



McDonough Town Square Visioning Workshop



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Executive Summary

The City of McDonough completed their original Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study for the McDonough Town Center in 2004. The LCI program, run by the Atlanta Regional Commission, offers planning grants on a competitive basis to local governments and non-profits to improve their town centers, activity centers and corridors. Once the initial plan is complete, additional funds are available for plan implementation in the form of transportation project dollars and supplemental study grants.

In 2011, the City applied for and was awarded an LCI supplemental study grant to further implementation of the original 2004 LCI study. Through the supplemental study scope of work, the City sought to maximize its opportunity for mixed-use and quality infill development; to improve linkages and access to both active and passive recreational amenities within walking distance of the town square; improve street, sidewalk and path connectivity; and strengthen existing downtown businesses.

To do this, the City asked for LCI funding to hire a consultant to complete three things: a business retention/recruitment analysis, a connectivity and mobility plan, and a mixed use overlay zoning ordinance. Additionally, as a part of their application, the City asked for ARC's assistance in organizing and managing a four day charrette to kick off this larger scope of work a consultant would subsequently be hired to complete.

Specifically, the topics the charrette team was instructed to focus on during the charrette were:

1. Lifelong Community Principles
2. Wayfinding signage and parking issues in the downtown area
3. Context sensitive design and connectivity/mobility issues
4. Tourism, cultural events and arts
5. Design guidelines

The McDonough charrette was held from June 13 – June 16, 2011. The week kicked off with a public meeting held at the Hazlehurst House in downtown McDonough, and smaller technical meetings were held throughout the week.

4 McDonough Town Square Visioning Workshop



The charrette headquarters on the Square.

Recommendations resulting from this process, organized by topic area, are below.

Lifelong Communities Principles (LLC)

1. Implement the recommendations of the Community Choices City of McDonough Quality Growth Audit – in Appendix.
2. Re-zone to allow neighborhood-based retail services and the integration of housing options in existing communities.
3. Correlate zoning and building codes to support continuous accessibility.
4. Provide non-age segregated housing options.
5. Connectivity between the focus area and outlying services needs to be improved.

Wayfinding Signage and Parking

1. Implement an anti-shuffling parking ordinance and allow for 4 hour parking.
2. Develop recognizable “parking” wayfinding signage.
3. Improve and maintain city parking lots.

4. Install pedestrian wayfinding kiosks in parking lots.
5. Explore the development of a wayfinding and marketing campaign.
6. Explore options of a municipal lot on the south side of the square.

Context Sensitive Design and Street Connectivity

1. Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy.
2. Develop a detailed connectivity and streetscape plan to determine precise facility types needed and streetscape design guidelines.
3. Adopt an access management policy.
4. Revisit design of one-way pair project to ensure desired design.
5. Proactively implement measures to ensure the long-term viability of the downtown square prior to the completion of the McDonough Bypass.
6. Work with GDOT’s District 3 (Thomaston) office to implement minor intersection improvements in the square such as signal timing, crosswalk paint, and signage.
7. Apply for LCI transportation funding to implement recommended streetscape and connectivity projects.

Specific Transportation Project Recommendations:

1. Downtown McDonough intersection safety project.
2. McDonough square streetscape improvements.
3. McDonough bike lanes.
4. Sims Road corridor improvements.

Additional Potential Projects Requiring Additional Study:

1. Multi-Use path network connecting the City’s three parks to downtown.
2. Street improvements to the “alleyways” surrounding the square.
3. Expand street network by extending streets and alleyways, formalizing large through-driveways as streets, and breaking up excessively large blocks to improve connectivity, walkability, enhance traffic safety and foster economic development.

Tourism, Cultural Events and Arts

Recommendations

1. Build on the success of existing events.
2. Build stronger partnerships among existing organizations.
3. Increase visibility for organizations and events.
4. Take steps to enhance the historic core.

Successful projects that are applicable and replicable in McDonough

1. Form-based development codes for cultural heritage tourism districts.
2. Undertake a demonstration project.
3. Adaptive reuse and renovation.
4. Historic theatre rehabilitation.
5. Using digital media.

Business Retention and Recruitment

1. Create cheat sheet for new businesses.
2. Formulate wish list of desired businesses.
3. Consider hiring a full time economic development staff person.



Members of the charrette team discussing transportation possibilities.

Introduction

The City of McDonough completed their original Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study for the McDonough Town Center in 2004. The LCI program, run by the Atlanta Regional Commission, offers planning grants on a competitive basis to local governments and non-profits to improve their town centers, activity centers and corridors. Once the initial plan is complete, additional funds are available for plan implementation in the form of transportation project dollars and supplemental study grants.

In 2011, the City applied for and was awarded an LCI supplemental study grant to further implementation of the original 2004 LCI study. Through the supplemental study scope of work, the City sought to maximize its opportunity for mixed-use and quality infill development; to improve linkages and access to both active and passive recreational amenities within walking distance of the town square; improve street, sidewalk and path connectivity; and strengthen existing downtown businesses.

To do this, the City asked for LCI funding to hire a consultant to complete three things:

Business Retention/Recruitment Analysis

Undertake an analysis focused on business retention and recruitment in the square. Perform research and analysis to determine the best recruitment prospects for the square and consider retention activities that will strengthen at-risk companies and keep the square filled with healthy, thriving businesses.

Connectivity and Mobility Plan

Research and propose solutions to improving the multi-modal environment within the study area to ensure a safe, efficient and effective transportation circulation system. This element will consider connectivity and mobility for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, along with access to uses in the study area and parking needs (vehicles and bikes). Efforts should be made to improve the existing road network without additional widening, extensions or other vehicle capacity elements and should focus on incorporating complete streets elements wherever possible.

Mixed Use Overlay Zoning Ordinance

Create a detailed zoning overlay ordinance to allow the development and full implementation of mixed uses, infill housing and Lifelong Communities principles.

Additionally, as a part of their application, the City asked for ARC's assistance in organizing and managing a four day charrette to kick off this larger scope of work a consultant would subsequently be hired to complete. A charrette is an intensive planning session where citizens, designers, stakeholder and others collaborate on a community vision or a specific vision for a development. Charrettes are organized to encourage the participation and ideas of all involved, and offered the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to designers and planners.

McDonough staff felt a charrette would be an effective way to engage the community in the planning process as well as to garner feedback on several important issues in order to inform the larger planned scope of work, outlined above.

Specifically, the topics the charrette team was instructed to focus on during the charrette were:

1. Lifelong Community Principles
2. Way finding signage and parking issues in the downtown area
3. Context sensitive design and connectivity/mobility issues
4. Tourism, cultural events and arts
5. Design guidelines

This document is organized by these topics and will outline what was heard throughout these meetings. In each section ARC staff recommendations are also provided – either as specific recommendations the City of McDonough could implement, or recommendations to be passed on to the consultant who is hired to complete the larger scope of work.

City of McDonough – Existing Conditions

Location and History

The original 2004 McDonough Town Center LCI area includes portions of the City of McDonough and unincorporated Henry County. A few specific landmarks included in this zone are the historic town square, Alexander Park and its expansion, the Performing Arts Center, and the Big Spring Park.

The focus area for the 2011 supplemental study work described in this report considered a smaller geographical area focusing largely on the historic town square and its surrounding areas. This focus area is shown in the map below.

Neighborhood Demographics and Housing

According to 2010 Census data, the City of McDonough includes:

- 22,084 total population
- 15,550 population over 18 years old
- 9,063 total households
- 1,010 vacant housing units



Aerial image of the charrette focus area.

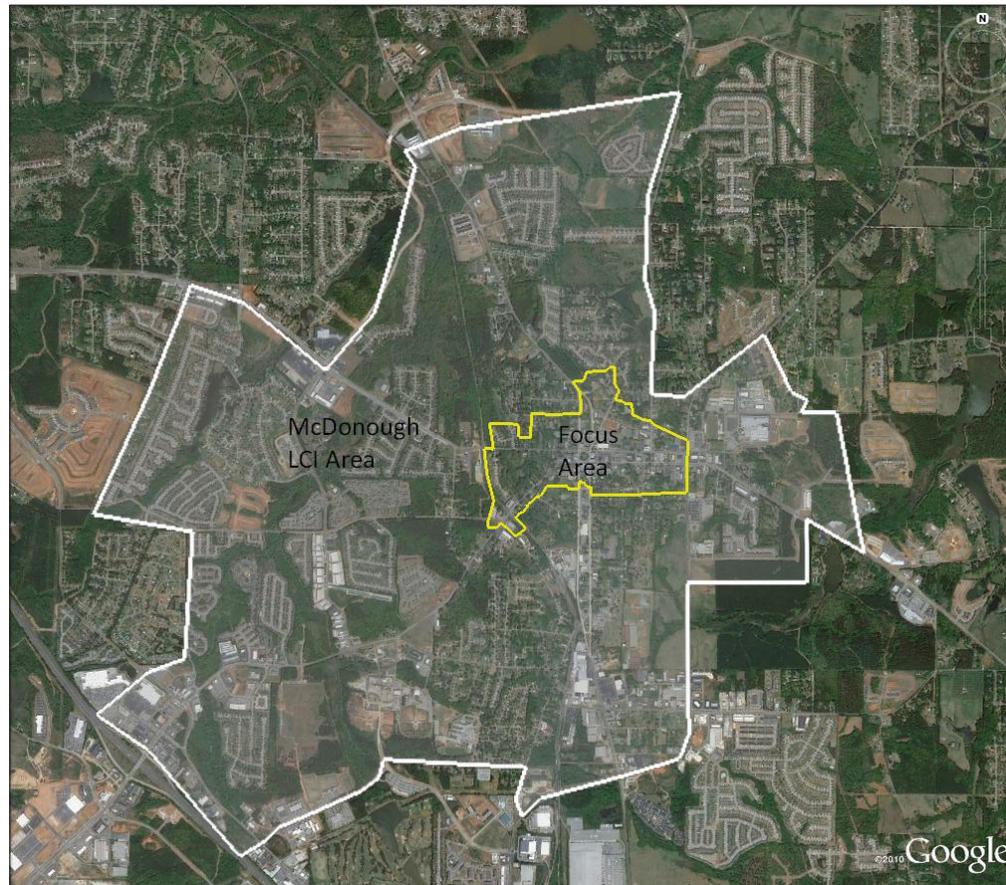
The 2004 LCI Report identified the housing mix within the McDonough LCI area as 59% single family, 31% multi-family, and 10% mobile home. Over 70% of the homes have been built post 1970 and the median value of a home in 2004 was \$124,622. Of the units, 63% were owner occupied and 37% were renter occupied. The original LCI study also revealed the need for senior housing (including low-income senior housing) and increased mixed use within the downtown. The City identified opportunities for infill housing, higher density housing, housing redevelopment, for rent housing, and mixed use development throughout the LCI area.

Land Use

The focus area encompasses the historic town square of McDonough and its immediate surrounding area. The land uses in this district are primarily

commercial with a few institutional buildings and parks scattered along the main corridor. There are six multifamily parcels located within the focus area and single-family residential lots are concentrated along the periphery of the focus area boundary. The predominance of commercial space in the focus area increases the demand for parking and intensifies the importance of mixed-use developments in the area.

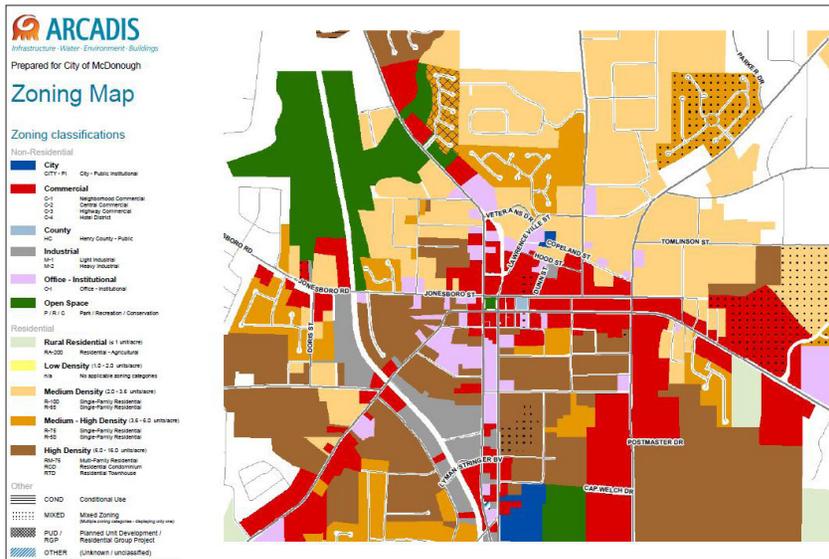
McDonough's downtown is a historic square surrounded by four major highways, with Atlanta Street/SR 42 to the north and Highway 81/SR 155/SR 20 on the east, Griffin Street/ Macon Street/SR 42 to the south, and Jonesboro Street/ Highway 81/SR 20 on the west. Most travel in McDonough must pass through the square for residents, workers, commuters, and visitors to reach homes, jobs, schools, shopping, or the interstate. This creates major traffic congestion in the downtown area, particularly during peak hours.



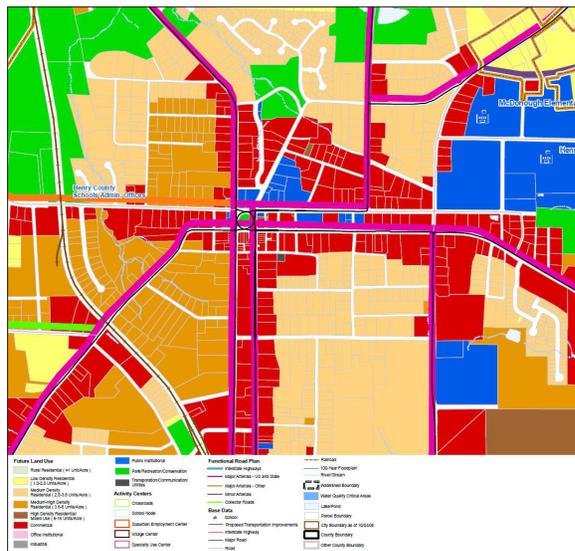
Aerial image of the focus area within the City of McDonough boundaries.

Zoning

The majority of the focus area is currently zoned for commercial use; however, there are also areas zoned for medium density residential, public institutional, and parks. The existing land use includes predominantly commercial and public institutional buildings with a few single family residential units, vacant sites and parking lots.



Current zoning in place for the focus area.



McDonough's Future Land Use Map.

Auto/Pedestrian Access

Access to the downtown square is accessible to the automobile and the pedestrian alike with available parking, wide sidewalks, crosswalks, and retail sidewalk frontage. However, outside the downtown square the numbers of crosswalks diminish significantly and the sidewalk/retail conditions become auto centric. The number of crosswalks and the number of driveway curb cuts found in the primary streets within the focus area are as follows:

Table 1: Crosswalks and Curb Cuts within Primary Streets in the Study Area

Street Area	Street Length	# Crosswalks	# Curb Cuts
Around Central Square:	.20 miles	16	0
Macon Street:	.10 miles	0	1
Lawrenceville Street:	.35 miles	3	6
Griffin Street:	.10 miles	0	2
Atlanta Street:	.25 miles	1	17
Keys Ferry Street:	1.0 mile	0	26
Hampton Street:	.50 miles	0	2 (+private drives)
Jonesboro Street:	.40 miles	0	6 (+ private drives)
John Frank Boulevard:	1.0 mile	0	33

There are areas around the square that are in need of pedestrian improvements. Several crosswalks are in need of an upgrade and better maintenance. The one way streets around the square also result in conflicts between pedestrians and cars, as it is not immediately clear to automobile users when pedestrians have the right of way to cross the street.

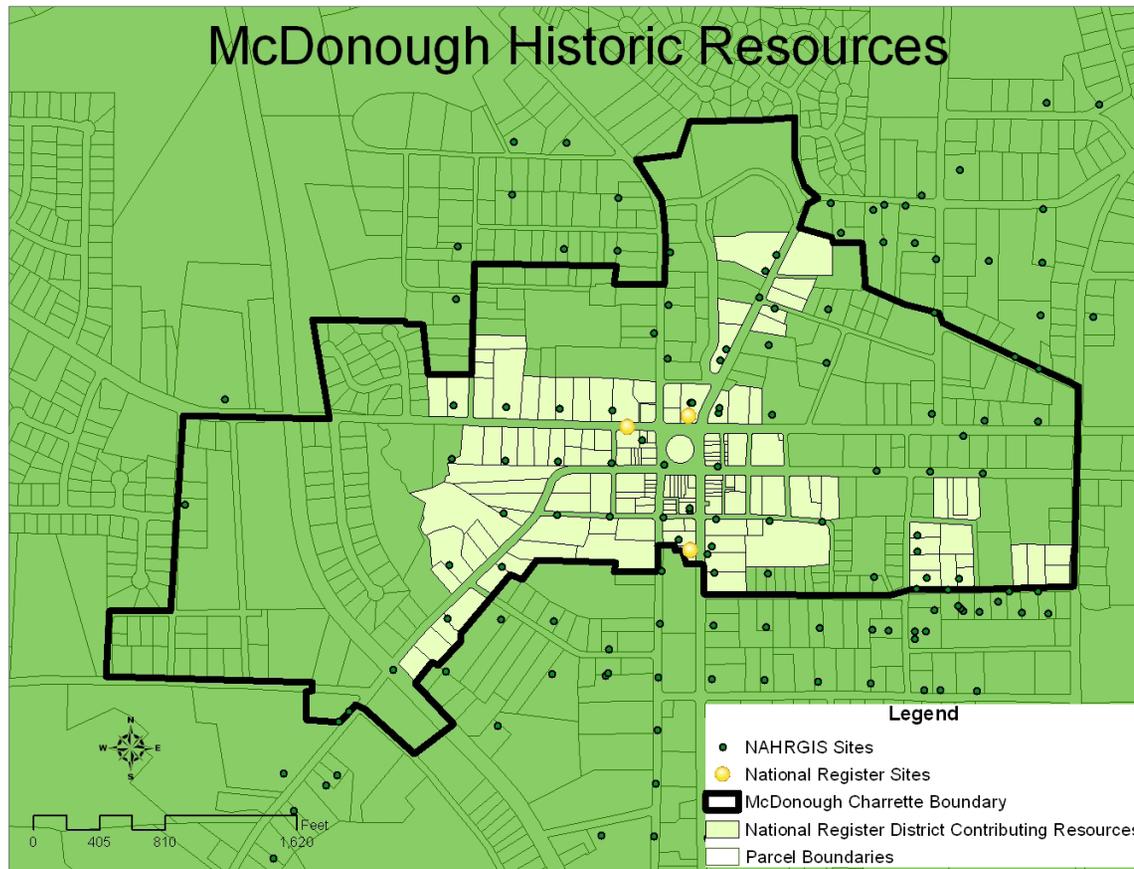
Historic Preservation

McDonough has two designated National Register Historic Districts. The McDonough Historic District encompasses the area around the downtown square, and the Lawrenceville Street Historic District includes properties on Lawrenceville Street between the town square and GA Highway 20. Additionally, three properties within the study boundary are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Globe Hotel, the Henry County Courthouse, and the Brown House.

The City of McDonough has been evaluating an effective means of preserving places of significance for the future and addressing the concerns of property owners on the perceived restrictions of proposed regulations. The city's Historic Preservation Commission is active and has been working with the elected officials and citizens on preservation efforts. The integrity of historic

buildings within the study area is generally good. In several locations, single family residential dwellings have been converted to commercial and office uses, particularly adjacent to the town square. However, in most instances, the façade of the building has retained its residential character, and modifications such as accessibility ramps and signage are minimally intrusive.

Within many of these areas are open lots that would provide opportunities for infill development. Instances of infill development have already occurred within the study area. In some cases, an attempt has been made to infill in a manner that is architecturally compatible with adjacent development. However, city ordinances lack specificity regarding compatible design standards for new construction on alteration within the study area. Therefore, it is possible that the integrity of the area will be compromised in the long term.



Historic resources in McDonough listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. NAHRGIS is the Georgia Natural, Archaeological and Historic Resources GIS database of cultural site information.

Previous Planning Work

McDonough Livable Center Initiative, 2004

McDonough's 2004 LCI Study emphasized the importance of the downtown historic district as the crown of Henry County and the county seat. Some of the major recommendations for the historic downtown area include:

- Redesign Big Spring Park as a Town Green surrounded by infill housing
- Strengthen linkages between downtown McDonough and Historic Alexander Park through new streetscapes, neighborhood entrances, and a greenway between Big Spring Park and Alexander Park
- Develop venues for the performing arts including the conversion of the Clay Plaza building into a new community arts center, and an outdoor amphitheater developed as part of the expanded Alexander Park
- Increase storefront space on key streets throughout downtown
- Expand the residential population downtown through innovative infill housing projects and loft conversions
- Improve street connectivity and mobility in the downtown area
- Establishing National Registry of Historical Properties
- Creating a series of overlay zoning districts for major corridors and village activity center nodes to regulate urban design, aesthetics, circulation, and access management
- Adopting a conservation open space overlay zoning district to encourage the preservation of open space within residential areas
- Adopting a new mixed-use zoning district to allow developers to build apartments, condominiums, and offices above shops and restaurants
- Creating standards for traditional neighborhood developments
- Adopt an Official Highway Map and a Connectivity Ordinance to improve the street network

McDonough Design Guidelines, 2004

Design Guidelines for residential and commercial historic properties were prepared by Jordan, Jones & Goulding in October 2004. This document provided a detailed historic context for the development of McDonough from its beginning as Henrysville, through the years of railroad development and other significant events such as the Civil War. Though established as early as 1823, much of McDonough reflects architectural character more typical of the late 19th and early 20th century. This can be readily seen in the area immediately adjacent to the square.

The McDonough Design Guidelines identify six architectural styles typical of residential development in Georgia: Greek Revival, Classical Revival, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Craftsman Bungalow, and English Vernacular Revival. Included in this list should also be styles of the mid-20th century such as the American Small House and the Ranch. Though briefly addressing commercial development, there is no discussion of styles typical of the late 19th and early 20th architecture found in the city.

City of McDonough By-Pass Feasibility Study, 2005

The City of McDonough received LCI supplemental funds from ARC in 2005 to conduct a study to evaluate a transportation bypass alternatives north of the downtown square. The need for a study stemmed from the City's 2004 LCI study which identified traffic congestion in the square and the lack of mobility as primary areas of concern.

The Bypass Alternatives Study examines Copeland Street and Hood Street as two corridors offering bypass potential to improve mobility and connectivity. The objectives of the study are:

- To provide a solution to alleviate traffic congestion in McDonough's downtown square and to minimize its role as a "commuter" thruway;
- To determine the best alternative for alignment and connectivity to accomplish improved vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle safety and mobility; and
- To serve as a catalyst for future City LCI implementation efforts related to this critical high priority transportation need.

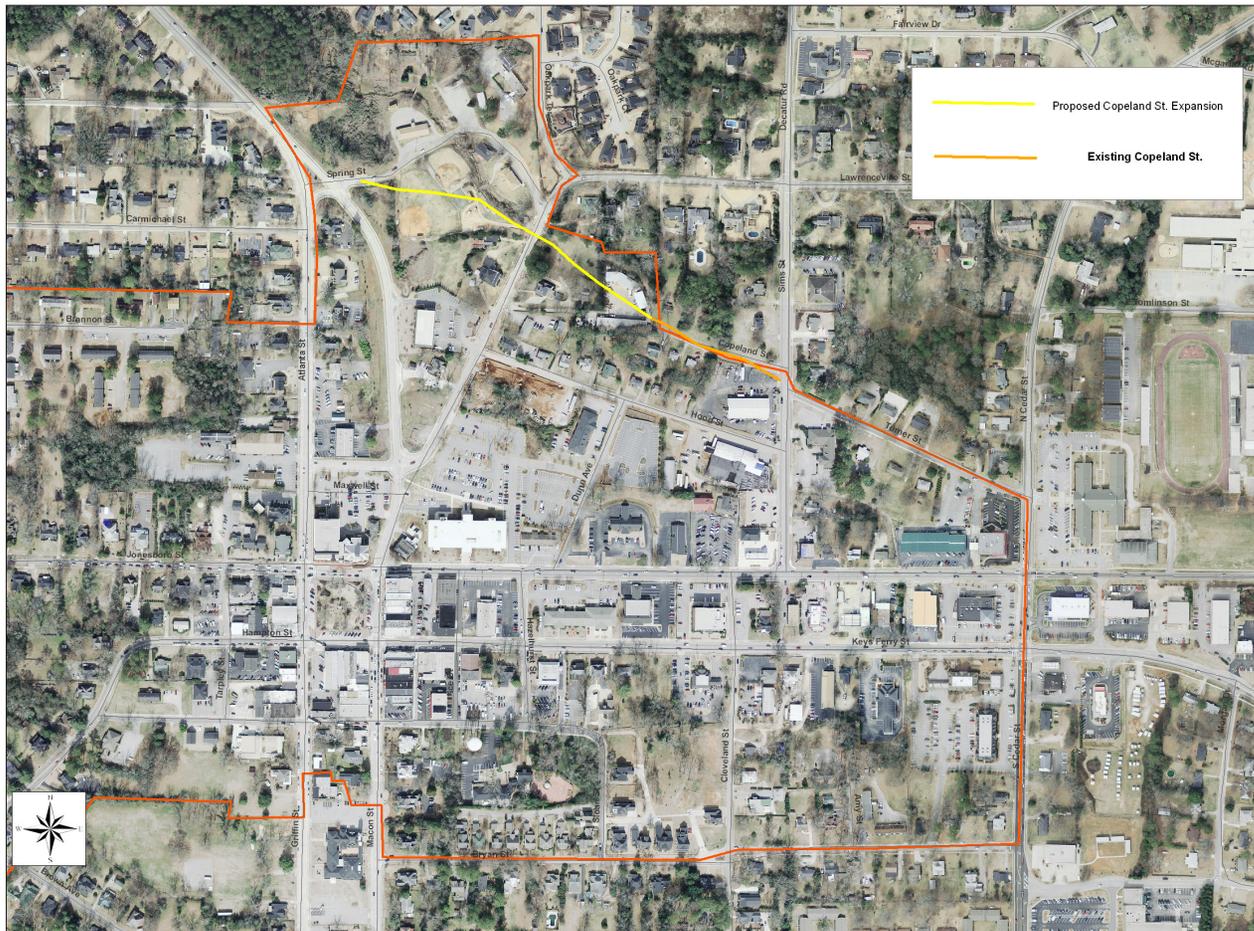
Based on the analysis, the study recommended Copeland Street as the bypass alternative choice.

Factors supporting this recommendation are:

- A Copeland Street extension would affect fewer parcels of private land, fewer older, possibly historic structures, and would minimize disruption to property owners, residents, and businesses
- It would provide a lower cost solution, with lower right-of-way acquisition costs, fewer new intersections, and less linear feet of new roadway construction;
- A Copeland Street extension would improve safety along Atlanta Road and Lawrenceville Street and provide needed pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the northern residential neighborhoods, Alexander Park, and the square; and

- The Copeland alternative offers the east/west connectivity to more efficiently serve the northern residential areas of McDonough.

The study finds that a Copeland Street bypass has the potential to greatly enhance the northern part of the City, offering economic development opportunities, development and redevelopment interest, and recreational accessibility. By creating options for travel and the much needed east-west connectivity, this bypass could help to alleviate traffic congestion in McDonough, supporting the City's goal to maintain the square as a livable, walkable, historic destination.



This map shows where the proposed Copeland Street expansion would be built.

McDonough Code Audits, 2010

In 2010, two code audits focusing on the City of McDonough's existing codes were completed.

Smart Growth Assessment, September 2010

The first, a Smart Growth Assessment completed by the Livable Communities Coalition in September of 2010, provided an assessment of smart growth planning and development in the City of McDonough. The assessment examined whether adopted plans and policies encourage and facilitate smart growth and are consistent with one another.

The assessment summarized the following key points around land use policy changes and matters impacting the charrette focus area:

- McDonough should re-evaluate its Future Land Use map to determine if the amount of land it has allocated to low-density, single-family residential development is in excess in the amount of land actual needed to meet future growth projections.
- The City should engage the public on the topic of density with the goal of increasing the level of allowable density for redevelopment, to facilitate workforce housing, and to accommodate livable places for residents including seniors.
- The Future Land Use map should reflect a prioritization of infill and growth around the city center.
- McDonough should redouble efforts to protect and acquire open space and green space.
- McDonough should conduct a detailed housing assessment to assess projected housing needs by income and demographic types, and to re-adjust zoning ordinances and comprehensive plan policies to meet such housing needs by consuming the least amount of land possible.
- The City should carefully pursue enhanced green building standards to complement sound planning and community development practices which are already in place.
- The City should explore changes in public works practices and zoning to address standards for livable communities such as road width, sidewalk standards, and new and retrofitted connectivity.

Quality Growth Audit, November 2010

The second audit, completed by ARC's Community Choices program, is a comprehensive evaluation of the City's official planning documents for consistency with quality growth goals from the City's comprehensive plan and Active Living by Design and Lifelong Communities principles. Documents analyzed include the Henry County/Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan, McDonough LCI Plan and the City's Code of Ordinances. Some of the suggestions resulting from this audit are below.

- Consider adopting corridor and activity center overlay districts with architectural design standards, building form standards and streetscape standards
- In order to allow construction of high quality, walkable mixed-use developments, the City might consider adding a mixed-use zoning district to its zoning ordinance. The City may also consider adjusting the density allowance for the more intense mixed-use activity centers to allow for higher residential, as the current housing density provisions, which range from less than 1 dwelling unit per acre to 8 dwelling units per acre average net density, may not support the type of development described in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The LCI recommends increasing storefront space along Highway 42 and Covington Street to encourage walkable, pedestrian-friendly development. Most of these properties are zoned O-1 or C-2, which both require a minimum front setback of 40 feet. The City could further increase the walkable storefront space along these corridors by reducing the allowable front yard setback.
- The City does not require bicycle paths or multi-use trails in any zoning district. Consider requiring bicycle paths in new mixed-use, corridor, or activity center overlays and in subdivisions or providing incentives to developers by crediting bicycle lanes and sidewalks of at least eight (8) feet toward open space requirements in those respective districts.
- According to the City's subdivision ordinances, blocks are permitted to be between 500 and 1,200 feet in length. Reducing or removing the minimum block size will allow flexibility in subdivision design to create connected street networks. Blocks of 200 to 600 feet in length are generally considered to be more walkable. New developments with smaller blocks will, over time, improve the City's street connectivity and create more walkable neighborhoods.

The Charrette Process

Public Kick-Off Meeting – June 13, 2011

The McDonough charrette document grew out of a public, four day workshop held from June 13 – June 16, 2011. The charrette team worked out of a studio space located at 19 Griffin Street in downtown McDonough. This studio was open to the general public throughout the four days, and community members were encouraged to drop by at any time to talk about the process and their ideas for the focus area.

The week kicked off with a public meeting held at the Hazlehurst House in downtown McDonough. This meeting introduced attendees to the charrette team and the process, and involved two interactive exercises that served as an initial opportunity to provide the charrette team with attendees' thoughts about the current conditions in the town square.



Public kick-off meeting.

The first exercise used aerial maps, and asked participants to place a red dot on places or things in the focus area that they would like to see changed or improved. Similarly, participants placed a green dot on areas of the focus area they enjoy and do not want to see changed. This exercise allowed the charrette team to get an initial idea of what the big issues are in the focus area, as expressed through the meeting attendees. The comments heard through this first exercise were very much aligned with the topics the City asked the charrette team to consider. This input served as a basis for the conversations throughout the week. The raw results as recorded during this exercise can be found in the appendix.



Each group reported on their findings at the public kick-off meeting.

Image Preference Survey

The final exercise of the night was an Image Preference Survey (IPS). An Image Preference Survey is a visual tool used to elicit stakeholders' responses to different design alternatives and their suitability in a given study area. During this, participants were shown a series of pictures depicting aspects of the built environment and were asked to think about and rate each image as it appears on a screen. Facilitators conduct the exercise without group discussion or pauses between images, to ensure that immediate and genuine individual preferences are represented. While it is not an exact science, the IPS helps identify design elements that are important to people.

Respondents were given scorecards showing thumbnail versions of the survey's 71 images, each with its own image number. Beside each image was a scale on which respondents were to circle their desired score, ranging from one to seven, with one being least desirable and seven being most desirable. The images were grouped in six categories representing different parts of the built environment:

1. **Form:** characteristics such as building height, width, depth, setback and lot coverage
2. **Parking:** configurations such as on- and off-street, front- and rear-facing, metered and non-metered, and impervious and pervious surfaces
3. **Materials:** types used in building facades, roofs, doors, windows and other areas; including brick, concrete, stone, steel, glass and others
4. **Streetscape:** components of the street such as sidewalks, parking lanes, bicycle lanes, automobile lanes, lighting, street furniture and landscaping
5. **Residential:** product types and styles such as single family detached, townhome, multifamily, historic and contemporary
6. **Open Spaces:** designs and uses including passive, active recreation, amphitheaters, greenways, trails and gardens

Technical team members collected scorecards at the end of the exercise, after which participants were given 12 adhesive dots – six green and six red. Participants were asked to select their one most desirable image and one least desirable image for each category, and accordingly to apply one green dot and one red dot to those images on a set of posters in the rear of the meeting hall.

Results

A total of 22 meeting attendees handed in scorecards. Scores were summed and divided by the number of respondents to arrive at an average score between one and seven for each image. The images were then ranked by average score from high to low for each category. Below are general conclusions based on the top two and bottom two ranked images in each group. The images themselves, ranked by average score and grouped by category, can be found in the appendix of this report. In general, the results of the green and red dot exercise at the end of the IPS tracked closely with the results of the IPS itself.

Form

High Scores: Image #s 3 (5.4) and 2 (5.0) | Low Scores: Image #s 8 (2.6) and 9 (2.1)

Participants' two most desirable images suggest the desire for a degree of additional height and bulk, while maintaining a connection to the traditional forms already present in the downtown square area. The two least desirable images indicate discomfort with low-density strip center forms with large setbacks, many of which can be found east of the square along Keys Ferry St. and John Frank Ward Blvd.



Top Votes



Bottom Votes

Parking

High Scores: Image #s 24 (5.3) and 23 (5.2) | Low Scores: Image #s 20 (2.4) and 15 (2.2)

Respondents' top two images demonstrate a preference for parking that is orderly, landscaped and well-maintained. The images also suggest a level of comfort with pervious surfaces and natural features that help mitigate stormwater runoff and other problems. The two least desirable images suggest an aversion to metered parking as well as poorly-maintained lots lacking curbs and gutters, shade trees and landscaping.



Top Votes



Bottom Votes

Materials

High Scores: Image #s 25 (5.0) and 32 (4.8) | Low Scores: Image #s 30 (3.9) and 31 (3.5)

The top two image selections in this group suggest that participants favor traditional building materials – such as brick, wood, stone and stucco – in traditional configurations, as opposed to more contemporary materials such as glass and metal. However, the disparity between the highest and lowest scores is small, and the lowest scores are nearly in the middle of the range, meaning these results are not as conclusive as those of other categories.



Top Votes



Bottom Votes

Streetscape

High Scores: Image #s 41 (5.8) and 43 (5.8) | Low Scores: Image #s 39 (2.2) and 46 (1.9)

The highest ranked images in this group indicate participants' desire for a pedestrian experience that includes places for people to walk, sit and congregate. Facilities that accommodate and encourage this vision include wide sidewalks, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees and landscaping. The lowest ranked images in this category suggest that participants dislike a lack of shade, confusing and non-uniform sidewalks, and conditions where the amount of right-of-way devoted to car use far exceeds car traffic volumes while undervaluing pedestrians and cyclists.



Top Votes



Bottom Votes

Residential

High Scores: Image #s 58 (5.4) and 56 (5.2) | Low Scores: Image #s 60 (3.0) and 57 (2.9)

Participants' highest ranked images suggest a preference for single-family detached dwellings in traditional architectural styles, even if those homes are spaced close together. The third ranked image, which shows attached townhomes with historic accents, scored not far below the second ranked image, suggesting a degree of comfort with higher residential density. The lowest scoring images indicate that participants do not prefer larger-scale and more urban multifamily structures, especially those featuring contemporary architecture.



Top Votes



Bottom Votes

Open Spaces

High Scores: Image #s 63 (6.0) and 68 (5.7) | Low Scores: Image #s 64 (4.5) and 69 (4.3)

Respondents' top images demonstrate preferences for not only passive-use spaces with formal designs, but also greenways and trails for active recreation and connectivity/mobility on foot or by bicycle. The bottom two images suggest that respondents are not as interested in large, high-intensity outdoor event spaces or small pocket parks with limited room for direct use. However, as with the Materials category, the gap between the highest and lowest scores is small, and the lowest scores are roughly in the middle of the range, making these results less conclusive than those of other groups.



Top Votes



Bottom Votes

Issues Explored Throughout the Week

Lifelong Communities Principles (LLC)

Created by the Atlanta Regional Commission, Lifelong Communities (LLC) is described as “A Regional Approach to Aging,” and focuses on designing places that meet the needs of residents young and old and create communities where individuals can live for a lifetime. The initiative recognizes that economic vitality, stability, and health cannot be maintained over an individual’s lifespan without a coherent and supportive physical neighborhood framework.

In many communities, housing and transportation infrastructure is not in place to support the changing needs and preferences of a growing older adult population. Getting healthy and staying healthy is increasingly difficult in communities with limited access to basic health services and too few opportunities for walking, exercise, good nutrition and recreation. In response to these challenges, Lifelong Communities focuses on 3 goals: promote housing and transportation options; encourage healthy lifestyles; expanding information and access to services.

Many communities in the Atlanta region face challenges in ensuring their communities are Lifelong Communities. This is significant, as the Atlanta region, similar to the nation, is experiencing a monumental demographic shift. By 2030, one out of every five residents in the region will be over the age of 60. The majority of older adults living in Henry County are located in McDonough.

The City of McDonough, recognizing these challenges, asked the charrette team to assess the focus area as it applies to these basic tenants of a lifelong community and identify opportunities or shortcomings in the focus area for aging adults. Laura Keyes, LLC program manager with the ARC facilitated this conversation. Based on this meeting, the team came up with the following LLC recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Community Choices Lifelong Communities Growth Audit – in Appendix.

- This audit should be considered and shared with the consultant the City hires to complete an overlay zone for the downtown area.

2. Re-zone to allow neighborhood-based retail services and the integration of housing options in existing communities.

- When older Georgians decide to remain in their homes, the majority are also deciding to remain in un-walkable communities with no public transit and no access to basic services or amenities unless they are able to drive. Rezone to allow higher densities of housing including condominiums, apartments or lofts above stores.
- Zoning changes should also ensure that supportive housing is located within activity centers of communities, bringing older adults within walking distance of critical services. Zoning can incentivize supportive housing options in areas with access to recreational amenities, bike and walking paths and health clinics so that housing for older adult is also housing that promotes active, healthy lifestyles.

3. Address comprehensive accessibility in building code.

- To be fully accessible, from inside the dwelling, down the street and into the restaurant, theater or store, a development must be supported by zoning codes that address accessibility continuously across the entire urban environment. In the existing regulations, accessibility is monitored through a mix of standards that start and stop at the edges of each building or public space. By correlating zoning code with building code, interventions can be tailored to the conditions of the site and ultimately measure the strategy's performance, not just the compliance of these codes.

4. Provide non-age segregated housing options.

- While several counties and cities in the state have adopted senior housing ordinances to promote the development of housing for older adults, all of these ordinances have followed the dominant development trend of the past two decades: They segregate older adults by age. These new zoning ordinances require senior housing developments to restrict occupancy to the 55+ population in accordance with the Fair Housing Act. While some older adults will choose to live only with other older adults, this is not universally preferable.
- Age-integrated housing that focuses on design and planning is more flexible and can respond to local market and demographic shifts.
- Future zoning changes to promote the development of senior housing should not rely on age restrictions to guarantee the supports, design and location that older adults will need.

5. Connectivity between the focus area and outlying services needs to be improved.

- There are currently no sidewalks leading to the senior center. The City could explore whether SPLOST funds could be used for this and other connectivity improvements.
- In addition, the City should explore whether opportunities are available to use New Freedom funds for improving connectivity to downtown services. The federal New Freedom grant program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. These funds can be used to help develop sidewalks and improve connectivity in places with older adults. Should they apply, it will be very important that the City clearly establish in their application the Point A to Point B destinations to be connected to – a farmers market, park, senior center, where people live now. There will be approximately \$2 million available in September, 2011.

Wayfinding Signage and Parking

One of the most popular critiques of downtown McDonough throughout the LCI study was the loss of on-street parking as part of the north-south one-way pair project and the redesign of the town square. The redesign eliminated most storefront parking spaces on streets around the square and added a lesser number to the angled parking adjacent to the square. The controversial change angered many local business owners and raised questions of the viability of downtown businesses. Since this time, a parking deck has been built within the square area, and additional parking options are being sought. A significant component of the charrette planning process evaluated the amount of parking located in downtown McDonough and within the focus area.



City of McDonough parking meters around the square.

Throughout the four days in McDonough, parking issues were brought up at virtually every meeting. Issues identified throughout the meetings demonstrated a continued perception of a lack of parking near the square, and some uneasiness about the role of parking meters within the square. ARC staff heard a variety of opinions regarding the parking issue, but did not hear a clear consensus over what steps the City should take to reconcile the issue. The parking issues can be broken down as follows:

Removal of meters

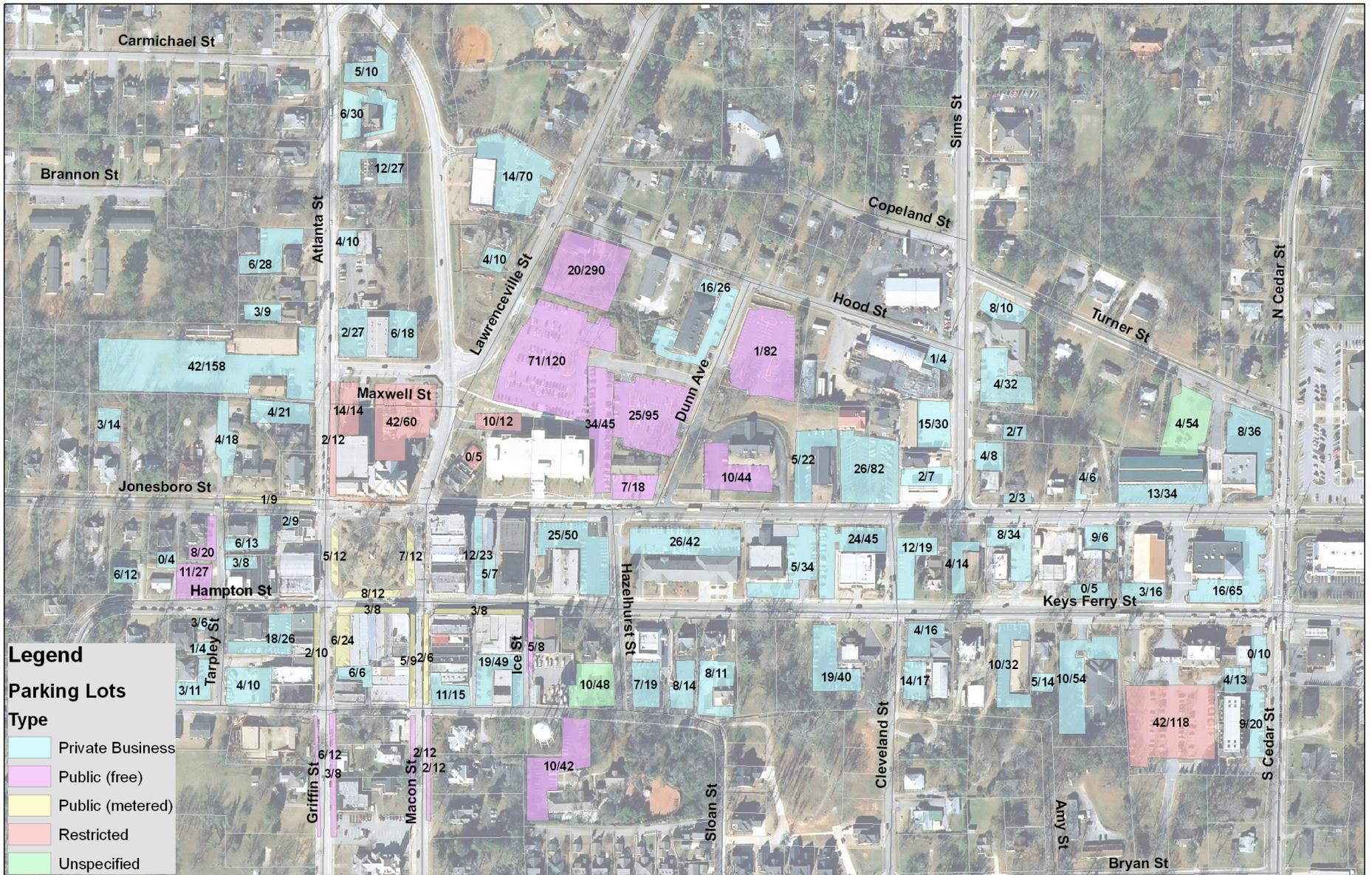
Stakeholders appeared to be divided on this issue. Some stated that the meters hurt business by not providing convenient parking and are not appropriate for the small town character of McDonough. Others were concerned that removing the meters and providing free parking will enable people who work around the square to park and stay all day, a problem that occurred in the past. In addition, virtually all stakeholders felt the two hour time limit on the meters did not allow enough time for a visitor to both shop and dine around the square.

Shortage of Parking

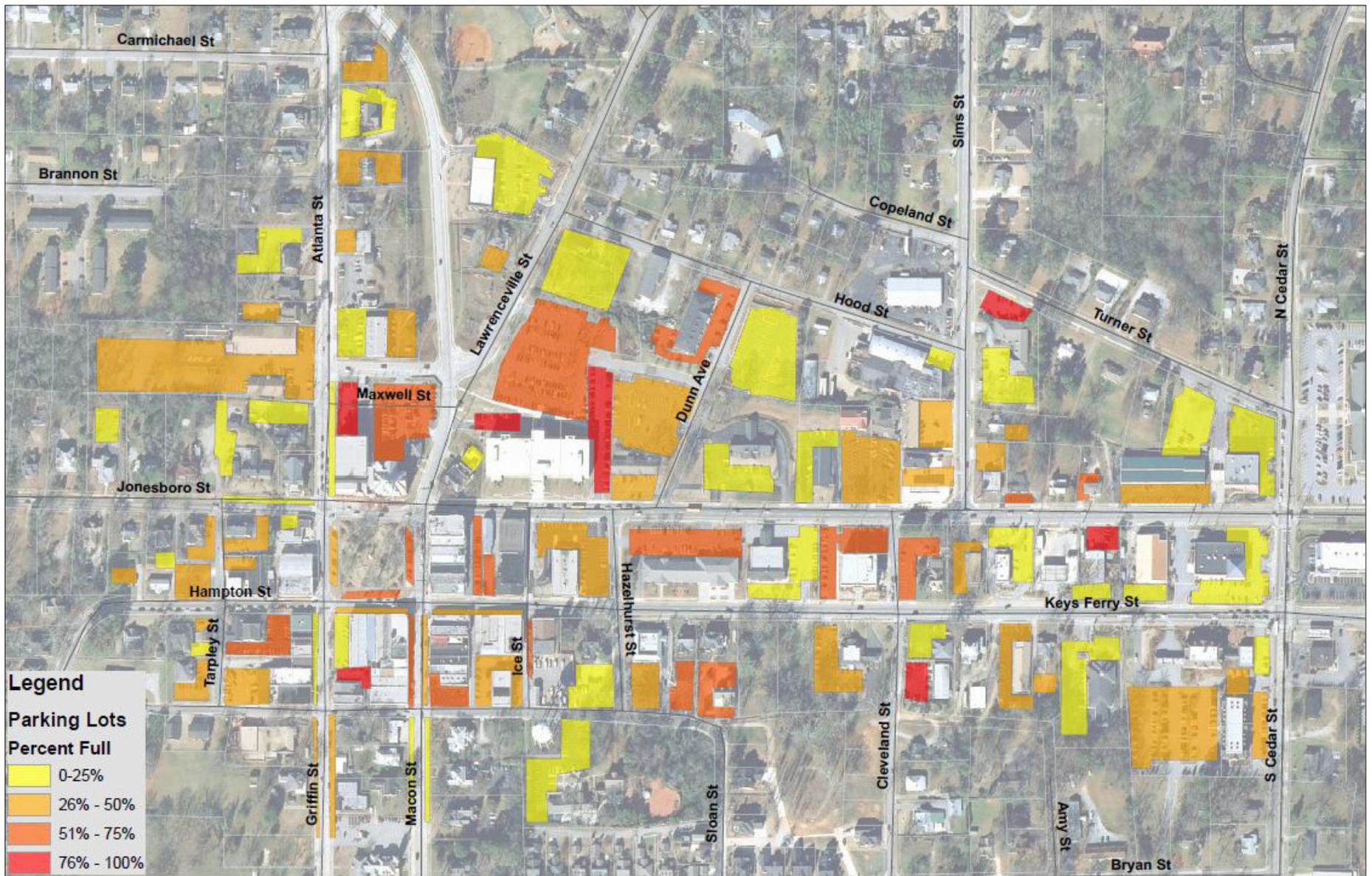
A parking study conducted by ARC staff evaluated the parking availability and demand in downtown McDonough. The results of the study indicated that only a third of the parking spaces provided in downtown McDonough are utilized on a daily basis. ARC staff calculated that there are approximately 2,818 parking spaces within the study area. Some spaces are metered or restricted to private business but 28% are public free spaces. The chart and maps below illustrate the findings from this study.

Table 2: ARC Parking Study Results, 2011

	Private Business	Public (free)	Public (metered)	Restricted	Unspecified	TOTAL
Number of Spots Available	1550	788	157	221	102	2818
% of total spots available	55.00%	28.00%	5.60%	7.80%	3.60%	-
% of total cars parked	58.80%	20.60%	6.50%	11.80%	1.50%	-
Number of Cars Parked	553.5	194.25	61	110.75	14.5	934
Ratio (Spots:Cars)	36%	25%	39%	50%	14%	33%



Parking maps by type. This map also shows how many spaces, on average, were used out of the total number of spaces during ARC's assessment.



This map shows the capacity that these lots were used, on average, during ARC's parking assessment

As these maps indicate, there is a good amount of surface parking in proximity to downtown, although not all of this parking is centrally located around the square. It seems that a key concern is that the visitors to the square do not know where parking is located compared to their final destination. Currently the study area does have some small signs for business that are attached to pedestrian light poles; however those signs do not designate public parking and the signs are difficult to read while driving.

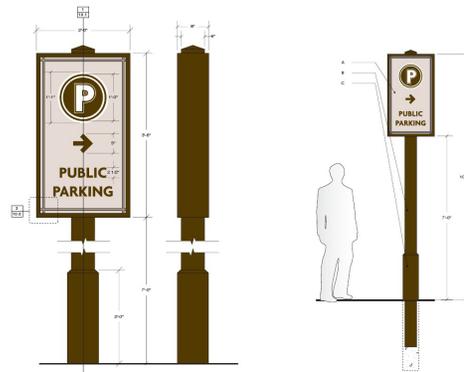
Recommendations:

1. Allow for 4 hour parking.

- An achievable first step the City of McDonough could implement would be allowing for four hour metered parking downtown. There seemed to be general consensus among stakeholders that an extension of allowed time on the meters would promote shopping and dining downtown, while still deterring employees from parking all day in front of businesses. However, this should be implemented with an anti-shuffling ordinance to prevent long term all day parking. Turnover of meter spacing is important to promote visitors to downtown McDonough.

2. Develop recognizable parking wayfinding signage.

- This allows visitors coming to the square to immediately know where parking is available. This signage should be consistent and the same parking symbol should be included in all maps and brochures available to visitors, so parking around the square can be easily identified.



Parking wayfinding example.

3. Maintain city parking lots.

- The City of McDonough should enhance and maintain the public lots to make them attractive to visitors. The majority of surface lots around the square contain no shade trees or landscaping. This is a fairly simple improvement that would have a lot of impact.

4. Install pedestrian wayfinding kiosks.

- A key complaint heard throughout the week was that visitors who do park at public lots do not know what direction to walk to get to their final destination. A kiosk in each lot, containing a wayfinding map of stores, restaurants and other key destination and walking times may assist and help promote the use of free public parking spots.

5. Explore the development of a wayfinding and marketing campaign.

- With the City of McDonough being over 12 square miles, the city should explore developing an integrated wayfinding/ marketing campaign for all of the city's destinations. This may include the development of special color signage, sign toppers and directional arrows to promote each area. This will promote the square as a destination while still providing a link to other areas of the city.

6. Explore options of a municipal lot on the south side of the square.

- There is a lack of free public parking near the southern edge of the square, where a majority of restaurants are located. The city could explore options with vacant or abandoned lots to develop a small municipal lot for evening parking use.
- If meters are removed, a major concern is that court employees and merchant employees will park in storefront spaces for the duration of the day. While the City can still implement four hour parking without meters, some of the responsibility falls to court employers and merchants to ensure that their employees are not parking in these spaces.

Context Sensitive Design and Street Connectivity

The purpose of the technical session on Context Sensitive Design (CSD) and Street Connectivity was to identify opportunities and challenges related to accessibility and mobility to/from the McDonough square and through the study area. One of the goals of the LCI Program and the McDonough LCI Plan is to promote and encourage bicycle and pedestrian trips within and to the study area, and improving access and increasing connectivity for all users of the transportation network.

The technical session was facilitated by ARC, and participants included the GDOT District Traffic Engineer, GDOT engineer from the Office of Design Policy, City of McDonough Public Works Director, ARC staff engineer, City of McDonough and ARC planners, and representatives from the community and business owners.

ARC staff gave a PowerPoint presentation showing photos of existing sidewalks and streets in the square, the eight approaches to the square (Jonesboro Street, Hampton Street, Griffin Street, Macon Street, Keys Ferry Street, John Frank Blvd, Lawrenceville Street, Atlanta Street), and a few key connector streets such as Brown Ave., Sloan St., and Sims Street. Participants took note of sidewalk and travel lane widths, condition of sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, on-street parking and traffic. Next ARC showed a variety of transportation solutions from around the country that could potentially be employed in McDonough, such as: bike lanes, separated bike lanes, multi-use paths, buffered sidewalks, back-in angled parking, mid-block crossings and crosswalk treatments, signals and signage, and traffic calming.

Following the presentations, participants were asked to identify the primary mobility and accessibility issues, and were given the opportunity to redesign McDonough's streets by drawing on tracing paper over enlarged aerial photos of the study area. Below is a summary of the challenges, opportunities and recommendations that came from the session.

Challenges

1. Intersections in the square are very dangerous for pedestrians.
 - Turning cars and trucks do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.
 - There is not a pedestrian-only crossing phase and no restrictions on turning on red.

2. Pedestrian safety is also a concern on the east side of the study area where pedestrian crashes are clustered along John Frank Ward Blvd and Keys Ferry Street.
3. Sidewalks in the square are not wide enough to accommodate outdoor dining, seating, landscaping, etc.
4. Angled parking on the square is dangerous.
 - Line of sight is blocked by other parked cars when backing out, i.e. driver cannot see on-coming cars.
 - Parking is located across the street from the businesses, requiring dangerous pedestrian crossings.
5. There are no bike facilities, and in particular, a lack of bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the three parks in the study area.
6. The planned McDonough Bypass may relieve traffic, but could threaten the livelihood of downtown businesses and vibrancy of the square.
7. The study area is traversed by multiple state highways that all come together at the square (SR 20, SR 81, SR 42/US 23, and SR 155 east of the square), and a one-way pair system leading to and through the square. Some of the challenges relate to the one-way pairs limiting access and increasing speeds, and state road designation and the traffic volumes (carrying 10,000+/- vehicles a day) may limit options to make the corridors more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
8. Distance between public parking deck and the square is too long for seniors, and the walk is unpleasant (no landscaping, adjacent to surface parking lots, etc), especially in the summer due to lack of shade.
9. The alleyways (e.g. Sloan St., Tarplay St., Ice St., Maxwell St, etc) which serve as alternate routes to avoid the square do not have sidewalks, or proper striping or signage – can be dangerous.

Opportunities

1. There is ample right-of-way available on the main roadways through the study area, which affords the ability to incorporate transportation improvements. Specifically:

- Griffin St., Macon St., Keys Ferry St, John Frank Ward, and Atlanta St each have two 12' travel lanes and two 8' – 10' shoulders and sidewalks.
- Roadways in the square are approximately 48' – 54' wide including two travel lanes, turn lanes, parallel parking and angled parking. (This excludes the Jonesboro St leg which is approximately 25' wide due to the courthouse curb extension and drop-off area).

Table 3: Existing Road Widths

Street Name/Location	Approximate Existing Roadway Width	Existing Number of Lanes (widths are approximate)
Griffin St. (in the Square)	48.6'	Two SB lanes and angled parking
Hampton St./Keys Ferry (in the Square)	53.7'	Two EB lanes, parallel parking lane and angled parking
Macon St. (in the Square)	50.4'	Two SB lanes and angled parking
Jonesboro St. (in the Square)	Section 1: 25.6' Section 2: (41')	Section 1: Two WB lanes; Section 2: Two WB lanes and right-turn lane
Griffin St. (from Sloan to Macon St)	43' - 45'	Two 12' SB lanes, two 8' – 10' shoulders, 5' sidewalks, 18" – 2' buffer
Macon St (from Griffin St to Sloan)	44' - 46'	Two 10'-12' NB lanes, two 10' – 12' shoulders, 5' sidewalks, 18" – 2' buffer
Keys Ferry St (from Ice St to Zach Hinton Pkwy)	39'	Two 10-12' EB lanes, two 6' – 8' shoulders, 5' sidewalks, 18" – 2' buffer
John Frank Ward Blvd (from Ice St to Zach Hinton Pkwy)	38' - 40'	Two 10-12' WB lanes, two 6' – 8' shoulders, 5' sidewalks, 18" – 2' buffer
Lawrenceville/Atlanta St (NB) from Maxwell St to Spring St/two-way convergence	27'	Two 12' – 14' NB lanes, 5' sidewalks and 18" – 2' buffer (no shoulders)
Atlanta St (SB) from Spring St/beginning of one-way pairs to Maxwell St.	44'	Two 10' - 12' SB lanes, two 8' – 10' shoulders, 5' sidewalks, 18" – 2' buffer
Jonesboro St (from Tarplay St. to Toby Springs Ln)	22' – 24' (Tarplay to Atlanta Rd - 37')	Two 12' travel lanes, 5' sidewalks with 18" – 2' buffer (Tarplay to Atlanta block also has one lane of parallel parking)
Hampton St (from Tarplay St. to Highland Ave.)	30' - 36'	Two 12' travel lanes, 5' sidewalks with 18" – 2' buffer
Sims St (from John Frank Ward to Lawrenceville St)	38'	3 lanes (two 12' travel lanes, one 14' center turn lane) and 5' sidewalks on east side, no sidewalk for most of west side of Sims.

2. The programmed project (construction scheduled in 2017) to convert Jonesboro/Hampton to one-way pairs poses an opportunity to not only improve traffic flow, but to improve safety and accessibility for bicycles and pedestrians and to create an attractive, welcoming gateway to McDonough.
3. There is a largely complete existing sidewalk network throughout the study area (except for a few alleys). While the sidewalks are in various states of condition, and may lack a buffer from the roadway or landscaping, they do provide for basic mobility needs and safety.
4. Many destinations within the study area are within walking distance (generally within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile), such as, city and county buildings, the square, neighborhoods, businesses, restaurants, parking and parks.
5. The square itself is valuable asset to the City. It is the centerpiece of the community and serves as a public gathering place, a park for residents and visitors to enjoy, and helps to frame and create a context for future development.
6. Funding and timing: The timing of this charrette and the follow-up studies will allow the City to take advantage of LCI funding opportunities expected in 2011.
7. There are three parks close to downtown – Alexander Park about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from downtown, and South Cedar and Heritage each about 2 miles from downtown.
8. The planned McDonough Bypass project offers the opportunity to alleviate traffic, create a more pedestrian environment in and around the square, and also to improve connectivity around town.

ARC Recommendations

ARC staff analyzed data on crashes, traffic volumes, existing facilities and dimensions, and gathered information on needs and preferences from residents, business owners, City officials and staff, GDOT staff and other stakeholders at multiple public meetings and focused technical sessions. Based on this needs assessment and data analysis, ARC recommends the following actions:

1. **Adopt a “Complete Streets” Policy**

- This policy will ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are included in all roadway projects (in particular in the planned GDOT one-way conversion and County/City Bypass projects).
- Complete Streets does not mean that all roadways necessarily have bike lanes and sidewalks – there may be some local roads where traffic calming is all that is needed to make it safer for bicycle and pedestrians, and other roadway where a multi-use path is more desirable.
- The key factor in a complete streets policy is that roadways are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation.

2. **Develop a Detailed Connectivity and Streetscape Plan to Determine Precise Facility Types Needed and Streetscape Design Guidelines**

In addition, the plan should specifically address the following:

- Plan should include proposed bicycle and/or path connections between the Cities’ three major parks: Alexander, Cedar, and Heritage.
- Investigate need for and feasibility of a downtown circulator.
- Implementation of the Plan: **Adopt Streetscape Design Guidelines** to be applied to future real estate development as well as roadway projects.

3. **Adopt an Access Management Policy**

- This will enhance safety for all roadway users, as well as preserve the transportation investment and level-of-service of the corridor.
- Installing medians not only reduce motor vehicle crashes, but they also provide a safer crossing for pedestrians, and can be landscaped to beautify the area and create gateway to McDonough.
- Consolidating driveways, restricting curb cuts, and encouraging shared parking and inter-parcel access creates

a more walkable environment, reduces crashes and conflict points for motor vehicles, and also creates more land and street frontage for property owners that can be used for patio seating, additional parking, or even new or expanded buildings.

4. Revisit Design of One-way Pair Project

- The City should meet with GDOT regarding the Jonesboro/Hampton one-way pair project (PI# 321530) to determine if the current design is consistent with the LCI Plan's recommendations, and if not, whether the design can be modified.

5. Proactively Implement Measures to Ensure the Long-Term Viability of the Downtown Square once the McDonough Bypass is Opened

Measures could include:

- Conduct corridor and land use study for the proposed Bypass and properties adjacent to it (study should include an audit of existing development regulations to determine allowable uses, densities, driveways, etc).
- Adopt new zoning or regulations restricting development along new Bypass to ensure the economic vitality of downtown McDonough, and also to preserve the transportation and mobility investment in the corridor.
- Implement access management policies through regulations (such as limiting driveway permits or requiring shared driveways and parking), and also through the project design process (adding medians, restricted left turns, etc).
- Develop a business retention and recruitment plan for businesses located downtown, including installation of wayfinding signage to downtown along the new Bypass and at key gateways in intersections.

6. Work with GDOT's District 3 (Thomaston) Office to implement Minor Intersection Improvements in the Square Such as Signal Timing, Crosswalk Paint, and Signage

7. Apply for LCI Transportation Funding to Implement Recommended Streetscape and Connectivity Projects

Specific Transportation Project Recommendations:

While the forthcoming detailed connectivity and streetscape plan will conduct a more thorough analysis of transportation needs, there were a number of specific projects that were identified during this brief, but intensive planning process. The methodology used to determine this project list included public and stakeholder input and an analysis of existing conditions (e.g. gaps in network, crash data, traffic volumes, deficiencies of existing facilities, etc). Additional projects will be identified through the detailed connectivity and streetscape plan. Those projects that were identified as needed, but require more investigation and preliminary design work are listed below as "potential projects".

1. Downtown McDonough Intersection Safety Project: At all four intersections of the McDonough square, implement the following:

- Install textured sidewalks to serve as traffic calming and as an audible notice to drivers to slow down in the Square;
- Paint crosswalks with high visibility reflective paint/thermoplastic;
- Install high-intensity fluorescent yellow pedestrian crossing signs in advance of the intersections and at the intersections;
- Install pedestrian countdown timers;
- Upgrade signals and adjust timing to allow Leading Pedestrian Interval (this gives pedestrians a "head start" crossing the street to minimize conflicts with turning traffic);
- Restrict right turns on red where possible



This brick crosswalk is not easily seen by an approaching driver. Extra precaution should be taken to ensure motorists know they are approaching a crosswalk.



White striping is more easily noticeable by motorists than red brick paving, which blends into the street. Prominent crosswalk signs also help to alert motorists they are approaching a crosswalk.



Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) are a traffic signalization strategy that assigns pedestrians an exclusive 3 to 5 second signal (in some cases much longer) to begin crossing the street before cars get a green light.

McDonough Square Streetscape:

- Remove on-street parallel parking to widen sidewalks
- Install planters that can also serve as informal seating, landscaping, benches/seating areas, and establish an outdoor seating zone.
- Re-design angled parking, options to consider:
 - Replace existing head-in angled parking with back-in angled parking. The benefits include improved line of vision to see oncoming vehicles, and a buffer between the roadway and parking is not needed (since sight distance is no longer an issue). The additional space could be used as a bike lane or for wider sidewalks.

- Relocated angled parking from square-side to business/curb-side. Reconfiguring of travel lanes will be required. This allows more convenience access to businesses on the square, eliminates many pedestrian crossings, and provides addition buffer between sidewalks and traffic.
- Consider removing angled parking altogether on one or more sides of the square. This would allow for the addition of a bike lane, parallel parking, and/or wider sidewalks.



Wider sidewalks and shade trees can enhance the visitor's experience on the square. In order to widen sidewalks, some on street parking may need to be removed.

2. **McDonough Bike Lanes:** The following projects could be done entirely within the curb and existing right-of-way, and is primarily a striping and signage project (but may require pavement overlay).
 - **Phase I:** Install separated or buffered one-way bike lanes on Griffin St/Atlanta St and Macon St./Atlanta St as a one-way pair system (i.e. one SB bike lane on Atlanta/Griffin and one NB bike lane on Macon/Atlanta).

- **Phase II:** Install separated or buffered one-way bike lanes on John Frank Ward Blvd and Keys Ferry Street as a one-way pair system (i.e. one WB bike lane on J.F. Ward and one EB bike lane on Keys Ferry).
- Bike lanes to transition to shared lane markings (or “sharrows”) through for the one block adjacent to the square due to limited right-of-way.
- Install bicycle parking in the square and along the corridor. Bike racks could be installed immediately in the painted hatched-out triangle area at the ends of the angled parking bays, and also in front of the courthouse.



An example of a separated bike lane.

3. Sims Road Corridor Improvements (from John Frank Ward Blvd to Lawrenceville Street):

- Reduce lane widths to 11’ travel lanes, 10’ center turn lane, and apply the additional 6’ to the shoulders to create bike lanes or bikeable shoulders. This also serves to create a much needed buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway, and provides a buffer for motorists pulling out of driveways.
- Install medians or crossing islands where driveways and intersections allow. Mark crosswalks to the median/island at key

intersections (i.e. Hood, Turner, etc) and other locations as needed.

- Install 5’ sidewalk along Westside of Sims.
- Improvements to intersection of Sims and Lawrenceville, including crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signal heads, signage, and ADA upgrades.

Additional Potential Project Requiring Additional Study:

1. Multi-Use path network connecting the City’s three parks to downtown
2. Street improvements to the “alleyways” surrounding the square (e.g. Sloan St., Tarplay St., Maxwell St., Ice St. Hazlehurst St., etc)
3. Expand street network by extending streets and alleyways, formalizing large through-driveways as streets, and breaking up excessively large blocks to improve connectivity, walkability, enhance traffic safety and foster economic development. Shorter blocks and the expansion of a traditional grid network improve pedestrian accessibility, disperse traffic, and can create new street frontages for development and an expansion of the tradition grid street.



An example of a median providing a pedestrian crossing island.

Tourism, Cultural Events and Arts

The meeting on tourism, cultural events and arts included stakeholders representing the City Hospitality and Tourism Board, the Henry County Players, the Henry Arts Alliance, local artists and local business owners. This session was facilitated by Bruce Green with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Product Development Division.

McDonough already has many pieces in place to build a strong and successful arts and tourism program. The key to moving forward will be organization. Stakeholders concurred that local events generally proved to be successful and draw crowds. However, stakeholders could also identify a number of challenges they felt hampered the overall success of tourism, arts and cultural events in the city. Specific concerns included:

1. Not understanding the roles and responsibilities of various groups, including the Main Street program, the Chamber of Commerce, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Hospitality and Tourism Board
2. Lack of responsiveness by city and county officials to promoting the arts and culture in the community
3. Need for physical space for arts and culture activities and lack of a permanent home for the Henry Players (the Clay Theatre has been suggested as an option, but there are other buildings as well)
4. Need for additional incentives to promote arts and culture
5. Need for better organization and communication among all of those groups with an interest in promoting downtown
6. Need for assistance in identifying funding sources and grants for arts and cultural activities

Specific goals and recommendations were identified based on the community's issues and opportunities heard through this meeting.

1. Build on the Success of Existing Events

- Survey license plates in parking areas to better target future marketing efforts.
- Include a celebrity appearance at special events to boost attendance; examples include NASCAR drivers, former *Dancing with the Stars* contestants, local resident who was *The Biggest Loser* contestant.
- Connect existing events with larger events, such as Bike Ride Across Georgia (BRAG) Tour.

2. Build Stronger Partnerships Among Organizations

- Define common goals.
- Compile a database of potential partner organizations, including information on mission and assets.
- Improve communications among organizations and with local government officials.
 - Host a retreat to determine a unified set of goals.
 - Be consistently present at City Council meetings to advance those goals.
 - Understand that many interests are competing for the time and resources of the City Council and don't get frustrated.
- Encourage the city to hire a point person to coordinate activities among various arts, culture and tourism organizations, as well as merchants and residents.

3. Increase Visibility for Organizations and Events

- Utilize State resources for press releases through both print and electronic media.
- Improve local website to be more attractive and user friendly.
- Utilize digital media (Facebook, Groupon, etc) to spread the word.

4. Enhance the Historic Core

- Give Consideration to Georgia’s model code for *Form-based Development Codes for Cultural Heritage Tourism Districts* in the development of the *Mixed Use Overlay Code* for McDonough.
- Through the Historic Preservation Commission, develop a grass roots advocacy program to encourage historic preservation.
- Through the Historic Preservation Commission, acquire façade easements for historically significant properties in McDonough.
- Undertake a demonstration project to highlight the economic viability of rehabilitated historic structures in McDonough:
 - The Truman House
 - Chafin’s Furniture Store
 - Clay’s Theatre
- Consider options for the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings to accommodate the needs for arts and cultural organizations

It was important for community members to be able to identify other successful projects to look toward for additional information and inspiration. Some of the following ideas were suggested during the meeting, and others have been supplemented by the Charrette Team. Towns who have implemented similar projects are also provided for reference.

1. Form-Based Development Codes for Cultural Heritage Tourism Districts

- City of Darien (Appendix C in the City Code of Ordinances)

2. Demonstration Project

- City of Madison – Walker Rose Lane neighborhood infill
- City of Greensboro – Commercial Rehabilitation: Yesterday’s Café and Genuine Georgia

3. Adaptive Reuse and Renovation

- City of Stone Mountain – CDBG funds to develop arts studios incubator space
- City of Atlanta/ Atlanta Development Authority – Telephone Factory Lofts

4. Historic Theatre Rehabilitation

- Strand Theatre – City of Marietta
- Douglass Theatre – City of Macon
- Grand Theatre – City of Fitzgerald

5. Digital Media

- North Georgia Canopy Tours – City of Lula



A “before” picture of the old theatre.



LEW OLIVER INC
WHOLE TOWN SOLUTIONS

An example of what the theatre could look like after renovations and upgrades.



A rendering was also done to demonstrate what additional height could look like on this block. The picture depicts two additional stories added to the existing buildings on Macon Street. These stories are stepped back as to create a rooftop deck on the existing buildings and to soften the appearance of additional density on this block.

Based on the issues and opportunities identified by stakeholders, the following additional resources may be of assistance as well:

1. Theatre Restoration

- Fox Theatre Institute - <http://www.foxtheatreinstitute.org/>

2. Acquisition and Monitoring of Façade Easements

- Easements Atlanta - <http://www.easementsatlanta.org/>
- The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation – www.georgiatruster.org

3. Historic Structure Reports and Analysis of Historic Buildings (Note: the below are both graduate programs through State Universities which offer free technical analysis of historic buildings as class projects under the guidance of the faculty)

- Georgia State University Heritage Preservation Program (contact Professor Richard Laub at rlaub@gsu.edu)
- University of Georgia Historic Preservation Program (contact Professor Mark Reinberger at reinberg@uga.edu)

4. Historic Preservation

- National Trust for Historic Preservation – www.preservationnation.org
- National Register of Historic Places – www.nps.gov/nr/
- Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office – www.gashpo.org

5. Financial Assistance and Grants

- The Foundation Center (Atlanta) – www.foundationcenter.org
- Institute of Museum and Library Services – www.ims.gov
- “Show Me the Money” Federal Grant Opportunities - <http://nthpgrants.blogspot.com/>

Business Retention and Recruitment

Several business owners were present in technical meetings throughout the week. However, to ensure the team properly understood and heard their needs and issues, a meeting specific to business owners was held. This meeting was attended by several members of the Merchants Roundtable, a recently reorganized merchants association. During this meeting the group explored several issues that impacted the success of businesses in the town square.

Specific concerns heard:

1. New business owners face a convoluted and confusing process when opening a business in the City. The City lacks a central point that harbors this information.
2. There is no strategy or plan for attracting desired businesses to the square.
3. The group felt that no one is on the same page when it comes to the future of the square. The City, Main Street Program, Tourism Board and Merchants Roundtable do not communicate. Currently these organizations act as four uncoordinated bodies with four independent goals.
4. The City does not lead in terms of forging and reinforcing a unique brand/vision/buzz/identity for the square.
5. The merchants present felt that most merchants understand the government process to a degree, but the City does not understand its merchants.
6. A strong merchants association is needed to help unify a marketing message and coordinate collaboration.

Based on what was discussed through this meeting, specific recommendations include:

1. “Cheat Sheet” for New Businesses

- The City could create a central location where people looking to start a business know to go to access information on what is required.
- In its simplest form, this could be a sort of “cheat sheet” people can access through a website or at City Hall. This

form would explain the steps someone should follow to open a business in McDonough, and where they need to go to obtain permits, find requirements for things such as signage, zoning and health codes, information about façade grant, and anything else that would be useful.

2. Formulate Wish List of Businesses

- Either before or during the writing of the Business Retention and Recruitment Plan, the City, with input from stakeholders, should compile a unified “wish list” of businesses that are desired in the square.
- The resulting plan can focus on how to recruit them.
- Some uses heard during the meetings that would be desirable: theater, bike shop, coffee shop, a pizza place.

3. Economic Development Staff Person Needed

- The City should consider hiring a staff person who can be dedicated to these and other economic development initiatives on a daily basis.

Design Guidelines

Jon Maximuk of the Atlanta-based Livable Communities Coalition, along with Lew Oliver, facilitated this session, during which participants exchanged ideas and identified areas of consensus related to urban design in the study area. Meeting attendees included local business owners and workers; property owners and residents of the study area and other areas of the City; McDonough’s Director of Public Works; GDOT’s District Three traffic engineer; City Planning staff; a City Council member; and members of the ARC technical team. In 2011, the City will hire a consultant to complete design guidelines for the square area. This meeting, in addition to the feedback gathered through the Image Preference Survey, served as a way to garner input from stakeholders and citizens on what these guidelines should contain, and this section will inform the consultant hired to complete the design guidelines. As such, specific recommendations are not made for this section, and instead a summary of what was heard is provided. Several renderings demonstrating examples of what new building forms in the Square could look like are also provided throughout this section. Discussion revolved around topics including historic preservation, land use, building form and design.

Historic Preservation

Meeting attendees agreed that historic preservation is extremely valuable but should function as one planning tool among many, to be used in a balanced way.

Many participants indicated that older buildings – even if vacant or underutilized – should be preserved wherever practicable, because the existing urban fabric will serve as a solid foundation for redevelopment when those pressures arrive. Attendees also agreed on the economic development value inherent in McDonough’s National Register districts and individual properties. Discussion on this point revealed a collective desire to maintain those districts and properties to the greatest extent possible by conducting restoration and reuse in line with National Register guidelines.

In general, participants expressed the belief that historic preservation regulations, when taken to the extreme, can “freeze a place in time” or deflect redevelopment to other areas – along with existing and prospective business owners, workers and residents. As such, stakeholders agreed that McDonough must maintain a physical connection to its past while exercising an ability to evolve over time.



Truman House as it currently exists.



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An example of the what the Truman House could look like after renovations.

Land Use

Many attendees expressed a desire for a mix of uses that includes a wider variety of residential formats, noting that there are few residential options in the study area besides limited single-family detached areas. Facilitators walked attendees through the basic elements of traditional zoning and its relation to form-based code, which regulates building form rather than use. Stakeholders generally agreed that a modified form-based code – with a measure of land use control – would provide the flexibility needed to encourage more in-town living, spur redevelopment and create a more vibrant area with a finer mix of land uses.



John Frank Ward Boulevard before.



An example of what John Frank Boulevard could look like as infill development occurs and streetscape improvements are made.

Building Form

City staff indicated that there had been no significant opposition to increased density in the past, and technical team members explained that results from the previous night's IPS indicated a degree of comfort with denser forms than that which exists at present. Participants expressed the belief that increased density is one key to redevelopment in the study area, and that opposition to it is typically a reaction not to density itself but to ancillary issues it can create, such as decreased parking availability and increased traffic congestion. Lew Oliver sketched several visuals depicting options for

densifying the square area, including building up behind or above existing structures to create a "step-back" effect; and tearing down buildings and retaining their façades, while creating new buildings behind them that can accommodate more density. These renderings are dispersed throughout this section. Participants expressed acceptance of additional height and density, as long as it is mitigated by measures like height step-backs, concealed parking, high-quality design – and as long as buildings retain their connection to the existing urban fabric.



An example of increased height on the existing Masonic Lodge building and a stepped-back third story on the existing Chafin Furniture building located at Hampton and Griffin Streets.



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This picture was also shown to meeting participants to demonstrate what 4-5 stories on the Square could look like.

Substantial discussion also focused on setbacks in the historic area around the square. Some participants suggested uniform setbacks or build-to lines, but there was general agreement on allowing for flexibility and non-uniformity in order to create visual interest and spur sidewalk activity. Deeper setbacks for some lots could create room for small plazas, outdoor dining facilities, landscaping and water features. During this discussion, Lew Oliver created an illustration showing this kind of “planned anomaly” and how – with massing and scale – one building can fit in with another. Attendees discussed allowing owners of properties with these deeper setbacks added height as compensation.

Gateways into the study area represented another significant topic of discussion regarding building form. Stakeholders agreed that building forms should be more coherent as one progresses from gateways through residential areas to the historic urban core.



An existing former mill building located at Hood Street and Sims Street.



A rendering of this building shows what infill development that utilizes and enhances the existing building could look like.

Design

As with historic preservation, participants agreed that design guidelines have value but can serve as an obstacle to redevelopment if they become too prescriptive, especially since they can be subjective in nature. Attendees expressed comfort with historic materials already in use in the study area, such as brick (painted and unpainted) and wood, but also reached a level of consensus on the need to allow for a variety of materials and building styles.

Some attendees voiced support for guidelines that give consideration to eco-friendly themes, including LEED, in order to draw interest from outside the area and create a more progressive brand for the City. Overall, participants tended to agree that, as long as a building has a high-quality design and finish and respects McDonough's urban fabric, people will accept it – even if its style is different.



This rendering was done to demonstrate what infill development and renovations to existing businesses could do to enhance the stretch of John Frank Ward Boulevard that leads up to the square. This stretch was dubbed "Theatre Alley" by the team, as it leads up to the old theatre.

Implementation

Following this charrette, the City of McDonough will hire a consultant to dig deeper into the issues explored throughout the week. This work will result in strategic plans in three subject areas – business retention and recruitment, transportation connectivity and mobility improvements and a mixed use overlay zoning ordinance. This document serves as a basis and resource for this work. Recommendations by subject matter are summarized below. Additional details relating to each recommendation can be found in their preceding section.

Lifelong Communities Principles (LLC)

1. Implement the recommendations of the Community Choices City of McDonough Quality Growth Audit – in Appendix.
2. Re-zone to allow neighborhood-based retail services and the integration of housing options in existing communities.
1. Correlate zoning and building codes to support continuous accessibility.
3. Provide non-age segregated housing options.
4. Connectivity between the focus area and outlying services needs to be improved.

Wayfinding Signage and Parking

1. Implement an anti-shuffling parking ordinance and allow for 4 hour parking.
2. Develop recognizable “parking” wayfinding signage.
3. Improve and maintain city parking lots.
4. Install pedestrian wayfinding kiosks in parking lots.
5. Explore the development of a wayfinding and marketing campaign.
6. Explore options of a municipal lot on the south side of the square.

Context Sensitive Design and Street Connectivity

1. Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy.
2. Develop a detailed connectivity and streetscape plan to determine precise facility types needed and streetscape design guidelines.

42 McDonough Town Square Visioning Workshop

3. Adopt an access management policy.
4. Revisit design of one-way pair project to ensure desired design.
5. Proactively implement measures to ensure the long-term viability of the downtown square prior to the completion of the McDonough Bypass.
6. Work with GDOT’s District 3 (Thomaston) office to implement minor intersection improvements in the square such as signal timing, crosswalk paint, and signage.
7. Apply for LCI transportation funding to implement recommended streetscape and connectivity projects.

Specific Transportation Project Recommendations:

1. Downtown McDonough intersection safety project.
2. McDonough square streetscape improvements.
3. McDonough bike lanes.
4. Sims Road corridor improvements

Additional Potential Projects Requiring Additional Study:

1. Multi-Use path network connecting the City’s three parks to downtown
2. Street improvements to the “alleyways” surrounding the square
3. Expand street network by extending streets and alleyways, formalizing large through-driveways as streets, and breaking up excessively large blocks to improve connectivity, walkability, enhance traffic safety and foster economic development.

Tourism, Cultural Events and Arts

Recommendations

1. Build on the success of existing events
2. Build stronger partnerships among existing organizations
3. Increase visibility for organizations and events
4. Take steps to enhance the historic core

Successful projects that are applicable and replicable in McDonough

1. Form-based development codes for cultural heritage tourism districts
2. Undertake a demonstration project
3. Adaptive reuse and renovation
4. Historic theatre rehabilitation
5. Using digital media

Business Retention and Recruitment

1. Create cheat sheet for new businesses
2. Formulate wish list of desired businesses
3. Consider hiring a full time economic development staff person



McDonough Town Square.

Charrette & Design Team

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)



ARC was created in 1947 by the Georgia General Assembly and for 60 years, ARC has focused the region's leadership, attention, and resources on key issues of regional consequence such as aging services, governmental services, leadership development, research and mapping, workforce development, environmental planning, land use planning, mobility and air quality issues.

City of McDonough



The City of McDonough was established in 1823 and is the county seat of Henry County. It has been recognized as a National Main Street City and a City of Character by the International Association of Character Cities (IACC). The Community Development Department is responsible for managing current and long range planning.

Lew Oliver, Inc.



Lew Oliver, Inc. is an award-winning Atlanta based design firm specializing in creating beautiful places in which to call home. Lew Oliver is driven by the idea that great places can still be designed and constructed, places that nurture the human spirit, meet social and economic needs, and that are in harmony with nature.

Livable Communities Coalition (LCC)



Formed in 2005, LCC is the region's smart growth advocate and catalyst. It unites more than 50 organizations working to change the way metro Atlanta grows by focusing on land use, transportation, housing, and conservation of open space and natural resources.

Georgia Department of Economic Development - Tourism Division



Tourism employs more than 234,100 Georgians and creates a total economic impact of more than \$32 billion. The Tourism Division assists communities with a number of resources including brand development, website content and collateral materials to support tourism product development.

APPENDIX A: Image Preference Survey Results

Slide #	Image	Rank	Slide #	Image	Rank	Slide #	Image	Rank	Slide #	Image	Rank
1		3.36	10		4.14	19		3.86	28		4.18
2		4.95	11		3.23	20		2.36	29		4.05
3		5.41	12		4.14	21		4.73	30		3.86
4		4.14	13		4.32	22		3.36	31		3.45
5		4.36	14		4.41	23		5.18	32		4.82
6		3.55	15		2.18	24		5.32	33		4.00
7		4.91	16		4.55	25		4.95	34		4.32
8		2.59	17		2.91	26		4.59	35		4.82
9		2.14	18		3.50	27		4.45	36		3.82

APPENDIX A: Image Preference Survey Results

Slide #	Image	Rank	Slide #	Image	Rank	Slide #	Image	Rank	Slide #	Image	Rank
37		5.05	46		1.86	55		4.00	64		4.50
38		3.45	47		3.73	56		5.18	65		5.14
39		2.18	48		5.41	57		2.86	66		4.91
40		5.36	49		4.82	58		5.41	67		4.64
41		5.82	50		4.55	59		3.82	68		5.68
42		4.05	51		3.64	60		3.00	69		4.32
43		5.82	52		3.64	61		4.68	70		5.36
44		5.36	53		3.91	62		5.59	71		4.45
45		5.00	54		3.91	63		6.05			

APPENDIX B: Community Choices City of McDonough Quality Growth Audit



City of McDonough Quality Growth Audit

*Prepared by
Atlanta Regional Commission Staff
November 2010*



Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission's Community Choices staff spent several months conducting a comprehensive review of the City of McDonough's official planning documents to evaluate them for consistency with quality growth goals from the City's comprehensive plan and Active Living by Design and Lifelong Communities principles. Documents analyzed include:

- Henry County/Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan (April 2009)
- McDonough LCI Plan (December 2004)
- City of McDonough Code of Ordinances

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this review was to ensure that the City's planning goals coordinate with policies in place and encourage their implementation.

PROCESS

All documents related to the planning process were collected from City staff. The City's goals and strategies were identified and each document was reviewed to check for internal consistency and adequate implementation mechanisms and policies to support stated goals. A copy of an organizational matrix used in the review is provided in **Appendix A**. The following are observations and short and long term recommendations that may further enhance future coordination and implementation of planning efforts within the City of McDonough.

By request of the City of McDonough, documents were also analyzed for consistency with the Active Living by Design standards and the Lifelong Communities standards. Observations have been presented when implementation strategies may be coordinated to achieve the goals of these two sets of standards.

The Active Living by Design strategies support a way of life that integrates physical activity into each day. The City of McDonough, in its policies and plans, is striving to promote this culture of activity. Building an interconnected network of trails and creating more walkable places will put a solid foundation in place for achieving an Active Living community.

Lifelong Communities is an Atlanta Regional Commission initiative that promotes places where individuals can live throughout their lifetime. Lifelong Communities provide a full range of options to residents, insuring a high quality of life for all ages. Guiding principles of the program are a variety of housing and transportation options, resources that encourage healthy lifestyles, and expanded access to services to meet the reality of increasing life expectancy, varying levels of ability and the needs of all ages.

GOALS

The following goals and strategies have been taken directly from the Henry County/Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan. The goals are county-wide and broad, so to ensure a level of comprehensive review, strategies included in the Comprehensive Plan below each goal and specific to McDonough are also presented. These goals and strategies serve as the framework for the observations and recommendations in this report. The quality growth audit is performed to ensure that stated goals are supported by policies and other implementation mechanisms.

LAND USE

Ensure that new developments promote a better sense of place and preserve valued elements of community character.

- Create unique and welcoming corridors into the downtown area
- Provide higher density residential in activity centers to accommodate the need for lifestyle and workforce housing
- Improve connectivity with a connected trail system throughout the City

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Attract and retain high-quality and diverse employers with quality of life, education, culture, housing, healthcare, retail, and recreation facilities.

- Enhance quality of life for the aging population
- Improve overall quality of life with quality residential environments and mixed-use development
- Increase tourism by promoting historic district
- Develop venues for the performing arts in the Historic Downtown and Alexander Park

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Preserve and conserve greenspace, scenic areas, and natural resources and provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

- Preserve and promote historic downtown square
- Protect scenic areas, trees, and open space from development pressure

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Provide high-quality community facilities and services for current residents and businesses and use thoughtful management of infrastructure to support and direct new growth.

- Consolidate all wastewater treatment facilities in the County and phase out older facilities
- Accommodate the needs of a growing population and explore ways to grow more efficiently
- Create Capital Improvements Programs to ensure that adequate facilities and services are provided to all residents

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Enhance mobility for people and goods.

- Improve street connectivity and mobility with more choices, better signalization, trails and greenways, pedestrian linkages, connectivity between new developments, and reduced demand
- Create bike and pedestrian paths linking schools, neighborhoods, and other places
- Reduce truck traffic in the downtown area

HOUSING GOALS

Provide a variety of housing choices to suit the changing needs and lifestyles of City and County residents.

- Diversify housing opportunities to provide more affordable rental units
- Encourage infill housing in and near downtown
- Provide more workforce and high-end housing opportunities

GOALS & STRATEGIES (Land Use, Economic Development)

- *Create unique and welcoming corridors into the downtown area*
- *Increase tourism by promoting historic district*

Observation

The City of McDonough's Livable Centers Initiative report recommends creating five gateways into the historic downtown core. These gateways would be regulated by overlay districts, which would "regulate urban design, aesthetics, circulation, and access management" (LCI, p. 5). The corridors identified as key gateways into the downtown core are along Jonesboro Road, Highway 20/81, Highway 155/Cedar Street, and the McDonough Parkway.

The future land use map in the Livable Centers Initiative report also identifies four village centers or neighborhood centers, in addition to the downtown core. Overlay districts could also be used to guide the appearance, intensity, and type of development in these nodes. However, no such districts have been established.

No overlay districts have been adopted for these locations. Currently, there is no signage notifying visitors that they are arriving into the historic downtown. There are also no unifying landscape features to distinguish the downtown core.

Recommendation

The City of McDonough may wish to consider adopting corridor and activity center overlay districts with architectural design standards, building form standards, streetscape standards, pedestrian circulation requirements, allowable uses, access management guidelines, parking standards, and/or setback requirements. Overlay districts have been shown to be successful in enhancing streetscapes and urban design. The City's LCI report recommends distinct overlays for each corridor, depending on the character of each street, but certain requirements and standards, such as streetscape design, can be the same for all four corridors to create a consistent and unified downtown. A sample gateway corridor overlay ordinance can be found in **Appendix B**.

Overlay district ordinances can also outline the process by which activity centers are planned, simplifying the approval process and making sure the activity center is cohesive.

GOALS & STRATEGIES (Land Use, Economic Development, Housing)

- *Provide higher density residential in activity centers to accommodate the need for lifestyle and workforce housing*
- *Enhance quality of life for the aging population*
- *Improve overall quality of life with quality residential environments and mixed-use development*
- *Diversify housing opportunities to provide more affordable rental units*

Observation

The Henry County/Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan expresses the City’s goals of providing higher density residential in walkable, pedestrian friendly activity centers and improving overall quality of life with quality mixed-use development. The future land use map identifies a number of potential locations for mixed-use development, including areas in the historic downtown core, along the major gateways into the downtown, and near the expanded Alexander Park.

Current zoning provisions do not permit the type of development described in the Comprehensive Plan and the Livable Centers Initiative report. The Mixed-Use Commercial Residential (MU-CR) overlay in the Code of Ordinances allows for residential uses on properties zoned O-1, C-1, C-2, or C-3. The overlay only covers a limited area surrounding the downtown core, which would not allow these future mixed-use centers to be developed. In addition, current housing density provisions, which range from less than 1 dwelling unit per acre to 8 dwelling units per acre average net density, may not support the type of development described in the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation

In order to allow construction of high quality, pedestrian-friendly, walkable mixed-use developments, the City might consider adding a mixed-use zoning district to its zoning ordinance. The regulations could specify the types of uses allowed, use ratios, density, building and lot requirements, parking regulations, landscaping and design standards, and administrative procedures.

The City may also consider adjusting the density allowance for the more intense mixed-use activity centers to allow for higher residential density. Allowing higher residential density in the activity centers will help the City achieve the goals of reducing traffic congestion, reducing the cost of providing services, and promoting a sense of community. Higher density mixed-use developments provide a housing choice to individuals who wish to work, live, and shop without driving, and a retail and entertainment destination for others who enjoy having many options within walking distance. By locating a number of stores, restaurants, homes, and places of employment within walking distance, mixed-use development can reduce the amount of car trips that residents take and give them more places to walk to.

Below are some examples of density in units per acre allowed by other suburban cities in the region, along with short descriptions of each location. **Appendix C** contains a sample mixed-use ordinance from Acworth, Georgia.

<i>Community</i>	<i>Density Allowed</i>
City of Suwanee (Town Center)	11 units/acre
City of Acworth (floating mixed use category)	Up to 12 units/acre
City of Decatur (medium density district)	18 units/acre

Acworth's mixed use zoning category is a floating zone established to provide a compatible mixture of commercial, employment, recreational, residential, civic, and/or cultural uses which are planned and developed as a unit. The district covers areas designated for mixed use in the Acworth Comprehensive Plan and future land use map. Densities in this district range from **4 to 12 dwelling units per acre**.

Suwanee's Town Center is a vibrant mixed-use area centered on a 10-acre urban park. It was designed with the goals of preserving open space with more parks and creating an attractive downtown and appealing gathering place. It includes an average density of **11 dwelling units per acre**.

Decatur has a medium density residential district which allows **18 dwelling units per acre**. These neighborhoods are only residential and not mixed-use, but they are located within close walking distance of the downtown commercial area.

Active Living by Design strategies include placing higher density housing near commercial centers, transit lines, parks, schools, and work sites to encourage routine walking and bicycling. Mixed-use development can create these pedestrian-friendly activity centers.

Lifelong Communities have destinations worth walking to. Mixed use centers, where residents can reach a variety of commercial and retail locations, are a good destination for pedestrians and a convenient housing choice. They can also create more physical spaces that provide opportunities for social interaction.

One way to increase the number of units available for older adults and help build the type of community the City's plan envisions is to provide an incentive to developers that construct a certain percentage of units according to Easy Living Home standards. These standards promote features such as no-step entries, wider hallways and a complete living suite on a main floor. More information on these standards can be found in **Appendix D**.

Observation

The LCI also recommends increasing storefront space along Highway 42 and Covington Street to encourage walkable, pedestrian-friendly development. Most of these properties are zoned O-1 or C-2, which both require a minimum front setback of 40 feet.

Recommendation

The City could further increase the walkable storefront space along these corridors by reducing the allowable front yard setback. Buildings that are close to the street encourage pedestrian use, slow traffic, and present a more welcoming façade. This change could be accomplished in the corridor overlay effort, by creating a new zoning category that applies only to the relevant parcels, or by reducing the allowable setback in the current zoning requirements. Allowing buildings to be placed closer to the street will gradually create a more pedestrian-friendly

environment. Other features in a potential overlay may include standards on vegetative buffers, amended parking requirements and traffic calming strategies.

Section 17.84.010 of the current zoning ordinance could be amended to include similar language to the following example.

- ❖ *“(m) The front setback for all new construction or major redevelopment of properties zoned O-1 or C-2 and located on Highway 42 or Covington Street shall conform to the following. These properties shall have a minimum front yard setback of ten (10’) feet from the curb and a maximum front yard setback of forty (40’) feet from the curb.”*

If the City chooses to create an overlay district governing these corridors, similar language could be added.

- ❖ *“The front setback for all new construction or major redevelopment of properties in the Gateway Corridor Overlay District zoned O-1 or C-2 shall conform to the following. All other setbacks shall comply with the underlying zoning district requirements. To the extent that there is a conflict between this section and the underlying zoning district requirements for any setback, this section shall govern. These properties shall have a minimum front yard setback of ten (10’) feet from the curb and a maximum front yard setback of forty (40’) feet from the curb.”*

GOALS & STRATEGIES (Land Use, Transportation)

- *Improve connectivity with a connected trail system throughout the City*
- *Improve street connectivity and mobility with more choices, better signalization, trails and greenways, pedestrian linkages, connectivity between new developments, and reduced demand*
- *Create bike and pedestrian paths linking schools, neighborhoods, and other places*

Observation

Subdivision, commercial, and industrial development regulations require the construction of sidewalks. However, the City does not require bicycle paths or multi-use trails in any zoning district.

Recommendation

The City may consider requiring bicycle paths in new mixed-use, corridor, or activity center overlays and in subdivisions or providing incentives to developers by crediting bicycle lanes and sidewalks of at least eight (8) feet toward open space requirements in those respective districts. These paths should connect to outside streets and to other nearby paths to create a continuous network. To maximize the benefit from new paths and the added connectivity, crosswalk signalization (with signal countdown) and traffic calming measures may be added as well.

To further ensure that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are met, the City could also consider creating a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. Other municipalities have used these plans to determine where infrastructure improvements and connections are needed and which are most important. Some examples of bicycle and pedestrian plans in other metropolitan Atlanta cities can be found below.

- City of Decatur (<http://www.decaturga.com/bicycledecatur.aspx>)
- Cobb County (<http://dot.cobbcountyga.gov/bikeped/index.htm>)

Observation

Existing bicycle facilities in the City could be expanded. While several major corridors surrounding the downtown core have shared bicycle and parking lanes, there is no signage indicating that these should be used by cyclists or alerting drivers to the presence of cyclists in these lanes.

Recommendation

Adding appropriate signage to existing bicycle lanes can improve safety and increase usage. Other bike facilities, such as adequate parking and commuter showers, could be made mandatory in new developments or encouraged with the use of incentives, such as a reduction in parking requirements.

Many **Active Living by Design** principles relate to an accessible, inter-connected, and safe network of bicycle and pedestrian paths. These users are just as important as vehicles, and their networks should be equally functional and accessible. New paths should be combined with maintenance plans and traffic calming efforts to improve safety. Important destinations should be linked with multi-use trails to generate more bicycling and walking trips.

Safe and connected sidewalks are also a critical element of a **Lifelong Community**. Older residents who wish to walk to neighborhood shops, or individuals who do not drive, need adequate facilities to stay safely away from car traffic.

Observation

A common impediment to street connectivity is large blocks. Large block size implies infrequent streets, forcing users to go further out of their way to get to destinations. Small blocks, with more streets, provide more route options, which can reduce traffic congestion and travel speed. According to the City of McDonough subdivision ordinances, blocks are permitted to be between 500 and 1,200 feet in length.

Recommendation

Reducing or removing the minimum block size will allow the necessary flexibility in subdivision design to create more connected street networks. Blocks of 200 to 600 feet in length are generally considered to be more walkable. New developments with smaller blocks will, over time, improve the City’s street connectivity while simultaneously creating more walkable neighborhoods.

The subdivision regulations in section 16.16.350 of the City of McDonough Code of Ordinances could be amended to include the following language.

- ❖ *“B. Length . Blocks shall be not less than two hundred (200) feet nor more than six hundred (600) feet in length, except where topographic or other conditions of the site make such dimensions impractical.”*

The **Lifelong Communities** strategies include retrofitting or building a street grid pattern. A street grid “provides the most options for getting from one destination to another, reduces traffic and creates a viable street network for multiple modes of transportation.”

Observation

There are no requirements for inter-parcel access in the Code of Ordinances.

Recommendation

Inter-parcel access regulations can improve connectivity between adjacent developments for both pedestrians and vehicles. Adopting an inter-parcel access ordinance (see **Appendix E** for an example) can help the City achieve its goals of increased street connectivity. This ordinance should address shared driveways and vehicular and pedestrian access between contiguous lots.

GOALS & STRATEGIES (Natural and Cultural Resources, Economic Development)

- *Preserve and promote historic downtown square*
- *Increase tourism by promoting historic district*

Observation

A city ordinance, section 15.44, authorizes the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission with the power to designate a historic district, but no such district has been created on the local level. The City has a number of historic homes and commercial buildings but no guidelines on preserving and maintaining these assets.

Recommendation

Historic districts with enforceable design standards can enhance a neighborhood’s character and protect important cultural resources. The City of McDonough’s downtown is included in the National Registry of Historic Places, but there is no local protection of historic properties.

The City could create an inventory of historic properties and designate a historic commission to evaluate applications for any material changes to these properties. To test the effectiveness of such a district and to prevent drastic changes in regulations, the district could initially encompass just a small area, such as the buildings immediately surrounding the square.

The Livable Centers Initiative report includes a set of design guidelines intended for the historic district. These guidelines can steer renovation and development to an aesthetic that fits the downtown character, highlights an important cultural resource, and further develops the character of the downtown core.

GOALS & STRATEGIES (Natural and Cultural Resources)

- *Protect scenic areas, trees, and open space from development pressures*

Observation

The City’s conservation subdivision ordinance (section 17.116) follows generally accepted best practice. At least 40% of the land must be kept as open space, 75% of which must be in a continuous tract, and the land must be protected in perpetuity from development. As an alternative to traditional suburban subdivisions, conservation subdivisions provide open space as a community resource, improve stormwater runoff and retention, and save developers money on infrastructure costs.

Recommendation

To incentivize conservation subdivision design, the City may consider adding a small density bonus to the regulations. Allowing developers to build additional lots in exchange for choosing to keep more land undeveloped creates larger areas of permanently protected open space. The following language from the Henry County Code of Ordinances section 3-6-95 calculates bonus density. The City of McDonough could adopt similar language tailored to their specific zoning districts and desired incentive level. It may benefit the City to include an upper limit on allowed bonus density to preserve the character of these areas.

- ❖ *Example Language: “A density bonus will be permitted when more than forty (40) percent of the total acreage of the project is designated as permanent, protected open space. For each additional whole acre greater than forty (40) percent, additional lots or units may be developed as follows:*

TABLE INSET:

Current zoning district	Additional lots allowed for each acre of protected open space greater than 40 percent
RA	1
R-1	1
R-2	2
R-3	2

The number of bonus lots shall be counted in addition to the number of lots calculated using the conventional subdivision design plan (yield plan).”

Observation

The City has made strides toward achieving the goal of conserving and protecting natural resources. Planned unit developments are required to maintain a percentage of open space (§17.88.080 of the Code of Ordinances), and several large tracts of land in the City are zoned for residential-agriculture use or designated as conservation subdivisions in the future land use plan.

Recommendation

To further achieve the goal of protecting natural resources, the City may consider implementing the recommendations of ARC's Green Infrastructure Toolkit to supplement the open space policies of the zoning code by developing a comprehensive open space plan. This resource can be found online at:

http://www.atlantaregional.com/File%20Library/Land%20Use/greenspace/lu_greenspace_toolkit_1009.pdf.

An example of such a plan can be found in DeKalb County, which has implemented a joint county/city greenspace program. This document is available at

<http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/greenspace/pdf/finalrpt.pdf>.

APPENDIX MATERIALS

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Appendix A

Quality Growth Audit Matrix

Land Use				
Create gateways into downtown area	LCI, zoning ordinance (Code of Ordinances of the City of McDonough, Part II §17)	Potential. Overlays have not been written or put into place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt overlay zones with specifications for landscaping, setbacks, and signage - Install signs welcoming visitors to historic McDonough at each gateway entrance - Consider one overlay for all corridors for consistent design 	The LCI recommends creating a streetscaped Jonesboro Road between the square and the expanded park. It also suggests implementing six overlay zoning districts with design guidelines to create gateway entrances to the city.
Provide higher-density housing in walkable, pedestrian friendly activity centers	LCI, zoning ordinance (Code of Ordinances of the City of McDonough, Part II §17)	<p>Yes. Max density 8 du/acre.</p> <p>Minimum setback is 40'. Not conducive to increasing storefront space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This level of density is not sufficient for the vibrant, pedestrian live-work centers set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Consider language on higher density, comparable to other suburban Atlanta communities. - For walkable activity centers, reducing minimum front setbacks in C-2 and OI zones from 40' to 0' could allow buildings to be built closer to the street. Allowing more uses in OI zones could create more places for people to walk. 	<p>LCI: new housing around Big Springs Town Green, and infill housing by redeveloping Sheriff Magistrate property, converting lofts downtown, and redesigning Big Springs Park as a town green to create better connections to downtown. Recommends increasing storefront space along Highway 42 between the square and Big Springs with mixed-use infill and along Covington Street, east from the square.</p> <p>Current max density allowances, 8 dwelling units per acre in the MFR districts (zoning districts RM-75 in §17.40, RTD in §17.44, and RCD in §17.48), do not support the mixed-use centers the LCI recommends.</p>
Improve connectivity with a connected trail system	LCI, subdivision development regulations (Code of Ordinances of the City of McDonough, Part II §16), building and construction regulations (§15.07)	None.	<p>Sidewalks are required in subdivisions, commercial, and industrial development (§15.07.460).</p> <p>A connectivity ordinance would set standards for access points to subdivisions, access between subdivisions, and establish minimum block sizes. Potentially require interparcel access (Fayetteville QGA).</p>	<p>LCI recommends streetscape improvements, a greenway prototype between Alexander Park and Big Springs, and pedestrian connections to the park expansion.</p> <p>Main streets have adequate multipurpose lanes (bike/parking) but better signage could indicate they should be used by bikes.</p>

Economic Development				
Enhance quality of life for the aging population	LCI	None	Use Lifelong Communities principles to guide development decisions.	Creating more walkable mixed-use activity centers will give seniors an option to age in place
Promote higher quality of life through mixed-use developments with lifestyle amenities	LCI, mixed-use commercial/residential overlay specifications (§15.48)	Yes. Maximum density is 8 du/acre.	Consider language on higher density, comparable to other suburban Atlanta communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This level of density is not sufficient for the vibrant, pedestrian live work centers set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. - Mixed-use is currently allowed around the square, but future land use map places more mixed-use development near Alexander Park.
Increase tourism by promoting historic district	LCI, McDonough Design Guidelines, historic preservation ordinance (§15.44)	Potential. No historic district exists on the local level.	Use gateways to set apart the historic district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LCI recommends creating historic district and adopting design guidelines (LCI p. 83). - Historic properties in historic district have to get a certificate of appropriateness for material changes in appearance, but no local historic district has been established.
Develop venues for performing arts	LCI, Alexander Park plan	None	Make sure these are connected to the trail/bicycle network.	LCI (p. 67-68): planned community center downtown and amphitheater in the park.
Natural and Cultural Resources				
Preserve and promote historic downtown square	LCI, McDonough Design Guidelines, historic preservation ordinance (§15.44)	Potential. No historic district exists on the local level.	City ordinance §15.44 authorizes the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission with the power to designate a historic district, but no such district has been created on the local level. Historic districts with enforceable design standards can enhance a neighborhood's character and protect important cultural resources. Even a small district around the square can protect these valuable resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LCI recommends creating historic district and adopting design guidelines (LCI p. 83). - Historic properties in historic district have to get a certificate of appropriateness for material changes in appearance, but no local historic district has been established.

Protect scenic areas, trees, and open space from development pressures	LCI, RA-200 residential-agriculture zoning district (§17.24), CSD ordinance (§17.116), tree ordinance (§12.20)	None.	Providing a small density bonus to developers who choose conservation subdivision design could encourage them to be built instead of traditional suburbs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation subdivision ordinance (§17.116) follows accepted best practice for these ordinances: land permanently protected and owned by HOA, >40% of the tract as open space, 75% of open space must be contiguous - RA-200 zoning district does not permit dense development. The minimum lot size is approx. 1.5 acres. - Open space requirement in PUDs (§17.88.080)
Transportation				
Improve street connectivity and mobility with more choices, better signalization, trails and greenways, pedestrian linkages, connectivity between new developments and reduced demand	Subdivision regulations for sidewalks (§16.16.410) and dead end streets (§16.16.200), LCI	Potential. Block size in subdivisions is 500-1200 feet.	Reducing the allowable block size in subdivisions could create more cut-through streets. Adopt access management strategies. Consider adopting a Complete Streets policy, which requires that roads be designed for users of all modes of transportation, or a Bike/Ped plan.	<p>LCI suggests several new street connections (p. 69-70), on- and off-street bike lanes, greenways (p. 81), access management strategies (p. 85) and a connectivity ordinance. It also identifies many cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets, which impede connectivity in subdivisions.</p> <p>Block sizes of 200-600 feet are generally considered to be the most walkable.</p> <p>Shared driveways/access and interparcel access can also improve connectivity.</p>
Create bike and pedestrian paths linking schools, neighborhoods, and other places	LCI, subdivision development regulations (16)	None	Install sidewalks to library. Consider requiring bicycle paths or providing incentives to developers who install them. Improve signage.	LCI identifies library as a place more residents would like bike path/sidewalk connections to. It also prioritizes sidewalks within 2,000 feet of schools.

Reduce truck traffic in the downtown area	LCI, §17.72 (M-1 Light Industrial), zoning map	Yes. Several M-1 light industrial zones are located within blocks of downtown	Look into options for diverting truck traffic to avoid the downtown square	Industrial zones put traffic downtown (LCI p. 27).
Housing				
Diversify housing opportunities to provide more affordable rental units	LCI, mixed-use zone (§15.48), multifamily zoning requirements (§17.84.010)	None	Include affordable housing requirements in new developments (look at Atlantic Station) or incentivize with density bonuses, reduced on-site parking mandates, or increased square footage.	Minimum apartment size in mixed-use (§15.48.040) and multifamily (§17.84.010) is small enough to allow affordable units (600 sq ft for 1BR, 900 for 2BR).
Encourage infill housing in and near downtown	LCI, provisions on accessory buildings in each zoning district (§17)	None	Encourage property owners to explore building accessory buildings or "granny flats."	LCI encourages higher-density housing and more traditional neighborhood design (p. 52).
Provide more workforce and high-end housing	LCI, zoning districts, future land use map	None		A variety of zoning districts allows for different housing types and lot sizes, and all districts are used in the zoning map. Future land use map shows more types of use, including mixed use zoning near activity centers.

Appendix B

Gateway District Ordinance Woodstock, GA

7.960. Gateway District Ordinance.

7.961. Legislative Purpose.

1. The Gateway District Ordinance serves as a development standard for the areas along Main Street, Towne Lake Parkway, Eagle Drive, and Arnold Mill Road. The specific design and land use policies are an extensive plan for the areas of the Central Business District of the City of Woodstock, Georgia including the Main Street, Towne Lake Parkway, Eagle Drive, Arnold Mill Road corridors.
2. The Gateway District calls for a pattern of commercial and office buildings constructed in a style reminiscent of nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles. The Gateway District is intended to generate quality development along the Main Street, Towne Lake Parkway, Eagle Drive, and Arnold Mill Road thoroughfares while promoting economic, cultural, open space and safety features to aid the public's general welfare. This orderly planning system is intended to attract future development and provides for mixed use options to encourage development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Woodstock, Georgia.

7.962. Establishment of Gateway District Overlay Boundary.

The general boundaries of the Gateway shall be those properties along Main Street, Towne Lake Parkway, Eagle Drive, and Arnold Mill Road within the limits of the City of Woodstock, Georgia. The specific boundaries are drawn on the approved map by the City Council and reside with the City Clerk and Department of Planning and Economic Development.

7.963. Exemptions from Gateway District Ordinance.

The following parcels are expressly exempted from the requirements of the Gateway Overlay District:

- [] Parcels zoned within the Downtown Master Plan (DTMP)

7.964. Permitted Use Standards.

The following uses shall be permitted, in addition to those uses permitted under the current zoning classification of the property, within any development permitted pursuant to this Ordinance:

1. Residential housing above retail and office space and any single family homes existing in non-residential zoning classifications at the date of adoption of this Ordinance.

7.965. Prohibited Use Standards.

Any uses not specifically listed in section 7.964 shall not be permitted within the Gateway Overlay District including, without limitation, the following uses:

1. Automobile Garages and Repair Shops, Adult Video Shops, Billiard Parlors, Check Cash Services, Drive-In Theaters, Emission Testing Centers Exclusive or Joint Service, Farm

equipment Sales/Storage, Itinerant Merchants, Mini-warehouse Facilities, Manufactured Home Sales, Motels with Outside Entrances, Nude/Semi-clothed Dancing Establishments, Pawn Shops, Recreational vehicle Sales/Service/Repair Facilities, Short-Term Loan Offices, Truck Terminals, Used tire Sales/Repair Shops, New and Used Automobile/Vehicle Dealerships/Salvage lots/Scrap yards.

7.966. Site Development Standards.

All exterior buffers and setbacks will be in accordance with Article IV of Chapter VII of the Land Development Ordinance of the City of Woodstock, Georgia.

7.967. Streetscape Zone Standards.

1. The appearance for this area shall incorporate sidewalks, brick piers, period style lighting and other appropriate elements to establish a consistent look along these road frontages.
2. Landscaping shall utilize hedgerow plantings, picket fences, trees and other methods to comply with the City of Woodstock's Streetscape Theme. Where parking area front the roadway, a planted berm or evergreen landscaping shall be provided to screen vehicular parking areas, loading areas, and dumpsters from the view from the thoroughfare or streets stated herein.
3. The width of this landscaped area shall not be less than five (5) feet.
4. This buffer area should include piers not less than three (3) feet in height constructed of brick or stone placed no less than forty (40) feet on center.
5. Fencing that approximate the look of wrought iron fencing should connect the piers if a hedgerow is not used.
6. Trees shall not be disturbed to any maximum possible extent than absolutely necessary to construct any building or other improvements in the opinion of the Director, Planning and Economic Development.
7. Existing (undisturbed) land forms and other elements such as berms with asymmetrical clumps of plants, trees and shrubs indigenous to the area and region of Georgia are preferred for eh landscape area.

7.968. Architectural Standards.

All projects within the Gateway Overlay District shall meet the following architectural standards:

1. Buildings shall be designed to substantially resemble eighteenth and nineteenth century architectural styles with the exception of single family detached residential development.
2. Building mass shall be broken up to give the appearance of individual buildings or places of businesses, presenting a village appearance.
3. Large areas of uninterrupted brickwork shall be broken up through the use of trellises, arcades, blind windows, archways, or other patterns.
4. Window areas shall not extend down to the floor line. A wall of not less than two (2) feet in height shall separate the floor from the bottom of the window frame.

5. Buildings shall have no less than eighty (80) percent of the non-glass area of three (3) exterior sides faced with brick of a natural color and texture that simulates historic types of brickwork. If a building has more than four (4) planar areas, seventy-five (75) percent of these areas shall be faced in brick.
6. Multi-pane windows shall be used in individual window openings, rather than large glass sheets.
7. Mirrored glass with a reflection greater than twenty (20) percent and glass curtain walls are prohibited.
8. Paint colors shall be of traditional, historic types which are generally muted tones such as ivory, cream, beige, white, and pastel colors. Colors which are not permitted are bright or vibrant colors of orange, pink, purple, bright green, or violet, which are considered to be inconsistent with the district. The exterior color scheme shall be approved by the Director of Planning and Economic Development.
9. All buildings shall have a pitched roof with a minimum pitch of four and one-half (4.5) inches vertical elevation per one (1) foot of horizontal distance, except as otherwise provided herein.
10. Commercial building styles without a pitched roof shall have a detailed parapet and cornice, in keeping with eighteenth and nineteenth century architectural styles.
11. All roofing materials shall be of a consistent style and pattern. Pitched roofs shall be finished in either architectural or dimensional shingles, or standing seam metal roofs.

Appendix C

Mixed Use Zoning District Acworth, GA

50.15 MU, Mixed Use District

A. Purpose.

The mixed use zoning category is a floating zone which is established for the purpose of providing a compatible mixture of commercial, employment, residential, recreational, civic, and/or cultural uses which are planned and developed as a unit. The location of a mixed use district is restricted to areas which are designated mixed use (single-family, multi-family, commercial, office) in the Acworth Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. A mixed use development should complement surrounding areas. Among the goals of the mixed use zoning category are the following:

1. Encourage residential uses in conjunction with commercial activities in order to create an active street life, enhance the vitality of businesses, and reduce vehicular traffic;
2. Provide opportunities for horizontal and vertical mixed-use developments by permitting existing and planned commercial zones to be combined into unified development sites;
3. Encourage compatibility between residential and commercial uses in areas where residential zones directly abut commercial zones, by permitting greater design flexibility across the existing boundaries of the two zones;
4. Ensure that the appearance and effects of buildings and uses are harmonious with the character (topography, economy, society) of the area in which they are located.

B. Effect and Procedure.

The site plan for development within the mixed use district shall be in conjunction with a master development plan approved by the Board of Planning and Zoning and Board of Aldermen. The owner and/or developer of the tract of land proposed to be included in the development shall file a general site plan with the Zoning Administrator for recommendation to the Boards of Planning and Zoning and Aldermen. The plan shall contain information and representations required or deemed necessary by the Zoning Administrator, Public Works Director, Board of Planning and Zoning, and Board of Aldermen for proper review. The site plan will be reviewed and a determination will be made as to whether the plan is consistent with the intent and standards of the mixed use district and whether the development of the tract serves the public welfare.

C. Permitted Uses.

The following uses are permitted in the Mixed Use Zoning District:

1. Single-family residential (Including single family detached, cottages, and townhomes)
2. Multi-family residential (Including apartments and condominiums)
3. Government administrative services
4. Ambulance services
5. Fire and Police protection services

6. Cultural facilities. Art galleries, museums, theaters, libraries, and other uses similar in character to those listed.
7. Administrative and business offices
8. Medical services
9. Personal services – such as copy and mail centers, dry cleaning and other similar uses.
10. Neighborhood Retail uses as listed in the C-1 District
11. Retail Professional services
12. Sign(s), (as permitted in the City of Acworth Sign Ordinance)
13. Senior Living Communities (following the requirements of Section 50.16, SLC, Senior Living Community District)
14. Eating and drinking establishments, Outdoor dining facilities may encroach into required setbacks only upon approval from the Fire Department, Public Works Department and Planning and Zoning. (Must meet Chapter 6 of the City Code)
15. Private parks and playgrounds including Commercial Recreation Facilities (indoor and outdoor).
16. Athletic and health clubs.
17. Barber and beauty shops.
18. Grocery and food stores up to 20,000 square feet.

The following uses are prohibited when located within a mixed use development that contains residential uses (single- or multiple-family):

1. Animal grooming, animal hospitals, animal sales
2. Drive-through services associated with any restaurant use
3. Service Stations, including auto repair and maintenance
4. New or used automobile or truck sales facilities

D. Special Uses Permitted by Board of Aldermen.

1. Hotels and motels for Mixed-Use sites over 20 acres.
2. Religious Institutions over 5 acres.
3. Townhomes, provided:
 - a) Minimum unit size 1,750 square feet (1,200 square feet within the Downtown Development Authority District);
 - b) Submittal of a Design and Use Plan including, but not limited to:
 1. Architectural upgrades such as carriage style garage doors, upgraded exterior building materials such as stone, brick or other comparable material, doors, windows and patios;
 2. Renderings and/or narrative descriptions of the interior features of buildings, including the floor area of units, floor plan, ceiling height, flooring materials, kitchen and bath features, and information on trim/finish details;
 3. A plan for the development and long-term maintenance of all common areas and facilities (including private streets and parking areas, detention areas, green spaces);

4. The proposed documents for the homeowners or condominium association, which shall include covenants related to maintenance of units, dues and fees, exterior storage and appearance, restrictions on rental occupancy. All such documents shall be reviewed and approved by the City.
4. Cottage Style Development, provided:
 - a) Minimum lot dimension: 45' x 120';
 - b) Green space to be provided within the development shall have a total area not less than 15% of the development's buildable total land area. Said green space shall be designed to accommodate its use for passive or active recreation;
 - c) Minimum unit size 1,600 square feet;
 - d) Maximum unit size 2,000 square feet;
 - e) Maximum unit height 1½ story;
 - f) Setbacks:

Front:	20 feet (with the garage portion of the home no less than twenty-five (25) feet from the back of the curb)
Minor Side:	Minimum 10 feet between structures
Major Side:	25 feet
Rear:	20 feet
Maximum Lot Coverage	40%
Maximum Impervious Surface Area per lot	60%
 - g) Submittal of a Design and Use Plan including, but not limited to:
 1. Architectural upgrades such as carriage style garage doors, upgraded exterior building materials such as stone, brick or other comparable material, doors, windows and patios;
 2. Renderings and/or narrative descriptions of the interior features of buildings, including the floor area of units, floor plan, ceiling height, flooring materials, kitchen and bath features, and information on trim/finish details;
 3. A plan for the development and long-term maintenance of all common areas and facilities (including private streets and parking areas, detention areas, green spaces);
 4. The proposed documents for the homeowners or condominium association, which shall include covenants related to maintenance of units, dues and fees, exterior storage and appearance, restrictions on rental occupancy. All such documents shall be reviewed and approved by the City.

E. Use Ratios.

In general, proposed mixed use developments shall adhere to the types established in the Acworth Future Land Use Map. The types and requirements are as follows:

1. Single-family (SF) mixed use: detached and attached single-family residential structures shall be the dominant use, comprising the largest percentage of total building floor area.
2. Multi-family (MF) mixed use: multi-family residential structure(s) shall be the dominant use, comprising the largest percentage of total building floor area.
3. Commercial mixed use: commercial structures shall be the dominant use, comprising the largest percentage of total building floor area.
4. Office mixed use: professional office structures shall be the dominant use, comprising the largest percentage of total building floor area.

In developments with two (2) uses, no use shall occupy less than twenty five percent (25%) of the either the total building floor area or twenty five percent of the overall acreage. In developments with three uses (3), no use shall occupy less than (Add) either twenty percent (20%) of the total building floor area or twenty percent (20%) of the overall acreage. In developments with four (4) or more uses, no use shall occupy less than either fifteen percent (15%) of total building floor area or fifteen percent (15%) of the overall acreage.

F. Density.

Areas identified in the Acworth Comprehensive Plan for mixed use development and that include a residential component shall be developed under this mixed use zone at a minimum of four (4) net residential units per acre and up to a maximum of twelve (12) net residential units per acre. These units may be any combination of single-family detached, single-family attached, or multi-family.

G. Bulk Limits, Lot Area, and Setback Requirements.

All mixed use developments shall be planned and constructed on lots at least fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet.

Maximum lot coverage:	60% (1 building); 75% (2 or more buildings)
Minimum undisturbed area or replanted area for sites already cleared:	20% (excludes floodplains, stream buffers, and setback buffers)
Maximum building height:	40 feet (as measured from street façade)
Minimum lot width:	40 feet
Minimum lot depth:	3 times lot width
Maximum building height:	40 feet
Front setback:	10 feet facing an internal street 25 feet if a double frontage adjacent to an external, collector or major road
Side setback (major):	10 feet
Side setback (minor):	10 feet
Rear setback:	15 feet
Minimum floor area for apartments:	550 square feet for efficiency unit 650 square feet for 1 bedroom unit

	900 square feet for 2 bedroom unit
	1100 square feet for 3 bedroom unit
Minimum floor area for Single Family detached, townhomes, condominiums:	1200 square feet
Floor Area Ratios:	At least 25% of MF units must be 900 square feet or above; Up to 25% of MF units may be 600 square feet or less

H. Parking.

All off-street parking areas shall be located solely in the side or rear yard areas and excluded from the area between the public right-of-way and the front face of the building. Parking spaces may be located either on or off parcel. Site plans must show proof of spaces, their location in relation to buildings and indicate if spaces are owned or leased.

1. Maximum number of off-street, surface parking spaces for office and industrial uses is one (1) space for every three hundred (300) square feet of building floor space; minimum number of off-street parking spaces for office uses is one (1) space for every five hundred (500) square feet of building floor space.
2. Maximum number of off-street, surface parking spaces for retail and consumer commercial establishments is one (1) space for every two hundred (200) for retail, one hundred fifty (150) for restaurant square feet of building floor area; minimum number of off-street parking spaces for retail and consumer establishments is one (1) space for every five hundred (500) square feet of building floor area.
3. Maximum number of off-street, surface parking spaces for residential dwelling units shall be one and three quarters (1.75) spaces within three hundred (300) feet of each unit, excluding on-street parking; minimum number of off-street parking spaces for each dwelling unit shall be one space within three hundred (300) feet of the unit, excluding on-street parking.
4. Garages shall be provided (attached or detached). Single car garages shall be a minimum of 11' x 25' and double car garages shall be a minimum of 21' x 23'. All measurements shall be clear internal measurements (exclusive of water heater or other mechanical equipment). Homes located in a designated historic district shall be exempt from the requirement to have a garage.
5. Minimum number of bicycle parking spaces shall be one (1) space for every thirty (30) automobile spaces. In no case shall a mixed use development provide fewer than three (3) bicycle spaces.
6. Parking incentives- Commercial maximums may be increased by a ratio of 1.5 % if developer provides at least 20% pervious spaces (as defined in SECTION 87 Overflow parking standards) or 20% of the spaces are shared spaces with residential mix (exclusive of the residential parking space minimum).
7. If a developer chooses to construct a parking deck as part of a mixed-use development, the maximum requirements for off-street parking shall not apply. Decks can include as

many parking spaces as possible, provided the exterior of the structure fits the same dimensions as other permanent structures, meaning they must conform to setbacks, height limitations, and lot coverage.

I. Landscape and Buffer Requirements.

In general, the areas between the public rights-of-way and parking facilities or buildings shall be landscaped with deciduous trees and planter boxes or beds, using standards established in City of Acworth Tree Preservation and Replacement Ordinance, "Tree Protection and Landscaping". The following additional landscape stipulations shall be required for mixed-use developments.

1. In order to reduce problems associated with runoff and water supply contamination, innovative stormwater management techniques shall be used in all mixed use district developments. This could include porous pavement and/or perforated brick or block, ground swales, reconstructed wetlands, depressions, etc. In no instance shall a retention pond be constructed as the sole means of controlling stormwater.
2. A minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the gross area of the development site must be set aside as permanent undisturbed greenspace (or replanted area for sites already cleared). This percentage cannot include space within wetland, stream, or setback buffers.
3. All off-street parking areas shall be set back a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from all other property lines, and at least ten (10) feet from any public right-of-way.
4. A buffer between a mixed use development and any surrounding residential developments shall be provided in the form of a minimum ten (10) foot wide, ten (10) foot tall landscaped area that includes native species trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses
5. Pedestrian pathways and sidewalks shall provide safe and aesthetically pleasing means of on-site movement and shall be an integral part of overall site design. Pedestrian pathways to buildings, parking areas, and other amenities shall be planned and installed in all developments. Sidewalks shall be required along all public roadways abutting the property and shall be a minimum of five (5) feet in width, paved, and shall include a minimum five (5) foot wide landscape buffer between the edge of the sidewalk and the boundary of the public roadway.

J. Lighting.

Lighting shall provide for the safe illumination of the site in order to maintain pedestrian and vehicle safety, security, and design accentuation. Building illumination and architectural lighting shall be indirect in character. Architectural lighting shall articulate the particular building design as well as provide the required functional lighting for safety of pedestrian movement. Pedestrian pathway lighting shall clearly identify the pedestrian walkway and direction of travel. All lighting shall be shown on site plans in sufficient detail to allow determination of the effects of such lighting upon adjacent properties and traffic.

K. Design Provisions.

It is the intent of the mixed use district to provide an environment of high quality building and landscape design. Special emphasis shall be placed upon methods that tend to reduce the

overwhelming visual impact of large buildings, encourage tasteful, imaginative design for individual buildings, and create a complex of buildings compatible with the streetscape and neighboring areas in terms of design, scale, and use.

1. Innovative and beautiful design is encouraged and welcomed as a means to enhance the overall quality of the built environment.
2. Minimum conflict shall exist between service vehicles, private automobiles, and pedestrians within the site.
3. Building entries shall be readily identifiable and accessible, with at least one (1) main entrance facing and opening directly onto a connecting walkway with pedestrian frontage.
4. Building materials shall blend with those existing on adjacent properties.
5. There shall be structural variations in roof lines to reduce the massive scale of structures and add visual interest.
6. All building facades facing public rights-of-way shall have at least thirty (30%) percent fenestration.

Appendix D

Easy Living Home Standards

An EasyLiving Home® delivers more for your dollar - convenience for today, peace of mind for tomorrow. This is accomplished with three simple but critical features.

1. Easy Access

A step-free entrance into the central living area of the home from a driveway, sidewalk or firm route into the main floor.

- Convenient, safe entry even when your arms are full of shopping bags or small children
- No threshold trip hazard
- Easy transport of luggage carriers, strollers and other cumbersome objects
- Easy entry for family and friends who rely on mobility aids

2. Easy Passage

The exterior door that provides the step-free entrance and all interior doorways provide easy passage, with a 2'10" or 3'0" door or other solution that allows a minimum of 32" clear passage.

- Pass freely around the main floor even when carrying bulky items such as laundry baskets
- No more wrestling large furniture through narrow doorways or logjams when entertaining
- Complete access to all the necessary living spaces on the main floor means independence for family members unable to fit through narrow spaces or climb stairs

3. Easy Use

A bedroom, kitchen, entertainment area and a full bathroom with designated maneuvering space of 30" x 48" rectangle in front of the sink, commode and tub or shower, all located on the main floor accessible via the step-free entrance.

- Fewer trips up and down the stairs since the rooms you spend most of your time in are all on one level
- Relatives or friends with mobility limitations are more comfortable visiting on holidays because they aren't excluded from the group
- A self-contained main floor with accessible bathroom makes it possible for people who develop serious medical conditions to remain at home and retain their independence

EasyLiving Home® Plans

By looking for an EasyLiving Home® you will be assured that your home offers convenience, livability, visitability and value. You'll get all that from a few simple features that can make a big, big difference.

What are EasyLiving Home® Features

Easy Access with a step-free entrance and a threshold of not more than 1/2" from a driveway, sidewalk or other firm route into the central living area.

Easy Passage because the exterior door that provides the step-free entrance and every interior door on the main level (including bathrooms) provides a minimum of 32" clear passage.

Easy Use with no less than one bedroom, a kitchen, some entertainment area, and at least one full bathroom with sufficient maneuvering space . . . all on the main floor.

Who operates the program?

The EasyLiving Home® program is operated by a non-profit coalition of organizations committed to making homes more accessible, including AARP, the Home Builders Association of Georgia and several access advocacy groups. Each EasyLiving Home® is visited by a coalition member to ensure that our guidelines are met and each home meets the program requirements.

Will It Add Cost?

Certified homes are available at all price levels, from the most modest starter home to country club estates. The EasyLiving Home® program shows its member builders how to make their homes more convenient by utilizing small improvements that add little or nothing to the cost of new construction, but would be very costly to retrofit later.

Can I have an EasyLiving Home on a steep lot?

An EasyLiving Home® can be built on nearly any lot, whether level, sloped, even a steep lot. As long as one entrance to the main living area is step-free, the home can be certified. EasyLiving Home® offers simple solutions that are compatible with practically any type of building site or home style, including multi-story homes, homes with basements and homes on hills.

Why Care About Accessibility?

An EasyLiving Home® is all about convenience! By grouping all the most essential living areas on a single floor with ample-sized doors and a step-free entry, the EasyLiving Home® frees you from the hassles of struggling to move bulky furniture through narrow doors, or negotiating stairs with your arms full of groceries.

While you may be in perfect health now, the day may come when you or a family member experience health problems that could cause limited access to be a real problem. Elderly relatives will appreciate the easy access and extra entry width when they visit you in your new EasyLiving Home®. And don't forget, in an aging society, an EasyLiving Home® will have a higher resale value when it's time to sell.

Appendix E

Inter-Parcel Access Ordinance Fulton County, GA

Sec. 103-72.

Access

(a) *Arrangement of lots.* When land is subdivided into larger parcels than ordinary building lots, such parcels shall be arranged and designed so as to allow for the opening of future streets and to provide access to those areas not presently served by streets.

(b) *Access to adjacent properties.* No subdivision or development shall be designed so as to completely eliminate street access to adjoining parcels of land. Every development shall be designed to facilitate access to adjoining properties which are developed or anticipated to be developed in a manner substantially similar to the subject property. Locations of inter-parcel access shall be as required by and subject to the approval of the department.

(1) *Interparcel access easement.* For any office or retail sales or services use, the property owner shall grant an access easement as described in this chapter to each adjoining property that is zoned or used for an office or retail sales or services use. The purpose of the easement is to facilitate movement of customers and their vehicles from establishment to establishment (lot to lot) without generating additional turning movements on a public street. When required by this chapter, interparcel access easements shall be recorded in the office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Fulton County, and reference to deed book and copy of such recorded easement provided to the director.

(2) *Access easement provisions.* The interparcel access easement shall permit automobile access from the adjoining property to driveways and parking areas intended for customer or tenant use; but parking spaces may be restricted to use by the owner's customers and tenants only. Upon the availability of access to driveways and parking areas of the adjoining lot, the pavement or other surfacing of the owner's driveways and parking areas shall be extended to the point of access on the property line.

(3) *Location of interparcel connections.* The location of vehicular connections across a property line should be mutually determined and constructed by both property owners. In the case of coordination problems or any factors preventing construction of an interparcel connection, the public works director shall determine the location of connection to be constructed by property owners.

(4) *Relief.* Where the proposed land use is such that adverse impact of the required easement on the use of the property would outweigh the reduced impact on the public

street provided by the reciprocal easements, the public works director may waive the requirement for access easements, in whole or in part, administratively.

(c) *Vehicular access to lots.* Any lot required to provide minimum frontage by the zoning district in which the lot is located shall provide vehicular access directly from a public street along the frontage or along any other property line which abuts a public street, except as provided in section 103-72(e).

(d) *Private streets.* Private streets, as may be approved under the provisions of the zoning ordinance, shall be constructed to the roadway construction standards of the city, as contained herein. The private roads shall be maintained by a mandatory homeowners association and documents of incorporation shall be submitted to the director of community development for review and approval prior to the recording of the final plat. The private streets shall be clearly designated on the final plat.

(e) *Vehicular access easements.* Vehicular access may be provided from a public street indirectly via easement in any one or more of the following circumstances:

(1) The property is not required to provide a minimum frontage by the applicable zoning district, provided that the easement shall be in a location and the access driveway shall have a width and alignment acceptable to the fire department and the department.

(2) The property is a buildable lot of record, as defined herein, but does not meet the minimum frontage requirement of the applicable zoning district. The property must be served by an exclusive access easement which shall be limited to the provision of access to only one principal use or structure.

(3) The access easement serves a single-family residence on a lot which is otherwise a buildable lot of record, and which is sharing a common driveway with no more than two other single-family residences.

(4) The access easement was lawfully established as such under the Code, or ordinances of the city prior to the adoption of these development regulations.

(5) The access easement coincides with a private roadway approved under the code, ordinances, or regulations of the city. All new private roadways must be constructed to the roadway standards of this chapter, and their ownership and maintenance responsibility by private party(ies). The access easement width shall be the same as required for right-of-way on a similarly classified public road, i.e. the easement on a local street within a residential subdivision shall be the same width as the right-of-way for a public, local residential street.

(6) The access easement serves a buildable lot of record which meets the minimum frontage requirements of the zoning ordinance, but at which point the access is not achieved.

(f) *Maximum number of lots with a single entrance.* A maximum number of 200 residential dwelling units shall be allowed to be constructed with only one street outlet to an existing public street. If a second access to an existing public road is not available or, in the opinion of the public works director, could induce nonresidential traffic through the development, a single entrance may be allowed if designed with a traffic signal and/or sufficient right-of-way and improvements to provide a protected left-turn lane, subject to the approval of the public works department.

(g) *Gated access.* Gated access must be developed in accordance with the following minimum requirements:

Table 11.3-1. Setbacks Distances For Gated Access

TABLE INSET:

INBOUND PEAK HOUR TRIPS	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL EQUIVALENT	DISTANCE FROM GATE TO EDGE OF PAVEMENT (FEET)
1 to 25	1 to 30	30' [1]
26 to 45	31 to 55	40'
46 to 55	56 to 75	60'
56 to 65	76 to 90	80'
66 to 75	91 to 105	100'
Over 75	106+	[2]
[1] If gated access under consideration for a street whose primary access is to a roadway classified as a collector or higher, 40 feet may be required.		
[2] Distance from the gate to the edge of pavement should be studied and submitted by the applicant.		

(1) Gates shall not be located within the public right-of-way and must be provide vehicular storage distance from the edge of pavement as shown in Table 11.3-1. Additionally, any gated access serving a nonresidential use, more than three single-family residential units, a multifamily residential use, or located on a collector or higher order road shall provide a minimum clear turnaround distance of 20 feet between the vehicular storage and the gate.

- (2) Minimum gate width must equal the required road width plus the width of any utility easements present. Where gates are provided with a center support post a minimum clear width of 20 feet shall be provided on either side unless otherwise approved by the fire marshal.
- (3) Gates shall not be located within the public right-of-way and must be set back a sufficient distance from the public right-of-way to provide for adequate stacking distance, turnaround and emergency vehicle access as required by the city.
- (4) Gate width and placement must be reviewed by, and are subject to approval by the fire marshal's office and the public works department.
- (5) Arrangements for access through the gate for emergency service vehicles must be reviewed by, and are subject to approval by the fire marshal's office. Emergency service vehicles include, but are not limited to, fire suppression equipment, medical emergency vehicles, and law enforcement vehicles. Necessary arrangements may include Knox-fire boxes for keyed/keyless entry, keypad code entry, occupant telephone authorized entry, and/or automatic gate opening upon power disconnect.
- (6) Arrangements for access through the gate for nonemergency service vehicles must be reviewed by, and are subject to approval by, the public works department. Nonemergency public service vehicles include, but are not limited to, mail delivery, garbage pickup, public utility meter reading, and public utility maintenance and inspection vehicles. Necessary arrangements may include, but are not limited to: access easements for refuse collection vehicles and appropriate utility easements for public utility development and maintenance.
- (7) Gates may not restrict access to any public right-of-way or publicly owned property within the proposed development.
- (8) The city must be properly indemnified against any liability resulting from the proposed development including damage from or broken utilities, fines associated with damaged or broken utilities. This indemnification shall be evidenced by:
 - a. The release and indemnity agreement placed on the plat.
 - b. A separate release and indemnity agreement executed by the developer.
 - c. A clause in each deed of conveyance by the developer for each lot in the subdivision acknowledging the release and indemnity agreement.
 - d. Assumption of liability of the release and indemnity agreement by the homeowners' association.
 - e. Assumption of liability of the release and indemnity agreement in the protective covenants, which shall become part of the covenants of the subdivision. The developer's liability shall end three years after the last lot has been sold by the developer, provided that there are then no pending or

threatened claims against the developer, the city or the homeowners' association. All language for liability agreements and covenants shall read as required by the city attorney's office.

f. The developer shall grant such easements to the appropriate governing authority or utility company as is necessary for public purposes regarding said community.

(9) The following standards shall be used by the city when considering any request for gated communities:

a. The number of units in the development shall not be excessive as identified on the future land use map of the city comprehensive plan.

b. The developer must demonstrate adequate provision for perpetual maintenance of the private road and any other infrastructure associated with the development, including but not limited to a note on the plat and a clause in each deed of conveyance by the developer for each lot in the subdivision acknowledging the perpetual maintenance of the private road (and other private infrastructure) by the homeowners' association.

c. The developer must demonstrate an adequate strategy for necessary emergency access.

d. The private road and gate must not unreasonably impede the logical future development of public roads in the vicinity of the project.

e. The private road and gate must not unreasonably restrict public access to sites of cultural, historical, or natural significance.

f. The private road and gate must not unreasonably restrict previously established pedestrian access.

g. The establishment of gated communities must not have unreasonable negative effects on the health and welfare of the community or the good order of the city.

h. Gates may be denied based on traffic conditions, interconnectivity needs and when not in compliance with adopted guidelines.

(h) *Access improvements.* When property that abuts upon an existing or proposed city road is to be developed or redeveloped and the city street will provide access to the property, access improvements to the city road (deceleration lanes, turn lanes, etc.) shall be provided by the developer as required in section 103-73.

(i) *Documentation required for alternative designs.* In the event that an alternative is suggested by the applicant, studies and reports conducted by professionals currently certified in the State of Georgia will be required to be submitted to and approved by the department. These studies and reports must clearly relate to the desired results and purposes expressed or implied in the applicable performance standard. Once an alternative has been approved by the department, it shall become a required standard applicable to the specific approved permit only.

(Ord. No. 2008-09-48, § 1, 9-16-2008)

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