

georgia department of community affairs

State Planning Recommendations

Character Areas





State Planning Recommendations

Character Areas



Use of this list of recommended character areas to identify both existing and potential character areas in your community. Character area planning focuses on the way an area looks and how it functions. Applying development strategies to character areas in your community can preserve existing areas, such as downtown, and help others function better and become more attractive. You can create additional character areas, or modify these to fit your community vision. More details can be found by referring to DCA's Guidebooks: *Discovering and Planning Your Community Character*; *Planning for Community Involvement*; *Character Areas: Techniques and Guidance*; and *Smart Code 6.5-Specific Function Chart*.

Conservation Area and Greenspace

Character Areas



Conservation Area and Greenspace.

Primarily undeveloped, natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development.

Conservation Area and Greenspace

Character Areas



Scenic views, coastal areas, steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, and wildlife management areas can all be categorized as Conservation Areas or Greenspace.

Conservation Area and Greenspace

Character Areas



Low-impact roadway to accommodate light traffic.



Narrow roadway with minimal clearing to protect surrounding environment.



Heavy roadway clearing endangering health of forest and wildlife.



Flooding and sedimentation caused by development along riverbank.



Healthy river with conservation buffer.



Erosion of hillside due to disturbance from construction.



Stable, undisturbed hillside.

Maintain natural, rural character by...

- not allowing any new development,
- promoting use of conservation easements,
- widening roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary,
- carefully designing roadway alterations to minimize visual impact and by
- promoting these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations.

Linear Greenspace, Trail & Pedestrian/Bike Network

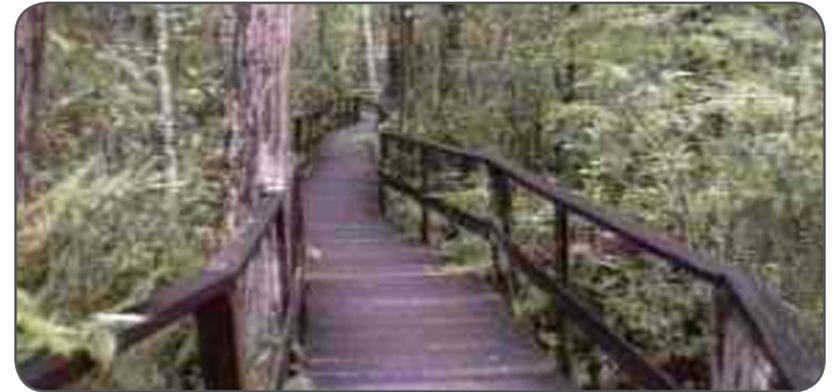


Linear Greenspace, Trail & Pedestrian/Bike Network.

Area of protected open space that follows natural and man-made linear features for recreation, transportation and conservation purposes and links ecological, cultural and recreational amenities.

Linear Greenspace, Trail & Pedestrian/Bike Network

Character Areas



Greenways can provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages and at the same time give users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. Properly designed greenways can serve as an alternative transportation network, accommodating commuting to work or shopping as well as recreational biking, skateboarding, walking and jogging.

Linear Greenspace, Trail & Pedestrian/Bike Network



Create these linkages by...

- linking greenspaces into a pleasant network of greenways
- setting aside land for pedestrian and bicycle connections between schools, churches, recreation areas, city centers, residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Agriculture Area

Character Areas



Agriculture Area.

Lands in open or cultivated state or sparsely settled, including woodlands and farm lands.

Agriculture Area

Character Areas



Traditional suburban neighborhood development with large yards and incompatible architecture styles.



Rural conservation neighborhood clustering development and preserving existing greenspace and character of the area.



Rural road accommodating low traffic volume.



Road expanded for heavier traffic volume while preserving surrounding landscape.



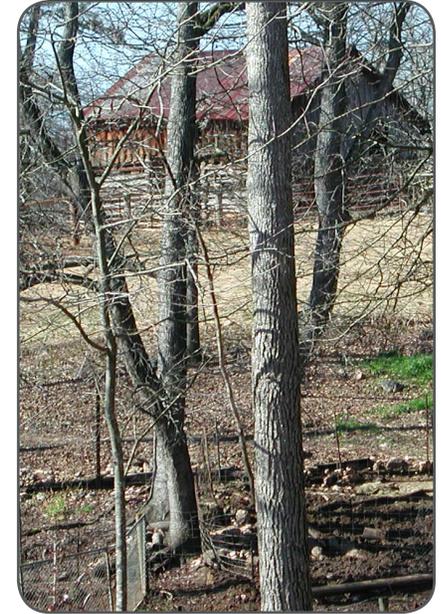
Highway built for high-traffic volume with little attempt to minimize visual or environmental impact of the area.

Maintain rural character by...

- strictly limiting new development,
- protecting farmland and open space by maintaining large lot sizes (at least 10 acres),
- promoting use of conservation easements by land owners,
- severely limiting residential subdivisions. When minor exceptions are made, they should be required to follow a rural cluster zoning or conservation subdivision design. Any new development should be required to use compatible architecture styles that maintain the rural character and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture,
- widen roadways only when absolutely necessary,
- carefully design the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact and by
- promoting these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations.

Rural Residential Area

Character Areas



Rural Residential Area.

Rural, undeveloped land likely to face development pressures for lower density (one unit per 2+ acres) residential development. Typically will have low pedestrian orientation and access, very large lots, open space, pastoral views and high degree of building separation.

Rural Village

Character Areas



Rural Village.

Commercial activity area located at a highway intersection. Typically automobile focused. There is a mixture of uses to serve highway passers-by, rural and agriculture areas.



Rural Residential Area and Village

Character Areas



“Corporate” style rural village incompatible with rural atmosphere.



Rural commercial area in keeping with local vernacular.



Traditional suburban neighborhood development with large yards and incompatible architecture styles.



Rural conservation neighborhood clustering development and preserving existing greenspace and character of the area.

Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development by...

- permitting rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space.
- encouraging compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture,
- connecting to regional network of greenspace and trails available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes and
- designing for greater pedestrian orientation and access, more character with attractive clustering of buildings within the center, leaving open space surrounding the center.

Suburban Area Developing

Character Areas

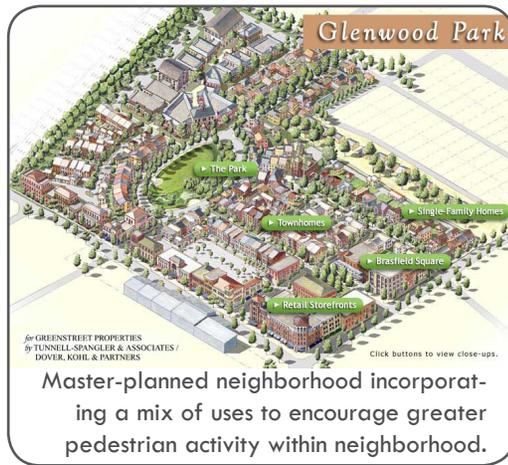


Suburban Area Developing.

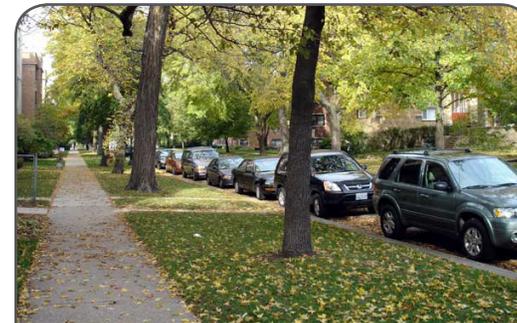
Area where pressures for the typical types of suburban residential subdivision development are greatest (due to availability of water and sewer service). Without intervention, this area is likely to evolve with low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, high open space, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear.

Suburban Area Developing

Character Areas



Moderately dense neighborhood with variety of housing options.



Pedestrian friendly street with sidewalks separated from street by greenspace and traffic calming strategies such as on-street parking



Connection to regional greenspace further encourages pedestrian activity.

Suggested Development Strategy.

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

Suburban Area Built Out

Character Areas



Suburban Area Built Out.

Area where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred.

Characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear.

Suburban Area Built Out

Character Areas



Neighborhood with low degree of street connectivity and little variance of housing style.



Master-planned neighborhood with high degree of street connectivity.



Walkable neighborhood with extensive sidewalk network.



Successful small-scale, infill development .

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles.
- This includes creating neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.
- Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walkability within existing neighborhoods.
- Permit accessory housing units, or new well-designed, small-scale infill multifamily residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.



Traditional Neighborhoods

Character Areas

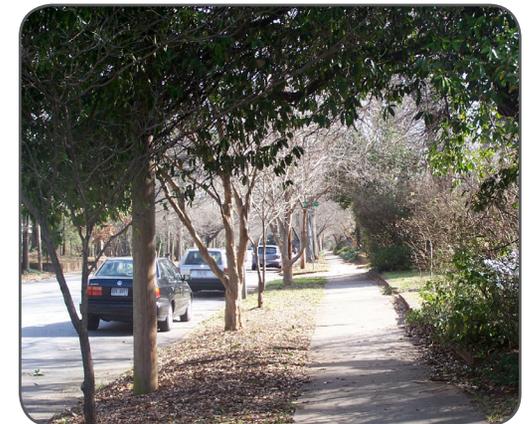


Traditional Neighborhood.

Residential area in older part of the community typically developed prior to WWII. Characteristics include high pedestrian orientation, sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, on-street parking, small, regular lots, limited open space, buildings close to or at the front property line, predominance of alleys, low degree of building separation, neighborhood-scale businesses scattered throughout the area.

Traditional Neighborhood Stable

Character Areas



Traditional Neighborhood Stable.

A neighborhood having relatively well-maintained housing, possess a distinct identity through architectural style, lot and street design, and has higher rates of home ownership. Location near declining areas of town may also cause this neighborhood to decline over time.

Traditional Neighborhood Stable

Character Areas



Dense, infill development with compatible architecture style.



Central neighborhood center providing several basic needs for residents to reduce vehicle use.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Focus on reinforcing stability by encouraging more home ownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.
- Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing.
- Include well-designed new neighborhood activity center at appropriate location, which would provide a focal point for the neighborhood, while also providing a suitable location for a grocery store, hardware store, and similar appropriately-scaled retail establishments serving neighborhood residents.
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided to encourage these residents to walk/bike to work, shopping, or other destinations in the area.

Traditional Neighborhood Declining

Character Areas



Traditional Neighborhood Declining.

An area that has most of its original housing stock in place, but housing conditions are worsening due to low rates of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance. There may be a lack of neighborhood identity and gradual invasion of different type and intensity of use that may not be compatible with the neighborhood residential use.

Traditional Neighborhood Declining

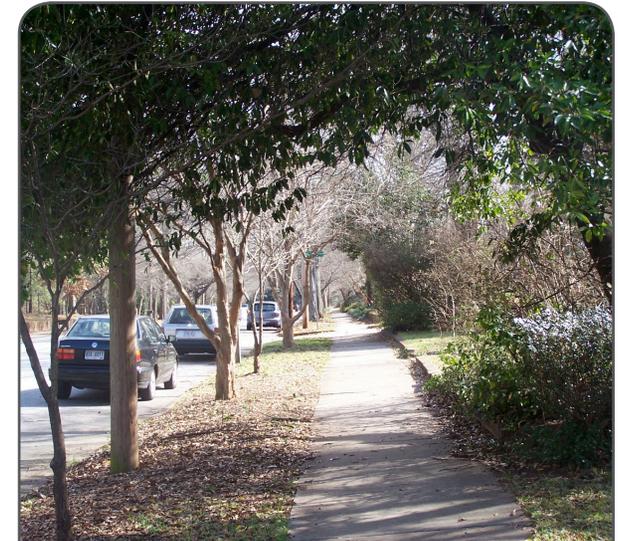
Character Areas



Infill development introducing mixed-income housing.



Neighborhood activity center accessible through pedestrian network.



Attractive sidewalks encouraging pedestrian activity within neighborhood.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Public assistance and investment should be focused where needed to ensure that the neighborhood becomes more stable, mixed-income community with a larger percentage of owner-occupied housing.
- Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing.
- The neighborhood should, however, also include well-designed new neighborhood activity center at appropriate location, which would provide a focal point for the neighborhood, while also providing a suitable location for a grocery store, hardware store, and similar appropriately-scaled retail establishments serving neighborhood residents.

Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Area

Character Areas



Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Area.

A neighborhood that has declined sufficiently that housing conditions are bad, there may be large areas of vacant land or deteriorating, unoccupied structures.

Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Area

Character Areas



Infill development combined with repair of existing housing stock.



Infill development on vacant land to create a neighborhood with more uniform density.



Neighborhood street displaying on-street parking, street trees, and sidewalks. All work to create safer, pedestrian-friendly streets.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- The redevelopment strategy for the area should focus on preserving and rehabilitating what remains of the original housing stock, while rebuilding, on the remaining land, a new, attractive neighborhood following the principles of traditional neighborhood development.
- The neighborhood should include a well-designed new neighborhood activity center at appropriate location, which would provide a focal point for the neighborhood, while also providing a suitable location for a grocery store, hardware store, and similar appropriately-scaled retail establishments serving neighborhood residents.
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shopping, or other destinations in the area.
- New streets should be connected (i.e. minimize or prohibit cul-de-sacs) to disperse traffic, shorten walking/biking trips.
- Design features that encourage safe, accessible streets should be employed – such as, narrower streets, on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees, and landscaped raised medians for minor collectors and wider streets.

Neighborhood Center

Character Areas



Neighborhood Center.

A neighborhood focal point with a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses easily accessible by pedestrians.

Neighborhood Center

Character Areas



A mixed-use neighborhood center provides several everyday needs to residents to encourage higher pedestrian activity.



Sidewalks , street plantings and cross walks that enhance the pedestrian experience.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Each Neighborhood Center should include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents day-to-day needs.
- Residential development should reinforce the center through locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments and condominiums.
- Design for each Center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear. Include direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.

Town Center

Character Areas



Town Center.

A focal point for several neighborhoods that has a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses easily accessible by pedestrians.

Town Center

Character Areas



High-density development with a mix of uses such as retail, office and residential space. This mixture of uses encourages greater activity and higher amount of pedestrians.



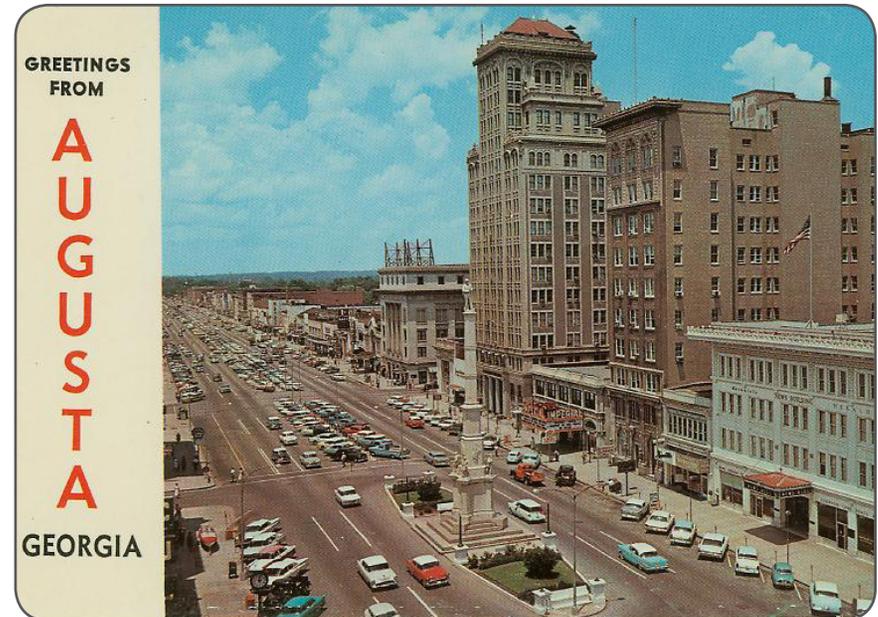
Pedestrian-oriented streets that provide a strong connection throughout town center.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Each Town Center should include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area.
- Residential development should reinforce the town center through locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments and condominiums.
- Design for each Town Center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
- Include direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.

Downtown

Character Areas



Downtown.

The traditional central business district and immediately surrounding commercial, industrial, or mixed-use areas.

Downtown Character Areas



Sidewalk and street trees enhancing the pedestrian environment.



High-density retail and residential space.



Infill development in keeping with existing structures preserve character of downtown and maintain density.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Downtown should include relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area.
- Residential development should reinforce the traditional town center through a combination of rehabilitation of historic buildings in the downtown area and compatible new infill development targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums.
- Design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.
- New residential and commercial development should be concentrated in and around the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods on infill sites.

Regional Activity Center

Character Areas



Regional Activity Center.

Concentration of regionally-marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, higher-education facilities, sports and recreational complexes. These areas are characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic, and high transit use, including stops, shelters and transfer points; on-site parking; low degree of internal open space; high floor-area-ratio; large tracts of land, campus or unified development.

Regional Activity Center

Character Areas



Pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing greenspace.



High-density, multifamily residences close to activity center to maintain density and accommodate a range of incomes.



Nearby location of retail and residential to bring a variety of uses to the area.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Should include relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area.
- Include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types, including multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums, including affordable and workforce housing.
- Design should be very pedestrian oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Include direct connections to nearby networks of greenspace or trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreation purposes.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety, provide conveniently located, preferably sheltered, bicycle parking at retail and office destinations and in multi-family dwellings.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.

Transportation Corridors

Character Areas



Transportation Corridors.

Developed or undeveloped land on both sides of designated high-volume transportation facility. Characteristics include orientation of buildings to highway; high transit, including stops and shelters; on-site parking; and large set-backs for buildings.

Transportation Corridors

Character Areas



In order to encourage pedestrian activity that capitalizes on the existing neighborhood fabric in the older parts of the community a hierarchical or tiered approach to corridor design should be adopted. This approach should focus on pedestrian comfort, safety and convenience in areas near the community's center where smaller lots and greater proximity to a range of services exists. As corridors move farther from the center and parcel sizes and development patterns work against easy pedestrian circulation, the focus should shift to vehicular safety, corridor appearance and traffic speeds while still providing basic access and safety for pedestrians. Finally, on major thoroughfares that serve as gateways to the community, the focus should be limited to corridor appearance only – providing a high quality image of the community. Best practices for all types of corridors include: driveway consolidation and landscaped raised medians, bicycle accommodations, traffic calming, and a buffer for pedestrians.

In-Town Corridor

Character Areas



In-Town Corridor.

Developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a street or highway in town that is already or likely to experience uncontrolled strip development if growth is not properly managed.

In-Town Corridor

Character Areas



Street enhanced with landscaping and street lights.



Crosswalk to provide safe pedestrian environment along corridor.



Signage to direct visitors to areas of town and attractions.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Gradually convert corridor to attractive boulevard with signage guiding visitors to downtown and scenic areas around the community.
- The appearance of the corridor can immediately be improved through streetscaping enhancements (street lights, landscaping, etc.).
- In the longer term, enact design guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street, to ensure that the corridors become more attractive as properties develop or redevelop.
- Corridors leading to town centers or downtown, in particular, should be attractive, where development is carefully controlled (or redevelopment tools are used) to maintain or improve appearances.
- Reduce the role and impact of automobiles in the community by employing attractive traffic-calming measures along major roadways and exploring alternative solutions to parking congestion.
- Provide basic access for pedestrians and bicycles, consider vehicular safety measures including driveway consolidation and raised medians (which also improve safety for bike/pedestrians).
- Coordinate land uses and bike/pedestrian facilities with transit stops where applicable.

Gateway Corridor

Character Areas



Gateway Corridor.

Developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a major thoroughfare that serves as an important entrance or means of access to the community.

Gateway Corridor

Character Areas



Attractive signage welcoming visitors to community.



Corridor with landscape improvements creating an attractive entrance into community.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Focus on appearance with appropriate signage, landscaping and other beautification measures.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments.
- Retrofit or mask existing strip development or other unsightly features as necessary.

Scenic Corridor

Character Areas



Scenic Corridor.

Developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a major thoroughfare that has significant natural, historic, or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views.

Scenic Corridor

Character Areas



Signs directing pedestrian and drivers to particular attractions along corridor.



Separated bike paths to encouraging safe use of corridor.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Establish guidelines on development to protect the characteristics deemed to have scenic value.
- Enact guidelines for new development that enhances the scenic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping and architectural design.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments.
- Provide pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential or commercial districts.

Major Highway Corridor

Character Areas



Major Highway Corridor.

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

Major Highway Corridor

Character Areas



Natural vegetation along highway to buffer from surrounding development. This buffer not only acts to visually separate but to reduce noise as well.



Pedestrian bridge across highway to provide safe crossing of highway.



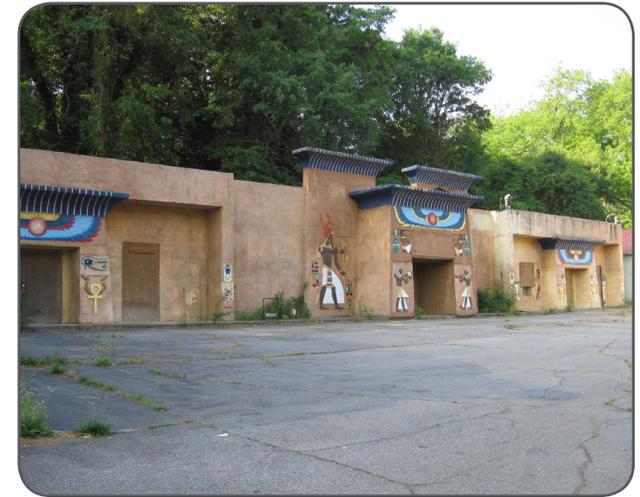
Signs directing motorists and keep traffic flowing.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Maintain a natural vegetation buffer (at least 50 feet in width) along the corridor.
- All new development should be set-back behind this buffer, with access roads, shared driveways or inter-parcel road connections providing alternate access to these developments and reducing curb cuts and traffic on the main highway.
- Encourage landscaped, raised medians to provide vehicular safety, aesthetics, and also pedestrian crossing refuge.
- Provide pedestrian facilities behind drainage ditches or curb.
- Provide paved shoulders that can be used by bicycles or as emergency breakdown lanes.
- Coordinate land uses and bike/pedestrian facilities with transit stops, if applicable.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to developments.
- Unacceptable uses: new billboards.

Commercial Redevelopment Area

Character Areas



Commercial Redevelopment Area.

Declining, unattractive, vacant or under-utilized strip shopping center. Characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic and transit if applicable; on-site parking; low degree of open space; moderate floor-area-ration; large tracts of land, campus or unified development.

Commercial Redevelopment Area

Character Areas



Abandoned commercial area with expansive parking area. Consider renovating similar areas in place of building new developments.



Renovated commercial development incorporating a mix of uses



Facade and circulation improvement with greater attention to pedestrian use.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Retro-fit to be more aesthetically appealing and, therefore, more marketable to prospective tenants by:
- Building new commercial structures at the street front, taking up a portion of the oversize parking lot and creating a shopping “square” around a smaller internal parking lot.
- Upgrading the appearance of existing older commercial buildings with façade improvement, new architectural elements, or awnings.
- Reconfiguring the parking lot and circulation routes for automobiles.
- Providing pedestrian and bicycling amenities, including covered walkways, benches, lighting and bike racks.
- Adding landscaping and other appearance enhancements, trees in parking lots to provide shade and help reduce storm water runoff.

Employment Center/Office Park

Character Areas



Employment Center/Office Park.

Typically campus-style development characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic, and transit if applicable; on-site parking; low degree of open space; moderate floor-area-ratio.

Employment Center/Office Park

Character Areas



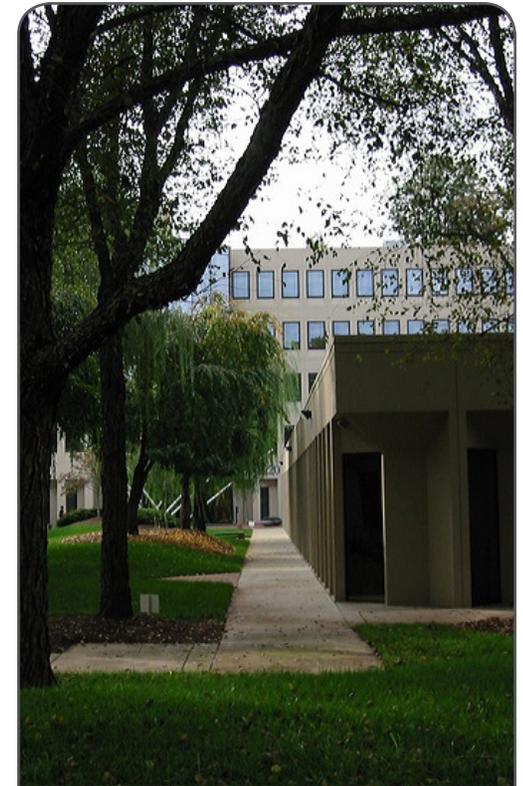
Large expanse of unnecessary parking creating great amount of stormwater runoff as well as an unattractive environment.



Employment center close to residences and other uses to encourage pedestrian activity.



Overflow parking with porous pavement to reduce stormwater runoff.



Attractive entrance into park, enhancing work environment.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Focus upon encouraging pervious paving and screening of cars and other unattractive aspects of businesses.
- Use buffers to separate from adjacent uses.
- Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve office employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

Light Industrial Area

Character Areas



Light Industrial Area.

Area used in low intensity manufacturing, wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics.

Light Industrial Area

Character Areas



Unattractive loading docks with lack of visual screening.



Expansive and highly exposed parking area



Vegetated islands within parking to create a more attractive landscape and reduce in runoff from parking lot.



Rehabilitated historic industrial building that incorporates a mix of uses.

Suggested Development Strategy.

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

Industrial Area

Character Areas

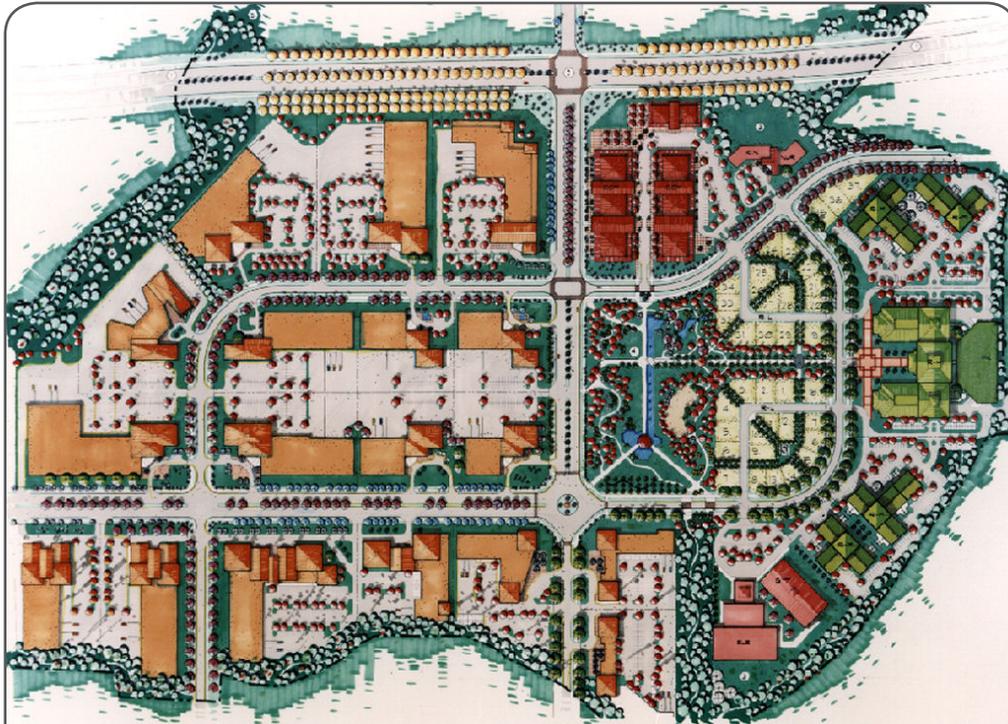


Industrial Area.

Land used in higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics are not contained on-site.

Industrial Area

Character Areas



Planned industrial park designed with a mixture of uses to serve employees and encourage pedestrian activity.



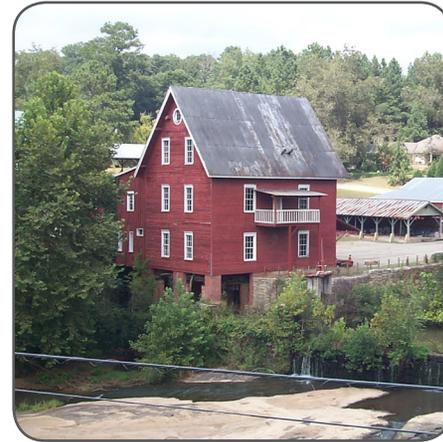
Basic services such as restaurants near area to reduce automobile use.

Suggested Development Strategy.

- Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

Historic Area

Character Areas



Historic Area.

Historic district or area containing features, landmarks, civic or cultural uses of historic interest. Characteristics may vary based on size, location and history of the community.

Historic Area

Character Areas



Restored historic site that maintains original character of buildings and is in keeping with national guidelines.



Appropriate infill development maintain existing historical character.



Connections to greenways to encourage pedestrian activity through area

Suggested Development Strategy.

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

Other/Special

Character Areas



Other/Special.

A district or area that presently does not fit or is not envisioned fitting into the above categories. It may, for instance, have singular characteristics such as hospital, airport, big box, etc. not likely to be replicated elsewhere within the community.

Development strategy to be determined locally.

Quality Community Objectives

Character Areas

- a.** Regional Identity Objective: Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.
- b.** Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- c.** Appropriate Businesses Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
- d.** Educational Opportunities Objective: Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.
- e.** Employment Options Objective: A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
- f.** Heritage Preservation Objective: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.
- g.** Open Space Preservation Objective: New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- h.** Environmental Protection Objective: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
- i.** Regional Cooperation Objective: Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.
- j.** Transportation Alternatives Objective: Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.
- k.** Regional Solutions Objective: Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.
- l.** Housing Opportunities Objective: Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.
- m.** Traditional Neighborhood Objective: Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
- n.** Infill Development Objective: Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
- o.** Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.