

CITY OF AUSTELL



Draft Community Assessment 2006

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to lay the foundation for the revisions to the City of Austell Comprehensive Plan, that will create an agenda to manage growth over the next twenty years. Specifically, the report outlines a set of issues and opportunities related to each of the Comprehensive Plan's elements that are based on an analysis of the existing conditions and historical trends. The report is designed to meet the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and adopted on May 1, 2005.

Another purpose of this report is to meet the intent of the "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on May 1, 2005.

Scope

At the direction of the Technical Advisory Committee the Community Assessment is written as an executive summary style document to provide an overview of the major findings so that citizens, elected officials, stakeholders and other interested parties can quickly review essential elements and findings of the request. Detailed information on existing conditions, historical trends, and future forecasts are included in the Technical Addendum at the end of this document. The report contains four (4) key components addressing the findings in the Addendum including; a list of issues and opportunities resulting from an analysis of the available data; an analysis of existing development patterns; and evaluation of the community's existing policies/development patterns for consistency with DCA's Quality Community Objectives; and an analysis of supportive data and information.

The Assessment will be submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (GA DCR) for review and approval and will form the basis for developing the Community Agenda. The Community Agenda represents the community's vision, goals, policies, key issues and opportunities that the community chooses to address, and an action plan highlighting the necessary tools for implementing the plan.

As per DCA Standards, this Community Assessment is primarily the product of a review of City policies, plans, regulations, and development patterns conducted by the City's Technical Advisory Committee and its consultant. The study area for this Assessment is the incorporated area of the City of Austell, an area of approximately 3500 acres.

The Community Assessment document is the first step in preparation of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This document, and two companion documents, the previously referenced Technical Addendum and the Community Participation Program. These documents will be submitted to the GA DCA for approval followed by a thirty (30) day comment and review period by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and GA DCA.

Upon approval of all documents, work on the Community Agenda steps will begin. The Community Agenda is the most important part of the plan; it includes the community's vision; key issues and opportunities to address during the planning period; and an implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. Please refer to the Community Participation Program for an outline of public participation activities/opportunities and schedule for subsequent steps in the process.

2.0. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Population

Issues

1. Steady growth of thirty-six percent (36%) or 1.8 percent per year from 1980 to 2000. This is far below the rapid growth by Cobb County as a whole which grew 104 percent, the Atlanta Region which grew 81 percent and the statewide average of 50 percent during the same period. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) estimates that Austell's population growth will average 7 percent between 2000 and 2005 (1.4 percent annually) and continue that trend during the planning period unless there is significant economic development beyond the historic norm.
2. Increasing percentage of aging population affecting healthcare and senior citizens services.
3. Decreasing household size.
4. Significant shift in the racial and ethnic mix of population.

Population

Opportunities

1. Public services will need to adopt a broader range of language and cultural patterns.
2. The aging population will change the needs for senior programs/activities, housing choices, healthcare requirements, recreation programs/activities, services industry mix in community and continuing education services.
3. The City and the civic and business organizations will need to provide community events/ education opportunities addressing a wider selection of language and cultural patterns.

Economic Development

Issues

1. Decline in manufacturing base while experiencing a significant increase in service related employment which typically pays less.
2. Increase in construction employment. Potential for instability during changing economic conditions.
3. Gradual and slight increase in workforce leaving community to work. Indicative of a trend toward high wage jobs in surrounding communities
4. Growth of tax base. Promote diverse tax base among residential, industrial, commercial sectors
5. Focus economic recruitment on business/industry matching skill sets of the local labor force
6. Develop and promote available local sites that are attractive to targeted industries and businesses.
7. Limited existing property for industrial sites.
8. Minimal growth in industrial base.

Economic Development

Opportunities

1. Downtown revitalization. Utilizing the plan developed from the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Program make Austell's Central Business District (CBD) an active town center to serve as a catalyst for development and/or redevelopment.
2. Leverage the historic downtown to bring infill and new commercial, office and residential developments.
3. Utilize vacant downtown parcels which are nearly vacant for future mixed commercial and residential use (public-private partnership).
4. Promote historic based tourism focusing particularly on the railroad heritage which was the reason for the City's original development.
5. Place greater focus on greyfield development.

6. Develop a recruitment and retention strategy to attract and support neighborhood-based businesses in the CBD and neighborhood commercial areas.
7. Identify, acquire, assemble, and stabilize properties for redevelopment.
8. Identify suitable property for annexation for economic development purposes.

Housing Issues

1. There are existing residential neighborhoods in need of revitalization. There are pockets of substandard housing.
2. There needs to be a balance in new housing units. Develop policy/regulations to encourage a diversity of housing types that meet the needs of a wide range of incomes and ages.
3. There are over 400 filed and pending residential building permits with the City.
4. There is a relatively small inventory of property within the City for future residential development.
5. Limited (just emerging) traditional neighborhood design developments.
6. There is a need to support and encourage infill and mixed-use development for future housing.

Housing Opportunities

1. Continue to update ordinances, codes and regulations to protect against insufficient and poor quality in residential development. Emphasize higher quality housing product.
2. Continue to update ordinances, codes and regulations to encourage traditional neighborhood developments.
3. Revitalize declining residential neighborhoods.
4. Preserve small-town charm and community identity through housing stock.
5. Identify areas suitable for in-fill development and adopt appropriate design standards for same.
6. Identify areas suitable for mixed use development and develop appropriate regulations for same.
7. Apply upgraded quality and development standards to pending permit demand for residential units.
8. Identify suitable property for annexation for residential development.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues

1. Preservation of open space. Continue plans to preserve land within developments and through conservation programs.
2. Continued support for downtown CBD historic preservation.
3. Linkage between existing greenspace, parks, cultural/historic interest points, trail systems, bike routes and similar facilities in adjoining communities and the region.
4. Protect and preserve existing natural resources (watershed areas; wetlands, flood plains and scenic views/sites).
5. Increase opportunities for environmental education.
6. Develop Historic District Ordinance.
7. Efforts are on-going to control erosion control and sedimentation but storm water runoff, which can affect water quality, increases the demand on storm water facilities.
8. Additional parks, recreation (passive and active) and greenspace are needed to meet future needs.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Opportunities

1. Increase use of conservation subdivisions.
2. Develop plan for 120 acres of property donated to City by Norfolk Southern for appropriate greenspace, open space, and recreation utilization.

3. Participation in plan development for the Clarkdale Community set aside from Norfolk Southern to mitigate the multi-modal transportation center.
4. Emphasize protecting historic resources.
5. Create greater awareness in the community for the importance of natural resources production.
6. Continue to create linkages between greenspace, parks, cultural/historic points of interest, local trail systems and existing trail systems in the county/region.

Community Facilities and Services

Issues

1. Absence of community or multi-use center in City.
2. Additional programs/facilities to meet needs of aging population (senior citizens).
3. Expand public safety (police, fire, EMS) services as needed with future growth.
4. Expand public works services as needed with future growth.
5. Implement County-wide transportation program.
6. Completion of sewer outfall line (Veterans Highway/Causey Road area).
7. Continue to ensure availability of water and wastewater capacity from Cobb Water System and Cobb/Marietta Water Authority.
8. Additional fiscal resources will be necessary to meet service and infrastructure needs for the future.
9. The capacity of existing and planned community facilities/utilities should be considered and evaluated during future land use planning.
10. Continue to modernize/upgrade departmental equipment and training resources for departmental personnel.

Community Facilities and Services

Opportunities

1. Develop a community multi-use center.
2. Coordination of resources with Cobb County, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority and Atlanta Regional Commission to implement County-wide transportation program.
3. Continue close coordination with Cobb Water System and Cobb-Marietta Water and Sewer Authority to ensure long-term availability of water and wastewater capacity.
4. Optimize the life of existing infrastructure by encouraging infill, redevelopment and compact growth (Smart Growth, TND).
5. Continue proactive program of maintenance, repair and replacement of the community's Infrastructure.
6. Continue to invest in modern, more efficient operating equipment and in employee training/education.
7. Continue to coordinate closely with Cobb County for county provided services within the City (public schools, public health, public libraries, senior services, etc.).
8. Pursue cooperative agreements with public/private organizations for adaptive reuse and joint use of community facilities.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues

1. County-wide and regional transportation planning.
2. Intergovernmental agreements to meet anticipated service demands.
3. Land use conflicts as a result of annexation.
4. Reciprocal mutual aid agreements for public safety services.
5. Delineation of service areas for public safety and utility services.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Opportunities

1. Continue active participation in Cobb County Transportation Plan. Continue coordination with the Georgia Department of Transportation, Atlanta Regional Commission and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.
2. Develop a City annexation policy.
3. Continue to coordinate public safety communications systems, first response responsibility, and service areas with Cobb and Douglas County Public Safety agencies.
4. Continue to coordinate water and wastewater service districts with Cobb and Douglas County.
5. Increase efforts to strengthen relationships with area cities through the South Cobb Municipal Association.

Transportation

Issues

1. Cobb County and the six municipalities, including Austell, understand the reliance on automobile oriented travel contributes to the region's air and water pollution problems.
2. Development trends appear to be facilitating the shifting of businesses away from town centers and activity centers towards strip retail developments along arterial road networks.
3. County and regional public transportation systems need to be expanded so they are both cost efficient and accessible to a larger residential population.
4. Greater connectivity and operational effectiveness needs to be achieved by mixing travel modes with respect to pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular transportation options.
5. Improvements related to the relationship between the location of existing transportation facilities and public transit service with the growing populations that are in need of transportation options to access local area jobs, services, goods, health care, and recreation opportunities are needed.
6. Increased regional traffic and peak period congestion are reducing the level of service on many of the County's, including Austell's, arterial roadways and the neighboring Interstate system.
7. Where compatible inter-parcel connections between individual development should be encouraged in new development scenarios.
8. Many major arterial corridors are experiencing increased peak period vehicular congestion, unappealing commercial signage clutter, and a heightened level of sprawling development patterns.
9. Effective transit options to County residents, including Austell, that evaluate cost-effective transportation technologies addressing the importance of peak period mobility options to job centers throughout the metro region are needed.

Transportation

Opportunities

1. Support opportunities and transportation alternatives which reduce the need of the private automobile to get to places, thereby reducing traffic congestion.
2. Maintain an effective balance between auto-dependent transportation initiatives and alternative modes of transportation (e.g. bicycle, pedestrian, transit, carpooling, etc).
3. Continue efforts to make areas of the County, including Austell, more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly based on the current roadway system.
4. Encourage County-wide development of additional sidewalks and bicycle trails be added to eventually establish an interconnected alternative transportation system.
5. Existing pedestrian facilities should incorporate urban design elements that would make them more attractive facilities, especially in activity centers, commercial nodes, villages, and hamlets.
6. Development patterns that blend uses incorporating housing, jobs, and recreation should be promoted for mixed-use opportunities in the future.
7. Roadways should be designed/constructed in a "Context Sensitive Design" manner. Connective Sensitive Design is a program developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to ensure

that new transportation facilities are designed, developed and implemented in a manner that provides positive results for connectivity, capacity and the aesthetics of the local area.

Land Use

Issues

1. Assistance to areas in need of revitalization. Create opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment in these blighted areas.
2. Limited availability of attractive large tracts of land for future development in the City.
3. Land use conflicts resulting from annexation.
4. Past development practices do not promote the conservation of resources.
5. The aging of the population will require land use and housing type changes.
6. Existing land use regulations limit the do not encourage mixed-use development.
7. Visual clutter along major corridors.
8. The presence of brownfields and greyfields.
9. Public spaces such as greenspace, parks, open spaces, gathering places, community centers, etc. need to be increased.
10. Predominant development patterns encourage dependence on automobiles and are not pedestrian- friendly.

Land Use

Opportunities

1. Preserve openspace/greenspace in the community.
 2. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development.
 3. Develop mix-used neighborhood zoning or overlay districts in appropriate areas.
 4. Adopt a City annexation policy to define when annexation is in the best interest of the City.
- Identify acreage for industrial and residential uses.
5. Encourage the redevelopment of blighted areas.
 6. Eliminate and redevelop brownfields and greyfields.
 7. Eliminate unattractive visual clutter along major corridors.
 8. Require sidewalks and multi-use pathways in new developments/redevelopments. Require connectivity to existing walkways.
 9. Protect natural resources within development. Encourage conservation subdivisions.
 10. Encourage streetscape development for safer walking and enhanced aesthetics.

3.0. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

This analysis is conducted to gain an understanding of the geographic setting within which Austell is growing and to explore those issues and opportunities that relate directly to the physical environment. The analysis examines three aspects of the existing development patterns in Austell: Existing Land Use, Areas Requiring Special Attention, and Character Areas.

Existing Land Use

The existing land use information and map is used to illustrate the issues and opportunities in relation to the existing development patterns. Analyzing the existing land use map in conjunction with the historical trend data can help to illustrate how the development patterns were formed. The land use map is based on a compilation of tax mapping data in comparison with aerial photography, and windshield surveys to determine what the predominant land use is for each parcel of land throughout the City. Table 1 shows the amount of land categorized by use.

Table 1. Existing Land Use, City of Austell

Existing Land Use Category Standard Category	Acres	% of City Total
Residential (Single Family)	1911	51.0
Agriculture/Forestry	0	0
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	113	3.1
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	41	1.1
Undeveloped/Vacant	408	10.9
Public/Institutional	189	5.1
Industrial	852	22.7
Commercial	233	6.1
Total	3747	100.0

The following table presents definitions of each of the land use categories.

Table 2. Land Use Definitions, City of Austell

Existing Land Use Category	Definition
Residential	All residential uses
Agricultural/Forestry	Land used for agricultural purposes such as cropland or livestock production and all land used or potentially used for commercial timber production.
Commercial	Commercial and office uses; including strip malls, big-box retail, auto-related businesses, restaurants, convenience stores, and office buildings.
Industrial	Industrial uses. Manufacturing, distribution, processing, warehousing.
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	Active and passive recreation areas, parks, and protected lands. Includes land owned by a land trust or public agency and preserved for future development as maintained as open space.
Public/Institutional	Community facilities (except utilities), general government, and institutional uses. Examples include schools, public safety stations, city halls, courthouses, jails, health facilities, churches, and libraries.
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	Land used for transportation, communication or utility facilities; such as airports, cell towers, power stations, sewer plants, water towers, and water treatment facilities.
Undeveloped/Vacant	No active use on the property, includes property improved for real estate sale (cleared and graded but no structure) and property with vacant or abandoned structures with which no employment or residence can be associated. Property with recently constructed structures will fall under one of the under construction categories or the use for which it is intended.

The predominant land use by far in Austell is for residential purposes at 51.0%. While highly visible along major corridors commercial uses represent less than 10% of the total City acreage. Industrial uses have increased significantly and represent more than 22% of the total acreage. Austell is

urbanized to a greater extent than may be realized with only approximately 11.0% undeveloped/vacant. Conservation/greenspace has remained static at just over 1.0%

While Austell is surrounded by significant existing development in both Cobb and Douglas Counties there are still vacant tracts remaining. The limited availability of vacant acreage within the existing City limits and the City's proximity to intense development, which is steadily absorbing available tracts, emphasizes the importance of redevelopment and an annexation policy/plan to the City's future.

Areas Requiring Special Attention

As growth continues there are inevitably going to be impacts to the existing natural and cultural environment as well as the community facilities, services and infrastructure that are required to service existing and future development. This section outlines areas where growth should be avoided, where growth is likely to occur, and where growth could potentially be stimulated. Maps reflecting these areas are included as appendices to this section.

DCA has identified the following seven (7) 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 uses and other relative data and has determined that the following areas within the City require special attention.

Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources

Attached maps included as appendices to this section illustrate the presence of a variety of environmentally sensitive areas located throughout the City. The environmental areas include wetlands, floodplains, streams, steep slopes, and the water supply watershed of Sweetwater Creek.

The Israel Causey-Maxham house located on Maxham Road just southeast of Austell's city limit, is on the National Register of Historic Sites as a prime example of 1840 pioneer settlement. The house has been carefully preserved and descendants of the Maxham family who bought the house 1887 continue to live there.

The Cobb County historic resource inventory has identified the Perkerson family house located on Perkerson Road at the Sweetwater Creek Bridge as a potential National Register nomination. The house is all that remains of a thriving mill originally built in the 1830's. A larger mill was built after the original mill was burned during the Civil War and operated until 1972. The mill was demolished in 1979.

Additional historic homes and churches are located in Austell in the Love Street district. Approximately 20 homes in this area are considered historically significant and may qualify for NR nomination. Also, the Central Business District along Main Street at the railroad includes a number of historic buildings.

Areas Where Rapid Development or Change of Land Uses is Likely to Occur

The City of Austell is projected to see a moderate but steady population growth over the course of the planning period. However, as noted there is relatively limited undeveloped/vacant property available within the current city limits. There are some 400 plus filed and pending building permits for residential units awaiting completion of 6,028 linear feet of sewer line in the Causey Road and Veterans Memorial Highway area. The installation of the new sewer line will be able to adequately handle up to 1.4 million gallons per day (mgd). Absent annexations and/or economic growth beyond projections this is the area most likely to see rapid growth.

Areas Where the Pace of Development has or May Outpace the Availability of Community Facilities and Services, Including Transportation

Given growth projections and development patterns the only area where growth has or may outpace the availability of community facilities in the near term is the above referenced Causey Road and Veterans Memorial Highway area. That need is being addressed by the sewer outfall installation project now underway.

Redevelopment Areas

The primary area in need of redevelopment in the City of Austell is the downtown Central Business District (CBD) and the immediately surrounding areas. There is a streetscape improvement project underway in portions of the area and a Livable Centers Initiative planning project for a phased redevelopment project which will lead to a more comprehensive revitalization of the area.

In addition, according to the Cobb County Comprehensive Plan there are a few corridors in the County that could significantly benefit from new development. These are primarily areas that were adjacent to the first commercial corridors in the County and have non-residential building near the end of their development cycle. Among those corridors designated for consideration for new investment which either traverse or are proximate to Austell are Veterans Memorial Highway and Austell Road. Areas of Austell Road contain some sections of older multi-family and single-family dwellings declining in condition.

Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

There are several such sites proximate to the City along Austell Road according to the Cobb County Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the downtown CBD and surrounding environs there are a number of structures (some historic) that may have potential as restoration/redevelopment sites. An inventory of structures and sites is to be conducted as part of this comprehensive plan process.

Infill Development Opportunities

While there are several dispersed neighborhoods suitable for some infill development the most significant concentrated area for this sort of development is the downtown CBD and surrounding areas.

Areas of Disinvestment and/or Underutilized Areas

The majority of disinvestment and underutilization in Austell is concentrated in the downtown CBD and surrounding areas. There are opportunities for commercial, professional services, institutional facilities and residential investment and redevelopment in this area. In terms of producing the greatest overall benefit to the City this area should be a focus of investment and redevelopment/development activities. The City of Austell has placed a very high priority on the redevelopment of this area.

Preliminary Character Areas

Character areas are defined as geographic areas of a community that share unique characteristics or have the potential to evolve as a unique area. Character areas can be used to illustrate existing patterns of development and also as guidelines for desired development patterns based on a community vision. A Character Area Map is attached as an appendix. The following character areas are based on existing conditions and the information contained in the section on Areas Requiring Special Attention. While reviewing the Character Area Map and descriptions it is important to keep in mind that the designated character may not necessarily be applicable for every property parcel, but is instead the overall defining character of the area delineated.

As the public participation process evolves and a community vision emerges the character areas will be revisited to make the map compatible with the vision, goals and objectives of the community.

Character Area Descriptions Within the City of Austell and Recommended Development Strategies

Conservation Areas/Greenspace – Areas of protected open space including wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, conservation areas, recreation/parks and other environmentally sensitive areas. **Recommended Development Strategies** – Limit any new development. Promote these areas as passive-use tourist and recreation destinations. Conservation/greenspace areas should be connected as possible. Limit impervious surfaces.

Suburban Area Residential – Residential subdivisions developed since the 1960's characterized by automobile orientation, light to moderate degree of building separation, low pedestrian orientation, predominately residential with scattered public and/or civic facilities/properties and disconnected streets often curvilinear .

Recommended Development Strategies –

For existing or built-out areas – Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles. This includes creating 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

accessory housing units, or new well-designed, small-scale infill multi-family residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.

For Developing Areas – Promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivision. New development should be a master-planned with mixed-uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision. There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development. There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivision, and multiple site access points. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture. Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes. Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

For Areas in Decline – Focus on strategic public investments to improve conditions, appropriate infill development on scattered vacant sites, and encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. Public assistance and investment should be focused where needed to ensure that the neighborhood becomes more stable, mixed-income community with a larger percentage of owner-occupied housing. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing.

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; building 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. Encourage stability within existing neighborhoods. Implement streetscape improvements to encourage continued high pedestrian orientation. Provide pedestrian/bike connectivity from traditional neighborhoods to other community amenities including greenspace, downtown, recreation and other areas of congregation.

Historic Downtown – The traditional historic Central Business District (CBD) and immediately surrounding commercial, residential, institutional or mixed-use areas. **Recommended Development Strategies** – Capitalize on the wealth of public open space in downtown comprised of City, County and railroad property. Create a “town green” with an amphitheater. Initiate public-private partnerships for large scale redevelopment projects utilizing available block-size parcels of land for future mixed-uses. Create a shuttle route between downtown and the historic Threadmill development with stops at major locations in downtown. Develop a new commuter parking lot and add new on-street parking. Provide pedestrian/bicycle connectivity from downtown to the Threadmill property, the historic Clarksdale Mill Village, surrounding residential neighborhoods, public schools, and parks. Continue downtown streetscape improvements to include new sidewalks, light fixtures, landscaping and treed median for Bankhead Highway. Downtown should include relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to service a regional market area. Residential development should reinforce the traditional town center through a combination of rehabilitation of

historic buildings in the downtown area and compatible new infill development targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums.

Corridors

In-Town Corridor – Westside Road (SR6/Business 6); Clay Road; Perkerson Mill Road. Developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a street or highway in town that is already or likely to experience uncontrolled strip development if growth is not properly managed. **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 can immediately be improved through streetscaping enhancements (street lights, landscaping, etc.). In the longer term, enact design guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street, to ensure that the corridors become more attractive as properties develop or redevelop. Corridors leading to town centers or downtown, in particular, should be attractive, where development is carefully controlled (or redevelopment tools are used) to maintain or improve appearances. Reduce the role and impact of automobiles in the community by employing attractive traffic-calming measures along major roadways and exploring alternative solutions to parking congestion. Provide basic access for pedestrians and bicycles, 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.

Major Highway Corridor – Thornton Road/C. H. James Parkway (U.S.278/SR6); Veterans Memorial Highway (U.S.78/U.S.278/SR8 & SR5); Austell Road (SR5); Austell-Powder Springs Road; Maxham Road. Developed or undeveloped land on both side 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. 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. Unacceptable uses: new billboards.

Light Industrial Area – Area used in low intensity manufacturing, wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics. **Recommended Development Strategies** – 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 of development.

Industrial Area – Land used in higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics are not contained on-site. **Recommended Development Strategies** – Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

Historic Area – Love Street District; Threadmill Complex. Historic district or area containing features, landmarks, civic or cultural uses of historic interest. Characteristics may vary based on size, location

and history of the community. **Recommended Development Strategies** – Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including Nation Register of Historic Places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs. Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area. Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area. Linkages to regional greenspace/trail system should be encouraged as well.

4.0. ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs)

The Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as defined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs help a community assess its development patterns with regard to preserving its unique character areas. The City of Austell has developed this assessment for consistency with these QCOs and upon the completion of the Community Agenda will reevaluate this consistency as it relates to planned development trends.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS	
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.	
Objective	Status
If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	Yes
Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional "By right" so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	No
We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	Yes, for certain specific development types
Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in summer.	Tree planting has been included along the CBD streetscape and city parks
We have a program to keep our public areas clean and safe.	Yes
Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	Yes
In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	Yes
Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	Yes
Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	Yes
Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community	Yes
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.	
Objective	Status
Our community has an inventory of vacant site and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	Yes
Our community is actively working to promote Brownfield development.	Yes
Our community is actively working to promote Greyfield development.	Yes
We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development.	Yes
Our community allows small lot development for some uses.	Yes
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.	
Objective	Status
If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he/she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	No (depending on where in the community he or she were dropped)

We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage and have taken steps to protect them.	Yes
We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	No
We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	Yes
If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.	N/A
Transportation Alternatives by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.	
Objective	Status
We have public transportation in our community	Yes
We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	Encouraged and promoted but not required
We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	Yes, but subject to improvement as to connectivity.
We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	Yes, as part of the City's Development Regulations.
We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	Yes
We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	No
We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	Yes
Regional Identity or regional sense of place should be promoted and preserved, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.	
Objective	Status
Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	Yes
Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	No
Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage.	No
Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	No
Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	Yes, through Chamber affiliations
Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, education.	Yes
RESOURCE CONSERVATION	
Heritage Preservation of the traditional character of the community should be maintained through the preserving and revitalizing of historic areas, 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.	
Objective	Status
We have designated historic districts in our community.	Yes
We have an active historic preservation commission.	Yes
We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure that happening.	Yes
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.	
Objective	Status
Our community has a greenspace plan.	No
Our community is actively preserving greenspace - either through direct purchase, or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	Yes
We have a local land conservation program, or, we work with state or national land conservation programs to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	Yes
We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	No
Environmental Protection of environmentally sensitive areas is necessary to protect 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.	

Objective	Status
Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	Yes
We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	Yes
We have identified our defining natural resources and have taken steps to protect them.	Yes
Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.	Yes
Our community has and actively enforces a tree preservation ordinance.	Yes
Our community has a tree-planting ordinance for new development.	For commercial/industrial
We are using storm water best management best practices for all new development.	Yes
We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community.	Yes
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
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 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.	
Objective	Status
We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	Yes
Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.	Often but not always
We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	Yes
We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth. These areas are based on the natural resources inventory of our community.	Yes
Appropriate 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.	
Objective	Status
Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses and has created a business development strategy based on them.	No
Our ED organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.	No
We recruit businesses that provide/create sustainable products.	No
We have a diverse job base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.	Yes
Employment Options: A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.	
Objective	Status
Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	No
Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	Yes
Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	Yes
Our community has jobs for professional/managerial labor.	Yes
Housing Choices in 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, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.	
Objective	Status
Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments mother-in-law units.	Yes
People who work in our community can afford to live here too.	Yes
Our community has enough housing for each income level.	No
We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and recommending smaller setbacks.	No
We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo-traditional" development.	No
We have vacant/developable land available for multi-family housing.	Yes, but limited
We allow multi-family housing to be developed in our community.	Yes, with development limitations
We support community development corporations building housing for lower income households.	No
We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	Yes
We allow small houses built on small lots in appropriate areas.	Yes, with conditions

Educational Opportunities and training should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to entrepreneurial ambitions.	
Objectives	Status
Our community provides work-force training options for citizens.	Yes (through Technical College)
Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	Yes
Our community has higher education opportunities or is close to a community that does.	Yes
Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	Limited in number and wages.
 GOVERNMENT RELATIONS 	
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.	
Objective	Status
We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community	No
We have processes in place that make it simple for the public to stay informed on land use and zoning decisions, and new development.	Yes, website and publications
We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	Yes
We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	Yes
We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.	No
We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently and are sure that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	No, will implement following planning process
We have a budget for annual training for planning commission members and staff, and we use it.	Yes
Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	Yes
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 transportation network.	
Objective	Status
We plan jointly with our cities and county for Comprehensive Planning purposes.	Yes
We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies.	Yes
We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services.	Yes

5.0. ANALYSIS OF SUPPORTIVE DATA AND INFORMATION

Compliance with Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria

The City of Austell has adopted the following ordinances as required to meet the Environmental Planning Criteria set forth by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources:

Section 200: River/Stream Corridor Protection District

Section 300: Water Supply Watershed Protection District

Section 400: Wetlands Protection District

Section 500: Groundwater Recharge Area Protection District

Compliance of Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy

Cobb County and each of its municipalities (including Austell) are coordinating services under an adopted Service Delivery Strategy, last updated in 2004 and approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The cooperation in meeting the stipulations as defined in the SDS has been very successful. Based

on the results of this comprehensive planning process, the local governments will address any necessary revisions to their service delivery strategy as mandated by GA DCA for consistency.

Supporting Analysis and Technical Addendum

Additional supporting analysis of data and information is included in the Technical Addendum so that the analysis narrative can appear with the data/information for purposes of context and ease of reference.