

PART II: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE ?

IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES & GOALS AND POLICIES

IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Lanier County, as the historical sketch in Chapter Three explains, has a rich heritage. Early settlements sprang up from grist and sawmill operations, which prompted settlement patterns to and through Greater Lanier. Some of these settlements formed the basis for Lakeland today and some have either disappeared or provide the link to the past and are now inhabited by farm/non-farm persons. Throughout the years, development in the county has brought with it farm and forest related structures, including several churches. Even without a comprehensive countywide inventory, many buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects of historical importance are present in Greater Lanier. As a result, Greater Lanier is rich with historic resources but at present no governmental actions have been taken to provide protective steps for preservation of the vast majority of these resources.

To bring Lanier County and Lakeland into the fold of protecting the historic resources the Planning Advisory Commission needs to form a Greater Lanier Historic Preservation Task Force. The first goal of this task force would be the completion of a comprehensive survey of historic resources for the entire county. Once the survey is complete, the historic preservation task force will know what and where the historic resources are and they can decide how to preserve them. With this information, the task force can then begin targeting areas for potential National Register districts and local historic districts. The task force could also use this information as a basis for seminars to educate owners of historic resources about their buildings and how they relate to their surroundings. Once the survey is complete, the historic preservation task force can then begin targeting areas for potential National Register districts and local historic districts. The task force could also use this information as a basis for seminars to educate owners of historic resources about their buildings and how they relate to their surroundings.

The historic preservation task force could also promote the protection of historic resources by making historic property owners aware of state and federal programs such as tax benefits and grants. It could also designate local historic districts and write an ordinance creating a historic preservation commission that would protect these local districts through a review process that includes any changes to the exterior of buildings located in the district. The task force could also serve as a catalyst for the formation of other groups interested in historic preservation.

Preservation of Lanier County's historic resources will require an organized effort such as the one described. With the formation of a preservation task force, many accomplishments can be made, but without it, little will get done and a part of Greater Lanier's heritage will disappear forever. It is of great importance that such a group be formed. It should be noted that for the goals to be met, the city and county governments must individually endorse the concept of historic preservation by getting involved in the formation of the task force and by having representatives as members of the group.

POPULATION AND ECONOMY

Greater Lanier's population, social, economic and environmental profile has been and will continue to be influenced by three major factors: (1) Greater Lanier lies between two major growth centers, namely, Valdosta and Douglas and within the trade areas of the following minor growth centers - Adel and Nashville; (2) Rural farm population continues to decline due to mechanization and competition; and (3) Rural non-farm population has been encouraged to develop prime farm/forest lands. In the last five years Lanier County has begun to take responsibility and guide development to locations, which promote the general health, safety and welfare of residents. Greater Lanier possesses a myriad of natural resources, which are intact, and the land development and subdivision ordinances along with the enforcement of the state construction codes (i.e. building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical codes) will safeguard said resources for future generations.

The vast majority of soils are rated "fair" which means the caution flag is raised and special on-site system designs must be engineered, which can lead to higher expenditures and larger lot areas needed to overcome the soil deficiencies. Therefore, until a countywide health inspection is conducted for all on-site sewer systems rural populations could be at risk on their private water and sewer systems on lots often undersized and not capable of supporting these activities.

Current data provides continuing evidence that the economy of Greater Lanier is not keeping even with regional growth centers, and lagging behind the State of Georgia and the United States. Out migration is a serious problem as young people leave the county and seek economic opportunity elsewhere.

The moderate growth labor market has a deep personal meaning to the residents of Greater Lanier. This means that 18.4 percent of Greater Lanier's residents are below the income poverty level, which is significantly higher than Georgia's average of 13.0 percent and the United States average of 12.4 percent. It also means that Greater Lanier's per capita income has decreased slightly from 68 percent to 67.2 percent of the state per capita income since 1979 and is 63.4 percent of the United States per capita income average. Coupled with Greater Lanier's educational attainment level of only 65.0 percent of its adult population having a high school or higher education (Georgia's average is 78.6 percent and the U. S. average is 80.3 percent), these two problems demand attention and insight if Greater Lanier is to prosper and grow.

The Greater Lanier economic picture recently saw gains in the retail service sector with the start of two new retail stores and a new Dollar General store. The new countywide Chamber of Commerce has provided the focus for economic development and will take positive steps towards acquiring new industries and promoting Greater Lanier towards economic revitalization.

Education is a major consideration for a prospective industry. Throughout the nation, the critical link between education and prosperity is being realized. Gains in the level of educational attainment mean a more skilled labor force, and a drop in the number of students who do not complete their schooling. This in turn reduces the out-migration; because industries will choose Greater Lanier and economic opportunities will become available. Current programs for keeping children in school and teaching them the value of vocational education, job training before and after they graduate, must be reinforced by the general public and the institutional community. Greater Lanier needs to seek every opportunity to encourage learning and personal development to foster a skilled labor force for existing and future industries.

COUNTY / COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Chapter Four has inventoried, analyzed and made recommendations concerning the county/city facilities and services. The heart and soul of a community's ability to grow and develop depends upon the capability of providing public infrastructure and services. These include: county and city governmental services, public safety, fire protection, emergency medical service, health care, public water and sanitary sewer systems, natural gas systems, electric distribution systems, solid waste management, transportation (streets, roads, railroads, aviation), recreation, cultural facilities, and educational facilities. In most cases facilities and services tend to be a reflection of a community's values and priorities, and therefore, plays an important role in stimulating growth and establishing the community's form of development.

For any business to be successful in the long term and operate in a fiscally sound manner, it must prepare an annual and long-range business plan. Cities and counties are actually "public corporations" which are intended to last a long time and should therefore, plan accordingly. Greater Lanier's two governments vary in size, but when all of the infrastructure and services are inventoried, the magnitude of investment for each of these is apparent; larger than most private businesses. Since the benefactors of each of these public corporations are not a small group of private individuals, but rather all of Greater Lanier's citizens, then it is essential for these corporations to be managed responsibly.

However, Greater Lanier does not currently have the mind-set (city/county policies, framework, i.e. process) for the preparation and implementation of a long-term capital improvement program, which is one sound method of long-range business planning for local governments. For the most part, on an annual basis with whatever information is readily available, a budget is prepared and priorities are selected and funds are expended. Without preliminary

engineering and architectural feasibility studies with complete cost estimates for each and every project which also show total long-term revenue needs, operation and maintenance costs, each unit of government annually prepares a budget that addresses its most immediate and known needs and no long-range strategies are developed.

With a known scarcity of fiscal resources and a multitude of needed facilities and services it becomes necessary to institute a capital improvement program process at the county and city levels. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 sets out the parameters that allow the units of government to commence such a capital budgeting process and Greater Lanier should use their individual five-year short-term work programs as the springboard for their capital improvement programs.

HOUSING

The housing element of the plan is based to a large extent on the findings of the population element. Population projections indicate moderate growth over the next 25 years amounting to 63 persons and 20 housing units per year. Within the housing element, Greater Lanier needs to consider the following factors while formulating goals and strategies for their comprehensive plan:

1. Greater Lanier has continuing programmatic efforts to redevelop and rehabilitate substandard housing through the use of state and federal housing rehabilitation programs. While there appear to be many units requiring exterior rehabilitation, there are also ample units that need electrical and mechanical upgrades to meet housing and building codes.
2. The proportion of persons in the 65 and above age groups is expected to increase dramatically throughout the planning period. The 55 to 65+ age groups are slated to rise and these trends often account for a decrease in the number of persons per dwelling unit. Together these trends have tremendous implications for the provision of housing, since elderly housing has to address the special needs of elderly homeowners and renters. Besides being on a fixed income, they have physical limitations, and often need supportive services.
3. Less than 6% of the current rental housing stock in Lakeland is provided by the public sector for low/moderate and elderly renters. The Lakeland Housing Authority manages these housing units. The high level of poverty in Lakeland has prompted community leaders to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing at two locations in Lakeland. Additional units will be added to meet the needs when funding is available.
4. Greater Lanier's housing mix has been shifting toward a higher percentage of mobile homes, which have become the dominantly attractive means of affordable housing. With moderate-growth in population, and a proportionately low acreage of developed commercial and industrial lands, this has negatively impacted the residential tax base. If left unchanged, this trend could have alarming impacts on fiscal resources. However, with adequate subdivision controls, land development regulations, and strategies for infill development and rehabilitation of existing site-built housing, this trend can be changed.
5. Greater Lanier needs to address the type of housing from the tax revenue basis, but also the location of housing. The natural resources and land use elements show the vast majority of rural non-farm residences are located on soils, which are not capable of supporting on-site sanitary sewer systems. Consequently, widespread effluent contamination prevails throughout the rural subdivisions. Small community water distribution systems serve several subdivisions to alleviate contamination of individual wells by septic tank wastes. This places public health in jeopardy and begs public officials to enforce appropriate codes and ordinances governing the division of land, location of residences, and the construction of wells and on-site sewage systems.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The inventory and analysis found in Chapter Three thoroughly explains the attributes of the soils, surface waters, wetlands, floodplains, watersheds, aquifers, groundwater recharge areas, river corridor protection, endangered species, recreational resources, prime farm and forest lands, scenic views and sites. The capability of the soils to support a myriad of land uses has been analyzed and several baseline maps have undergone review by the Planning Advisory Committee. The needs are as follows:

1. The comprehensive plan needs to reinforce the necessity to utilize the detailed soil survey by first delimiting broad soil association areas, namely Lakeland-Pelham-Alapaha and Tifton-Fuquay-Pelham shown on Maps 3-8 and 3-11, and at least focus planned subdivisions and development to these more suitable soil associations. The Land Use Plans should guide development to areas capable of supporting development while the Health Code and other development regulations need to address the current site and situation. If future development is steered away from the soil associations with severe constraints and to soil associations that are suitable for the proposed development, then a win-win situation exists for man and the environment.
2. Item number one above presupposes development decisions are conducted within the public forum. The City of Lakeland and Lanier County maintain a joint planning advisory commission to guide development per respective development regulations (subdivision, building, zoning, etc.,).
3. Greater Lanier has a strong farming economy that has adjusted to market forces by growing in size, and the impact of farming jobs and earnings will continue to be a positive impact in the Greater Lanier economy throughout the twenty year planning period. It is the responsibility of government to recognize that there are 10,315 acres of "prime" and 64,646 acres of "important" farmlands in Greater Lanier and take whatever measures necessary, including the adoption of the comprehensive plan, to protect these natural resources for future generations.
4. The groundwater recharge areas depicted on Map 3-2 are located in the southwest quadrant- the Grand Bay/Banks Lake area and south of Georgia 37 along US 129 to the county line. Development regulations have been enacted in conformance with Georgia's environmental criteria to protect these sensitive areas.
5. Development should avoid flood hazard areas because of high development costs, potential damage to private property and its associated potential public costs, and damage to the ecosystem within the floodplain. Lanier County is in the process of being mapped for flood hazards and the Lakeland flood hazard map is shown on Map 3-7. Since new flood hazard map documentation may take several years to accomplish, it is incumbent upon developers to provide engineering documentation that show their proposed developments will not adversely impact a floodplain. New development regulations can spell out necessary language to protect the public liability.
6. Wetlands fall under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977. This Act prohibits the discharge of dredge or fill materials into the water bodies or wetlands of the United States unless a permit is granted. Before a landowner starts a proposed development he is required to ascertain wetlands applicability. He should be advised to obtain a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Lanier County and the City of Lakeland have adopted wetlands protection ordinances in conformance with Georgia's environmental criteria to protect these sensitive areas.
7. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resource Division-Georgia Natural Heritage Program has inventoried plant and animal species in the State of Georgia. Table 3-6: Endangered or Threatened Plant and Animal Species identifies these plants and animals.
8. The Alapaha River corridor is included in the River Corridor Protection Ordinance adopted by Lanier County in conformance with the Georgia Environmental criteria.
9. Particular attention needs to be focused on three impaired stream segments, namely Alapaha River, Tenmile Creek, and Fivemile Creek. Total maximum daily load implementation plans have been prepared dealing with dissolved oxygen (Map 3-6 depicts the location of the impaired stream segments).

LAND USE

In theory, a local unit of government should consult its comprehensive plan when making land development decisions or reacting to state or federal mandates to ensure or test whether their decisions are in harmony with the goals and policies articulated in its Comprehensive Plan. The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan can be achieved with the help of a number of tools. The pattern, timing, and standards of development within any community can be influenced and guided in accordance with the comprehensive plan in several ways. Non-regulatory measures include the use of incentives to promote certain types of uses, educational meetings and hearings, voluntary persuasive measures, and intergovernmental coordination. Regulatory measures, such as a building permit code, building construction code, subdivision control ordinance, housing, electrical and plumbing codes and land development (zoning) ordinance are common actions taken to influence and safeguard local land use patterns.

While all these codes, ordinances, and regulations are often viewed as restrictions on private property owners, they do have positive benefits for land investment, besides protecting the public health, safety and welfare. These regulations insure that all property owners develop their land according to a common set of standards. The land investment value perceived lost when private development options are limited is returned to the property owner when the limitations prevent neighboring properties from being developed for incompatible uses.

To begin to protect the public health, safety and general welfare, Lanier County/Lakeland have taken the leadership role and maintained a joint countywide planning advisory commission (PAC). The county and the city have set up an enforcement program for building permits, the state construction code, land subdivision ordinance and land development ordinance.

SUMMARY

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and subsequent guidelines within minimum planning standards, procedures, and environmental criteria has given each local unit of government in Georgia a choice: (1) Prepare and adopt an individual or joint comprehensive plan according to state guidelines and maintain "qualified local government status", or (2) take everything under advisement and do nothing. The second option places the local government in a status, which will jeopardize its chances to receive state and federal grant assistance.

Greater Lanier has: (1) continue participating in the Growth Strategies planning process and routinely update or amend the Plan; and (2) individually assess their current regulatory tools, including but not limited to building, land subdivision, floodplain management ordinances, zoning, soil erosion and sedimentation ordinances, Health Department regulations, etc., and ascertain which tools currently are supportive or divisive in implementing its comprehensive plan. Where falling short, each respective local government's ordinances should be amended to achieve stated goals and policies. These regulatory tools should also be critically analyzed in light of the State's environmental planning criteria, and appropriate measures should be adopted to insure local compliance with state standards.

It is further suggested that like the preparation of the updated Greater Lanier Comprehensive Plan was guided by a planning advisory commission, that the PAC be created, empowered, and charged with keeping the Greater Lanier Comprehensive Plan alive, and working towards the implementation of its goals, policies and short-term work programs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Lanier planning process has reached the stage where the citizens and staff have reviewed impacts and opportunities and recommended the preparation of goals and policies that will provide the general framework for the 2025 Greater Lanier Comprehensive Plan. The Impacts and Opportunities summary also recommended further studies be undertaken in all of the seven planning elements, which could insure moderate growth. The Greater Lanier Goals and Policies will address these findings and actual programs will be included in the Five Year Short-Term Work Programs, which will make investments to strengthen Greater Lanier's long-term economic base.

A "goal" should be viewed as an outcome or end towards which the eventual realization of plans, development policies and programs are targeted. An example of a land use goal could be a statement that would call for the wise use, protection, or rational development of a given county or city characteristic. The goal is carried to fruition through enforcement of the land use plan, land development and other ordinances, and by carrying out scheduled public construction projects.

A "policy" is a definite strategy or course of action, which will ensure that the goals are realized. By nature, a policy becomes a tool embodied in both the plan and ordinances derived to carry out the plan. However, policies are useful only so long as they are well formulated and carefully reflect county and city goals. A well-conceived list of policies provides a basic framework for decision makers.

Finally, it is assumed that some persons reviewing the goals and policies contained in this document will feel they are "pie in the sky" types of statements. Without specific program objectives, which are presented in the five-year short-term work programs, this would be an accurate comment. As someone once said, "When you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there". The goals and policies provide the definition of where we're trying to go in Greater Lanier.

The Goals and Policies are premised on the creation of a countywide planning commission.

- (1) Lanier County/Lakeland will continue to empower Greater Lanier Planning Advisory Commission to implement the comprehensive plan. The South Georgia RDC could provide on-going technical assistance services to help the Greater Lanier Planning Advisory Commission implement the 2025 Greater Lanier Comprehensive Plan.

GOAL 1:

Lanier County and Lakeland should consist of an Urban Service Area and a Rural Service Area. Urban services (public water, sanitary sewers, etc.,) will be provided within the Urban Service Area. Persons choosing a rural lifestyle should not expect to receive urban services outside of these planned Urban Service Areas.

URBAN SERVICE AREA (USA)

One of the main purposes of the "2025 Greater Lanier Comprehensive Plan" is to determine general priorities for county and city investments. To provide guidelines in setting county/city priorities, the county and cities will have an Urban Service Area (USA) within which county and city systems for existing and proposed, sanitary sewers, water systems, and highways will be provided. Urban density development should be encouraged to occur in the Urban Service Area to ensure that maximum use is made of public and private investments. The alternative of a rural lifestyle, including commercial forestry and agriculture, should also be available in Lanier County. Persons who live in the Rural Service Area (RSA) should not expect to receive an urban level of services.

The City of Lakeland whose corporate limits include both urban and rural lands, have the responsibility to set the boundary between the Urban Service Area and the Rural Service Area within their community. The City should stage their growth adjacent to existing activity and service areas for as long as practical, and they should consider allowing the continuance of agricultural activities, especially those on prime agricultural lands in areas not planned for urban services.

Considerable development has already occurred in the Urban Service Areas. This development is scattered throughout the county, and there are several acres of unused tracts of land. Many of these lands are provided with a range of urban services, and as a result, constitute a large capital investment in under-utilized public facilities.

In spite of the under-utilized facilities in the urbanized areas, development of unserved land continues both there and in the Rural Service Areas. Federal, state and county roads have made employment and shopping highly accessible. Consequently, the entire county is subject to increasing pressures for urbanization.

Although the highway system has contributed to current development trends putting country living within easy commuting time for employment centers, there are other reasons for the county's pattern of scattered development. Two of the most important of these are the desire of a large portion of the population to live in a low density, semi-rural environment and the relatively low initial cost of rural housing. Housing in the rural areas is less expensive partially because of the lack of urban services and amenities such as sewer and water systems, paved streets, full-time police and fire departments, and recreation programs. Rural areas also often have fewer regulatory requirements than those in urban areas, and this means that housing can be built less expensively. Land can be less expensive in rural areas, so that larger lots can often be obtained at the same prices as smaller urban or suburban lots. However, people moving to rural areas are usually urban oriented, and they soon desire urban related services. These urban services were not necessary to support a truly rural population primarily engaged in farming and forestry.

Public investments in new facilities are wasteful to the extent that existing utilities, roads, and schools have adequate capacity to accommodate growth. In addition, development contiguous to present development, rather than scattered across the countryside, is more economical to serve with electricity, telephone, cable television, parks and roads. The extra costs of scattered development are not borne entirely by the owners of scattered housing because many of the costs are spread throughout the county and state in the form of higher sales taxes, utility fees, and gasoline taxes. Persons choosing to live in semi-rural environment do so without paying the full cost of their choice because other residents of the state subsidize many of the utilities and public improvements.

RURAL SERVICE AREA (RSA)

In the Rural Service Area, agriculture and commercial forestry should be given first priority. This Rural Service Area can contain other secondary uses including specialized agricultural uses such as processing facilities, sod farms, truck farms, nurseries, plant farms, recreational areas, and forested tracts. The Rural Service Area promotes the concentration of neighborhood activity centers (NAC) in existing and proposed subdivisions at densities which range from lots with private wells to lots that are serviced by a community-type domestic water supply, but not a joint sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. These NAC's function for those persons who prefer larger than urban lot sizes and densities, and they never require the public provision of the full range of urban services. It becomes imperative that future NAC's in the RSA be developed on soils, which have few to no limitations for septic tanks and drain fields. Extreme caution should be exercised in Lanier County, because there are only moderate and severely limited soil associations throughout the unincorporated portions of the county.

Commercial Agricultural Uses

A large part of the Rural Service Area contains prime farm and forestland, and these areas need to be protected. The agricultural economy remains strong; there is a large investment in farming; and farmers desire to continue the agricultural use of the land. Some of the land in the rural area, however, is of poor quality and more suited to forestry. Both the excellent and poorer quality areas should be protected from urban encroachment; a favorable social and economic climate is necessary if farm families are to make the heavy investment and take the risks necessary to keep their farm business viable.

To avoid these problems, agriculture should be considered an exclusive land use. Agricultural areas which have prime farmland and substantial agricultural investments should be identified as **Commercial Agricultural Areas (CAA)** and protected from further encroachment by non-agricultural uses. Protection from encroachment should involve actions on many fronts including exclusive-use zoning, restrictions on public works projects that are unrelated to agriculture and forestry, and relief from special assessments and environmental ordinances not related to public health and safety.

GOAL 2:

Increase an intensive mixture of employment, goods, services, and residential use in Activity Centers; link high intensity Activity Centers; provide a wide variety of residential and employment alternatives both inside and outside Activity Centers; and achieve the highest standards of quality in the urban environment.

Policy 2.1:

The City and County shall adopt/or amend appropriate Land Development Regulations to provide standards, including minimum and maximum density standards, for three classifications of Activity Centers: Downtown Activity Center, Urban Activity Center, and Neighborhood Activity Center. These shall be depicted on the respective Future Land Use Maps for the city and the county.

Policy 2.1.1:

Activity Centers shall be intended to fulfill the following purposes:

- (a) **Downtown Activity Center (DAC)** - This is the central business and service center of Lakeland. Areas should be allocated for concentrated residential, commercial, office, institutional, recreational and cultural facilities at a scale which serves the entire area, and at the highest intensities to be found anywhere in the county. Pedestrian-oriented streets containing clusters of retailing, personal services, eating and entertainment are important attributes of downtown. The policies and requirements of this Activity Center are intended to retain the character of these areas by assuring that new development provides active uses on ground floor levels, and other design features conducive to pedestrian activity.
- (b) **Urban Activity Center (UAC)** - This area provides for concentration of residential, commercial, office, industrial, recreational and cultural facilities serving major subregions of the Lanier County urban area at intensities significantly higher than in surrounding neighborhoods. Although some Urban Activity Centers may be composed of a single type of use, a mixture of land uses is specifically encouraged. These activity centers are intended for locations where the highest level of thoroughfares are available, providing access between other counties and complimenting the primary arterial transportation system.
- (c) **Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC)** - This area provides for concentration of neighborhood-serving commercial, office, residential, recreational and cultural facilities, at intensities compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Although some Neighborhood Activity Centers may be composed of a single type of use, a mixture of land uses is specifically encouraged. These activity centers are intended for locations where lower level thoroughfares and collectors are available, providing access to adjacent activity centers and the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy 2.2:

Community development should be responsive to the social, economic and environmental needs of the County. For this reason, the County and City should prepare and implement plans consistent with the following guidelines:

- (a) Lakeland should accommodate their share of urban growth, as indicated by the comprehensive plan, and located within the Urban Service Area.
- (b) Local services, such as schools, police and fire protection, public streets, water and drainage facilities, and parks should be planned to be adequate for the population and employment densities anticipated. Areas of the community where local services are available should be developed first. New land should be opened for urbanization in a staged, contiguous manner through a coordinated program of public service extensions. Existing facilities, including schools, should be used to full capacity. Cooperative arrangements between service districts should be made if necessary. Where practical, investment in all services, including schools, shall be consistent with City and County land use plans.
- (c) Community development should be compatible with features of the natural environment, including the soils, hydrologic system, and not intrude into prime farm and forestlands.
- (d) Community development should provide a variety of housing types for all income levels and located convenient to employment, shopping and services.
- (e) Business activities should be located in the Downtown, Urban or Neighborhood Activity Centers and planned industrial parks. Major Activity Centers should be developed through a clustering of regional shopping, service, cultural, entertainment, business office, governmental and high-density residential facilities in concentrated, highly accessible locations. The centers should be designed for good pedestrian mobility and landscaped to accommodate people and vehicles. Where major activity centers have already developed in a spread out or disconnected pattern, joint public/private programs should be developed to plan transportation systems to link the activity centers together so that the entire subarea may function as a single major activity center.
- (f) Density of development should be planned by local authorities to be consistent with the capacity of the City's utilities, state and federal environmental standards; and the continuation of agricultural activities on prime farmland not programmed for urban expansion.
- (g) Encourage the redevelopment and renewal of blighted areas.
- (h) Encourage the elimination or reduction of uses consistent with the community's character and future land use.
- (i) Ensure the protection and preservation of historic resources.
- (j) Discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl.
- (k) Ensure the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development.
- (l) Protect viable and stable neighborhoods from uses not in keeping with their established character and use.

GOAL 3:

Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.

Policy 3.1:

Private sector economic investments should be encouraged and fostered through the availability of financial and technical assistance. The County and City should continue to support the countywide chamber of commerce.

Policy 3.2:

Public sector financed economic developments should be encouraged and used as a tool to stimulate or leverage private sector economic investments.

Policy 3.3:

Products and raw materials available in the region should be given first consideration for use in manufacturing in the area.

Policy 3.4:

Diversification of the economic base should be fostered and maintained. The development of recreational, educational and health care facilities and services should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, economic, and industrial their strong tendency to generate employment, economic, and industrial development.

GOAL 4:

Encourage economic development through business/industry recruitment and/or expansions that capitalize on and are compatible with the natural attributes of the county.

Policy 4.1:

Economic developments should be compatible with environmental standards.

Policy 4.2:

In cases where development is incompatible with the environment, such developments should be located where environmental and social costs are minimized.

GOAL 5:

Create and maintain a well-trained work force of professional, technical, and skilled workers capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.

Policy 5.1:

Training programs, vocational and technical, should be designed to correlate with anticipated industrial and commercial growth and needs.

Policy 5.2:

Training and manpower programs should be designed which are readily accessible to the unemployed and underemployed.

Policy 5.3:

Programs should be developed which encourage college and technical school graduates to seek employment within the county.

Policy 5.4:

Industries, both existing and new, should initiate on-the-job training programs for the benefit of themselves and their employees.

GOAL 6:

Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing economic development and to encourage future economic growth.

Policy 6.1:

Industrial growth and expansions should be located within or adjacent to developed industrial parks and sites to readily access public utilities.

Policy 6.2:

The development of cultural, historic and educational services and facilities should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, economic, and industrial development.

Policy 6.3:

Public investments in services and facilities for economic development should be reflected in the short-term work program.

GOAL 7:

Ensure that all people within Greater Lanier have access to adequate and affordable housing.

Policy 7.1:

Housing development agenda in the City and Lanier County should address needs of the elderly, low and moderate income families, minorities, handicapped, and developmentally disabled persons.

GOAL 8:

Ensure in a equitable manner that existing residential structures and neighborhoods are preserved, improved and maintained.

Policy 8.1:

Housing development agenda should give priority to projects involved in preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure: streets, walks, curbs, water, sewer and drainage systems, lighting and bridges.

Policy 8.2:

Neighborhood redevelopment projects should seek to conserve, rehabilitate, or relocate existing housing structures, in lieu of demolition, whenever it is feasible.

Policy 8.3:

The city and county are encouraged to adopt, enforce, revise and update building codes where applicable as to permit new concepts in building technology.

Policy 8.4:

Low interest loans and tax reduction activities or other alternatives should be developed to promote rehabilitation of existing housing.

GOAL 9:

Design and maintain a network of thoroughfares for safe and efficient movement of people and goods which are linked to and coordinated with rail, air, and other transportation terminals.

Policy 9.1:

The carrying capacity of roadways should preserve the functional purpose of the road system to assure that the transportation network functions as originally intended.

Policy 9.2:

Land development, access, and circulation should be closely coordinated in the design of highway and street facilities in order to preserve the traffic carrying ability/safety aspects of highways and streets.

Policy 9.3:

Early acquisition of needed highway rights-of-way and access controls should be sought to minimize land costs, prevent undesirable development, and preclude land speculation.

Policy 9.4:

Costs of roadway construction should be justified by utilization and need.

Policy 9.5:

Frontage roads should be constructed to avoid proliferation of entrance to high volume arterial streets and highways.

Policy 9.6:

Increased off-street parking should be encouraged to maximize the traffic carrying capacity of roadways, reduce congestion and ensure safe, efficient, traffic flow.

GOAL 10:

Keep a well-maintained system of rail lines which facilitate safe and efficient movement of goods and

serves the economic needs of the county.

Policy 10.1:

Grade separation should be provided on major arterials and collectors to eliminate traffic tie-ups, emergency vehicle delays and to enhance vehicle and pedestrian safety.

Policy 10.2:

Where rail abandonment is imminent, corridor maintenance and potential reuse should be evaluated to avoid unnecessary permanent loss of rights-of-way.

GOAL 11:

Establish and maintain conservation of areas where natural processes would be endangered by development (i.e. in floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, drainageways, etc.).

Policy 11.1:

Areas where critical natural processes would be endangered by development should be avoided. The areas most directly impacted include drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas.

Policy 11.2:

An adequate minimum flow and water quality should be maintained in all rivers and streams to ensure a productive fish habitat and protection of aquatic life and scenic qualities.

Policy 11.3:

Development should not pollute, exhaust or interfere with the natural replenishment cycles of groundwater.

Policy 11.4:

State or federal agency rules and regulations mandating local enforcement programs should be accompanied with adequate staff and financial assistance to help local units in their implementation programs. These include local floodplain management requirements, soil and sedimentation control requirements, wetlands protection, river corridors, and similar laws designed to prevent degradation of the natural environment. Ongoing public awareness and education activities should also be developed to encourage participation in natural resource preservation and other related activities. Agencies that currently offer educational material on the conservation and protection of natural resources are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (EPD), Georgia Department of Natural Resources Pollution Assistance Division (P2AD), Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), etc.

Policy 11.5:

Development should not grossly impair the functioning of vital natural systems. Land use should be primarily determined by natural characteristics, suitability of the land, and the availability of urban services.

Policy 11.6:

Lands that are not suitable for on-site absorption systems should not be subdivided/developed unless public sewers are available or other provisions are made for the handling of sewage.

Policy 11.7:

Treatment facilities should be available for the discharge of septic tank, holding tank and recreational vehicle pumpage.

Policy 11.8:

Soil resources should be managed in a manner that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality.

Policy 11.9:

Best Management Practices that minimize siltation and pollution should be utilized. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Approval of grading, filling, and excavation plans by the city and county to ensure that erosion and siltation are minimized. (Examples: sodding, seeding, re-vegetation schedules, etc.).
- (b) Provide and maintain strategically located settling basins to remove silt and debris from surface water runoff.

GOAL 12:

Commercial, industrial and residential developments should locate in Greater Lanier's Urban Service Areas on existing/proposed water and sewer systems.

Policy 12.1:

Allocate with the Land Use Plan an adequate amount of properly service lands to meet projected land use demands.

Policy 12.2:

Commercial growth and redevelopment should be restricted to existing and planned commercial districts.

Policy 12.3:

Industrial expansion should occur in the existing industrial parks.

Policy 12.4:

In general, redevelopment in vacant and redevelopable areas that are already serviced with water and sewer utilities should be strongly encouraged.

Policy 12.5:

Local implementation devices should include the state construction code, subdivision control and land development/zoning ordinances in the county and the city.

Policy 12.6:

Lands shall be deemed unsuitable for any proposed development by the local unit of government if the land is largely affected by any of the following:

- wetlands
- aquifer recharge areas
- flood hazards
- inadequate drainage
- adverse soil conditions
- severe erosion potential
- unfavorable topography
- inadequate water supply or sewerage disposal capabilities
- any other feature likely to be harmful to the health or welfare of the future residents of the proposed development

Policy 12.7:

Lanier County should limit development in their Rural Service Areas to uses and intensities, which would not require the county to provide urban or suburban levels of utilities and services.

GOAL 13:

Identify, conserve and protect the broad range of cultural resources in Greater Lanier.

Policy 13.1:

Areas, structures and districts of significant architectural and historic value should be so designated and approved by appropriate city and county authorities. Preservation techniques, including local designation through local historic district ordinance, should be encouraged. Additional techniques to support these activities include various state and federal programs including historic register listings, tax incentives and credit, and the Georgia Main Street Program.

Policy 13.2:

Develop a public awareness/education element to encourage participation in preservation activities.

Policy 13.3:

Greater Lanier should preserve and protect for future generations their scenic, cultural, historic landscapes, buildings and archaeological sites. Special management practices should be applied to those areas possessing unique natural, cultural or historic features.

GOAL 14:

Preserve lands suitable for all agricultural pursuits, including farming, forestry and soil conservation.

Policy 14.1:

Where soil productivity is high and where conditions are better suited for agriculture than urban uses, measures should be developed to preserve such land for agricultural use.

Policy 14.2:

Non-agricultural-forestry uses, which generally include a broad range of urban land use types, should not intrude into rural areas best suited for agricultural/forestry uses.