developments.
- Develop standards for signage and prohibit new billboards.

1.2.16 Community Access Points

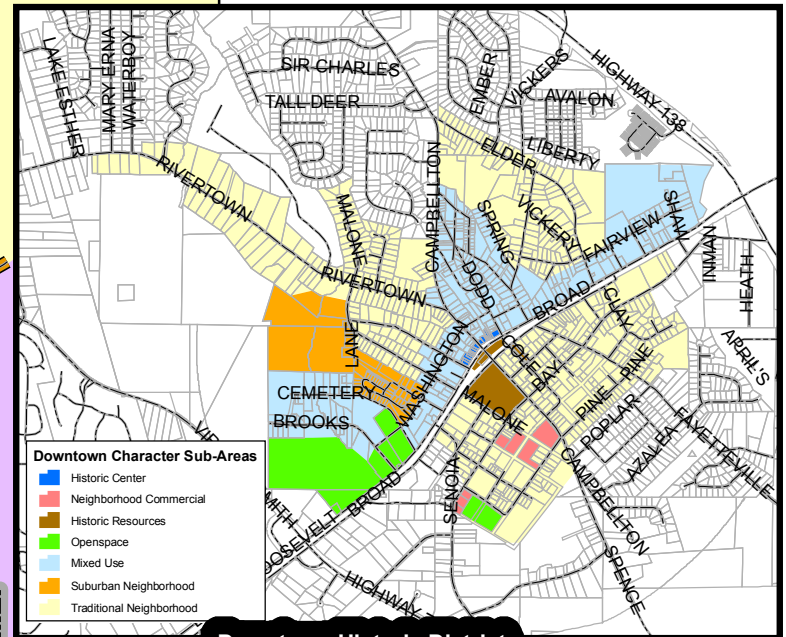
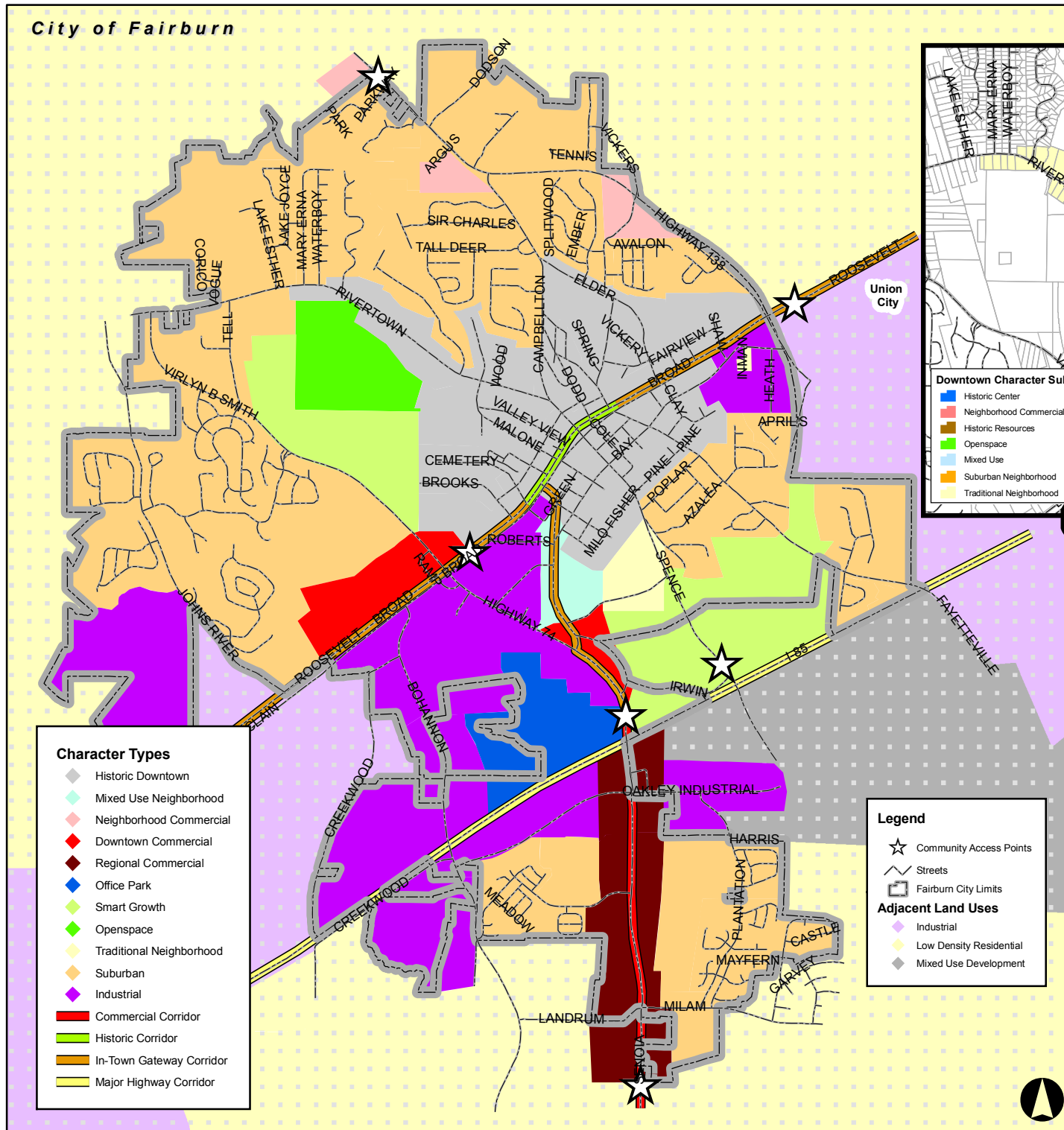
A Community Access Point is the developed or undeveloped land at an important entrance or means of access to the community.

**Recommended Development Strategies:**

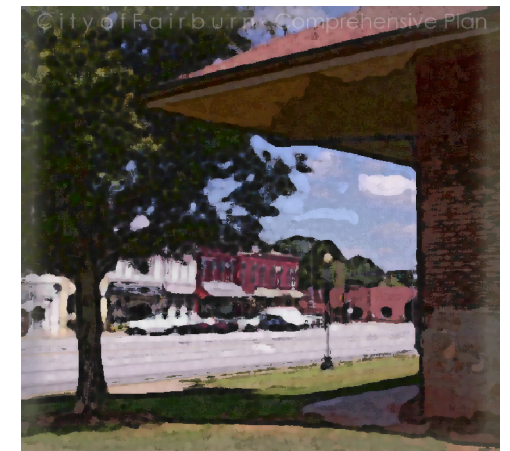
- Focus upon appearance with appropriate signage, landscaping and other beautification measures.
- Install appropriate directory signage to community amenities and developments.
- Retrofit or mask unsightly features as necessary.

City of Fairburn

Community Character Areas



Downtown Historic District Sub-Areas



1.3 Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA)

The City of Fairburn is undergoing rapid population growth. As a result, it is important to address and plan for the impacts this growth will have on community resources. This section discusses the effects that anticipated growth may have on natural and cultural resources and the potential for infill development throughout the City. Also included in this section are the areas where development should be directed, areas where it should be avoided, and areas where additional investment will be needed in order for the City of Fairburn to achieve the goals outlined in this plan. The Map of Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA) in Figure 3 identifies these areas within the City of Fairburn.

The DCA has identified the following seven special conditions and requires that they be addressed where they exist within the community:

- Natural or cultural resources
- Areas where rapid development is likely to occur
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of public facilities and services
- Redevelopment areas
- Large abandoned structures or sites
- Infill development opportunities
- Areas of significant disinvestment and/or under-utilized areas

The City has reviewed the Existing Land Use and proposed Character Areas and has determined that the following areas within the City of Fairburn require special attention.

1.3.1 Areas Where Development or Change of Land Use is Likely to Occur

The City of Fairburn is projected to see a significant population increase over the next 20 years. Large undeveloped lots have been subdivided to accommodate the influx of new residents. This type of development is likely to put a strain on the existing infrastructure and lead to suburban sprawl if not managed accordingly.

As a result, the City has addressed the following issues in order to accommodate the increasing population: 1) Transportation, 2) Water, Sewer, Stormwater Runoff, and 3) Public Services and Facilities. There are no areas within the City where the current pace of development is expected to outpace community facilities or services.

Areas identified as Smart Growth and Office Parks will likely be developed. In an effort to accommodate a growing older population, the City plans to develop an over-45 community on the undeveloped property near I-85. Additionally, the City will continue to accommodate additional residential development in the outlying areas currently under development. As part of the DHD revitalization effort the City will encourage appropriate infill development and the conversion of residential uses to mixed-uses in the downtown area. The hope would be

that development and redevelopment occurs in a manner consistent with the principles outlined in this plan. These areas are identified on the Map of ARSA.

1.3.2 Significant Natural Resources

The City of Fairburn contains natural resources such as streams, lakes, groundwater recharge zones, water supply watersheds, greenspace, and floodplains. The proper management of these resources is important to sustain the anticipated future growth. The Map of ARSA illustrates these natural resources.

The entire area south of GA-29 (West Broad Street/Roosevelt Highway) falls within a water supply watershed. The current and future development patterns within these water supply watersheds are dominated by heavy commercial and industrial uses. A substantial amount of new residential development is also occurring in these areas. Development patterns near Fairburn will also have an impact on these water supply watersheds.

It is important that both the City of Fairburn and Fulton County address water quality in these basins in order to protect drinking water supplies for current and future residents.

1.3.3 Significant Cultural Resources

The historic resources in Fairburn present the greatest opportunity for restoration and redevelopment in the downtown area. The old rail stations, courthouse, and the row of historic storefronts are among the many cultural resources in the downtown center and are identified on the Map of ARSA. The historic houses identified by Fairburn can be restored to enhance the historic character and provide housing and commercial space in the downtown area. The City needs to create economic incentives to encourage the restoration of these structures.



1.3.4 Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities

There is a significant opportunity for infill development in the downtown area of Fairburn. The traditional residential neighborhood south of West Broad Street (shown in yellow on the Map of ARSA) contains a number of vacant properties and deteriorating residential units. Increased demand for housing makes infill development a realistic and attractive option. Placing an emphasis on infill development in this area will create a more vibrant downtown and minimize the impacts that continued sprawl could have on quality of life for Fairburn residents.

1.3.5 Areas of Disinvestment, Needing Redevelopment, or Improvements to Aesthetics or Attractiveness

The majority of disinvestment and redevelopment opportunities in the City of Fairburn are centralized around the downtown area.

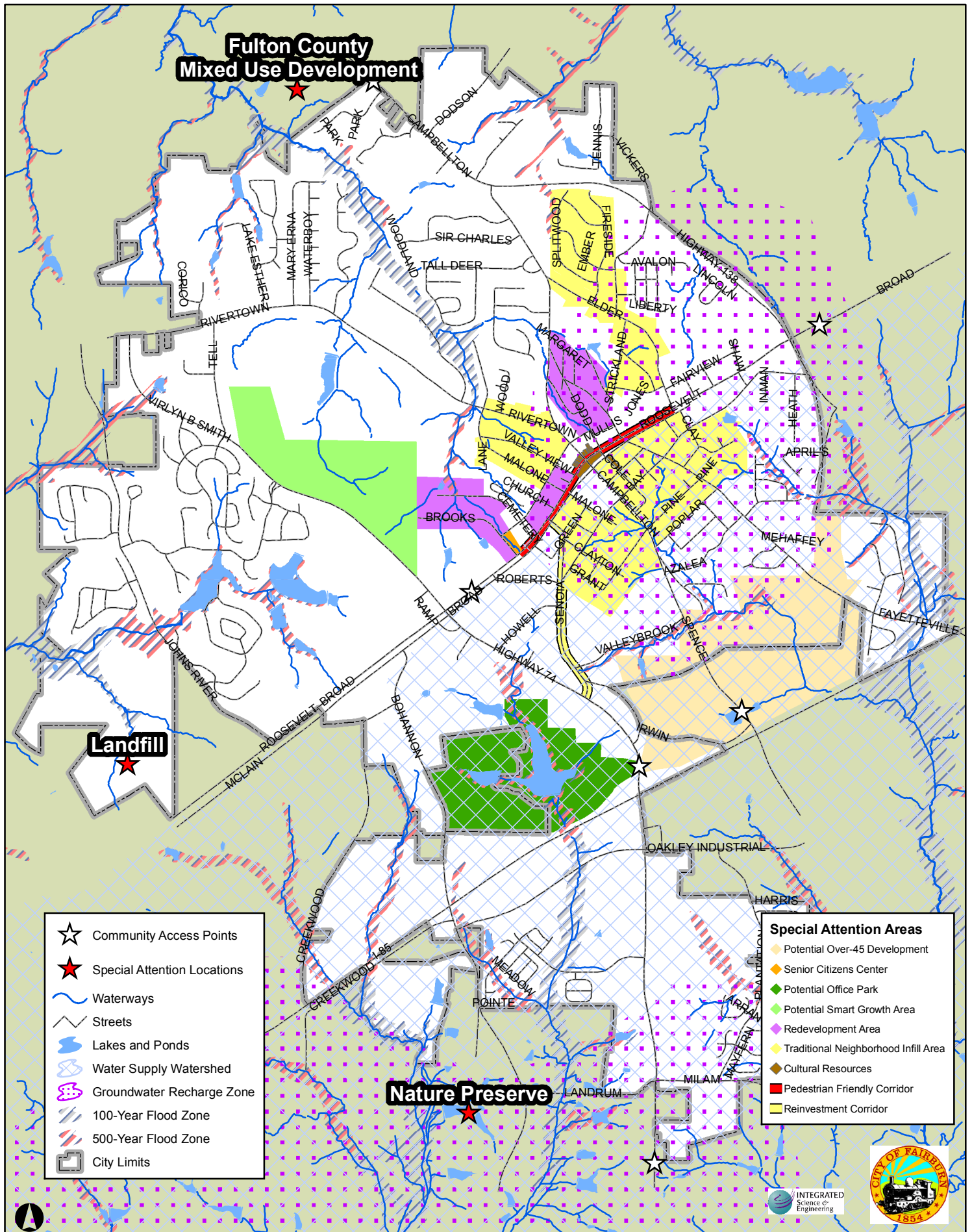


Residential disinvestment is most prevalent in the Lightning District and on Brooks Street and Cemetery Street. The area most suitable for commercial redevelopment is on West Broad Street west of the downtown center. Additionally, there are some neighborhood commercial shopping centers that are underutilized and should be targeted for redevelopment. The redevelopment areas are illustrated in purple on the Map of ARSA.

The accelerated population growth and the suburban development support the fact that re-investment is currently taking place in Fairburn. The City has placed downtown redevelopment at the forefront of its planning agenda and should focus redevelopment efforts in these downtown areas.

1.3.6 Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

The City of Fairburn does not have any significant abandoned structures or sites, however, there are a number of historic structures that may have potential as restoration/redevelopment projects. An inventory of structures and sites is currently being conducted.



2. Issues and Opportunities

A truly effective Comprehensive Plan will not only identify issues faced by the community as it continues to develop, but will also provide solutions in the form of recommended land use policies, development standards, and community-based projects and programs. Part 110-12-1-.03 of the DCA rules for development of the Community Assessment requires the City of Fairburn to identify potential issues and opportunities facing the City. The City has reviewed the list of typical issues and opportunities provided in the State Planning Recommendations and has selected those that are most applicable for the community. Additionally the City has given ample consideration to objectives and strategies identified in other plans including the LCI Study, the Southside Masterplan, the Fayette County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and the Main Street program goals. This initial step has yielded a list of potential issues and opportunities for consideration during the public involvement phase of the planning process.

The City has organized the issues and opportunities by the major functional elements as defined in the Comprehensive Plan Rules. For each element, the major trends are outlined, followed by specific issues that result from the trends identified. Lastly, a list of potential opportunities is included. It is the hope of the City of Fairburn that the list will be further researched and refined as more and more Stakeholders participate in the process.

2.1 Population Change

Major Trend: Population growth had exploded in the past five years, and is likely to continue to grow rapidly for the next five to ten years.

Issue: The ethnic diversity of the community will increase.

Issue: The proportion of the population that is over 45 years of age will increase.

Issue: There is a need for vocational and technical education/job training to help residents of Fairburn develop marketable skills.

2.1.1 Opportunities:

- Schools and public services should adapt to a wider array of language and cultural patterns.
- The City and local civic and community organizations should provide education and events tailored to a wider array of language and cultural patterns (i.e. – festivals, workshops, educational materials).
- Encourage the development of housing communities and services focused on older residents.
- Work with local technical colleges to develop a satellite campus in Fairburn.

2.2 Economic Development

Major Trend: Fairburn's DHD has not achieved its full potential as a focal point for the community.

Issue: Small, neighborhood-based businesses and mixed-use development are needed to vitalize the DHD.

Issue: Pedestrian traffic needs to be encouraged in the DHD during the day as well as after work hours.

Issue: Commercial development in the DHD is perceived as risky.

Issue: There is no marketing strategy to appeal to developers and potential residents of the DHD.

Issue: Fairburn needs to be more proactive on redevelopment projects in the DHD.

Issue: Adequate parking is not available in the DHD.

Major Trend: There is disinvestment in key areas, which contributes to neighborhood decline and a reduced quality of life.

Issue: Redevelopment process can be prohibitive or perceived as difficult.

Issue: Fairburn should provide resources and incentives for parties interested in redevelopment.

Issue: Stability in existing neighborhoods needs to be encouraged.

Major Trend: Available activities/point of interest are not sufficient to meet the needs of Fairburn residents.

Issue: There are no services/activities to cater to residents after hours. Examples would include restaurants, ice cream parlors, bookshops, café's, etc.

Issue: Commercial uses/businesses must appeal to the demographics present in Fairburn.

Issue: There is no City community center.

Issue: There is no regional activity center that caters to residents in Fairburn as well as in the surrounding areas.

2.2.1 Opportunities:

- The City should strive to make the DHD a vital, unique and exciting place to live and visit.
- Provide better signage to identify the DHD to visitors and residents, include historic markers where appropriate.
- Encourage the establishment of businesses in the DHD that will provide after hour activities to get people downtown after work (i.e. restaurants, bookstores, cafes, etc).
- Self-guided walking/bike tours in the historic downtown can be developed to encourage pedestrian traffic in the DHD.
- Encourage the restoration of historic structures in the DHD to provide additional residential and commercial spaces.
- Encourage redevelopment and infill development in identified areas.
- Ensure redevelopment/infill process for development that is not prohibitive or perceived as difficult.
- Streamline the approval process for new developments and redevelopments that are consistent with the desired character of the given area.
- Promote stability in neighborhoods by providing education and tools to encourage home ownership.
- Develop a formal Economic Development Strategic Plan with meaningful Stakeholder input. The plan should include the following:
 - An evaluation of the local market to ensure that any new downtown and neighborhood commercial development matches the available demographics.
 - Develop recruitment and retention strategy to attract and support small neighborhood-based businesses in the DHD and neighborhood commercial areas.
 - Establish economic incentives to encourage redevelopment, infill, and revitalization in the DHD.
 - Seek the participation of local business owners and potential investors to ensure that the plan addresses their concerns.
 - Include the development of a long-term infrastructure plan that guides, directs, and supports appropriate development.
 - Establish an Economic Development organization to provide continuing support and oversee implementation of the plan.
- Develop economic development programs that:
 - Use appropriate business recruitment, i.e. niche marketing, downtown revitalization.
 - Identify, acquire, assemble and/or stabilize property for redevelopment.
 - Use incentives to encourage targeted types of businesses including those that could be accommodated immediately.
 - Support DHD revitalization, chamber-based promotion and tourism development
 - Encourage infill development and grayfield redevelopment.

2.3 Natural & Cultural Resources

Major Trend: Development has the potential to impact ecological integrity, historic integrity, and cultural significance of community resources.

Issue: There is no inventory of significant historic structures that should be targeted for restoration during redevelopment.

Issue: Continued support for the downtown historic preservation effort is needed.

Issue: Development entities, public officials, and citizens could be more aware of community resources and the need to conserve/protect those resources.

Issue: There could be more coordination with other local and regional governments, the State, non-profits, etc. to develop a regional plan for resource protection.

Issue: Fairburn needs additional greenspace and passive recreational areas.

Issue: Adequate linkages are needed between greenspace, parks, cultural or historic interest points, local trail systems, state designated bike routes, and existing trails in neighboring communities.

Issue: Land development activities are increasing stormwater runoff, which can affect water quality, increases demand on the existing stormwater infrastructure, and create flooding problems.

2.3.1 Opportunities:

- Completed an inventory of historic structures and used to prioritize revitalization projects.
- Work with historic preservation groups to obtain additional funding and assistance with revitalizations projects.
- Expand the historic district overlay to include design standards and preservation requirements to protect identified historic structures (commercial and residential).
- Develop a Historic Preservation organization to oversee protection and restoration efforts.
- Develop a greenspace plan.
- Require new smart-growth developments to set aside a required minimum amount of greenspace.
- Provide education about resource conservation and protection that includes the public, local elected officials, developers, economic developers, etc.
- Continue to create linkages between greenspace, parks, cultural or historic interest points, local trail systems, state designated bike routes, and existing trails in neighboring communities.
- Continue to implement SWMP in compliance with the City's Phase I MS4 NPDES permit.

- Begin to masterplan the City by drainage basin, on a prioritized basis, to guide new development and plan the City's Capital Improvement/Replacement program.
- Continue to utilize revenue from the City's stormwater utility to fund the SWMP, masterplanning, and capital programs.

2.4 Facilities and Services

Major Trend: New development has an impact on existing facilities and services.

Issue: The capacity of existing community facilities and utilities should be evaluated and considered during future landuse planning.

Major Trend: More public spaces available to all residents are needed for City-sponsored activities.

Issue: There is no community center for residents to gather, attend classes, or other public activities.

Major Trend: The public school system cannot accommodate the growing population.

Issue: South Fulton County schools have had to use mobile classrooms to accommodate the growing number of school age children.

Issue: Classrooms are overcrowded and the teacher to pupil ratio is increasing accordingly.

Issue: An increase in the percentage of school age children in Fairburn will exacerbate this issue.

2.4.1 Opportunities:

- Consider the future costs of providing services at current growth rates for the same types of development patterns.
- Protect existing infrastructure by encouraging infill, redevelopment, and compact development.
- Provide publicly accessible greenspace/openspace in new development and redevelopment.
- Develop a community center for public use.
- Assess the capacity of existing and future planned services and facilities, and utilize this information when permitting new development.
- Implement Inflow & Infiltration and Water Conservation programs to open up existing wastewater capacity.
- Begin planning for additional wastewater capacity.
- Work with the Fulton County School Board to plan for future school development to accommodate the growing population.

2.5 Housing

Major Trend: The current trend is focused on single-family suburban housing and this may not provide a suitable mix of housing options for all income levels, lifestyles, and stages of life.

Issue: Fairburn needs varied housing options available to meet residents' needs at all stages of life.

Issue: There is a need to encourage infill and re-development for creation of future housing.

Issue: There is little protection for existing stable neighborhoods. DHD revitalization is necessary to ensure stability of existing neighborhoods.

2.5.1 Opportunities:

- Encourage development of housing that meets the needs of a wider range of incomes and ages.
- Identify areas suitable for infill development and develop design standards for infill housing in identified areas.
- Provide incentives for infill development.
- Identify areas where mixed-use development may be appropriate and amend regulations to allow mixes of residential and appropriate neighborhood commercial uses.
- Provide for continued development of affordable housing.
- Regulate to better protect stable residential areas by encouraging appropriate infill development and prohibiting intensive commercial and industrial land uses.
- Encourage homeownership through readily available homebuyer education programs.
- Allow for medium to high-density and multi-family residential development in appropriate locations near to DHD or regional commercial areas.

2.6 Land Use

Major Trend: There is a need for small pockets of neighborhood commercial development to serve suburban areas.

Issue: Residents must travel long distances to run simple errands.

Issue: Alternative travel is discouraged because there is no destination close enough to walk/bike.

Issue: There are existing vacant and/or deteriorated commercial structures that are not being adequately redeveloped.

Issue: Land use patterns and zoning should encourage the development of neighborhood commercial nodes.

Issue: Commercial development must be appropriate for the surrounding land uses, i.e. intensive commercial uses are not appropriate for neighborhood commercial nodes.

Major Trend: Fairburn's development patterns need to promote safe and pedestrian-friendly environments.

Issue: Suburban development patterns encourage dependence on automobiles.

Issue: Public spaces and commercial/mixed-use areas need more attention and presence from people at all hours of the day and night.

Issue: Sidewalk development and streetscapes are needed to make walking safer and more attractive.

Major Trend: Development in Fairburn must be compatible with the City's vision as well as residents' and property owners' rights.

Issue: Fairburn will find a way to guide new development to meet the goals of this plan and provide associated benefits without infringing on private property rights.

Issue: Fairburn needs to seek a method to encourage more dense development in areas where it is appropriate, while also encouraging less development in areas that should be preserved.

2.6.1 Opportunities:

- Encourage revitalization of existing neighborhood commercial structures and creation of future neighborhood commercial districts.
- Require connectivity between roadways within new residential development and between developments.
- Require sidewalks and multi-use paths within new development/redevelopment and connect to existing bikeways and trails and nearby uses.
- Encourage streetscape development to make walking safer and more attractive.
- Provide incentives for conservation and new urbanist designs.
- Create expedited approval processes and other incentives for infill development and quality community growth projects.
- Develop mix-used neighborhood zoning or overlay districts that allow for neighborhood commercial and upstairs residential/downstairs commercial in appropriate areas.

2.7 Transportation

Major Trend: The existing transportation network needs to provide a useful network of roadways, connectivity, and alternative uses.

Issue: Fairburn has few alternatives to using a car for mobility, which causes traffic congestion.

Issue: The community needs more sidewalks and bike trails and those that exist are not well-linked.

Issue: Housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are not within easy walking distance of one another in the community.

Issue: New and expanded roads in the community cause an increase in driving and congestion.

Issue: Public education is needed on existing transit and alternative transportation networks.

Major Trend: Commute time is increasing as more and more residents rely on automotive transport, which increases congestion.

Issue: Fairburn is not connected to MARTA rail, either through a local station, or express transportation to a local station.

2.7.1 Opportunities:

- Provide connectivity to MARTA, either through a local station, or express transportation to a local station.
- Encourage alternative forms of transportation through public transit, bikeways, attractive pedestrian routes, etc. Ensure connectivity between existing facilities.
- The City should implement streetscape improvements to create pedestrian/bicycle friendly corridors.
- Require connectivity between roadways within new development and between developments.
- Provide sufficient parking in the DHD.

2.8 Intergovernmental Coordination

Major Trend: Fairburn could benefit from more coordination with other local, county, and State governments/agencies, regional agencies, private agencies, the business community, and the public.

Issue: Coordination is necessary to maximize economic opportunities, manage public facilities, and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Issue: It would be beneficial to Fairburn to strengthen liaisons and foster communication and coordination among residents, the business community and other local entities.

Issue: The possibility of developing private partnerships should be more fully investigated.

2.8.1 Opportunities:

- Expand efforts or programs to build and strengthen relations with technical colleges/universities in the community and region.
- Fairburn should coordinate with other local governments in order to ensure maintenance of roads, delivery of utility services, efficient investment in schools and other public buildings.
- Consider land use and development patterns in adjacent areas when making land use/zoning decisions.
- Investigate potential of partnership with CSX, Landmark School, etc.
- Work with Fulton County and appropriate local governments for transportation planning.

3. Assessment of Quality Community Objectives

The following assessment was conducted to address the Quality Community Objectives (QCO), adopted by the Board of the DCA to highlight the development patterns and policies that will help local governments protect their unique cultural, natural and historic resources as their communities continue to grow. The assessment was modeled on the QCO Assessment tool created by the Office of Planning and Quality Growth. A status report is included below to illustrate the City's strengths and needs as they related to local zoning, ordinances, and policies. In most cases, the City has already begun to address the QCO, and will continue to work towards fully achieving the quality growth goals set forth by the DCA.

3.1 Traditional Neighborhoods

"Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity."

The City of Fairburn encourages preservation of existing and development of new traditional neighborhoods. A planned development (PD) zoning district as well as three separate residential districts have been established to facilitate the masterplanning of neo-traditional and conservation oriented developments. Additionally, the City has taken steps to ensure that the pedestrian environment is protected and improved through preservation and planting of trees, development of a system of connected trails and sidewalks, and the addition of other streetscape and traffic calming improvements. The City intends to continue to review, update, and implement regulations and ordinances to encourage these traditional neighborhood characteristics.



Strengths:

- The City has a zoning code that doesn't separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.
- The City has a zoning code that allows neo-traditional development and does not necessarily require a long variance process.
- The City has a street tree ordinance that requires tree protection and replanting during development.
- The City operates a maintenance program to keep public areas safe and clean and to

make the pedestrian environment more inviting so that walking is a viable option.

- There is mixed-use development that allows for some errands to be made on foot.
- In many neighborhoods children can walk or bike to schools located in close proximity to their homes.

Needs

- The tree ordinance should be reviewed to ensure it is adequately protective.
- Streetscaping improvements and better sidewalk networks are required to make the pedestrian environment more attractive.

3.2 Infill Development

“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.”

Fairburn has already identified areas in the DHD that are in need of appropriately designed infill development. Infill development would help to create the additional density needed to vitalize the downtown area. The Economic Development Authority is developing an inventory of historic sites and buildings available for restoration or redevelopment in the DHD.



Strengths

- Fairburn allows small lot development (5000 SF or less) and nodal commercial development in the DHD and other appropriate areas.

Needs

- A citywide and DHD inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment/infill development is needed.
- Fairburn should develop an inventory of commercial grayfields and work to promote grayfield redevelopment.

3.3 Sense of Place

“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.”

The City of Fairburn's DHD is a unique and highly recognizable feature of the surrounding community. To expand upon the draw and potential of the historic downtown, the City has been actively pursuing revitalization of the DHD through the efforts of the Development Authority (DA). The DA has begun a comprehensive inventory of historic structures in the DHD and will identify those structures that are available for restoration/redevelopment. These programs and this Comprehensive Planning effort will continue to focus on the DHD and its role in creating a sense of place for residents of Fairburn.



Strengths

- Historic structures such as the train depot and the historic row of shops are distinguishing features of Fairburn's DHD.
- The DA is conducting an inventory of the historic areas and resources in the community.
- The City has developed standards to regulate the aesthetics of development in some highly visible areas.
- The City has adopted an ordinance to regulate size and types of signage.
- The City has zoning categories that are protective of remaining farmland.

Needs

- The City needs to review and update architectural standards for the DHD to ensure that they are adequately protective of the historic character of the area.
- The City should also review standards set for other highly visible areas to ensure that the aesthetics of new development match the character of the area.

There are no significant agricultural areas in Fairburn, so the City has no need to develop protective regulations.

3.4 Transportation Alternatives

“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.”

A large percentage of the City workforce commutes to work in the Atlanta metropolitan area, and a large percentage of those commuters are driving alone. This is partially due to the lack of access to transit that is convenient and faster than automotive travel. Additionally, the City recognizes the importance of providing alternative transportation options through a system of regionally connected trails and sidewalks that provide linkages between different uses.

Encouraging the use of alternate transportation will lessen dependence on automobiles, relieve existing congestion, and accommodate future growth in the region. The City will work to make the pedestrian environment more attractive and to create destinations within walking/biking distance of residential neighborhoods.

Strengths

- There are public transportation options in Fairburn including a bus connection to the MARTA rail.
- The City encourages new development to connect with existing development through a street network where appropriate, not a single entry/exit.
- There is an existing network of sidewalks and a plan to continue the development of the sidewalk network that will allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.
- The City requires that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks where possible.
- The City allows commercial and retail development to share parking lots wherever possible.



Needs

- Better connectivity to MARTA is needed through express buss service or an in town rail station.
- A plan for a system of bikeways and multi-use trails is needed.

3.5 Regional Identity

“Each region should promote and preserve a regional identity, or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.”

The City of Fairburn is part of the metropolitan Atlanta area, and is intricately bound to other communities in the metropolitan area by their common history, economic base, and cultural activities. Like many cities in the region, Fairburn has a historic downtown that acts as a focal point for the community.

Strengths

- Fairburn’s community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.
- The City contributes to and draws from the region as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainments, and education.

Needs

- The City does not currently but has plans to participate in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.
- The City should promote tourism based on the unique characteristic of the community and region.

3.6 Heritage Preservation

"The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character."

The City of Fairburn recognizes the importance of its historic features in defining the local character and drawing people to the DHD. Therefore, the City will establish architectural standards for the DHD and create an Architectural Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the architectural standards set for historic restoration and new development in the DHD.

Strengths

- The City has a designated historic district.

Needs

- The City should establish an active historic preservation commission.
- The City has made it a priority to develop standards to ensure that new development complements the existing historic character.

3.7 Open Space Preservation

"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. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation."



The City of Fairburn has a limited amount of openspace preserved for City parks and passive recreation. In an effort to create more permanently preserved tracts of openspace, the City is encouraging new development to set aside openspace. The eventual goal is to provide a system of linked greenspace and openspace that will be an amenity not only for those people living in new developments, but for the community as a whole.

Strengths

- The City is actively preserving greenspace as set-asides in new development.
- There is a dedicated nature preserve just south of the City limits.
- The City has adopted a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that protects open space in perpetuity.

Needs

- The City should develop and actively implement a Greenspace Plan.

3.8 Environmental Protection

“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.”

Because environmental conservation is vital to the quality of life in Fairburn, the City has made identification and protection of natural resources a priority within the community. The highly evolved Stormwater Management Program funded through a stormwater utility fee and a number of natural resources protection ordinances will ensure the ecological integrity of natural resources within the community for years to come.

Strengths

- The City has developed a natural resources inventory and will work to steer development away from sensitive areas.
- The City has identified defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.
- The City has adopted and enforces all necessary Part V Environmental Planning Criteria.
- The City has a tree preservation ordinance that protects existing trees and required new development to replant trees.
- The City is requiring stormwater best management practices, as defined in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, for all new development.
- The City has adopted land-use measures that will protect natural resources in the community.

Needs

- The City should consult the natural resources inventory when making land use and zoning decisions.
- The City should review and update the tree ordinance to ensure the protection and replanting of native, shade-bearing trees.

3.9 Growth Preparedness

“Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.”

The City of Fairburn has made a great effort accurately assessing the need for new infrastructure and economic development programs to support the growing community. A Capital Improvement Program has been developed and funded to provide protection and service for existing and new development.

Strengths

- Population projections have been developed for the City for the next 20 years, and those projections will be considered when making infrastructure decisions.
- The City has developed and is implementing a Capital Improvement Program.
- The City has designated areas within the community for new development, and is supporting the development of masterplans to ensure that new development is compatible with the City’s vision and priorities.

Needs

- Other regional agencies still utilize population projections established by the US Census, which do not reflect recent growth trends.

3.10 Appropriate Businesses

“The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, 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 of Fairburn has established a DA, which will focus attention on the recruitment of businesses appropriate for the City’s demographics, infrastructure, and long-term vision. This group is beginning the process of developing a formal strategy outlining recommended business recruitment policies and programs.

Strengths

- The City currently has a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple the economy.

Needs

- The Fairburn DA must consider the community's strengths, assets, and weaknesses and create a business development strategy to address them.
- Although the City does not have a large manufacturing center, it should consider the recruitment of sustainable products manufacturing businesses where appropriate.

3.11 Employment Options

"A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce."

The City has a diverse range of jobs including professional, managerial, service, retail, government, and skilled and unskilled labor. The City intends to increase the availability of office jobs available to residents through the development of an office park near City Lake. There is also support available from regional economic development organizations for small, neighborhood businesses.

Strengths

- Jobs are available for skilled and unskilled labor, professionals and managers.

Needs

- The City DA should develop an entrepreneur support program as part of the Economic Development Strategy.

3.12 Housing Choices

"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 (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs."

The City of Fairburn has a variety of housing options as well as a range of housing prices. The City is working to increase residential density in proximity to the downtown area as part of the overall DHD revitalization effort. The City has identified several areas appropriate for infill development in traditional neighborhood areas near to the



downtown, and has developed ordinances that allow for neo-traditional development. Additionally, the City has designated mixed-use neighborhoods within and adjacent to the DHD to provide a live/work environment where practical. Such mixed-use neighborhoods will allow residents the opportunity to address daily needs without a lot of automotive travel. The City of Fairburn has also supported the construction of homes for lower-income families by Habitat for Humanity.

Strengths

- Accessory units like garage apartments and mother-in-law suites are allowed in appropriate areas.
- People who work in Fairburn can afford to live there, too.
- The City has housing for each income level.
- New residential development is encouraged to follow the pattern of the original town, continuing street design and recommending smaller setbacks.
- There is vacant and developable land available for multi-family housing, and such development is allowed in Fairburn.
- The City supports community development corporations building housing for lower-income households.
- There are housing programs that focus on households with special needs.
- Fairburn allows small houses to build on small lots (less than 5,000 SF) in appropriate areas.

Needs

- The City should provide more options available for loft living, downtown living, or new-traditional development through restoration of historic structures and infill development.

3.13 Educational Opportunities

“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.”

Due to their location within the Atlanta metropolitan area, residents in Fairburn have access to all sorts of training programs ranging from universities to technical training colleges. Specifically, the Georgia Military College has a campus located close to Fairburn in Union City.

Strengths

- Work force training is available to residents of Fairburn.
- There are higher educational opportunities in the Fairburn area.
- There are job opportunities open to college graduates near to Fairburn in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Needs

- The City should investigate the possibility of locating a satellite campus for a technical college in Fairburn. This will make technical training more readily available to the residents of Fairburn and will attract people to support nearby commercial development.
- The City should work to provide more jobs for college graduates within the City to improve the live/work ratio.

3.14 Local Self Determination

“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 Fairburn has taken a proactive role in involving its citizenry in the decision making process. The City operates a cable access channel, publishes a newsletter, and maintains a website that allows interested citizens the opportunity to learn about the development process and other government operations.

Strengths

- The City has a process in place to make it simple for the public to stay informed on land use and zoning decisions and new development.
- The City has a public awareness element in the comprehensive planning process.
- The City has clearly understandable guidelines for new development.
- The City has developed a guidebook that illustrates the type of new development desired in the community.
- The City has established and utilizes a budget for annual training of staff.

Needs

- The City has reviewed the development regulations and/or Zoning Code recently and has established that the ordinances will require amendment to achieve the QCO goals.
- The City should develop a guidebook to illustrate desired types of development for different areas within the City.

3.15 Regional Cooperation

“Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.”

The City of Fairburn enjoys a good working relationship with its neighboring cities. Such relationships are necessary for regional planning and delivery of certain services.

Strengths

- The City plans jointly with neighboring cities when applicable.
- The City is satisfied with the recently approved Service Delivery Strategy and will continue to participate in any future updates.
- The City cooperates with other local governments to provide or share services including sanitary sewer, water, schools, fire services, etc.

4. Data Assessment Summary

The following section summarizes the major findings of the Data Assessment performed in accordance with DCA requirements. For a full discussion of the Data Assessment, please see the Technical Addendum to this document.

4.1 Population

Population growth in Fairburn has accelerated in recent years and is a driving factor behind many of the issues and policies outlined within this document. Since 1990, Fairburn's population has increased at an even more accelerated rate than the County's and State's, presenting a myriad of issues for Fairburn's environment, City services, infrastructure and resulting quality of life. Southern Fulton County, which has largely been overlooked as the rest of Fulton County grew, is fast becoming a focal point for new development. The Table below compares Fairburn, Union City and Palmetto with Fulton County to illustrate the comparably fast rate of growth in the southern part of the County.

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	2005	Chg '80 to '90	Chg '90-'00	Chg '00 to '05
Fairburn	3,466	4,013	5,464	10,310	15.80%	36.20%	88.69%
Palmetto	2,086	2,612	3,400	3,729	25.22%	30.17%	9.7%
Union City	4,780	8,375	11,621	13,331	75.21%	38.76%	14.7%
Fulton County	589,904	648,951	816,006	872,532	10.00%	25.70%	6.9%

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau, City of Fairburn

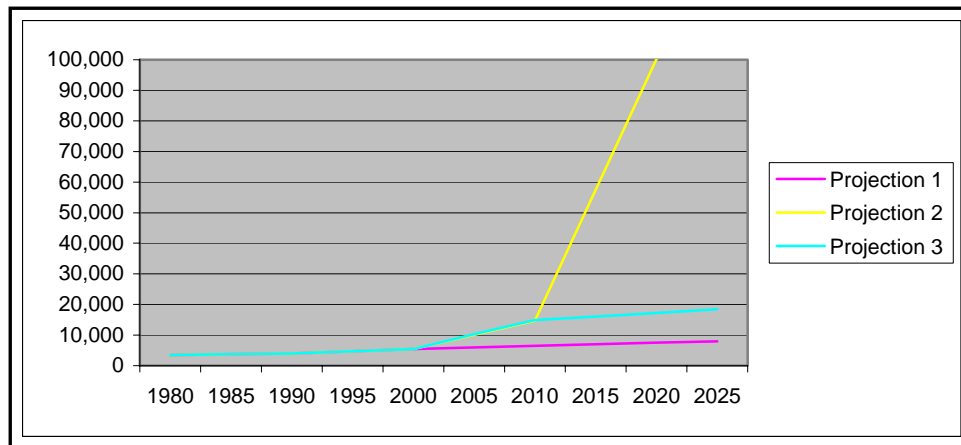
The population projection below presents the current established and future projected populations. In this projection, the accelerated pace of growth is expected to continue for the next five to ten years, adding approximately 6,000 residents by 2015, the mid-point of the 20-year planning period. This represents an amount that exceeds a quadrupling of the 1995 population in only 15 years. The projection is based on the 2005 population estimate that was derived from the City's certificates of occupancy and average household size as established by the DCA.

Fairburn City: Population Projection 3										
Time Span	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	3,466	3,740	4,013	4,739	5,464	10,310	14,950	16,034	17,192	18,439

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau,

Despite the current surge in development, the rate of growth is expected to decrease to 45% from 2005 to 2010, and then leveling off to a healthier growth rate of 15% in the following decades due to the decreased availability of developable land and new land use regulations. This growth rate would mirror the growth rate in Fairburn between 1980 and 1990.

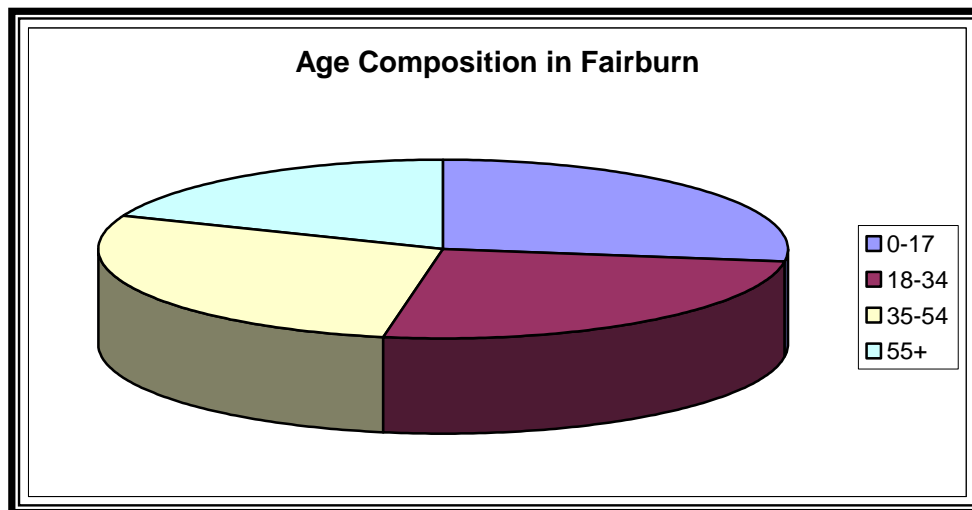
The chart below details three population projections. Projection 1 is a graphic representation of the DCA's current population projections based on the 2000 Census Data. This projection is already inaccurate based on the number of certificates of occupancy in Fairburn in 2005. Projection 2 utilizes the DCA's projection tool to correct future population projections based on the rate of growth between 2000 and 2005. Although this projection is improbable to say the least, it is a good illustration of just how rapid the population increase has been over the last five years. Projection 3 is based on the continued increase in the rate of growth followed by a leveling off predicted by the City based on current land use and annexation policies.



Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.1.1 Age Distribution

With the drastic increase in total population, trends in population composition will be intensified. The chart below shows a breakdown of age composition that examines the total percentage of children, young adults, adults, and seniors. It is nearly a quarter split between all four of these age groups. This trend indicates that approximately half of the population is either young adults who are starting out and are more likely to not have children or senior adults whose children are likely to have left home. In both cases these segments of the



Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

population are likely to prefer more varied housing options other than single-family detached homes.

The population by age projection shows increases in the following age groups: 5-13, 35-44, 45-54, and 65+. In 1980, only 43% of the population was 35 years or older; however, by 2025, the population is predicted to be split 50/50 with half of the population being 35 or older. The one age group below 35 that also shows a continuing upward trend is the age group 5-13, which will increase the number of children the school system must accommodate.

4.1.2 Racial Distribution

Fairburn's racial composition has shifted dramatically from 1980 to 2000. In 1980, the white population comprised almost 80 percent of the total population, but by the end of the millennium, represented less than 45%. Fairburn's non-white races represented over 56 percent of the 2000 population. Most of the change related to racial composition is related to the percentages Caucasian versus African American people. Other racial groups only represent approximately 9% of the total population in 2000 and 13% of the total population by 2025. Included within the "other" racial group category is the Hispanic population, and the table below shows the dramatic increase projected for this racial group.

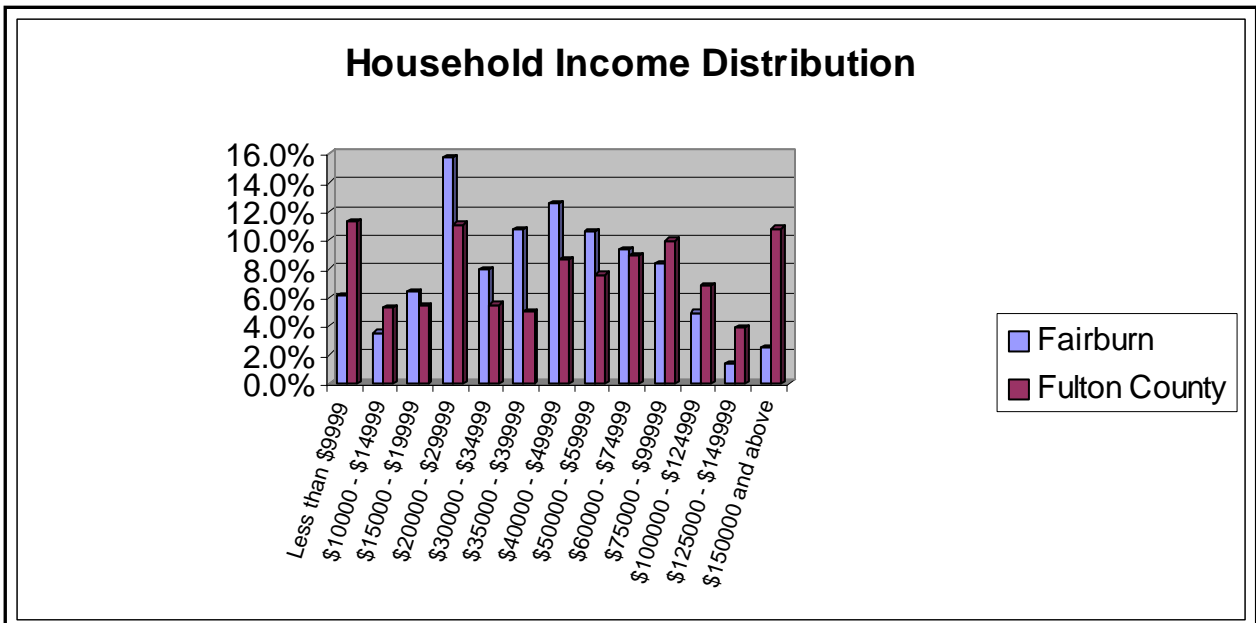
Fairburn City: Hispanic Ethnic Composition Projection										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Persons of Hispanic origin	38	84	129	420	711	1520	2424	2800	3189	3594

4.1.3 Educational Attainment

The significance of education in today's competitive workplace is difficult to exaggerate. Comparison with Fulton County indicates that while current dropout rates in Fairburn are only slightly higher than Fulton County, 22.4% and 16% respectively, the number of people with college and graduate degrees in Fulton County (41.5%) is significantly higher than the number in Fairburn (17.5%). This indicates that Fairburn's workforce is more focused on skilled labor and related industries, and additional focus on vocational training would be appropriate and desirable.

4.1.4 Household Income Distribution

The average household income in Fairburn is \$50,618 versus \$74,933 in Fulton County as a whole. The chart below illustrates the percentage of households in Fairburn and Fulton County that have an annual household income within a specified range. While Fulton County seems to have a randomly distributed percentage of households that earn anywhere from less than \$9,999 to over \$150,000, the distribution of household income in Fairburn peaks at approximately \$20,000 to \$49,999. When viewed this way, there appears to be less of a disparity between Fulton County and the City of Fairburn. Fairburn has a lower percentage of households earning less than \$15,000. The 2000 US Census reports that 12.4 % of households in Fulton County are below the poverty level, while only 6.1% of households in Fairburn are below the poverty level. The higher average household income in Fulton County is likely skewed by the percentage of households that earn well above \$150,000.

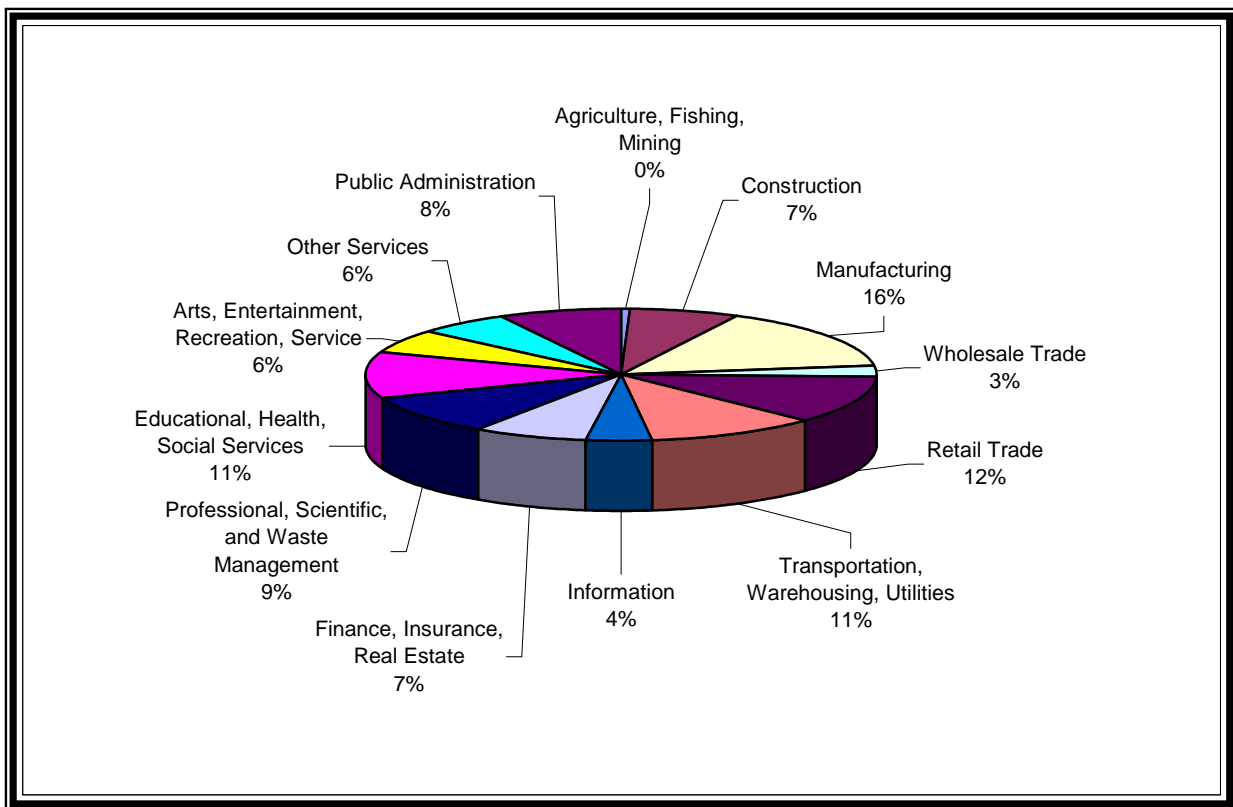


Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.2 Economic Development

4.2.1 Economic Base

The chart below demonstrates that economy in Fairburn (as determined through the 2000 Census) is not dependant on any particular industry type, and would therefore be less subject to downturns in a single industry. The major employers in Fairburn include: manufacturing, retail trade, transportation/warehousing/utilities, and health and educational services.



Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.2.2 Labor Force

Employment Status

Unemployment rates are computed by comparing the number of total adults in the workforce with the number of civilian adults that are unemployed. Unemployment rates in Fairburn compare very favorably with those of Fulton County and the State of Georgia. Fairburn data also indicated a downward trend in the unemployment rate, whereas Fulton County shows an increase.

Unemployment Rate						
	Fairburn		Fulton County		Georgia	
Category	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Workforce	3,024	3,815	344,956	431,553	3,351,513	4,129,666
Total Unemployed	111	118	23,619	38,245	188,102	223,052
Unemployment Rate	3.7%	3.1%	6.8%	8.9%	5.6%	5.4%

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

Personal Income by Type

Personal Income by Type is an indicator of how residents of Fairburn are supporting themselves. The information provided in the Technical Addendum illustrates that there is a growing percentage of people in Fairburn who rely on social security and retirement for their income. This is consistent with the age distribution within the community, specifically a growing percentage of older residents. Additionally, there are a growing number of self-employed residents, which is a positive trend if Fairburn wishes to encourage the development of neighborhood commercial businesses.

Place of Employment

The table below shows the percentage of the total workforce in Fairburn that works within or outside of the City limits. The percentage of people who live and work in Fairburn is decreasing at a significant rate, as this percentage was already low in 1990. This trend is disturbing for two reasons. The increase in the percentage of people working outside the City combined with the drastic increase in total population will lead to a greater number of people who will need to commute greater distances to their place of employment. This could potentially lead to greater numbers of automobiles and associated congestion and traffic issues. The City must work to provide more options for transit and better access to that transit to accommodate residents that are commuting to work outside the City. Additionally, the decreasing number of residents that work in Fairburn City limits reflects the need for a healthy local economy. Even though a large percentage of the population is employed by industries that could be located in Fairburn such as retail, manufacturing, health and education, residents still need to travel outside of the City to find work. Fairburn should

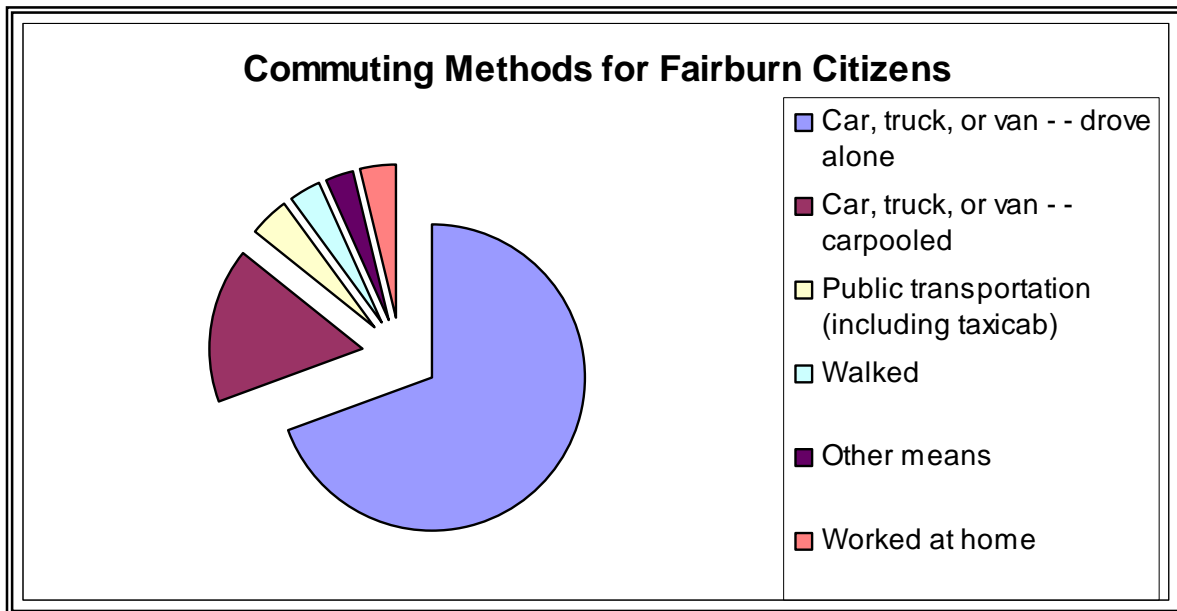
focus efforts on economic development that will provide these opportunities to residents in the City.

Place of Employment						
	Fairburn		Palmetto		Union City	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Worked in place of residence	18.20%	13.30%	14.80%	10%	9.90%	11.10%
Worked outside of place of residence	81.80%	86.70%	85.20%	90%	90.10%	88.90%

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

Commuting Patterns

The largest percentage of commuters in Fairburn drive an automobile alone, and the next largest percentage of commuters carpool. Far less people rely on public transit in Fairburn, most likely due to the lack of a direct connection with MARTA and the relatively long bus connection to the nearest MARTA station. Providing such a connection could drastically increase the number of residents who would rely on transit thereby decreasing the number of people who drove a vehicle alone.



Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.2.3 Economic Resources

Aside from the Fairburn Development Authority, Fairburn leverages the support of a number of agencies to attract new business to the City. The primary resources for recruiting large commercial concerns are local utility organizations including Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), Georgia Power and Coweta-Fayette EMC. The South Fulton Chamber of

Commerce, South Fulton Parkway Alliance and South Fulton Community Improvement District provide additional venues for facilitating business development activities in the City. As Fairburn's residential development has accelerated, the construction sector has grown significantly. This trend is expected to continue in the future, but at a more controlled rate, so as to prevent excess demand for City infrastructure and services. Fairburn's largest employers are Porex Corporation and S.C. Johnson Distribution. Both Owens Corning and CSX Corporations have large facilities that the City is seeking to annex into its limits.

4.3 Housing

4.3.1 Types of Housing

The current housing trend in Fairburn is towards single-family detached and attached units. There is also a slight increase in the number of multifamily units in medium to large apartment complexes. The projected future housing stock presents a problem for two reasons. The first reason is that as the population continues to increase, the City does not have the space to accommodate a vast majority of those people in single-family detached homes. Secondly, this trend could lead to suburban sprawl, and additional reliance on automobiles.

Another trend that is important to consider in conjunction with the trend in housing types is the dramatic increase in the number of dwelling units over the past five years. There was a 26.4 % increase in the number of households from 1990 to 2000, and a 93.9% increase in only five years from 2000 to 2005 (based on the number of COs). The significant increase in total number of units compounded with the increasing percentages of single-family units results in a great deal of new single-family development.

4.3.2 Occupancy

Figures from the 2000 Census related to housing occupancy are included in the table below. In Fairburn, the trend appears to be away from vacancy and renter-occupied units towards owner-occupied housing units. This is a very positive development as it is directly related to the stability of residential neighborhoods. Home ownership leads to increased personal and financial investment in homes and which creates a vested interest in the appearance and condition of their homes. This leads to more attractive, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods, which in turn increases safety. Fairburn should continue to encourage this trend, especially in traditional neighborhood infill areas.

Housing Occupancy Characteristics						
	Fairburn		Fulton County		Georgia	
Category	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
TOTAL Housing Units	1,593	1,969	297,503	348,632	2,638,418	3,281,737
% Vacant	6.7%	6.2%	13.6%	7.9%	10.3%	8.4%
% Owner Occupied	58.2%	60.0%	42.8%	47.9%	58.2%	61.8%
% Renter Occupied	35.1%	33.8%	43.6%	44.2%	31.5%	29.8%

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.3.3 Housing Cost

The median property value in Fairburn in 2000 was \$93,200, which compares favorable with the average household income of approximately \$50,000/per year. The median property value is less than twice the average household income, which means that the median property in Fairburn is affordable for the average household income. Affordable housing is defined as annual owner costs less than or equal to 30% of annual gross income. Therefore, the average household with an annual gross income of \$50,000 is estimated to be able to afford a home worth \$145,000 without having total costs exceed 30% of their annual household income.

Additionally, the average household income increased by 45.8% while the median property value only increased by 23.8%, which indicates that homes were more affordable for Fairburn residents in 2000 than they were in 1990. Rent also appears to be more affordable for residents than it has been in the past since median rent values also increased less than the average household income.

4.4 Public Utilities

The City of Fairburn, located in south Fulton County, Georgia, comprises approximately 7.3 square miles. Through Fairburn Utilities, the primary infrastructure facilities for which the City is responsible includes Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Sewer, Electricity, Cable Television, and Internet service.

The following tables outline the primary water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer utility infrastructure facilities of the City.

Water System Facilities Inventory			
Water Main (1-1/2" – 16")	Fire Hydrants With Valves	Master Meters	Water Valves
64 miles	517	23	754

Sanitary Sewer Facilities Inventory		
Sanitary Sewer Line (4" – 24")	Manholes	Pump Stations
65 miles	1,383	3

Storm Sewer Facilities Inventory							
Storm Sewer Line (8" – 84")	Catch Basins	Drop Inlets	Flared End Sections	Head Walls	Hooded Grate Inlets	Junction Boxes	Outlet Structures
25 miles	1,383	76	126	302	30	164	44

4.5 Natural Resources

The City of Fairburn is approximately 6,294 acres and contains roughly 28 miles of streams and waterways. The City has 368 acres of designated greenspace and plans to set aside more land in the future. Three water supply watersheds intersect the City to the south and east totaling 2,623 acres. As a result, 42% of the City falls within a water supply watershed. Approximately 23% of the City is within a groundwater recharge zone. These zones account for 1,432 acres dispersed throughout the City. Approximately 220 acres of land in Fairburn are within the 100-year flood zone.

City of Fairburn

Natural Resources

