

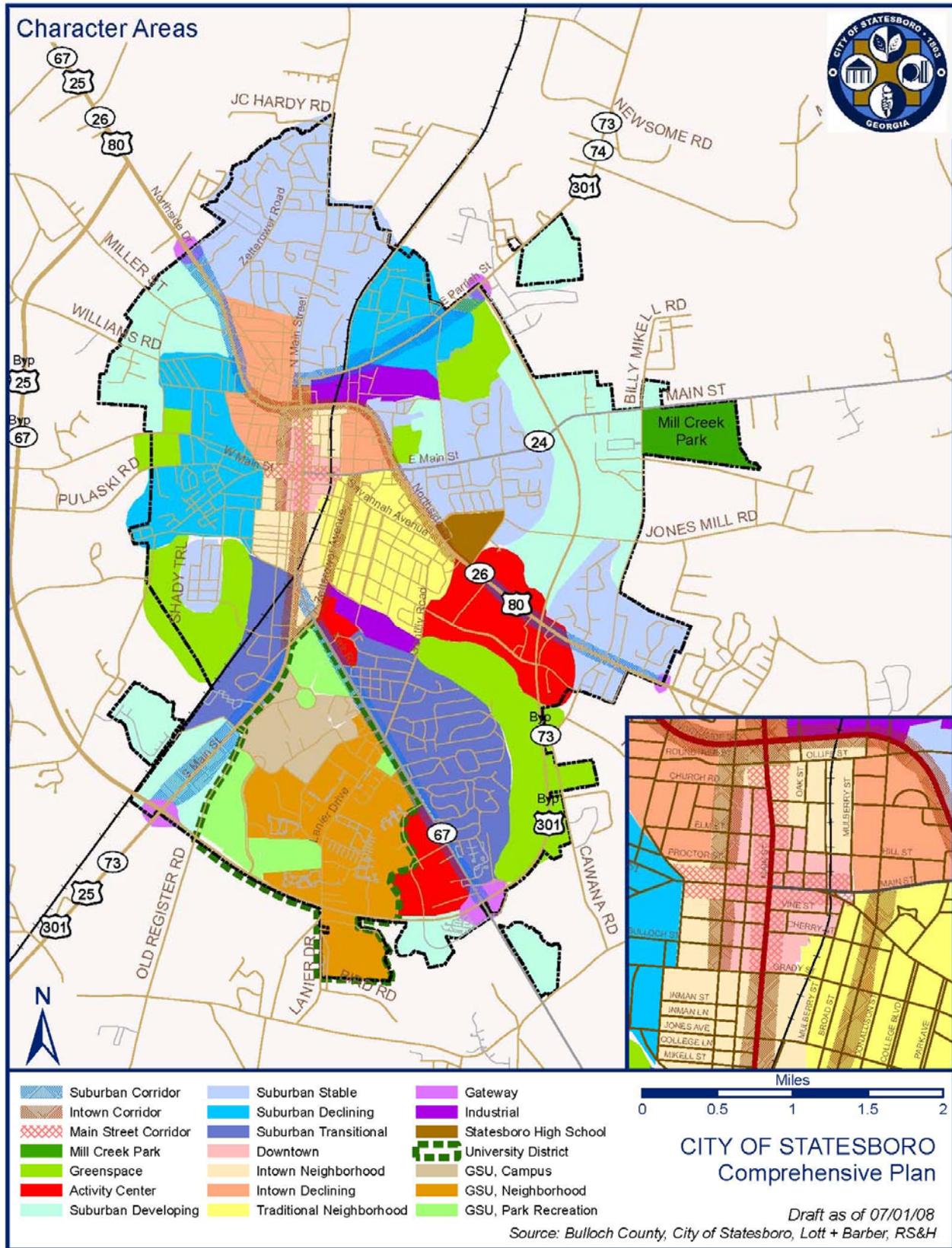
### **III. RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS**

The DCA defines a Character Areas as: “A specific geographic area within the community that:

- Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor);
- Has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into more attractive village development pattern); or
- Requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.)

Each Character Area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision. The Character Areas described in the following section were created with input from the Steering Committee, City staff and the consultant team. The map of Recommended Character Areas is shown as Figure 3.

Figure 4



## Downtown

Downtown is the historic core of city, with traditional commercial land uses and limited residential in the form of apartments and condominiums. There is an interconnected street grid, with the heaviest activity along the main streets and College Avenue to the west. Lots are typically small with zero-lot line buildings and shallow or no setbacks from the street right-of-way. There is also continuous sidewalk system throughout Downtown and a link with the McTell Trail, with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the GSU Parks and Recreation area to the south.



### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Maintain integrity of interconnected grid and pedestrian circulation
- New development should respect historic context of building mass, height and setbacks
- Historic structures should be preserved or adaptively reused wherever possible
- Encourage mixed-use infill and redevelopment
- Create local historic districts
- Economic development strategies should continue to nurture thriving commercial activity
- Enhance tree planting to include more shade trees and ornamental streetscape plantings
- Ensure that future phases of streetscape enhancements are developed in harmony with previous efforts as well as economic development goals of the City and the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority (DSDA) / Main Street program
- Continue to promote downtown as the cultural hub of the region (for example, through programs sponsored by the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority and the Averitt Center for the Arts)

## Main Street Corridors (overlay)

Historic Main Streets in the Downtown area were the center of commerce and shopping from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sidewalks and attractive streetscaping can be found along both Main streets. Predominant building types include two- to three-story commercial buildings typical of regional construction and styles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some buildings within



the corridor have been demolished for parking space, but remaining buildings still define and contribute to the historic character of this area.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Same as *Downtown*

### **Traditional Neighborhood**

Traditional residential neighborhood developed from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, features connected street grid linked with downtown. Sidewalks found on both sides of major streets; lesser streets have limited facilities. Portions of Savannah and Zetterower avenues are transitioning into predominately commercial uses; these corridors are also major traffic thoroughfares between downtown and the *Activity Centers*.



*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Ensure that new development and land uses do not encroach upon or detract from the character of the recognized National Historic Districts within this area
- Consider creating local historic districts to protect Savannah Avenue and other historic residential areas from inappropriate development and to restrict the demolition or substantial alteration of recognized historic structures
- Enhance existing pedestrian connectivity by repairing/replacing sidewalks and adding new ones, where necessary
- Plant shade trees along streets and sidewalks

### **In-town Neighborhood**

These areas surround downtown and feature more residential land uses. Other uses are similar to those found downtown, but with much lower density and intensity. In-town areas tend to have a well-connected network of streets linking with the downtown area. Sidewalks and streetscaping are limited or non-existent.



*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Encourage residential infill and redevelopment in these areas that maintain the existing character; limit commercial uses to primary arteries
- Enhance existing pedestrian connectivity by adding new sidewalks and repairing/replacing old ones where necessary
- Plant shade trees along streets and sidewalks

**In-town Neighborhood – Declining**

Similar to *In-town Neighborhoods*, these areas of disinvestment and poor property maintenance result in substandard housing and vacant properties.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Focus on infill and redevelopment in distressed areas to create quality housing (affordable and market-rate)
- Continue to implement programs such as Habitat For Humanity that meet the housing needs of existing residents
- Enhance existing pedestrian connectivity within the neighborhood by adding new sidewalks and repairing/replacing old ones where necessary
- Plant shade trees along streets and sidewalks

**In-town Corridors (overlay)**

These corridors are auto-dependent and provide connectivity with the downtown area, although historic architecture and land uses do not appear in the same quantity and density as downtown. Sidewalk facilities are available but may be discontinuous in places. Residential uses may abut these corridors, with some street connectivity between character areas.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Envision these corridors as extensions of downtown, with high levels of connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods
- Encourage the infill of mixed uses wherever possible
- Consider a streetscaping enhancement program similar to the one downtown
- Require shade trees to be planted in parking lots and along highway corridors

- Require infill and redevelopment within these corridors to be pedestrian-oriented and linked with surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Encourage the redevelopment of the corridor between downtown and the GSU campus to provide an attractive, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere between these two character areas; retail and other uses that provide “stepping stones” between the university and downtown should be promoted
- Encourage architectural styles and building types that refer to historic structures found downtown or existing along the corridor

### **Activity Centers**

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Commercial uses dominate this category, especially large strip malls, shopping malls and department stores. Fast food and franchise dining establishments are also found here, especially as outparcel developments. Little or no pedestrian and bicycle circulation found in these areas, which are auto-dependent and largely separated from nearby residential areas.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Infill and redevelopment in these areas should occur according to a master plan that allows for mixed uses, transportation choices and urban design that mitigates the appearance of auto-dependence (such as screening parking lots or locating large parking areas primarily to the sides and rear of buildings)
- Future developments and highway improvements within these areas should include pedestrian and bicycle access to surrounding neighborhoods
- Connect these areas with existing and proposed networks of bicycle paths, sidewalks and multiuse trails (such as the McTell Trail and the proposed county greenway)
- Require shade trees to be planted in parking lots and along highway corridors
- Focus on redevelopment in areas of disinvestment (such as those that have become or are in danger of becoming “greyfields”). Development strategy should encourage uses and activities that are suitable for the immediately-surrounding character areas

### Suburban Corridors (overlay)

These corridors feature larger lot sizes and less intense activities than the *In-town Corridors*. Auto-dependent, primarily commercial land uses (similar to those found in the *Activity Centers*) occur on outparcels and at intersections. Sidewalks are limited or non-existent.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- These areas have some characteristics similar to the *Activity Centers* character areas; development strategies for those areas should be followed wherever appropriate
- Similar to the *Suburban* character areas, it is suggested that all large-scale (multi-lot) developments be master-planned and include mixed-uses wherever appropriate

### Suburban – Stable

Primarily residential consisting of single-family houses. Street network has limited connectivity; sidewalk facilities limited or absent. Commercial development tends to occur in the form of strip malls and other convenience shopping on outparcels along main roads. School grounds and small office parks may also be found in these areas.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Any new development should be master-planned to include mixed-uses wherever appropriate. These developments should blend residential uses with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses, and services, linked together in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips
- Promote walking and bicycling as an alternative means of transportation
- There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each subdivision
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and restrict “franchise” or “corporate” architecture

- Wherever possible, connect to the existing and proposed network of bicycle paths and multiuse trails (such as the McTell Trail)
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities

### **Suburban – Transitional**

Similar to *Suburban Stable*, but with some houses in poor condition, presumably due to owner neglect. Single-family houses may have been converted to multi-family rentals and limited parking space on individual lots may be an issue.

#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Strengthen enforcement of code violations for private property, including property maintenance, parking, and structural conditions
- Ensure adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities for students commuting to and from GSU campus



### **Suburban – Declining**

Similar to *Suburban Transitional*, but with more obvious signs of owner neglect. Property maintenance violations may be common. Visible evidence of reinvestment is scattered and uneven. Housing units are predominantly rental.

#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Strengthen enforcement of code violations for private property, including property maintenance, parking, and structural conditions
- Ensure adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link these neighborhoods with adjacent areas.

### **Suburban – Developing**

These areas are currently undeveloped or minimally developed but are under pressure to grow in a suburban manner, which has conventionally featured separate land uses, primarily single-family residential uses, and strip mall development along outparcels. These developing areas can be found at the periphery of the city, adjacent to existing suburban development and highway corridors.

### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Within these areas, identify places of natural beauty and sensitive natural resources (such as wetlands) and protect these areas from development
- New development should be master-planned to include mixed-uses wherever appropriate. These developments should blend residential uses with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses, and services, linked together in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision
- Promote walking and bicycling as an alternative means of transportation
- There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each subdivision
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street network connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain regional character, and restrict “franchise” or “corporate” architecture
- Promote street designs that foster traffic calming, such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities



### **GSU – Academic Campus**

This is a traditional four-year college campus. Academic and administrative buildings, residence halls and dorms, student activity centers, cafeterias, performing arts venues, and ancillary buildings are found in the campus core, which is organized around an internal pedestrian circulation system. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within the campus is excellent. Parking lots are found along the periphery, allowing students, faculty and staff to park and walk to buildings and facilities in the core.



### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Encourage future growth within the academic core
- Host formal discussions between GSU and the City on how to strengthen physical “town and gown” connections between the campus and adjacent commercial and residential areas.
- Consider the pros and cons of the greenbelt around campus, which physically separates the campus from the greater community
- Continue to preserve open spaces such as Sweetheart Circle and areas of natural beauty, including Herty Pines
- Collaboratively address parking needs on campus that may also affect public and private property in surrounding areas
- Consider the installation of parking structures on campus as a parking solution. Potential sites include the existing parking areas near the Hwy 67 entrance, along Old Register Road, and along Chandler Road

### **GSU – Parks and Recreation**

These areas feature formal athletics fields, including GSU athletics NCAA football and baseball stadiums. Some passive open spaces are also found in limited supply. The University’s student recreation center is also located within the southwestern Parks and Recreation Area.



### **GSU – Student Neighborhood**

Residential areas adjacent to the GSU campus, primarily oriented to student housing. Multi-family, duplex and single-family housing types are all found in this district. Student-oriented commercial uses are found along primary arteries, including restaurants/bars and nightclubs. Interspersed throughout this area are GSU properties including residential halls.



### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Strengthen enforcement of code violations for private property, including property maintenance, parking, and structural conditions

- Ensure adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities for students commuting to and from GSU campus

### **Mill Creek Park**

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The largest public recreation facility in the city and county, Mill Creek Park has a variety of playing fields, playgrounds, walking paths, and passive open spaces. The park also features a water park and indoor swimming facility. Parking areas are consolidated behind the playing fields, with vehicular circulation on the periphery. The park occupied land that was annexed by the city and is abutted by the county on three sides. These areas in the surrounding county are directly influenced by the park; land uses in this area will need to be considered in annexation becomes a possibility.



### **Greenspace**

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These areas include a range of uses, but are characterized primarily by lack of built structures and surface paving. Agriculture and silviculture uses appear on the periphery of the city. Wetlands and undeveloped forest (non-silviculture) are also found throughout the city.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Within these areas, identify places of natural beauty and sensitive natural resources (such as wetlands) and protect these areas from development; consider the use of conservation easements for increased protection in perpetuity
- New development should be master-planned and carefully linked to surrounding developed areas through a network of streets
- Wherever possible, connect new development with existing and proposed networks of bicycle paths and multiuse trails (such as the McTell Trail)

## Industrial

Heavy industrial uses within the city include concrete plants and wood mills. These areas are auto-dependent and have limited commercial activities on frontage parcels. Internal street networks are limited or non-existent; as is typical of industrial areas, connectivity with surrounding character areas is non-existent.



### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Mitigate the appearance of these areas as they present themselves to adjacent corridors and surrounding character areas. Where necessary, consider trees and other planted buffers as a visual screen and to attenuate noise levels associated with industrial activities
- Encourage infill and redevelopment within these areas that consists of industrial uses similar or complimentary in nature to existing uses

## Statesboro High School

The campus of the city's only public high school, the uses consist of primarily educational and administrative buildings with associated parking and vehicle circulation. Athletic fields and ancillary facilities are also included. SHS is largely auto-dependent, with most students and staff arriving by car or bus. Limited pedestrian and bicycle connectivity exists to link the surrounding residential areas.

### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with surrounding streets and neighborhoods
- Require shade trees to be planted in parking lots and along adjacent public roads

## Gateways

These areas are located at the intersections of the by-pass and Highways 67 and 301 South and at the city limits where Highway 301 North and Highway 80 North and South intersect. The gateways at the intersection with the by-pass are auto-dominant and feature commercial, auto-oriented land uses on most corners of



their intersections. Traffic lanes are very wide, with separate left turn lanes and median strips. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are present but not connected to any nearby facilities, making accessibility difficult.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street network connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain regional character, and restrict “franchise” or “corporate” architecture
- Promote street designs that foster traffic calming, such as narrower streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities