

Community Assessment Sugar Hill Comprehensive Plan

Submitted to:
**Georgia Department of
Community Affairs**

By:
City of Sugar Hill

October 18, 2007



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Community Assessment

Sugar Hill

Comprehensive Plan

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ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS

ARC	Atlanta Region Commission
ARSA	Areas Requiring Special Attention
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
LCI	Livable Communities Initiative
QCO	Quality Community Objectives
SR	State Route
SWMP	Stormwater Management Plan

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 to everyday decision making for use by the local government officials and other community leaders.

The Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 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 government's 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 participating in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. 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. The City of Sugar Hill plans to submit the complete Comprehensive Plan by September 30, 2008.

This document represents the Community Assessment for the City of Sugar Hill. 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 of the documents in September 2007 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.

- Section 1 addresses development patterns including current land use, proposed character areas, and areas requiring special attention;
- Section 2 identifies issues and opportunities as they relate to all of the traditional planning elements including, but not limited to, population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, and land use;
- Section 3 provides an analysis of the City's implementation status regarding the DCA's Quality Community Objectives; and
- Section 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 Sugar Hill is currently contending with several issues related to current and future development, growth readiness, and economic development as it relates to drawing and retaining appropriate businesses. The City is fully committed to the comprehensive planning process and is hopeful that this Comprehensive Plan will provide an outline for the following:

- Redevelopment of the City's downtown area.
- An adequate transportation network that alleviates traffic congestion.
- Appropriate planning, regulation and infrastructure readiness for new development and redevelopment.
- Creation of an economic development strategy that will support the development of commercial areas and improve design of new commercial developments.
- Preservation of the City's cultural and natural resources and enhancement of the quality of life for both existing and future residents of the City of Sugar Hill.

1. Analysis of Development Patterns

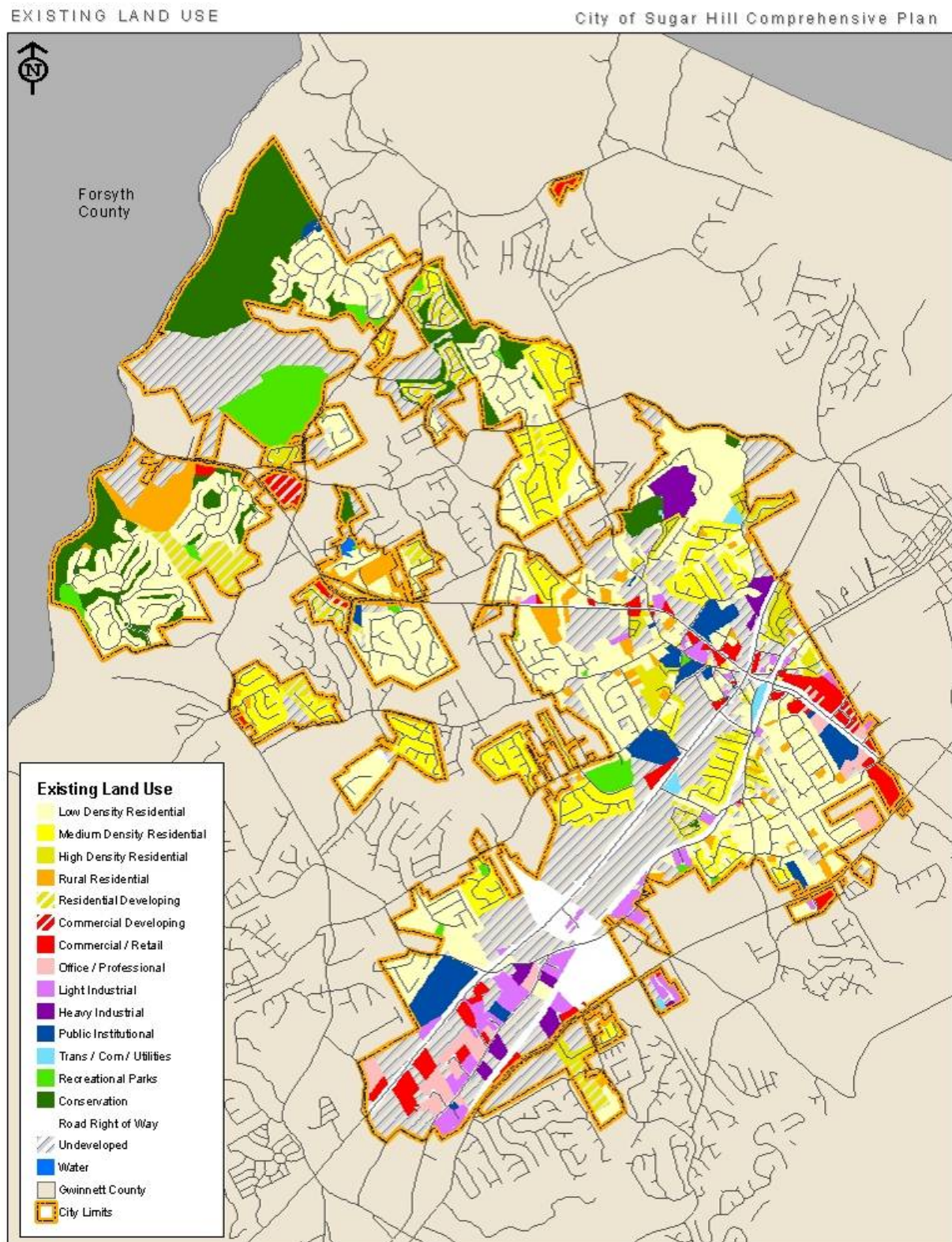
1.1. Existing Land Use

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 existing development patterns if the goals developed through this process are to be viable and achievable. In order to have an accurate record of the existing land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis, the City of Sugar Hill conducted a field survey of existing land use in April 2007. The Standard Land Use categories described in the new DCA Rules for Comprehensive Planning were used as the basis for the Sugar Hill's land use collection. The City opted to use additional categories, consistent with those used on the Gwinnett County Comprehensive Plan for this assessment. The survey was conducted with a field tablet equipped with both GPS and GIS 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 see Appendix A.

- Rural Residential. This category is used to describe residential lots greater than one acre.
- Low Density Residential. This category is used to describe residential areas that contain 1-3 units per acre (0.33-1 acre lots).
- Medium Density Residential. This category is used to describe residential areas that contain 3-8 units per acre (0.125-0.33 acre lots).
- High Density Residential. This category is used to describe residential areas that contain eight or more units per acre (lots sizes < 0.125 acres).
- Commercial/Retail. This category is used to describe service related commercial activities; including, but not limited to, uses that include bars, restaurants, shops, lodging, gas stations, grocery stores, etc.
- Light Industrial. This category describes low intensity land uses such as wholesale trade and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, traffic, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics.
- Heavy Industrial. This category describes higher intensity land uses such as manufacturing, assembly, and processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics may result.
- Office/Professional. This category is used to describe professional office space. Uses that fall into this category include law offices, doctors/dentists offices, realtors, etc.
- Recreation Parks. This category is used to describe areas of land specifically designed for active recreational use. Uses typically include parks, playgrounds, beaches, public swimming pools, etc.

- Conservation. This category is used to describe areas of land specifically designed for preservation and/or conservation. These areas may contain light use trails, but are not actively used by residents.
- Public Institutional. This category is used to describe certain federal, state, or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls, government building complexes, police and fire stations, public libraries, post offices, schools, etc. Examples of institutional uses include colleges, churches, hospitals, etc.
- Road Right-of-Way. This category is used to describe areas of undeveloped land used by public/private entities as a means of access to areas requiring routine maintenance or unopened roadways.
- Transportation/Communications/Utilities. This category is used to describe tracts of land dedicated for use by public utilities. Infrastructure for electricity, gas, and water services such as power plants, sewage treatment plants, etc. are included in this category.
- Undeveloped. This category is used to describe lots or tracts of land that are not currently developed for a specific use, but are likely to be developed in the future.

The land use survey also includes two additional categories: Residential – developing and Commercial – developing. These categories were used to define areas that were technically undeveloped when the land use survey was completed, but will be developed by the time the Comprehensive Plan is completed. The City opted to use these categories to anticipate updates to the existing land use map for the near future.

Figure 1. Existing Land Use Map

1.2. Community 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 Sugar Hill will be able to provide more specific guidance for future development through appropriate planning and implementation within each Character Area. The Character Areas map (Fig. 2) identifies 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 that the identified character may not be accurate for every single parcel, but is rather the overall defining character of the area as a whole. 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 Sugar Hill. Each Character Area is defined in the remainder of Section 1.2.

1.2.1 Commercial Infill Development

Declining, vacant or under-utilized areas identified for future commercial development will have a high potential for access by vehicular traffic and transit; on-site parking; and masterplanned development.

Desired Development Patterns:

- Redevelopment should be higher quality, more versatile and aesthetically appealing; therefore, more marketable to a broader range of prospective tenants.
- Populate the street front with new commercial structures. This can be accomplished in vacant commercial centers by utilizing a portion of oversized parking lots to create a shopping “square”.
- Upgrade the appearance of existing older buildings as well as new development with façade improvements, new architectural elements, or awnings.
- Reconfigure the parking lot and circulation routes for better automotive mobility.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycling amenities, including covered walkways, benches, lighting and bike racks.
- Add landscaping and other appearance enhancements such as street trees and landscaped medians in parking lots to provide shade and help reduce stormwater runoff.



1.2.2 Greenspace

Areas of protected greenspace are established for recreation, alternative transportation, or conservation purposes. These areas include ecological, cultural and recreational amenities.

Desired Development Patterns:

- Maintain property in as natural a state as possible.
- Link greenspaces into a useful 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.
- Utilize these areas as much as possible for the infiltration and natural cycling of stormwater runoff.



1.2.3 Industrial

Land uses in this area includes higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, or other nuisance characteristics could be present.

Desired Development Patterns:

- Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.
- New industrial development should be masterplanned.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure for future build-out.



1.2.4 Mixed Use Redevelopment

Declining, unattractive, vacant or under-utilized areas are identified for future mixed use development. These areas will be developed to include a mix of residential and neighborhood commercial uses.

Desired Development Patterns:

- Design residential development and commercial uses to compliment each other and create a live/work environment.
- Allow varied residential uses including upstairs residential/downstairs commercial.
- Masterplan projects to be very pedestrian-oriented, with walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at the edge of the streetscape with parking in the rear.
- Enhanced pedestrian-friendly environment through required streetscape improvements.



1.2.5 Neighborhood Commercial

This character area includes neighborhood-scale development with a concentration of activities such as restaurants, retail, service commercial, professional office, and appropriate public and openspace uses.

Desired Development Patterns:

- 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.
- Allowable uses should be compatible with neighborhood character and may include a mix of retail, services, and offices.



- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at the edge of the streetscape with parking at the side or in the rear, if possible.
- Enhanced pedestrian-friendly environment through required streetscape improvements.
- Provide pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Architectural standards should reflect the local neighborhood character.
- No franchise architecture should be permitted in these areas

1.2.6 Neighborhood Commercial Corridor

This area allows for a mix of commercial uses that are less intense than those in the regional commercial area. Uses in this area are smaller scale and provide a transition from the Regional Commercial Corridor as you approach Downtown Sugar Hill. Development should be consistent with the surrounding areas.



Desired Development Patterns:

- Development includes a mix of retail, services, offices, and other mid-scale commercial uses.
- Design standards should be consistent with the desired character of the area.
- There should be a smooth transition between higher intensity and lower intensity uses.
- Developments should include an appropriate level of pedestrian, transit, and/or bicycle orientation.

1.2.7 Office Park

These areas are designated for masterplanned office park development characterized by a high degree of access by vehicular traffic, and transit if applicable; on-site parking; and a mix of uses to serve workforce.

Desired Development Patterns:

- Develop as masterplanned office parks having adequate water, sewer, stormwater, openspace, and transportation infrastructure for all component uses at build-out.
- Develop design standards for office buildings and landscaping to foster long lasting architectural compatibility within the development.
- Incorporate signage and lighting guidelines to protect the visual integrity of development.
- Incorporate measures to mitigate impacts on the natural environment.
- Allow for upstairs residential/downstairs commercial to create a live/work environment.
- Encourage mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve office employees) to reduce need for automobile usage during the work day.
- Office park design should be very pedestrian-oriented with strong walkable connections between different uses within the development.



1.2.8 Regional Commercial Corridor

This character area includes a concentration of regionally marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, and higher-education facilities. These areas are characterized by a high degree of vehicular traffic and transit access and typically have a low degree of internal openspace and high floor-area-ratio.

Desired Development Patterns:

- 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.
- New commercial developments should be masterplanned to provide adequate water, sewer, stormwater, and transportation infrastructure, and openspace for all component uses at build-out.
 - High quality design standards for commercial centers and landscaping to foster long lasting architectural compatibility within the development.
 - Encourage landscaped medians to provide vehicular safety, aesthetics, and also pedestrian crossing refuge.
 - Provide paved shoulders or bike lanes 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 into and within developments.
 - Uncluttered signage and minimal presence of billboards.

1.2.9 Suburban

These areas are where suburban residential subdivision development is occurring or has already occurred. The City should encourage these areas to develop with high pedestrian orientation, connectivity, and neighborhood-appropriate uses.

Desired Development Standards:

- Promote a mix of housing types including traditional neighborhood development style residential subdivisions.
- Internal street connectivity should be encouraged.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character.
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming measures (i.e. narrower residential streets, and allows for bicycle and pedestrian facilities).
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to:
 - Retail/commercial services
 - Adjacent properties/subdivisions
 - Regional network of greenspace and sidewalks



- Promote the preservation of openspace in new residential subdivisions that will be accessible to residents of the community and serve as an amenity.
- Require new development to provide a connection to the existing sidewalk network.

1.2.10 Town Center District

The Town Center District marks the boundaries of the City's Livable Community Initiative (LCI) Plan and is the Heart of the City. It contributes to the City's sense of place and creates a vibrant activity center by concentrating uses, such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and openspace uses easily accessible by pedestrians.

Desired Development Standards:

- The Town Center District should include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, residential, and family entertainment activities.
- Residential development should reinforce the town center through locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels. The mixture of housing should meet the needs identified by the Market Assessment conducted for the LCI Plan.
- Each project in the Town Center District should be heavily pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at the edge of the streetscape with parking in the rear.
- Include direct connections to the greenspace, trail networks, and sidewalks.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other multi-use linkages to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.
- Implement the goals and recommendations of the LCI Plan including:
 - Create and implement a set of standards and overlay districts that protect and enhance existing land within the Town Center District as well as encouraging new development to fall within the design standards to create livable places.
 - Enhance the City's aesthetic infrastructure.



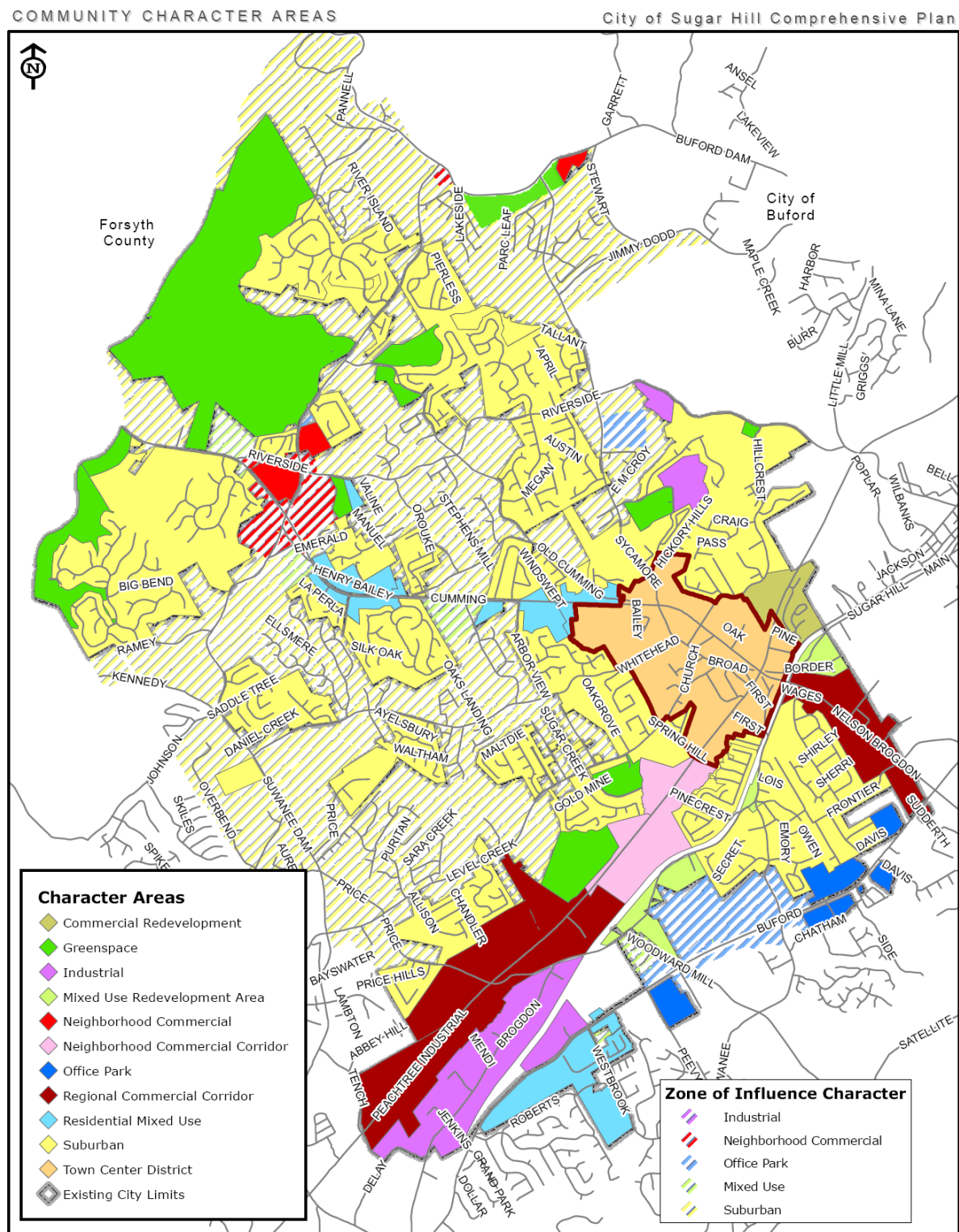
1.2.11 Residential Mixed Use

These residential areas contains a mix of neighborhood commercial uses.

Desired Development Standards:

- Commercial uses and architecture should be consistent with the residential character of the area.
- Commercial uses should be low-intensity retail, office, and service uses to serve neighborhood residents day-to-day needs.
- Street connectivity and trails should be encouraged to provide a link between residential areas and commercial uses.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment through streetscape improvements.



Figure 2. Character Map

1.3. Areas Requiring Special Attention

As a community in the growing Atlanta Metro Area, the City of Sugar Hill is faced with a unique set of circumstances. With an increasing demand for property and a decreasing amount of developable land, the City is faced with difficult decisions to make with regard to land use and natural resources. As a result, it is important to address and plan for the impacts that future development will have on the City. This section discusses the effects that anticipated growth, demand for property, and development pressures may have on various resources. The map of Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA) is included in Figure 3.

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

- Natural and 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 Sugar Hill require special attention.

1.3.1 Natural Resources

The City of Sugar Hill is made up of a unique collection of natural resources including numerous streams, lakes, and floodplains, as well as parks and conservation land. The proper management of these resources is important as the City faces anticipated population growth and development pressure. The map of ARSA illustrates these natural resources.

The 100-year floodplain has also been identified on the map of ARSA. Sugar Hill is in close proximity to the Chattahoochee River, but due to the topography of the area, the City does not have a significant amount of



land falling within the borders of the 100-year flood zone. However, as the City continues to grow, development in the floodplain should continue to be regulated to protect the welfare and property of the residents of Sugar Hill and areas downstream of the City.

The City of Sugar Hill contains roughly 500 acres of public and community parks. Many new residential developments have been designed to contain community parks, recreational facilities, and conservation land. As a result, an additional 300 acres of conservation land is located in new developments and in other areas throughout the City. Parks and conservation lands are displayed on the ARSA map.

1.3.2 Cultural Resources

The City of Sugar Hill does not have a record of historic and cultural resources, however there may be a few locations which should be considered (e.g. old churches and City Hall). There is no current inventory and in the past little has been done to address identification of significant cultural sites. A digital inventory will be a tremendous benefit to assist the City in identifying and protecting any important historical and/or cultural resources.

1.3.3 Areas Facing Rapid Development

The City of Sugar Hill is currently experiencing rapid residential and commercial development. The pace of development within the City has the potential to outpace the availability of community facilities and services in the absence of proper planning. The City needs to ensure that existing facilities, transportation routes and utilities are adequate to serve the rapidly increasing population.

1.3.4 Areas Facing Significant Development Pressure

These areas face significant pressure for development because of their location, site characteristics and availability of adequate infrastructure. Development in this area is inevitable and the City must ensure that appropriate regulations are in place to guide future development so that it is consistent with the character identified in this plan.

1.3.5 Redevelopment Areas

These areas, identified on the map in Figure 3, are poised for redevelopment due to changes in its accessibility and land value. State Route 20 (SR 20) and the Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridors have been identified as having significant opportunities for infill development and are also in need of standards for aesthetics or attractiveness for new development.

1.3.6 Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

There are no large abandoned structures or sites in need of special attention in the City. However, there are properties within the infill development area described below that could be better utilized, are in need of façade improvements, and/or have the potential for restoration.

1.3.7 Opportunities for Infill Development

The greatest potential for infill development is along the SR 20 and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridors. These areas currently consist of commercial development in the form of automotive service centers, retail establishments, and restaurants. The City will encourage compatible infill development that matches the character of the area.

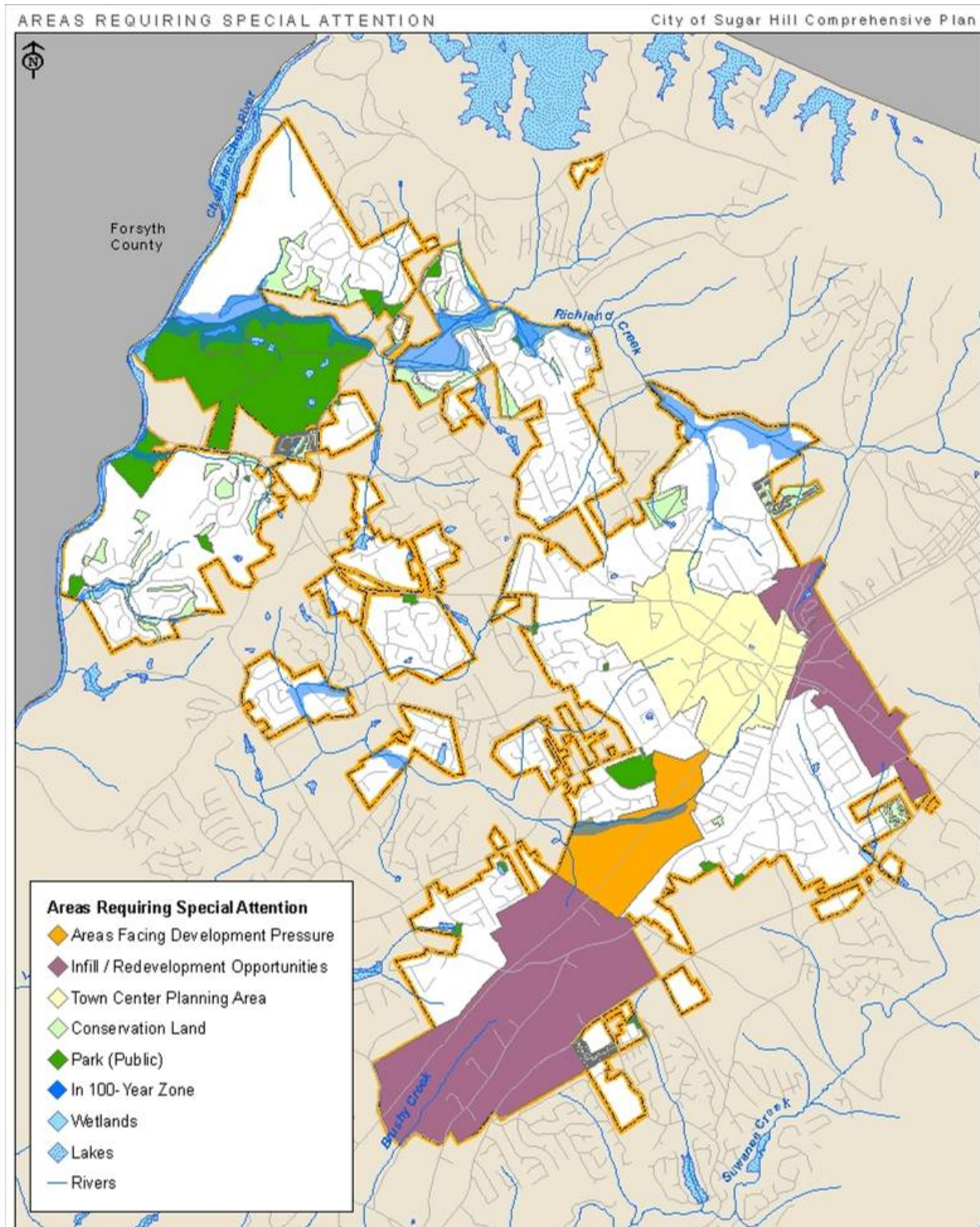


1.3.8 Areas of Significant Disinvestment

There are no areas of significant disinvestment present in the City.

1.3.9 Town Center Planning Area

The City of Sugar Hill has developed an LCI Plan for the Town Center planning area. The Plan contains goals, objectives and a short-term work program. The City will continue to work to implement this plan in the identified planning area.

Figure 3. Areas Requiring Special Attention Map

2. Issues & 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 Sugar Hill to identify potential issues and opportunities facing the City. Representatives of the City have worked together to identify issues and opportunities that are applicable to the City of Sugar Hill. Additionally, the City has given ample consideration to objectives and strategies identified in other plans including the Sugar Hill LCI Plan. 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, specific issues and related opportunities are presented. It is the hope of the City of Sugar Hill that the list will be further researched and refined as the Community Participation program begins and residents have the opportunity to participate in the process.

2.1. Population

Major Trend: There continues to be a significant amount of population growth in the City of Sugar Hill.

Issue:

- As the population continues to grow existing facilities and services may become inadequate.

Opportunities:

- Ensure public services facilities are adequate to provide for more residents.
- Control population growth vs. services through restriction of residential developments.
- Provide services and facilities to foster a family atmosphere.
- Ensure adequate recreational and educational facilities to serve young children and families.
- Encourage the location of a satellite campus or technical college to provide more educational and training opportunities.

2.2. *Economic Development*

Major Trend: There is a significant amount of commercial development taking place along major corridors in the City of Sugar Hill.

Issues:

- There is currently no established plan for commercial development on SR 20, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Buford Highway.
- Sugar Hill is a large residential City and there is a need for more retail and service commercial businesses to serve the residential population.

Opportunities:

- Need to develop a plan to attract and focus appropriate commercial development along major commercial corridors.
- Commercial redevelopment should be encouraged at/or near the intersections of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and SR 20, Suwanee Dam Road and SR 20, as well as Buford Highway and SR 20.
- Encourage small-scale, retail and service oriented commercial development near neighborhoods for ease of use and limited travel time.
- Create an economic development plan that addresses appropriate business recruitment and retention for major corridors as well as neighborhood commercial areas.
- Discourage strip commercial development on minor corridors.

2.3. *Natural & Cultural Resources*

Major Trend: Development is diminishing ecological health, historic integrity, and cultural significance of community resources.

Issues:

- Need to identify additional financial and staff resources to implement the stormwater management program (SWMP).
- Chattahoochee River runs adjacent to the City for approximately 2.5 miles, however the City does not take advantage of or promote it as a recreational and drinking water resource.
- There is no access provided to the Chattahoochee from SR 20.



Opportunities:

- Implement a SWMP in accordance with Phase I permit.
- Continue to identify and protect greenspace within the City.
- Incorporate greenspace/conservation land into new development design.
- Provide access to parking where SR 20 crosses the Chattahoochee River.
- Develop this parking area into an educational access point for the Chattahoochee River.

2.4. Facilities and Services

Major Trend: High growth has potentially introduced the need for additional facilities and services.

Issues:

- Development may be outpacing the City's services.
- The capacity of existing community facilities and utilities should be evaluated and considered during future land use planning.
- Continue to manage and foster exceptional recreation services, efficient sanitation service, and low cost gas utility.

Opportunities:

- Determine the existing and desired level of service for all City services and infrastructure.
- Provide publicly accessible greenspace/openspace in new development and redevelopment.
- Assess the capacity of existing and future planned services and facilities, and utilize this information when permitting new development.
- Ensure that there are adequate recreational, educational, and family oriented facilities that appeal to families.

2.5. Housing

Major Trend: Formerly robust housing market has left the City with abundant housing units that are either being built or will be built in the near future when the demand for new housing returns.

Issues:

- There is little need to provide additional housing.
- Some houses in older areas of the City could be better maintained.
- The City is satisfied with the current housing stock and price point distribution.



Opportunities:

- Identify residential areas that have older homes in need of better maintenance.
- Identify methods or programs to encourage better maintenance of housing.
- Encourage homeownership.
- Investigate the need for additional development and property maintenance standards for housing.
- Encourage reinvestment in traditional neighborhoods.

2.6. Land Use

Major Trend: There is a significant shortage of existing commercial uses and new commercial development in the City.

Issues:

- More commercial development is desired along major roads identified as commercial corridors concentrated at nodes at major intersections.
- The City wishes to maintain the current low-density residential character of the City while heavily encouraging new commercial development patterns.
- The City limits are not contiguous.

Opportunities:

- Maintain commercial corridors and promote commercial development that is desirable via zoning standards.
- Concentrate commercial uses within identified commercial character areas.
- Provide neighborhood commercial nodes for convenient use as well as reduced trips and travel times, in turn, reducing congestion.

- Masterplan development for commercial and industrial corridors along Buford Highway, SR 20, and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.
- Provide for appropriate connections between commercial and residential uses.
- Allow for ease of access through connection to the sidewalk network.
- Target areas along SR 20, around intersection of Suwanee Dam Road and SR 20 and Buford Highway for annexation of land suitable for commercial development or use.

2.7. Transportation

Major Trend: The existing level of service for the transportation network is poor and is limited as a useful network of roadways, connectivity, and alternative modes.

Issues:

- Sugar Hill is a “bedroom community” which creates a great deal of rush hour traffic and congestion.
- SR 20 is highly congested during peak travel hours.
- Currently, there is minimal opportunity for public transit.



Opportunities:

- Connect future greenspace, athletic complexes and public facilities (parks, schools, churches, City properties, and greenspace) with sidewalks/multi-use trails.
- Encourage the development of the cross county connector to terminus on Buford Highway.
- Continue connecting existing sidewalks for pedestrians.
- Develop a formal sidewalk/bikeway multiuse trail plan.
- Design and implement streetscape projects on arterial roads to improve aesthetics, promote pedestrian activity, and slow traffic.
- Connecting sidewalks and crosswalks with pedestrian traffic control devices.
- Promote the use of Park & Ride at 985.

2.8. Intergovernmental Coordination

Major Trend: Potential conflicts between the City and other local governments are possible as the City moves forward on initiatives related to planning and development within the City.

Issue:

- Sugar Hill could benefit from more effective coordination with other local, county, and State governments/agencies, regional agencies, private agencies, the business community, and the public.



Opportunities:

- Continue to work with local government to ensure the adequate provision of infrastructure and capacity to serve future development.
- Work with local and regional agencies to achieve common goals.

3. Assessment of Quality Community Objectives

The following assessment was conducted to address the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs), which were adopted by 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 relate to local zoning, ordinances, and policies. In most cases, the City has already begun to address the QCOs, 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.”

A traditional neighborhood is structured on an effective network of pedestrian oriented streets and public spaces. These communities provide a mixture of housing types and values, stores, offices, and work places as well as highly visible common buildings or spaces. New construction and growth of existing traditional neighborhoods should be encouraged near existing churches, schools, preschools and daycare facilities. The City of Sugar Hill has several traditional neighborhoods in various places throughout the City. The largest concentration of this type of development is found in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area. This area is defined as the “Town Center” on the Community Character Map. This neighborhood contains a traditional grid pattern street network with a mix of residential homes. The City supports infill development, redevelopment, and restoration within these areas and wishes to preserve the existing character of each area by encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing neighborhood fabric.

Strengths:

- Small lot sizes with short front yard setbacks encourage traditional/neo-traditional development patterns, and provide the residential density to support local businesses.
- Grid street patterns encourage connectivity and improve walkability of the community. It also ensures easy connections to other areas of the City.
- There is an existing sidewalk network to increase pedestrian mobility.

Needs:

- Streetscape improvements should be examined to make pedestrian movement safer and more appealing.
- The City should provide incentives for desirable redevelopment and infill projects.
- The City should develop design standards so new development is consistent with the existing neighborhood.

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.”

The City has identified several areas along major corridors, including Peachtree Industrial Boulevard as well as nodes and pockets on SR 20, as having potential for commercial infill development. These highways experience a significant amount of traffic on a daily basis. Peachtree Industrial Boulevard is largely undeveloped near the Town Center District and is ripe for neighborhood commercial development and redevelopment. SR 20 is the main through route in the City and creates the potential for significant commercial development at nodes created by its intersection with Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, West Broad Street and Suwanee Dam Road. This corridor also has the potential for redevelopment of vacant or underutilized structures.

Strength:

- There is both the opportunity and support for redevelopment and infill development projects in the City.

Needs:

- The City needs to complete an inventory of vacant buildings and sites to target for redevelopment and/or infill development.
- The City should develop a recruitment strategy/marketing plan to target and draw desirable businesses to these areas.

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 Sugar Hill contains a number of unique features that add to the City’s sense of place. Close proximity to the Chattahoochee River, exceptional recreation services and activities as well as a popular golf course contribute to the City’s identity. A revitalization effort in the Town Center District and the redevelopment of a vibrant downtown would give the citizens a desirable image to associate with the City of Sugar Hill.

Strengths:

- The City already contains a significant amount of unique features.
- Unique natural resources add to the City’s sense of place.

Needs:

- There is a need for revitalization in the Town Center District.
- The City needs to develop a branding/marketing plan for Sugar Hill and the activities available in the area.

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.”

The City of Sugar Hill is a “bedroom community” and has a large percentage of residents commuting to work outside the City limits. Due to the lack of transportation alternatives, these people are mainly traveling alone by automobile. The lack of convenient public transportation options leads to more traffic congestion in the City. The City is dedicated to providing and improving the pedestrian/cycling environment by offering alternative routes.

Strengths:

- There is an existing demand for an improved pedestrian environment.
- The City has already begun planning for transportation projects that include bike lanes and shared roadways.

Needs:

- Traffic movement along arterial roadways needs to be reduced in areas with a higher concentration of pedestrians.
- Improvements need to be made along SR 20, Buford Highway, and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to create a safer area for pedestrian/bicycle traffic.
- Sidewalk improvements and network extensions need to be scheduled and completed around the City.
- Downtown Sugar Hill should be a hub for connecting pedestrian and bike routes via shared roadways.

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 Sugar Hill is part of Gwinnett County and shares a close connection with the surrounding communities in the area. The history of development in the area is broad; however, current trends are seeing a revival of architecture in the modern and neo-traditional styles with significant reinvestment into older parts of the County as well as traditional

downtown or mainstreet infrastructure. Sugar Hill intends to preserve and enhance these elements within the City while weaving improved economic linkages with similar regional efforts.

Strengths:

- The combined characteristics Sugar Hill and the surrounding communities offer a variety of activities for visitors
- Sugar Hill's architectural design standards and commitment to redevelop the City Center and other appropriate commercial nodes in an appropriate style.

Need:

- The City should coordinate more effectively with the other jurisdictions in the County to better market available activities in the 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 recognizes the importance of its historic features as a means of remembering the past and adding to the destination appeal of the City. There may be a number of historic sites located throughout the City; however, the locations of many historic landmarks in the City are not clearly defined. An inventory of historic sites would assist the City in identifying these sites and determining the best approach for calling attention to them.

Strengths:

- The history of the region creates an added value for any historic features located in the City.
- There are, potentially, historic locations and sites within the City.

Needs:

- There could be more public education with regard to the history of the City.
- An inventory of historic structures and sites.
- Restoration of historic homes should be encouraged.

3.7. ***Openspace Preservation***

“New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and openspace 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 openspace preservation.”

There is a significant amount of dedicated openspace and/or public parks in the City. In addition, new and active suburban developments are being designed in a manner that portions of openspace are set aside for residents in the community.

Strengths:

- New developments are incorporating and setting aside greenspace as part of the subdivision design.
- A significant part of the Chattahoochee River floodplain within Sugar Hill is permanently protected.

Needs:

- The City should develop and actively implement a Greenspace Plan.
- Enhance the City’s existing Buffer, Landscape and Tree Ordinance.
- The City should work to link existing and future greenspace and openspace through a network of multiuse trails and green infrastructure.
- The City should work to facilitate public access to greenspace and openspace areas.

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.”

The City contains an array of natural features and is taking an active role in the protection of these environmental resources.

Strength:

- The City has existing ordinances that are protective of natural resources, including the Stormwater Management Ordinance, the Erosion & Sedimentation Control Ordinance, the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria.
- The City has protected a significant amount of greenspace, much of which is along the Chattahoochee River.

Needs:

- The City needs to work with industries and businesses to minimize the impact they have on the environment.
- The City needs to identify resources to implement the SWMP.
- The City could provide better access to the Chattahoochee River for citizens and visitors.

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 Sugar Hill has been working to accurately assess the need for new infrastructure and economic development programs to accommodate a growing population.

Strength:

- Population projections have been forecasted for the City for the next 20 years, and these numbers will be referenced when making infrastructure decisions.

Needs:

- The City should be aware of wastewater service and capacity issues before they become obstacles to development.
- The City should continue to anticipate the need to accommodate a growing population with expanded and additional facilities and services.
- The City needs to continue updating regulations to manage growth appropriately.

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 has identified several commercial corridors and infill areas appropriate for new commercial development. In addition, City residents have expressed a need for more retail, restaurants and other service-type commercial development to meet their daily needs. The City should focus on recruitment of new commercial businesses appropriate to the demographics, infrastructure, and long-term vision.

Strengths:

- There are areas identified that would be appropriate for commercial development. These areas have been segregated into different areas based on the type/intensity of commercial development that would be desirable.
- The City has a traditional village area that provides a location for neighborhood commercial businesses.

Needs:

- There is a need for more service-oriented commercial businesses.
- The City should utilize the recommendations within the LCI plan for downtown redevelopment and revitalization projects.
- The City needs to develop incentives or programs that provide assistance to small businesses.
- There is demand for office space to accommodate small businesses.

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 contains a wide array of employment options. There will be an increasing opportunity for employment in the service related industries such as restaurants and retail as commercial development along the major highway corridors continues to flourish.

Strength:

- Jobs are available for a wide range of skill levels and educational background.

Needs:

- There is a need for more professional jobs in the City.
- Creating more employment opportunities will improve the live/work ratio in the City.

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 Sugar Hill contains a variety of housing options as well as a wide range in the price of houses. Distributed around the City is a mix of low-density single-family residential homes, multi-family residential, townhouses, and apartments. The older residential areas of the City offer smaller houses of a more traditional style and design, while the newer suburban developments contain a selection of new and resale housing options. Together, the

traditional neighborhoods and suburban developments contain a mix of residential price points that range from starter homes to larger houses for established households looking to expand.

Strengths:

- A variety of different housing types exist throughout the City.
- The market for housing in the City is on the rise.
- Housing exists at prices that are affordable for a wide range of incomes.

Need:

- The City needs to develop policies to ensure that new housing is consistent with the existing neighborhood fabric and identified character areas.

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.”

There are a number of colleges, universities, technical training opportunities in the region. Residents of Sugar Hill have relatively easy access to these resources.

Strengths:

- Training and educational opportunities are available to residents of Sugar Hill.
- There are higher education opportunities in the area.

Need:

- The City should work to provide more jobs for educated workers 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.”

Sugar Hill values input from its citizenry regarding big picture visioning and offers a number of different venues for residents to provide feedback and be directly involved in the decision making process.

Strengths:

- The City takes extra care to make it easy for the public to stay informed about City business.
- The City will be implementing a strong public awareness element in the comprehensive planning process. This element has a number of different levels of participation so that citizens can find a comfortable level of involvement in the process.

Needs:

- The City needs to develop a usable set of guidelines to illustrate the desired types of development for different areas within the City.
- The City needs to create a webpage for information related to the Comprehensive Plan.

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 Sugar Hill has a good working relationship with neighboring jurisdictions.

Strength:

- The City works closely with neighboring cities and the County where applicable.

Need:

- The City will need to coordinate its planning efforts with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistency on overlapping issues and opportunities.

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 including maps, figures and tables, please see the Technical Addendum to this document.

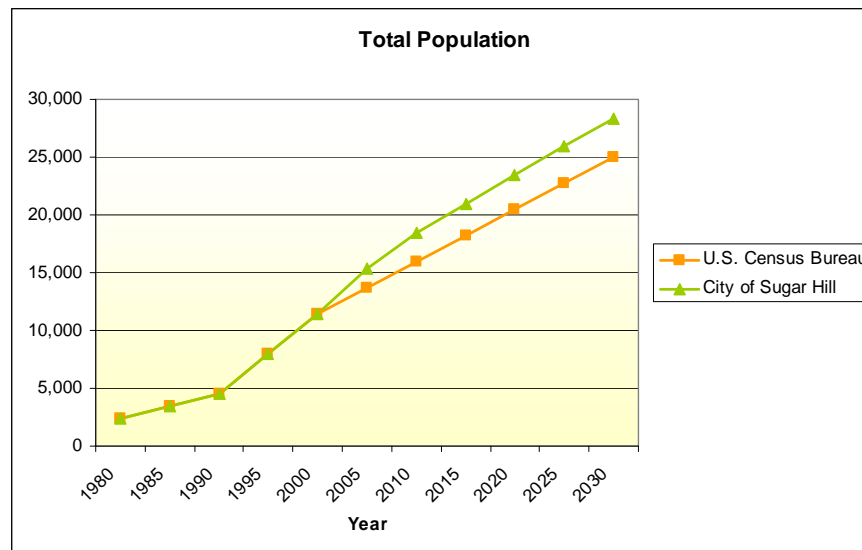
4.1. Population

4.1.1 Population Projections

The City of Sugar Hill's population more than tripled in the last 15 years, growing by 4,557 persons to a total population of 15,305 people in 2005. Like most places in the Atlanta region, the primary reason for the City of Sugar Hill's growth since 1990 has been migration (the number of new families moving here from other places) and annexation. Therefore, growth is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Despite the previously rapid population growth in the later part of the 20th century, the pace of growth is slowing. The City of Sugar Hill grew by 94.7% between 1980 and 1990. The rate of increase slowed to 85.8% during the years 1990 to 2000. The Atlanta Regional Planning Commission (ARC) predicts continued growth for the City of Sugar Hill. However, the rate of increase is estimated to be only 39.7% during the current decade (2000-2010) and only 28.4% from 2010 to 2020. A major contributing factor to the decreased rate of growth is that land available for development is almost fully utilized. The only other available alternative for growth is annexation and the City does not have a large need to annex more residential lands.

Figure 4. Total Population



**Sugar Hill Population based on Certificates of Occupancy*

As Table 1 indicates, the first population projection is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, which involves the assumption that past demographic trends will remain constant. The second population projection, specifically the current population update for 2005, was determined using the residential certificates of occupancy issued in the years of 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. The population projection for 2010 was calculated using the information collected by the City regarding existing approved lots and future proposed projects. The remaining projections were amended accordingly using the rate of increase from 2005 to 2010. All figures shaded in gray have been projected.

Table 1. City of Sugar Hill Population

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
U.S. Census Bureau	2,340	3,449	4,557	7,978	11,399	13,664	15,929	18,193	20,458	22,723	24,988
City of Sugar Hill	2,340	3,449	4,557	7,978	11,399	*15,305	18,488	20,962	23,436	25,909	28,383

**Sugar Hill Population based on Certificates of Occupancy*

4.1.2 Population Comparison

The City of Sugar Hill and the Atlanta region as a whole have experienced a significant amount of population growth in the past 30 years. Table 2 below compares the population totals for the City of Sugar Hill, Atlanta, Gwinnett County, and the Atlanta region since 1970. There have been increasing numbers throughout the entire Atlanta region over the course of the past 25 years. However, the percentage increase for the City of Sugar Hill continues to exceed that of the region. It is likely that Sugar Hill will experience more growth in the years to come prior to a reduction in the rate of growth. This presents the City with a number of issues related to the natural environment, City services, infrastructure, and overall quality of life. Figures shaded in gray have been projected based on the 2000 Census data and historical trends.

Table 2. Population Comparison

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005
Atlanta Region	1,500,823	1,896,182	2,557,800	3,429,379	3,813,700
Gwinnett County	NA	166,903	352,910	588,448	693,834
City of Atlanta	495,039	424,922	415,200	416,474	442,100
City of Sugar Hill	NA	2,340	4,557	11,399	15,305

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

Table 3 compares the areas discussed above based on the percent change since 1980. As the table shows, the percentage growth in Sugar Hill has been consistently higher than the growth rate in Atlanta, Gwinnett County and the region as a whole.

Table 3. Population Average Annual Percentage Increase

	1970 to 1980	1980 to 1990	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2005
Atlanta Region	2.4	3	3	2.1
Gwinnett County	NA	2.1	1.6	1.2
City of Atlanta	-1.5	-0.2	0	1.2
City of Sugar Hill	NA	9.5	15.0	6.4

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

4.1.3 Number of Households

The number of households in the City of Sugar Hill has continued to increase to accommodate growth in the metro-Atlanta region. However, despite continued development, the rate of growth for both the City and the County has continued to slow, and that trend of slower growth is predicted to continue. The number of households in the City of Sugar Hill increased by a smaller percentage every five years from 1990 to 2005 and the projections to 2030 predict that the trend will continue. From 1995 to 2000 the number of households grew by 42% but from 2000 to 2005, the growth was only 34%. The predicted increase in the number of housing from 2005 to 2010 is 21% and growth from 2010 to 2015 will be only 13%. The number of households in 2005 was determined through an analysis of the certificates of occupancy, and the shaded numbers were projected based on current growth patterns.

Table 4. Number of Households in the City of Sugar Hill

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total households	766	1,196	1,625	2,815	4,004	5,370	6,487	7,355	8,223	9,091	9,959

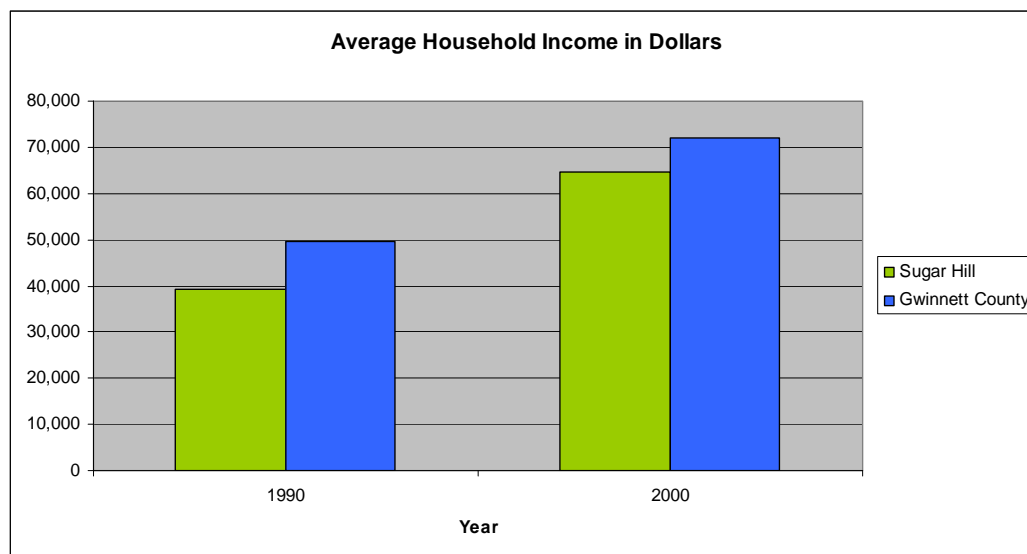
Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.1.4 Average Household Income

According to the 2000 census, the average household income in Sugar Hill is high (\$64,703), but still below the average household income for both the State of Georgia (\$80,077) and Gwinnett County (\$71,888). The average income for the State of Georgia more than doubled (117.5%) over the past decade from \$36,810 to \$80,077 in 2000 and the City of Sugar Hill's average household income increased 64.7% during that same period.

Averages can be skewed by high and low extremes included in the calculation. Therefore, average household income may not depict the financial condition of the majority of households as accurately as the distribution of household income.

Figure 5. Average Household Income



Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

Table 5. Average Household Income (in dollars)

Jurisdiction	1990	2000
Sugar Hill	\$39,280	\$64,703
Gwinnett County	\$49,638	\$71,888
Georgia	\$36,810	\$80,077

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.2. Economic Development

4.2.1 Employment by Industries Comparison

Table 6 compares the percentage of residents employed by each industry type in the City of Sugar Hill versus all of Gwinnett County.

Table 6. Industries Comparison

Category	1980		1990		2000	
	Sugar Hill	Gwinnett	Sugar Hill	Gwinnett	Sugar Hill	Gwinnett
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	0.00%	1.10%	2.30%	1.30%	0.60%	0.20%
Construction	7.00%	7.50%	11.40%	7.70%	9.50%	8.80%
Manufacturing	36.00%	22.30%	21.30%	15.00%	13.40%	12.00%
Wholesale Trade	10.40%	8.80%	11.70%	9.30%	7.40%	6.00%
Retail Trade	13.70%	15.00%	14.10%	17.20%	14.90%	13.40%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	6.20%	8.90%	7.80%	8.60%	2.90%	3.90%
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.10%	5.80%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	4.90%	7.60%	5.90%	9.30%	8.30%	8.20%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services	1.30%	6.30%	5.20%	7.30%	11.40%	13.00%
Educational, Health & Social Services	8.60%	10.50%	9.90%	10.60%	15.40%	14.00%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	2.30%	3.20%	0.70%	1.20%	5.90%	6.40%
Other Services	4.60%	4.10%	6.40%	9.00%	3.80%	5.00%
Public Administration	5.20%	4.70%	3.20%	3.40%	2.30%	3.10%

Since the 1980 Census year, the City of Sugar Hill has moved away from an economy that was dominated by the manufacturing industry. Sugar Hill and Gwinnett County are now much closer in comparison when examining the diversity between the various industrial sectors.

4.2.2 Wages

Table 7 shows the median wages earned in the City of Sugar Hill for males and females and compares these numbers with the County. This data was collected during the 2000 US Census and represents the status of wages in that year. The median wages are generally consistent between the City and the County with males and females in Sugar Hill earning slight less than those in Gwinnett County.

Table 7. Median Earnings

Category	Sugar Hill	Gwinnett County
Male full-time, year-round workers	\$42,141	\$42,343
Female full-time, year-round workers	\$29,428	\$31,772

4.2.3 Place of Employment

Table 8 shows the percentage of the total population in Sugar Hill that works within or outside the City limits. These numbers are derived as a percentage of the total population. As the table shows, the number of people that work in Sugar Hill has increased slightly between 1990 and 2000. This can be related to an increasing number of employment opportunities in the City.

Table 8. Employment Information

Category	1990	Percent	2000	Percent
Total Population	4,557		11,399	
Worked in City Limits	184	4.0%	568	5.0%
Worked outside of City Limits	2,243	49.2%	5,359	47.0%

4.2.4 Economic Resources

Economic development in Sugar Hill is supported by the City of Sugar Hill through a number of quasi-governmental organizations:

- Sugar Hill Downtown Development Authority. The Sugar Hill Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a seven member appointed board and their purpose is to create a positive atmosphere within the City where people are happy to live and work by promoting development that increases the commercial tax base thus providing a balanced community. The DDA is devising a conceptual plan giving a clear direction towards managing development within the boundaries of West Board Street, SR 20, and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. The largest economic development venture underway is the downtown streetscape project, which will create a more attractive setting for new commercial development within the downtown area. The newest economic opportunity will be the sewer availability along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, although some land constraints do exist.

- Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce. The Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce provides an open line of communication between states and local government officials to keep positive relationships between the County government, education, homeowners and developers. The Chamber's mission is to assist in the development of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones, establishing a more balanced tax base with jobs closer to home and local consumption of goods and services. The Chamber sponsors the *Partnership Gwinnett: A Shared Vision for the Future*, which was established to develop and accomplish a collective plan involving government, healthcare, education, and business for the growth of the community.

4.3. Housing

4.3.1 Types of Housing

The total number of housing units in Sugar Hill by type according to the 2000 US Census is displayed in Table 9. The projections (identified with gray shading) are calculated based on growth rates evidenced over the last 20 years. The current trend is towards single-family detached and attached units. The housing stock for residents in the City will remain primarily single-family detached.

Also, as the population of Sugar Hill ages, it is likely that the desirable types of housing options will also change accordingly. The older population has shown a trend towards smaller homes with less yard space. They also tend to seek housing that is within close proximity to retail and medical services.

Table 9. Housing Units

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Single Units (detached)	82.4%	72.7%	68.3%	76.9%	80.6%	80.5%	82.2%	83.4%	84.4%	85.2%	85.8%
Single Units (attached)	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Double Units	4.6%	3.3%	2.7%	1.8%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
3 to 9 Units	6.5%	5.8%	5.5%	4.3%	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.4%
10 to 19 Units	0	0.9%	1.2%	1.7%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
20 to 49 Units	0	0	0	8	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
50 or more Units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile Home or Trailer	5.5%	16.2%	21%	13.8%	10.7	10.9%	9.4%	8.2%	7.3%	6.5%	6.0%
All Other	0	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

Table 10. Housing Types

Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Housing Units	786	1,750	4,047
Single Units (detached)	648	1,195	3,262
Single Units (attached)	8	10	49
Double Units	36	47	55
3 to 9 Units	51	96	153
10 to 19 Units	0	21	79
20 to 49 Units	0	0	15
50 or more Units	0	0	0
Mobile Home or Trailer	43	368	434
All Other	0	13	0

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

4.3.2 Housing Costs

The City of Sugar Hill enjoys a good reputation for schools and quality built homes. As a result, the median cost of homes in Sugar Hill has continued to rise as a reflection of the area's attractiveness to those in the market for homeownership. Although the median property value continues to be higher than the median for the state of Georgia, it is lower than the median for Gwinnett County.

Table 11. Housing & Rental Cost (in dollars)

Category	City of Sugar Hill		Gwinnett County		Georgia	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Median Property Value	\$82,200	\$130,000	\$95,900	\$142,100	\$70,700	\$111,200
Median Rent	\$534	\$697	\$577	\$824	\$433	\$613

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

The average household income in Sugar Hill is approximately \$64,700/per year according to the 2000 Census. This average income compares favorable with the median property value of \$130,000. The median property value is approximately twice the average household income, which means that the average household income is enough to support a mortgage on a home in Sugar Hill of median property value.

Affordable housing can be defined by comparing annual homeowner costs with the annual gross household income. If the annual owner costs associated with a residential unit are less than or equal to 30% of annual gross income of the residents, the unit is considered "affordable". Annual costs can be estimated by assuming the cost of purchasing a home at the time of the Census based on reported value of the home. Assuming a 7.9% interest rate and national averages for utility costs, taxes, and insurance, the value of a home a person can afford to purchase equals approximately 2.9 times their income. For example, the average household with an annual gross income of \$64,700 is estimated to be able to afford a home worth \$187,630 without having total costs exceed 30% of their annual household income.

In addition, the average household income increased by 64.7% while the median property value only increased by 58.2%, which indicates that homes were more affordable for Sugar Hill 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.

5. Community Facilities & Services

The City of Sugar Hill's water distribution system and the sewer collections system is maintained by the Gwinnett County Department of Public Utilities. The water distribution services provided by the County include water meter and service line replacement, all pipe repairs to the water system and preventive maintenance programs. The sanitary sewer service provided by the County includes maintenance to the system as well as rehabilitation to keep the system in good shape. This is to prevent exfiltration, (sewerage from escaping the system,) infiltration and inflow, and water other than sewerage entering the system. The County performs repairs to all sewer lines, manholes and sewer pump stations.

5.1. Water Supply & Treatment

The City's existing water system consists of 844 water valves, 921 hydrants, and approximately 95 miles of pressurized water mains. The system water lines are primarily constructed of 6" through 12" PVC and ductile iron piping. Please see Figure 6 for a map of the water supply system.

5.2. Sewerage System & Wastewater Treatment

Presently, the City has 2,213 manholes, 19 pump stations, and approximately 92 miles of gravity and pressurized mains. Please see Figure 7 for a map of the sanitary sewer system.

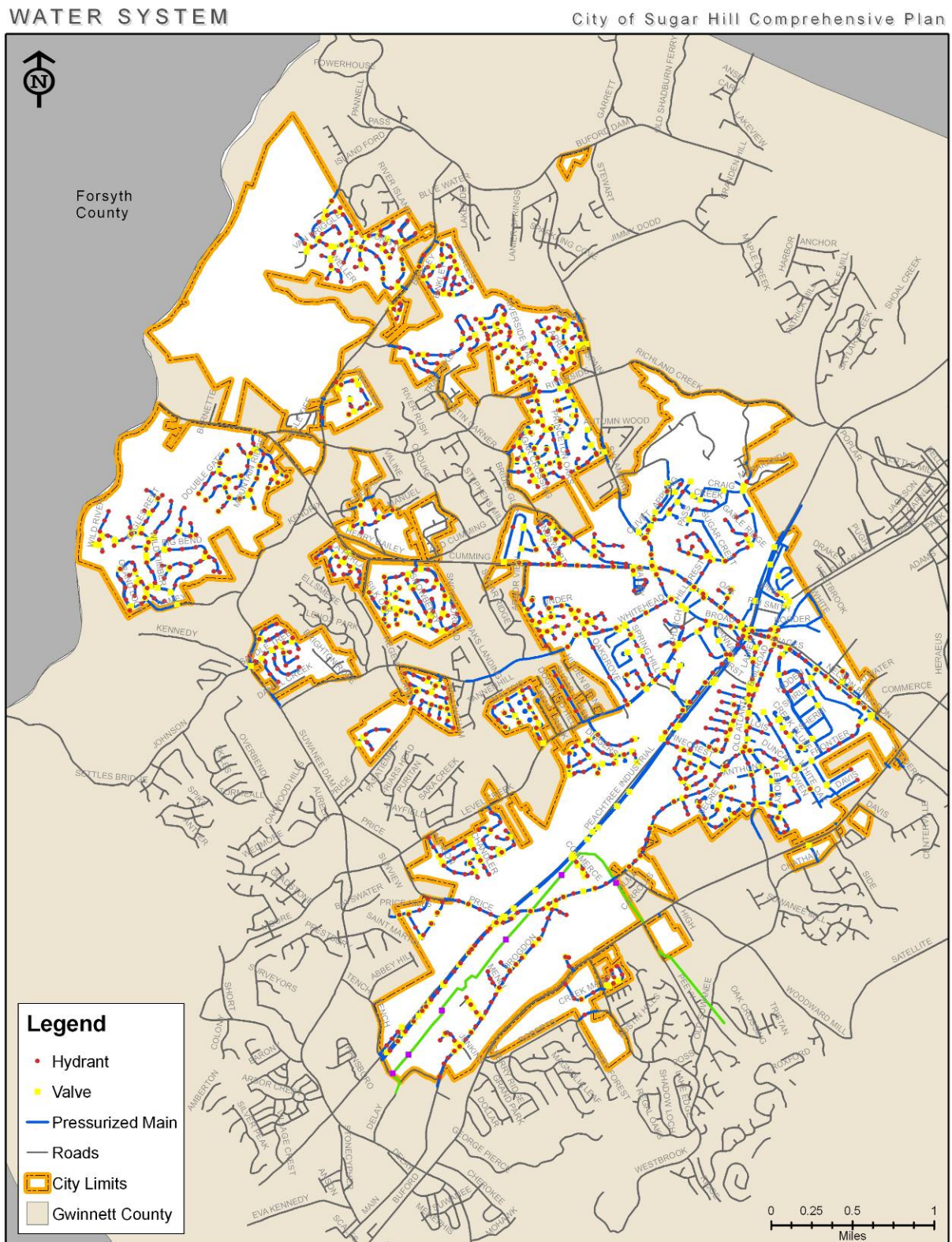
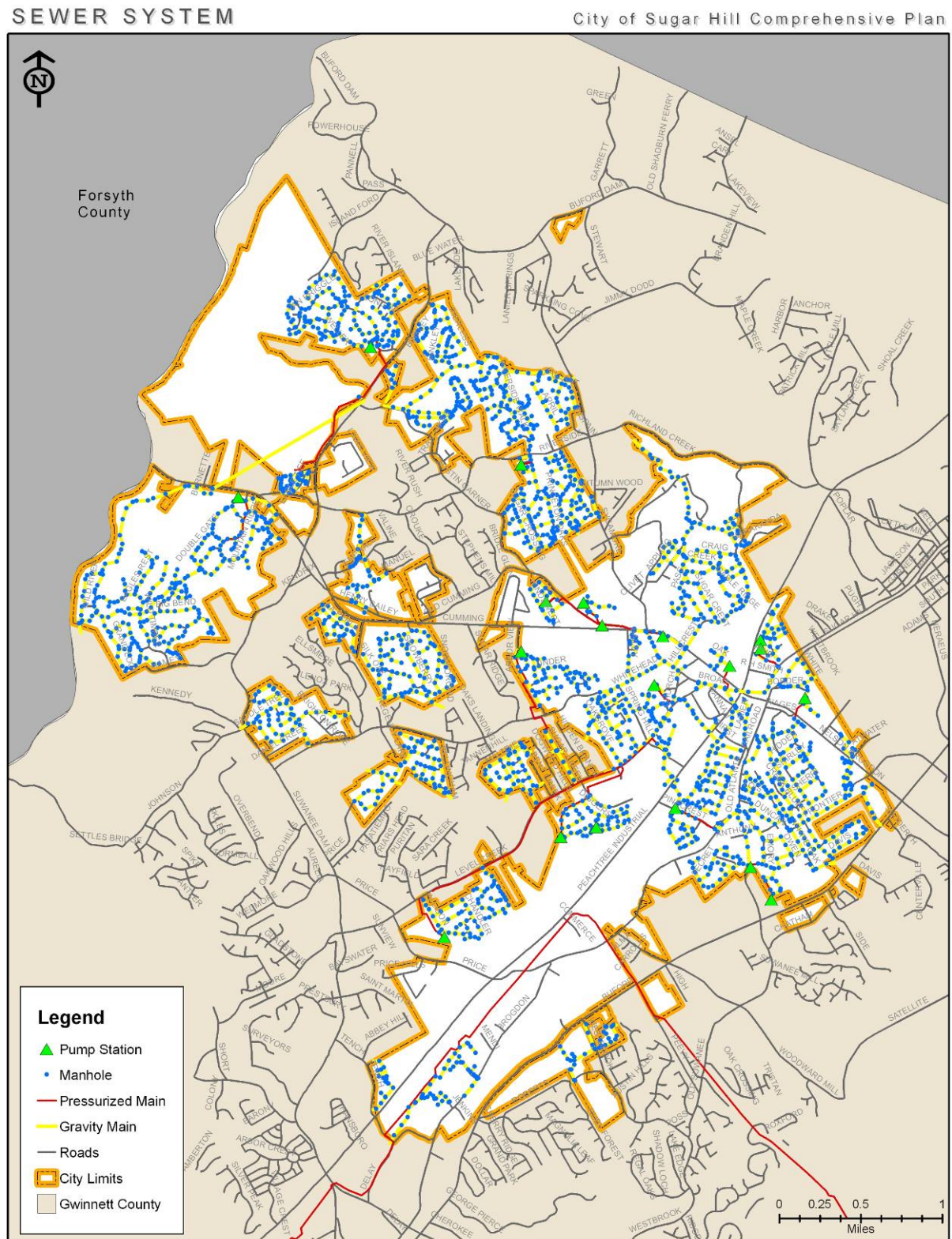
Figure 6. Map of Water System

Figure 7. Map of Sewer System

5.3. Storm Sewer System

The City of Sugar Hill has continued to work on updating its stormwater system inventory. Gwinnett County previously collected inventory within the city limits of Sugar Hill. This inventory was not completed at the time Sugar Hill separated from the County's stormwater management program. The City has continued to collect structures to complete this inventory, which is included in Table 12.

Table 12. Sugar Hill Stormwater System Inventory

Gwinnett County Ms4 Inventory		
Structure	Number	Mileage
Catch Basins	982	
Drop Inlets	58	
End of Pipes	83	
Flared End Sections	3	
Junction Boxes	281	
Headwalls	396	
Yard Inlets	185	
Hooded Grate Inlets	1	
Trench Drains	0	
Standpipes	2	
Flumes	3	
Weirs	39	
Ditches		42.5
Pipes		29.7

Source: Gwinnett County, City of Sugar Hill, 2007

5.4. Public Safety

Both fire protection and police services are provided within the City of Sugar Hill. One fire station is located within the City limits, Station #26 at 6075 Suwanee Dam Road. Primary responsibility for Emergency Medical Services (E.M.S.) and rescue within the City of Sugar Hill is placed upon the Gwinnett County Emergency Services Department.

5.4.1 Fire Protection

- Operations. Gwinnett County is the largest fire service district in the State of Georgia for the number of legal jurisdictions (15 under one fire department) and protects a population of over 750,000 people covering an area of 437 square miles. Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services have a history of excellence in all areas of service. The Department has designed its divisions and strategically placed its stations to facilitate excellent responses to community needs. This division coordinates, staffs, and commands the Department's response to over 50,000 annual

incidents. This area is composed of 25 stations, 25 advanced life support capable engine companies, seven basic life support ladder companies, 18 advanced life support ambulance companies, an air and light truck, a tanker truck, and two manpower squads.

- Citizens Fire Academy. This program will allow Gwinnett County citizens an opportunity to learn how their fire department operates. The 11-week program includes hands-on fire, medical and emergency service demonstrations and classroom discussions to provide an overview of the department as a whole.

5.4.2 Police Department

The Gwinnett County Police Department provides service for the City of Sugar Hill. The County's Northside Precinct is strategically located on U.S. 23 in Buford and serves the Cities of Buford, Sugar Hill, and Rest Haven, as well as some of the unincorporated areas of Suwanee, Braselton, and Lawrenceville. The Gwinnett County Police Department is a nationally accredited and rapidly growing police agency located in the Northeastern quadrant of the metropolitan Atlanta area. The Department currently has an authorized strength of 656 sworn officers supported by 266 non-sworn employees with the responsibility of providing law enforcement services to over 700,000 residents within an area of 436 square miles. The Department is organized into five divisions: Administrative Services; Criminal Investigations; Uniform; Support Operations; and, Training. In addition, the City of Sugar Hill hires off-duty Gwinnett Police Officers for additional police protection 80 hours a week.

- Criminal Investigations. The Criminal Investigations Division is responsible for all criminal investigations in Gwinnett County and consists of two sections: First is the Criminal Investigations Section under Major Steve Cline. This section is responsible for investigation of violent and property crimes, child protection, white collar crime, and auto theft. The Crime Scene Processing Unit is also part of the Criminal Investigations Section. Second is the Special Investigations Section under Major Bart Hulsey. This section includes the vice squad, alcohol enforcement, the permit unit, and the narcotics squad. The Division has a total authorized strength of 127 persons.
- Training. The Training Division of the Gwinnett County Police Department consists of three units: the Basic Mandate Academy, Firearms, and In-service training. The Basic Mandate Academy includes the 404 hours of training required by the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council. The Department's commitment to training is exemplified in that an additional 356 hours of training is required for graduation from the Gwinnett County Police Academy. The Training Division does offer an abbreviated Basic Mandate Academy to previously Georgia Certified Police Officers, which consists of seven weeks of intense training to ensure that officers with previous experience meet the standards dictated by the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council. Each year, certified peace officers are required to attend 20 hours of In-service training in order to maintain state certification. Each sworn member of the department attends the minimum 20-hour requirement. In-service training consists of both classroom and practical exercises that reflect judicial changes and current tactical techniques that will enhance an officer's skill and knowledge.

- Neighborhood Watch. Gwinnett County's Neighborhood Watch program is called "C.O.P.S." (Community Oriented Police Service). The C.O.P.S. program requires four meetings over approximately a 1-year timeframe.

5.5. Parks & Facilities

Sugar Hill has three recreational amenities located within the City limits. These recreational areas have an array of facilities such as baseball fields, football fields, picnic areas, soccer fields, softball fields, tennis courts and walking trails.

Table 13. Existing & Proposed Recreational Parks

Park	Location	Acreage	Facilities
Sugar Hill Community Center & Town Green Park	Church Street	Building	Newly renovated community center available for residents and families to rent.
E. E. Robinson Park	Level Creek Road	34	Softball fields, pavilions, soccer field, tennis courts, basketball goals, concession stands, jogging trail, volleyball court, playground and an amphitheater
Gary Pirkle Park & Community Center (Summer 2008)	Austin Garner Road	49	Soccer, walking trails, picnic areas, tennis, basketball, racquetball, classes, playground, exercise rooms, etc.

Source: Sugar Hill Recreation Department, 2006

5.6. Transportation

The City of Sugar Hill is supportive of regional transportation planning for Gwinnett County. The Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan serves as the official document for transportation planning in the region and is adopted by reference. Funding, implementation and coordination of the Plan includes leveraging local funds to secure state and federal funds and coordination of projects with the Georgia Department of Transportation and ARC.

5.7. Roads & Highway Network

The streets, roads and highways in the City of Sugar Hill are classified as City maintained or private roads. The remaining roads are County maintained with the exception of State Route 20.

- State Maintained Roads. Defined as thoroughfares designed and used for high traffic volumes and cross-town traffic movement. State Route 20 or Buford Highway is the only street that falls into this category; this street is also known as Cumming Highway or Nelson Brogdon in Sugar Hill.
- County Maintained Roads. Defined as thoroughfares designed for moderate traffic volumes, generally having the right-of-way over intersecting minor streets.
- City Maintained Roads: The City of Sugar Hill maintains the majority of the streets. The remaining streets are private roads, as shown on the Map of Transportation (Figure 8).

5.8. Alternative Modes

5.8.1 Gwinnett County Transit

Gwinnett County Transit was formed in 2000 to provide express, local and para-transit services for the people of Gwinnett County. Express bus service operates Monday through Friday and includes six routes using the HOV lanes on I-85. Park and ride lots at I-985, Discover Mills, and Indian Trail have been built or upgraded to provide free and convenient parking for bus riders.

Local bus service operates five routes Monday through Saturday connecting neighborhoods and businesses to Gwinnett County's many cultural, shopping and educational opportunities. Express routes also operate to Atlanta, connecting with MARTA at the Chamblee or Doraville stations. Transfers are free between MARTA and Gwinnett County Transit. Paratransit service for qualifying persons with disabilities operates in conjunction with the local bus service.

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority operates an express bus service that serves Sugar Hill citizens. The City also encourages alternative modes such as bicycle and walking by providing bicycle routes and sidewalks for pedestrian paths.

5.9. *Commuting Patterns*

Table 14 compares the commuting patterns in Sugar Hill with those patterns in Gwinnett County. According to the 2000 Census Bureau data, over 95% of people in both the City and County either drive alone or carpool to work. Less than 1% in both jurisdictions combined relies on public transportation as a means of travel to work. This can be related to the fact that public transportation is not considered convenient within the City or County.

Table 14. Commuting Patterns

Commuting Patterns	Sugar Hill	Gwinnett County
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	84%	79.7%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	12.1%	14.1%
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0%	0.8%
Walked	0.2%	0.8%
Other means	0.4%	0.8%
Worked at home	3.4%	3.8%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	34.7	32.2

5.10. *Parking*

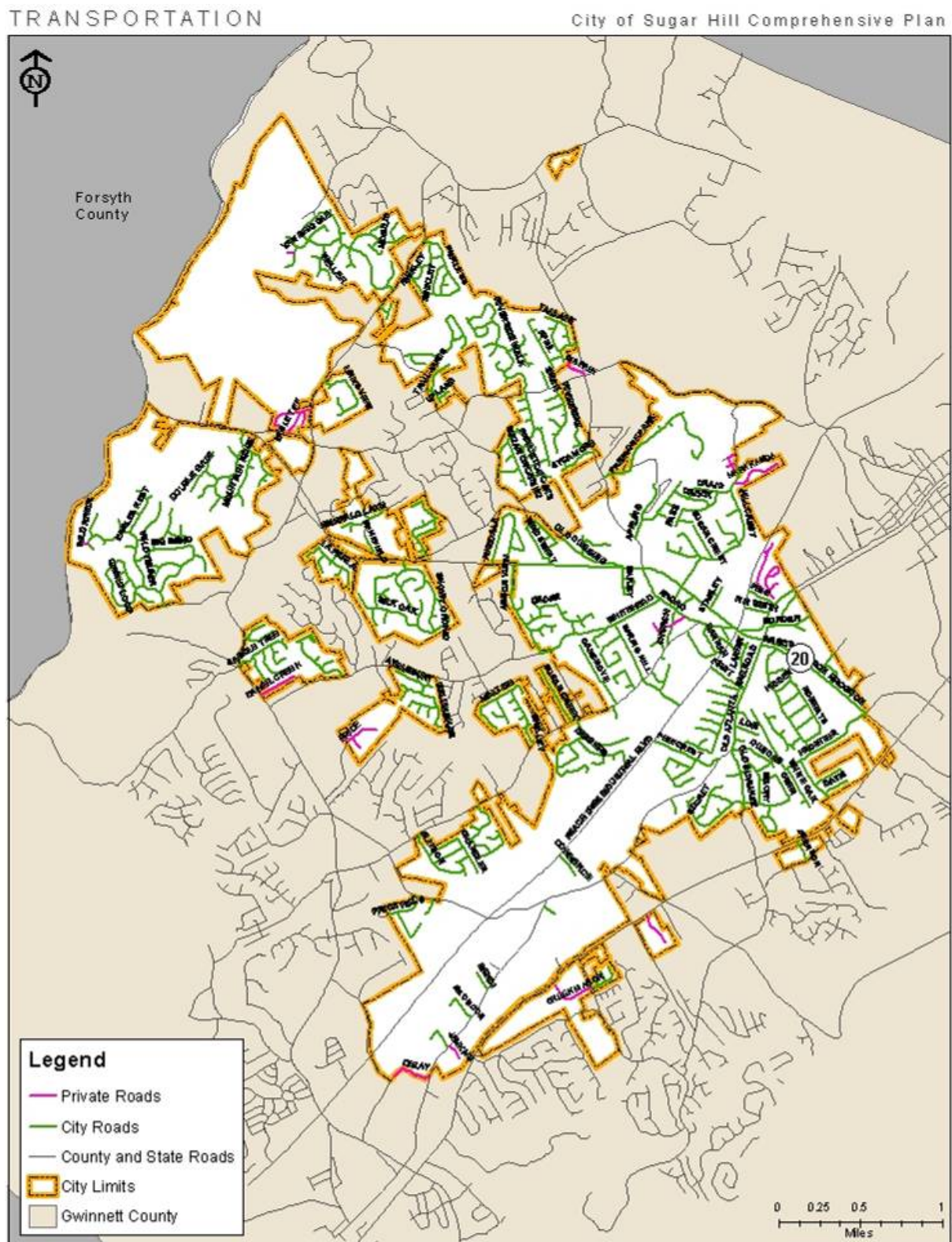
Currently, parking is not a major issue in the City of Sugar Hill and there is limited surface parking facilities within the City. The City also does not provide parking meters in the downtown area, but adequate parking is planned for the future development of downtown.

5.11. *Railroads, Trucking, Port Facilities & Airports*

There are no railroads, trucking, port facilities or airports in the City of Sugar Hill.

5.12. *Transportation & Land Use Connection*

The transportation issues and policies identified within this plan will have a direct impact on the other elements of the plan and can ultimately shape the character of the City. The reverse is also true, working to achieve the desired character in a neighborhood can raise a new set of transportation related issues. For example, the density of a new housing development is important in determining the appropriate transportation infrastructure. The primary area of significant traffic congestion is the traffic on SR 20 or Buford Highway. Two specific intersections within the City that experience problems on SR 20 are at Sycamore Road and also at Suwanee Dam Road, both of these intersections are backed up during peak hours.

Figure 8. Map of Transportation

5.13. Part V Environmental Planning Criteria

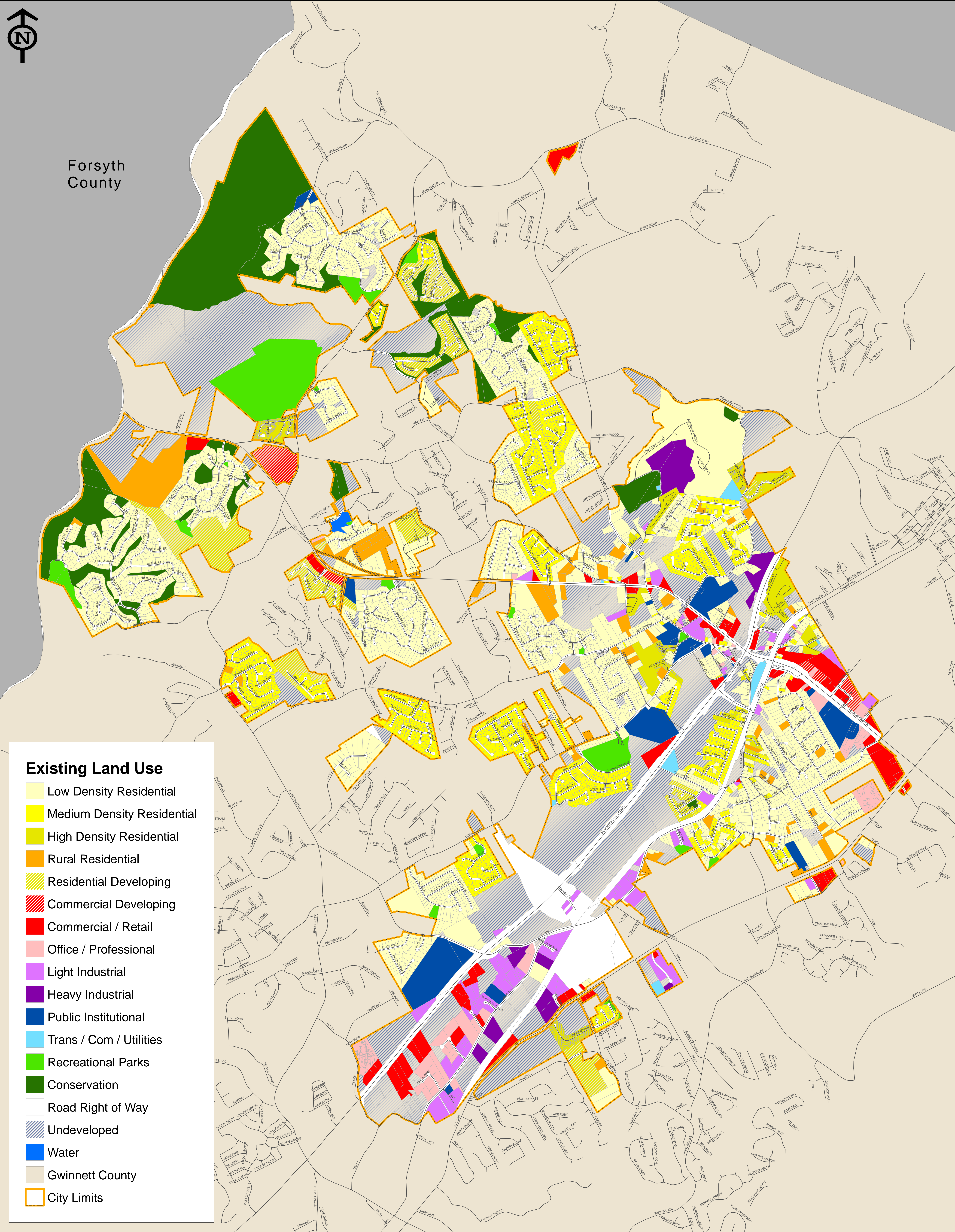
The City of Sugar Hill plays a key role in the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The City is committed to improving its own environmental management strategies and practices, developing the environmental understanding and awareness of the community through its own services, and by supporting the activities of other agencies, such as the Clean Water Campaign, Greenspace Program, and Keep Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful. The City has adopted the Environmental Planning Criteria for Wetlands and will explore adoption of the Protected River Corridor and Water Supply Watershed elements. There are no protected mountains or groundwater recharge zones intersecting the City.

5.14. Service Delivery Strategy

The City of Sugar Hill will work with Gwinnett County to update the Service Delivery Strategy as required by October 2008.

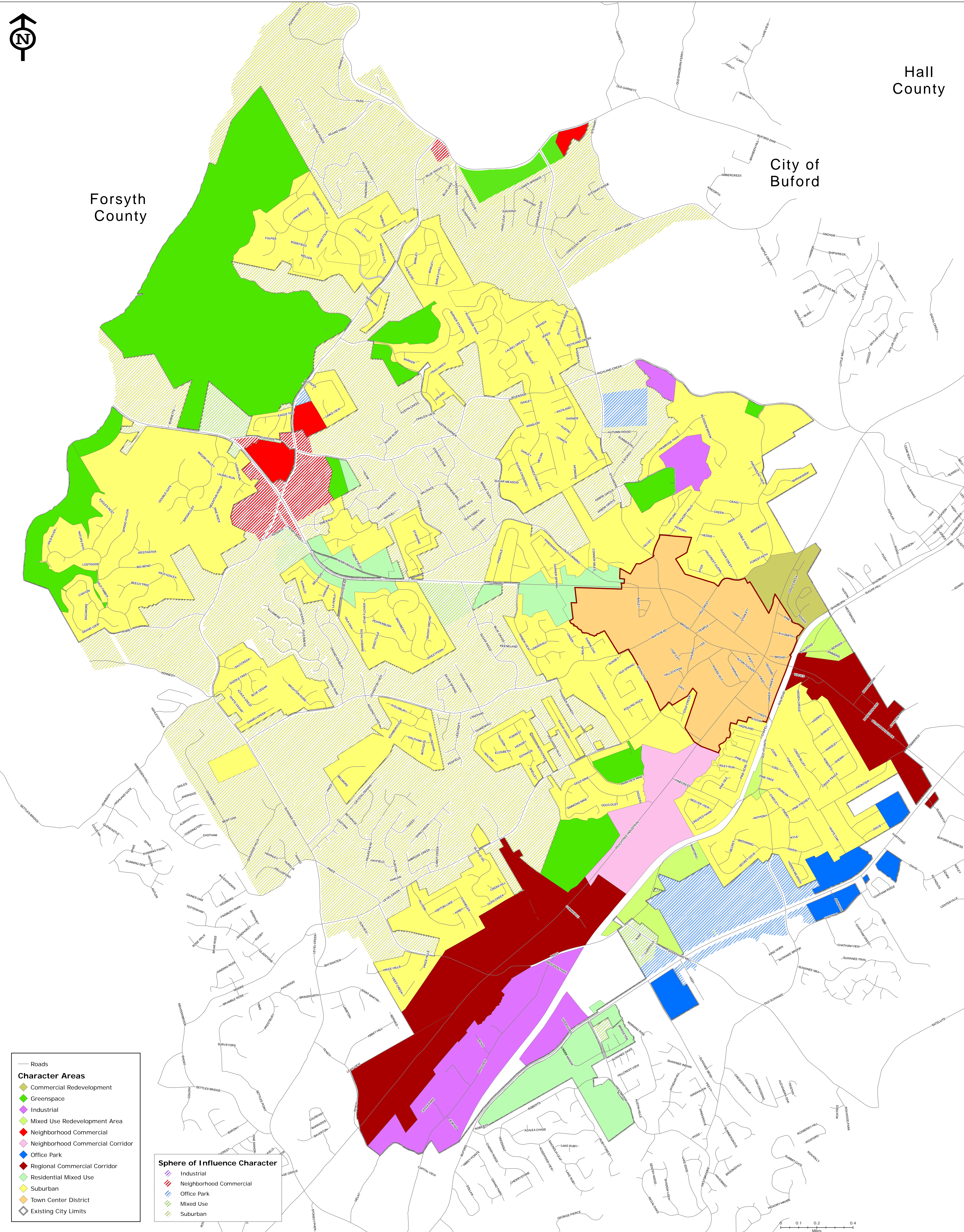
APPENDIX **A**

Existing Land Use Map



APPENDIX **B**

Community Character Areas Map



APPENDIX C

Areas Requiring Special Attention Map

