



Partial update to the City of Oakwood, Georgia Comprehensive Plan



June 2009

CITY OF OAKWOOD

Comprehensive Plan Partial Update



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I. Introduction, Purpose and Scope

The northeast Georgia City of Oakwood is located in southern Hall County approximately 30 miles from the Atlanta metropolitan area. Oakwood is strategically located near the intersection of Interstate 985 with state route 53 (Winder Highway) and the intersection of state route 13 (Atlanta Highway) with Winder Highway. According to the latest U. S. Census estimate, the population of Oakwood is 4,063 persons. The City has a long history of planning for future growth and changing land use patterns. In 1994, the city participated in a joint comprehensive plan with Hall County that met the minimum planning standards as promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Ten years later the City launched out on an effort to prepare a more detailed plan that would address the significant growth/development issues that the City was facing. The Oakwood Comprehensive Plan 2004-2025 was adopted in September, 2004 and has served as a road map for guiding community growth up to the present.

The 1989 Georgia Planning Act requires that each city and county in Georgia prepare and adopt a local comprehensive plan. At a minimum the plan's short term work program must be updated every five years and a complete up date and re-write of the plan must occur every ten years. The adoption of a comprehensive plan and subsequent updates allows the City of Oakwood to maintain its Qualified Local government Status, which is required to qualify for most state grants and loans. A recent shift to the statewide recertification schedule has necessitated that Oakwood prepare a partial update to its current plan.

The requirements for a partial update have been established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The purpose of the partial update is to provide a document for use as a policy guide for local governments in the interim period between Comprehensive Plan Updates. This partial update to Oakwood's Comprehensive Plan should:

- Generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community;
- Engage the interest of citizens in implementing the plan; and
- Provide a guide to everyday decision-making for use by local government officials and other community leaders.

When implemented, the resulting plan will help the community address critical issues and opportunities during the interim, transitional period between comprehensive plan updates resulting from a shift in the statewide Comprehensive Plan Recertification Schedule. According to the current recertification schedule, the City of Oakwood will be required to complete a full Comprehensive Plan update by June 30, 2011.

II. Quality Community Objectives (QCO) Assessment

<i>Development Partners</i>			
<i>Traditional Neighborhoods</i>			
<i>Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, missing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	✓		Planned Development Districts for Residential (PRD), Commercial (PCD), Industrial (PID) and Office (POD) were adopted in 2007 as amendments to the zoning regulations.
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	✓		Neo-Traditional development is allowed by right in the planned Residential (PRD) and Commercial (PCD) zoning districts.
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.		✓	
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in summer.		✓	
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	✓		Oakwood coordinates with the Keep Hall County Beautiful Program in sponsoring various clean-up programs & campaigns in addition to Police and Public Works Department activities.
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	✓		Public Works Department has an established program for maintenance & repairs City has provided new sidewalks when necessary and currently has underway phase I & phase II of sidewalks project funded by TE-21. Sidewalks required on all new developments.
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	✓		
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	✓		Oakwood Elementary is accessible to most residential neighborhoods by sidewalks. TE Project Phase II will make improvements to school accessibility by sidewalks.
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	✓		
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	✓		Oakwood Elementary is centrally located near City Hall and many of the older residential neighborhoods. West Hall High School, Johnson High School & South Hall Middle School are located nearby.

<i>Infill Development</i>			
<i>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.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	✓		City also coordinates with the Greater Hall County Chamber of Commerce to maintain listing of vacant industrial sites/buildings.
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment		✓	
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	✓		Some market driven revitalizations is occurring and the city is also pushing this effort though an aggressive downtown redevelopment master plan. (Oakwood 2030 the Shape of Life to Come), City has also established a Tax Allocation District (TAD) and Community Improvement District (CID) to further this effort.
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).	✓		Downtown Master Plan provides for this as does our mixed use zoning districts.
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.		✓	Smallest minimum lot size currently allowed is 7,200 sq. ft.
<i>Sense of Place</i>			
<i>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.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.		✓	City is working to change this and develop a “sense of place” and became a destination.
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	✓		Historian District is identified. Initial steps have been taken to protect it. Older neighborhoods are protected in 2030 plan.
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	✓		Development in mixed use zoning districts is subject to additional landscaping and aesthetic requirements including green space.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	✓		

5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.	✓		
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		✓	
Transportation Alternatives			
<i>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.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.	✓		City does not operate a public transit system but Oakwood is served by the Hall area transit system which combines demand/response and fixed route. Future plans call for expansion of routes in the Oakwood area.
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	✓		Inter-parcel connectivity is required on commercial and industrial development.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	✓		Sidewalks system are being upgraded and improved. City has 2 TE grants pending. Participated in MPO generated bike & pedestrian plan.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	✓		Requirement for all new development to install sidewalks was a recent amendment to City's zoning ordinance.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		✓	
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	✓		Oakwood has an approval bike plan as part of the Gainesville Hall County MPO Bike & Pedestrian plan adopted in 2005
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	✓		The issue is addressed during the plan review process
Regional Identity			
<i>Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	✓		

2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	✓		A common link that binds the region together economically is the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce; the South Hall Business Coalition; and the Hall County Vision 2030 Plan.
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).		✓	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.		✓	
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	✓		Working with the Greater Hall Chamber, The City promotes tourism opportunities that take advantage of the regional attractions such as Lake Lanier and Road Atlanta that draw people to the region. These tourism opportunities are mainly found in the service industry.
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	✓		Significant activity in the area of local culture and entertainment with productions sponsored by Gainesville State College such as the Starlight Concert and the College Players theatre production.
Resource Conservation			
<p>Heritage Preservation</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.		✓	The City does not have any National Register sites or officially designated Historic Districts, but does maintain a sense of place with its older neighborhoods.
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		✓	
3. We want new development to complement our historic development and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	✓		City recently amended its zoning ordinance to allow mixed use development. Also prepared and adopted a Master Plan 2030 for guiding future growth in redeveloping Neighborhoods.

Open Space Preservation			
<i>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. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.	✓		A detailed green space plan adopted as part of Oakwood 2030 Master Plan.
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	✓		With the past 12 months, the City has purchased some 40 acres of land that will be partially preserved as green space under the 2030 Master Plan.
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.		✓	
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	✓		The Conservation Subdivision Ordinance was adopted in cooperation with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District guidelines.
Environmental Protection			
<i>Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	✓		As part of the Oakwood Comp Plan 2004, Natural Resources were inventoried, mapped & discussed.
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	✓		
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.		✓	
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	✓		The City has adopted and enforces all applicable Part V Environmental Ordinances. Additionally, the City has adopted all applicable Ordinances as promulgated by the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District. These Ordinances relate to stormwater management and water quality.
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.		✓	

6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.		✓	
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	✓		(see comments in 4 above)
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	✓		
Social and Economic Development			
Growth Preparedness			
<i>Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	✓		The Oakwood Comp Plan 2004 as population projections in annual increments through the year 2025. These are used by Staff.
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		✓	
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	✓		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	✓		Development Regulations are regularly monitored for effectiveness and are periodically updated in response to changing land use and growth issues. Current regulations will play a major role in helping to achieve QCO goals.
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	✓		Capital Improvement Program was adopted by City council in 208 as part of the overall master planning effort.
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		✓	
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	✓		
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.		✓	

9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	✓		Zoning, land use and growth information is presented on the City's website and through the City's Newsletter <u>TOGETHER</u> . Also, the local press attends Planning commission and City Council meetings and is very cooperative regarding press releases and news coverage (written, audio and visual) of these meetings and actions taken.
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.		✓	

Appropriate Businesses

The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	✓		The City of Oakwood is an active member of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has a strong economic development program that includes Oakwood and South Hall County. Business recruitment, expansion and promotion is well coordinated and implemented through a professional staff. The Chamber's efforts, which include the South Hall Business Coalition, are further enhanced by the Oakwood Development Authority.
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	✓		
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.	✓		
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	✓		

Employment Options

A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	✓		Oakwood's economic development program is enhanced by the Chamber's Existing Industry Division which provides entrepreneur support of business development.

2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	✓		
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	✓		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	✓		
<p>Housing Choices</p> <p><i>A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.</i></p>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	✓		Guest houses, accessory apartments and garage apartments are allowed either as an outright or conditional use in R-1, R-2 and R-3 Zoning Districts.
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	✓		A high percentage of residential units in Oakwood are either apartments, condominiums or town houses. Many of these complexes offer affordable units.
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).		✓	There is a deficiency in available housing units for above average income persons. A recent annexation and proposed residential development for 38 – 40 up-scale priced homes has been put on hold due to the economic downturn.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.		✓	
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	✓		Recent amendments to City’s development regulations allow and encourage mixed use development that will serve to implement Oakwood 2030 Master Plan.
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	✓		There are several tracts of land currently zoned for high density residential and several large tracts of land that were recently annexed and zoned “PRD” for planned residential development that could include a mix of single family and multi family units.

7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	✓		The City Council looks favorably on multi family developments and has recently approved a 300 unit apartment complex that is currently under construction.
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	✓		City has a working relationship with a local non-profit community based organization (HDRI-Home Development Resources Incorporated) that specializes in providing housing opportunities for lower income persons. The City has also recently partnered with The local Chapter of Habitat for Humanity to provide new house for a disabled veteran.
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		✓	
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	✓		Our development regulations allow for small lot sizes (minimum of 6,000 square feet) in our R-4 “multi-family” zoning district.

Educational Opportunities

Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	✓		These opportunities are provided through City’s participation in the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce.
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	✓		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	✓		Higher education opportunities are available right in the center of the community through Gainesville State College and Lanier Technical College which are housed on adjacent campuses.
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	✓		

<i>Governmental Relations</i>			
<i>Regional Solutions</i>			
<i>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.</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
<i>1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.</i>	✓		<i>Oakwood is a member of and participates in programs of the Georgia Mountains RDC including activities relating to the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Staff also participates and coordinates with economic development initiatives of organizations with regional emphasis like Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Region 2 Planning Director recently completed the Regional Economic & Leadership Development Program of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.</i>
<i>2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.</i>	✓		<i>Oakwood is a member of REIAC (Regional Environmental Issues Action Committee) which is sponsored by the Georgia Mountains RDC. Topics addressed by this committee include solid waste management, code enforcement, water quality, air quality and re-cycling.</i>
<i>3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.</i>	✓		
<i>4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.</i>	✓		<i>Community is not opposed to regional approaches. Good examples are the formal agreements with sewer service with the neighboring cities of Gainesville, Flowery Branch and Braselton.</i>

<i>Regional Cooperation</i>			
<i>Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.</i>			
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.</i>		✓	<i>In earlier planning efforts, the City had participated in a joint plan with Hall County. In 2004, due to the tremendous growth that was occurring in the City, the decision was made to prepare and adopt a free standing plan.</i>
<i>2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.</i>	✓		<i>There are some issues that need to be resolved relating to provision of sewer service in the Winder Highway Corridor.</i>
<i>3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.</i>	✓		
<i>4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.</i>	✓		<i>Oakwood is an active participant and regularly hosts a meeting of the Joint Local Government Association (JLGA) of Hall County.</i>

III. Analysis of Areas Requiring Special Attention

The City of Oakwood initially developed as a railroad settlement in the early 1900's. It is now a vital part of one of the fastest growing areas in the State of Georgia. This growth pressure has presented the City Council with both opportunities and issues as it continues this growth into the future.

Early economic activity focused around timber, cotton and railroad transportation for the shipment of goods. From 1940's to 60's, poultry farming replaced cotton as the primary agricultural land use in the area. In the early 1970's, Georgia State Route 365 (now known as I-985) was constructed with an exit/interchange developed at Oakwood. This action created a demand for commercial activity, especially the service industry. This new road opened the gateway link to the Atlanta Metropolitan Area providing opportunities for employment and commercial/industrial development. The City of Oakwood began its first sewer contract with the City of Gainesville in the I-985/Mundy Mill Road corridor. Since that initial project, sewer has been expanded to most areas of the City. The majority of industrial development has occurred since the placement of sewer infrastructure. In 1997, the City developed its first full service industrial park to the south along McEver Road.

A new decade approaches, the City of Oakwood is taking an important step in developing a core Downtown and connected Commercial Center for itself. This project is poised to enhance and provide an identity for a growing economic center in Hall County and Northeast Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has identified the following seven special conditions and requires that they be addressed in the partial plan update where they exist within the community:

- Natural or Cultural Resources.
- Areas where Rapid Development or change of Land Use is Likely to Occur.
- Areas where the Pace of Development has and/or may Outpace the Availability of Community Facilities and Services.
- Areas in Need of Redevelopment and/or Significant Improvements to Aesthetics or attractiveness.
- Large Abandoned Structures or sites.
- Infill Development Opportunities.
- Areas of Significant Disinvestment, Levels of Poverty, and/or Substantially Higher Unemployment.

The City has reviewed existing conditions and has identified areas that require special attention. These areas have been indicated on the enclosed map entitled “City of Oakwood Areas Requiring Special Attention”.

A. Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources

The City of Oakwood contains numerous streams which are a valuable natural resource. The largest concentration of these stream corridors is found within the limits of the Town Center Master Plan and have been identified as part of an extensive greenway corridor system. The proper management of these greenway corridors is important to sustaining future development in Oakwood. Green infrastructure is the interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations. This framework of ecological components such as greenway corridors and buffer zones provide the physical conditions necessary for ecosystems and species populations to survive in a human dominated landscape while providing a wealth of social and economic benefits. This system of greenway corridors is as deserving of careful planning and management as are utility corridors, roads and other forms of infrastructure.

B. Areas Where Rapid Development or Change of Land Uses is Likely to Occur

1. Town Center:

In the Spring of 2008, the City of Oakwood completed a Master Plan for development of its central core area or “downtown”. This Master Plan analyzed the potential of the City to create a Downtown and Commercial Center (shown on map as Oakwood 2030) encompassing the elements necessary to strength the central core and promote the City as a vibrant urban center. The plan concluded that there is a clear need for a Downtown and Commercial Center in Oakwood, positioning the City for the expected future economic growth. Creating a defined Downtown will help Oakwood establish and identity and create a sense of place.

2. Future Annexation/Growth Areas:

One of the major issues for Oakwood is that past annexation has occurred in a disjointed pattern due to the demand for city services. Future annexations will focus on infill development (where the City is intertwined with Hall County) particularly in the area proposed for the Downtown Center (shown on map as Oakwood 2030 Town Center) and in the form of industrial development where tracts are adjacent to existing non-residential uses (shown on map as Future Industrial Areas) and utility infrastructure is available. Also, with boundary constraints to the north, south and west is logical for the city to consider areas to the southeast for future annexations and growth. This area (shown on map as S R 53 Winder Highway Corridor) is beyond the areas that are likely to be annexed due to infill development or based on service delivery. This area represents enormous land acreage and is considered for annexation within the current Generalized Future Land Use Plan for Oakwood.

C. Areas Where the Pace of Development has and/or may Outpace the Availability of Community Facilities and Services

(Not Applicable)

D. Areas in Need of Redevelopment and/or Significant Improvements to Aesthetics or Attractiveness

(Not Applicable)

E. Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

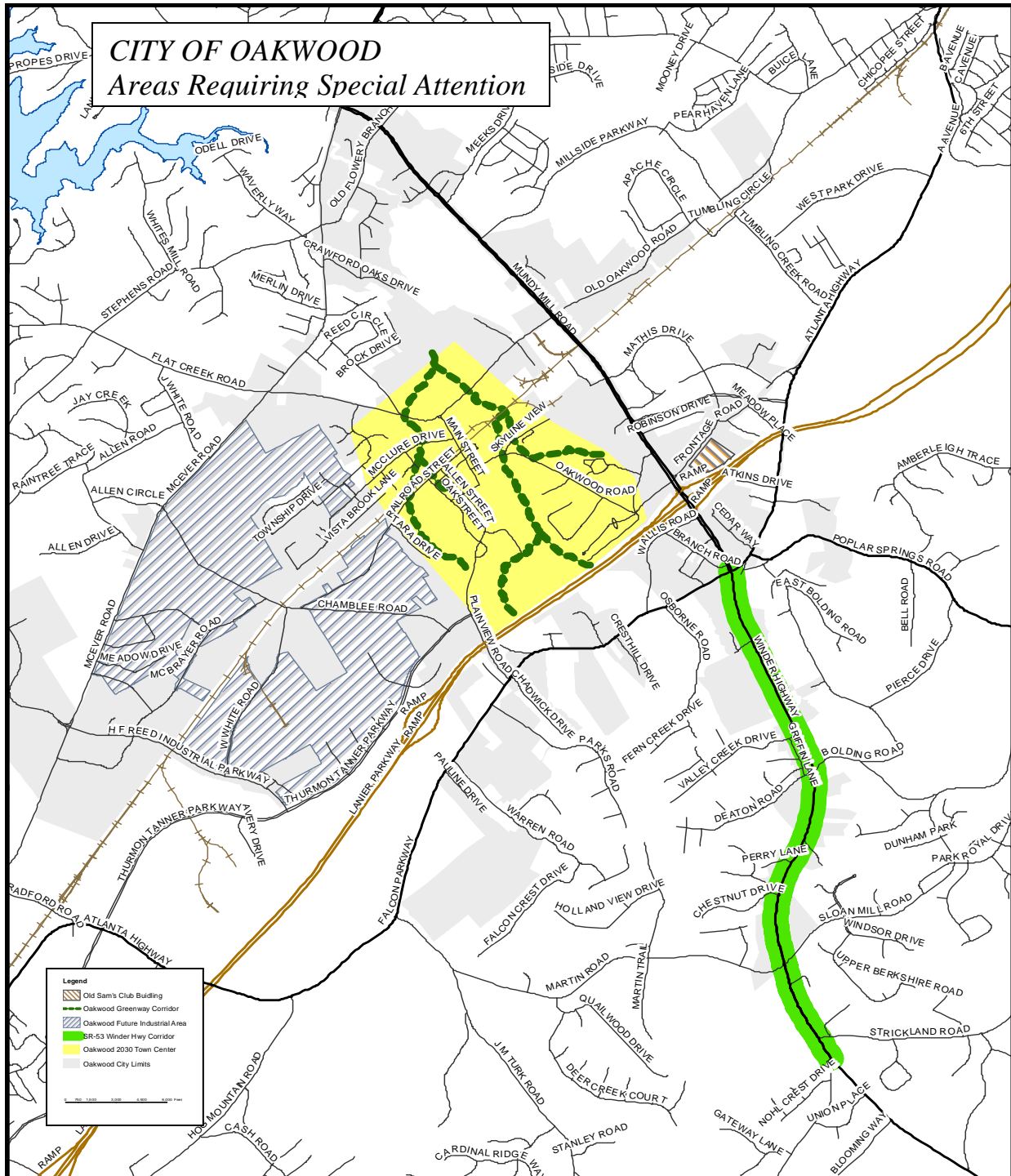
The recent re-location of the Sam's Club membership retail center to the Mundy Mill Road Corridor has created a large, vacant and unused area. The building itself contains more than 107,000 square feet of floor space, all within a single level. The accompanying parking area is approximately three acres and contains over 500 spaces. The facility, which has been vacant for about 15 months, is in a prime location near transportation, population and services making it a good candidate for re-use. It is expected that once the economic slow down begins to turn around, the facility will be occupied.

F. Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities

(Not Applicable)

G. Areas of Significant Disinvestment, Levels of Poverty, and/or Unemployment Substantially Higher than levels for the Community as a Whole

(Not Applicable)



IV. Identification of Issues and Opportunities

The following Issues and Opportunities were identified using the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment Tool. The full update of Oakwood's Comprehensive Plan, which is to be completed in June of 2011, will provide more detail and analysis of community demographics resulting in an expanded list of issues and opportunities. The full update of the plan will also include a more extensive involvement of community residents, business persons, community leaders and political leaders. This process will serve the community by allowing it to choose, expand and highlight the issues/opportunities that they feel are highest priority.

Economic Development

Issues

- Sewer capacity is needed to accommodate the growth expected from future annexations in the Winder Highway Corridor.
- There are vacant properties in Oakwood suitable for commercial, residential and industrial development.
- There is a lack of small to medium sized conference facilities in the area.

Opportunities

- Oakwood is working with the neighboring City of Braselton to secure sewer capacity for long term future growth.
- Continue to promote and implement the Oakwood 2030 Downtown Master Plan.
- With the highway and interchange improvements to Exit 20 on I-985 being put in place by GDOT, take advantage of location by promoting a full service hotel with conference facilities.
- Promote and make use of recently adopted Tax Allocation District (TAD) and Community Improvement District (CID).

Natural and Historic Resources

Issues

- Areas along streams and natural drainage ways are a resource for the community.
- There are significant areas of open space containing forested areas with specimen trees within the City.
- Historic and Cultural Resources in Oakwood are in need of protection. Currently no protective measures, organizations or incentives to encourage preservation of these resources exist.

Opportunities

- Implement all aspects of Oakwood Greenway Design Plan as part of the development plan for the Downtown and Commercial Center (Oakwood 2030)
- Protect open space and forested areas through a tree preservation ordinance.
- Complete an Historic Resources Survey to locate, identify and catalog local resources.
- Continue to update and enforce environmental regulations and encourage development such as conservation subdivisions.

Community Facilities and Services

Issues

- Pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements could greatly enhance access, connectivity and safety for residents to get to shopping, schools, parks and employment.
- Provide additional neighborhood parks to better serve a growing population.

Opportunities

- Continue to follow through on recommendations in Oakwood 2030 Master Plan to enhance sidewalk and trail systems to provide pedestrian connectivity.
- Apply for funding from DNR to develop small parks on one or more vacant lots/parcels owned by the City of Oakwood.
- Coordinate with Oakwood Elementary School in participating and implementing the “Safe Routes to Schools Program”.
- Continue to expand Oakwood Phase I and Phase II TE Program to improve pedestrian access and mobility.

Housing

Issues

- There is an increasing number of housing units that are considered over crowded.
- There is a high percentage of housing stock in Oakwood that is older particularly with single family units.

Opportunities

- Continue to work with development community to offer and maintain a balanced mix of housing types.
- Improve housing stock through better code enforcement, increasing home ownership and protecting neighborhoods from commercial encroachment.

Land Use

Issues

- New development should be environmentally sensitive especially as relates to streams and drainage channels.
- There is a need for a consistent development pattern along the major transportation routes leading into Oakwood.
- Development regulations need to reflect the latest requirements from state agencies and authorities.

Opportunities

- Conduct a stream and roadside clean-up event at least annually.
- Coordinate with Hall County and other local governments in developing Corridor or Gateway overlay districts.
- Update existing development regulations by adopting a unified development code that addresses quality growth.

V. Updated Implementation Program

A. Short Term Work Program:

This program identifies specific implementation actions the local government, or other entities, intends to take during the interim planning period. This program should include any ordinances, administrative systems (such as site plan review, design review, etc.), community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to implement the plan. The Short Term Work Program must include the following information for each listed activity:

- i. Brief description of the activity
- ii. Timeframe for undertaking the activity
- iii. Responsible party for implementing the activity
- iv. Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity
- v. Funding source (s), if applicable

Oakwood’s Interim Short-Term Work Program Update for the partial plan update is shown in the table below.

City of Oakwood
Comprehensive Plan Interim Short-Term Work Program 2009-2010

<i>PLAN ELEMENT</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	2 0 0 9	2 0 1 0	2 0 1 1	2 0 1 2	2 0 1 3	<i>ESTIMATED COST; DEPT RESPONSIBLE</i>	<i>DEPARTMENT FINDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES</i>
<i>Population</i>	<i>Develop an annexation strategy in the Mulberry Basin down Winder Highway to Braselton</i>	X	X				<i>\$1,500.00 Planning & Development</i>	<i>General Fund</i>
<i>Housing</i>	<i>Prepare and submit an application to Georgia DCA for funding assistance through CHIP Program</i>		X				<i>\$500.00 Planning & Dev and HDRI</i>	<i>Gen. Fund & CHIP Grant</i>

<i>Housing</i>	<i>Coordinate with Hall County in implementation of Housing Needs Assessment</i>		X				<i>No Direct Costs Planning & Development</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Construct Thurmon Tanner Parkway Extension from Plainview Rd. to Mundy Mill Road</i>	X	X				<i>\$7,000,000.00 Public Works & Engineering</i>	<i>General Fund, SPLOST, Hall County and DOT</i>
<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Install/Construct a traffic circle (round-about) at intersection of Main Street and Old Oakwood Road</i>		X				<i>\$450,000.00 Public Works & Engineering</i>	<i>General Fund & DOT</i>
<i>Economic Dev.</i>	<i>Purchase additional acreage in southwest quadrant of City for new industrial park.</i>	X	X				<i>Unknown Administration</i>	<i>General Fund, SPLOST & GEFA</i>
<i>Economic Dev.</i>	<i>Construct sidewalks and handicapped accessible curbs/crossings along Railroad Street near Police Station and City Park</i>	X					<i>\$300,000.00 Public Works</i>	<i>General Fund, TE(DOT)</i>
<i>Economic Dev.</i>	<i>Develop a Bio-Diesel production facility for fueling of Public Works fleet vehicles</i>	X					<i>\$25,000.00 Public Works</i>	<i>General Fund</i>
<i>Community Fac.</i>	<i>Replace two culverts under Shawnee Drive</i>	X					<i>Public Works & Engineering</i>	<i>General Fund</i>
<i>Community Fac. (stormwater)</i>	<i>Build a stormwater detention pond as part of the Town Center Master Plan for the Government Center</i>		X				<i>Public Works</i>	<i>General Fund</i>
<i>Community Fac.</i>	<i>Construct 8" reuse line for irrigation , parallel to existing sewer line along east side of proposed Government Town Cntr.</i>		X				<i>Public Works</i>	<i>General Fund, EDA, ARC</i>
<i>Community Fac.</i>	<i>Purchase land and construct new Public Works office and maintenance facility</i>		X				<i>\$500,000.00 Public Works</i>	<i>General Fund</i>

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Amend development regulations to comply with new amendments to the Georgia E & S Manual</i>		X				<i>No Direct Costs Planning & Development</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Conduct stream clean-up events in coordination with Keep Hall Beautiful</i>	X	X				<i>\$1,000.00 Planning and Development</i>	<i>General Fund</i>
<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Coordinate with other governments in Hall County to develop compatible corridor overlay districts for Winder Highway, Atlanta Highway, Mundy Mill Road and Thurmon Tanner Parkway</i>		X				<i>\$2,000.00 Planning and Development</i>	<i>General Fund & DCA grant</i>

B. Long-term and ongoing activities (optional):

Since the City will be required to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan by June of 2011, long term and ongoing activities have not been addressed in this partial update.

C. Policies: The policies provided herein are designed to help the City of Oakwood by providing ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with addressing the identified Issues and Opportunities.

Economic Development

GOAL: To enhance economic development in the City of Oakwood by promoting a diverse, healthy economy.

POLICIES

- Strengthen existing business climate
- Encourage and promote new commercial, industrial and business development
- Encourage, promote and support the development of Oakwood 2030 Downtown and Commercial Center project as a vibrant center for government, culture, dining, residential and retail diversity.
- Actively participate in regional and multi-jurisdictional economic development efforts.
- Target reinvestment in existing declining neighborhoods to encourage private sector development or re-development for future growth.
- Continue to market and develop properties in and adjacent to the Oakwood South Industrial Park.
- Plan for necessary infrastructure to support new commercial, industrial and business growth.

Natural and Historic Resources

GOAL: Preserve, protect and conserve the natural and historic resources in Oakwood.

POLICIES

- Encourage new development in suitable locations in order to protect natural, cultural and historic resources as well as environmentally sensitive areas.
- Promote and encourage clustering of development to preserve open space within development sites.
- Enlist and promote significant site features such as view corridors, water features, farmland, wetlands, etc. as amenities that shape the identity and character of development.
- Use infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.

Community Facilities and Services

GOAL: Provide adequate public facilities for the Oakwood community.

POLICIES

- To provide for improved governmental facilities and adequately trained staff to manage high quality growth.
- To actively work to improve and maintain the City's major street and sidewalk network.
- Consider re-use of existing vacant or underutilized structures (e. g. commercial centers, office spaces, warehouses) to accommodate new community facilities.
- Promote the use of common area drain fields and/or neighborhood-scale sewerage treatment systems to reduce parcel size in areas that must be served by septic tanks.
- Promote development of educational, cultural, and recreational facilities as well as businesses at a smaller scale and located in neighborhoods where walking is an option for mobility.
- Enhance safety and functionality of parks, pool and community buildings.
- Expand beautification projects.
- Decrease solid waste collections by improving recycling efforts.

Housing

GOAL: To encourage the provision of adequate and affordable housing for current and future population.

POLICIES

- Promote housing units that provide rental opportunities for small households and income generation for homeowners to increase affordability.
- Promote distribution of affordably priced homes throughout the community.
- City will promote new residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of older, closer-in neighborhoods of the community.
- City will promote new development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types and pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
- Support and promote residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family homes, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments), densities and prices in the same neighborhood.
- Promote residential development with healthy mix of uses (corner groceries, barber shops, drugstores) within easy walking distance of residences.

Land Use

GOAL: Promote development that is sensitive to the land and gives consideration to adjoining, existing and planned development that provides adequate protection of residential neighborhoods, commercial, industrial and environmentally sensitive areas from encroachment by non-compatible land use.

POLICIES

- Discourage development that would disturb environmentally sensitive resources.
- Promote nodal developments with buildings clustered at center, clearly defined edge surrounded by open space.
- Keep/develop downtown areas as the focal point of the community. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed use, pedestrian friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
- Consider redevelopment of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip.
- Encourage new industry or other major employers to locate close in to Downtown Center, making jobs accessible to all residents by way of transit, walking or bicycling.

**D. COMP PLAN SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM
REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

ITEM NUMBER FROM STWP		ITEM ACCOMPLISHED	CURRENTLY UNDERTAKEN	PROJECT POSTPONED	NO LONGER CITY PROJECT	EXPLANATION OF PROJECT STATUS
1.	<i>Establish & Implement annexation strategy.</i>	X				<i>Annexation strategy is currently in use.</i>
2.	<i>Update development regulations to ensure quality residential development with adequate neighborhood amenities.</i>	X				<i>Development Regulations amended to allow PUD's.</i>
3.	<i>Continue build-out of Oakwood South Industrial Park.</i>	X				<i>OSIP is built out. City is looking to develop new industrial park.</i>
4.	<i>Develop and/or acquire additional sanitary sewer capacity.</i>	X				<i>Additional 200,000 gallons purchased from Gainesville and agreement signed with Braselton for 2.5 million GPD.</i>
5.	<i>Construct McBrayer Road Realignment.</i>	X				<i>Completed in 2007.</i>
6.	<i>Identify and catalog historic resources in the City.</i>			<i>To Be Completed In 2010</i>		<i>Initial efforts to identify & catalog historic resources inventory are underway as part of 2030 plan.</i>
7.	<i>Develop public involvement strategy to encourage protection, promotion, and preservation of historic resources.</i>			X		<i>Postponed until Historic Resources inventory is completed.</i>

8.	<i>Create a developer's guide (enhance and streamline the development process).</i>	X				
9.	<i>Update development regulations to enhance opportunity for quality land development.</i>	X				
10.	<i>Update environmental regulations.</i>	X				<i>Adopted all ordinances as required by the Metro North GA. Water Planning District.</i>
11.	<i>Develop and implement a strategy to encourage infill development.</i>	X				<i>Infill annexation strategy was implemented; downtown development plan adopted; mixed use zoning adopted.</i>
12.	<i>Develop and implement infrastructure management system.</i>	X				<i>Completed by Rosser International, Consultants.</i>
13.	<i>Develop and implement capital improvement program to meet growth related infrastructure needs.</i>	X				<i>Completed by Rosser International, Consultants.</i>
14.	<i>Develop and implement first phase of the sidewalk and recreational, trail system.</i>		X			<i>City approved for TE Grants. Awaiting go ahead to construct form GDOT.</i>
15.	<i>Construct Thurmon Tanner Parkway Phase 3.</i>		X			<i>Contract was awarded in October of 2008. Construction underway-completion date of January 2010.</i>

16.	<i>Concept development and design of connector road (from Main St. to Oakwood Elementary to New Thurmon Tanner Parkway.</i>		X			<i>This project is proposed in the newly adopted Town Center Plan. Construction expected in 2011.</i>
17.	<i>EPD approval and City implementation of NPDES Phase 2 Stormwater Management Program.</i>	X				
18.	<i>Develop and implement vehicle and equipment replacement program for Police and Public works.</i>	X				
19.	<i>Develop and implement community appearance program.</i>			X		<i>Project postponed until Phase I of Downtown 2030 plan is complete.</i>
20.	<i>Replace toddler playground in the community park.</i>	X				<i>New playground installed in 2006.</i>
21.	<i>Construct new restroom facilities in the community park.</i>	X				<i>New restrooms constructed in 2008.</i>
22.	<i>Evaluate and determine long range plan for solid waste services.</i>	X				<i>Completed in 2006. New garbage truck & tipping system implemented.</i>

**CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF OAKWOOD
HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA**

RESOLUTION No.: 2009-06-05

A RESOLUTION TO TRANSMIT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE (AS PART OF THE 20-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE) TO THE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS FOR OFFICIAL REVIEW PURSUANT TO THE STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ESTABLISHED BY THE GEORGIA PLANNING ACT OF 1989 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the City of Oakwood City Council has completed the Comprehensive Plan Partial Update document as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective May 1, 2005 and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS the required public hearing was held on June 26, 2009;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Oakwood City Council does hereby transmit the Comprehensive Plan Partial Update to the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

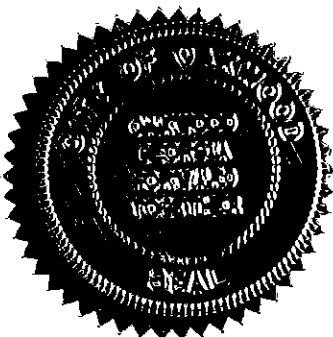
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council for the City of Oakwood, Georgia this 26th day of June, 2009.

**City Council for the City of Oakwood,
Georgia**

ATTEST:

Tanger B. Puckett
City Clerk

By Lamar Scroggs
Mayor Lamar Scroggs



GEORGIA, HALL COUNTY

I, Tangee Puckett, City Clerk of the City of Oakwood, Hall County, Georgia do hereby certify that the attached resolution which appears of record in the minutes proceedings of the City of Oakwood, Hall County, Georgia known as "Resolution No. 2009-06-05" entitled "Comp Plan Partial Update 09 Transmittal" was duly passed on the 26th day of June 2009 and same is true and correct copy of said resolution.

H. Lamar Scroggs
MAYOR

Ron McFarland
Montie Robinson, Sr.

Sam Evans

Martha Collins

Gary Anderson

Donald T. Hunt
CITY ATTORNEY

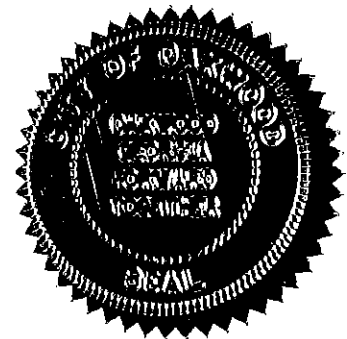
Stan Brown
CITY MANAGER

Patti J. Doss-Luna
ASSISTANT
CITY MANAGER

Tangee Puckett
CITY CLERK

WITNESS, my official signature and seal of the City of Oakwood, Hall County, Georgia on the 29th day of June 2009.

Tangee B. Puckett
Tangee Puckett
City Clerk
City of Oakwood, Georgia



Post Office Box 99
4035 Walnut Circle
Oakwood, GA 30566

770.534.2365
f: 770.297.3223
CityOfOakwood.net



September 16, 2009

Mr. Adam Hazell
Planning Director
Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
P. O. Box 1720
Gainesville, GA 30503

Dear Adam:

In accordance with the Georgia Planning Act and requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, I am enclosing a copy of Oakwood City Council Resolution No. 2009-09-01 officially adopting the partial update to the City's 2004 Comprehensive as approved by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and Department of Community Affairs.

If additional information is needed, please contact me. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Larry B. Sparks
Planning Director

Enclosure

Copy: Stan Brown, City Manager
Patti Doss-Luna, Assistant City Manager

H. Lamar Scroggs
MAYOR

Ron McFarland
Montie Robinson, Sr.

Sam Evans

Martha Collins

Gary Anderson

Donald T. Hunt
CITY ATTORNEY

Stan Brown
CITY MANAGER

Patti J. Doss-Luna
ASSISTANT
CITY MANAGER

Tangee Puckett
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CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF OAKWOOD
HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA

RESOLUTION No.: 2009-09-01

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE PARTIAL UPDATE OF THE OAKWOOD 2004 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO THE STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ESTABLISHED BY THE GEORGIA PLANNING ACT OF 1989 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the City of Oakwood is responsible for developing a Partial Update to the Oakwood 2004 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakwood's Comprehensive Plan Partial Update - 2009 was submitted to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS the Department of Community Affairs has notified the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission that the City of Oakwood's Comprehensive Plan Partial Update - 2009 adequately addresses the Local Planning Requirements; and

WHEREAS the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission has notified the City of Oakwood that the Partial Update - 2009 has been approved;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Oakwood do hereby adopt the Oakwood 2004 Comprehensive Plan Partial Update - 2009 and authorize the City Manager to transmit the plan to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

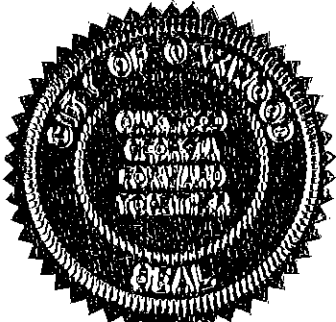
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council for the City of Oakwood, Georgia this 14th day of September, 2009.

City Council for the City of Oakwood,
Georgia

ATTEST:

Tangee B. Puckett
City Clerk

By Lamar Scroggs
Mayor Lamar Scroggs



GEORGIA, HALL COUNTY

I, Tangee Puckett, City Clerk of the City of Oakwood, Hall County, Georgia do hereby certify that the attached resolution which appears of record in the minutes proceedings of the City of Oakwood, Hall County, Georgia known as "Resolution No. 2009-09-01" entitled "Adoption of Partial Update of the Oakwood 2004 Comprehensive Plan" was duly passed on the 14th day of September 2009 and same is true and correct copy of said resolution.

H. Lamar Scroggs
MAYOR

Ron McFarland

Montie Robinson, Sr.

Sam Evans

Martha Collins

Gary Anderson

Donald T. Hunt
CITY ATTORNEY

Stan Brown
CITY MANAGER

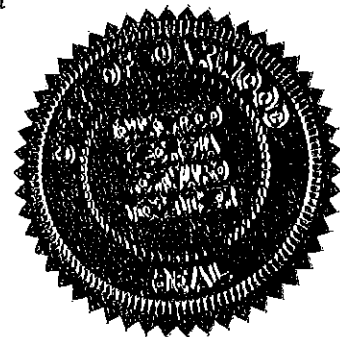
Patti J. Doss-Luna
ASSISTANT
CITY MANAGER

Tangee Puckett
CITY CLERK

WITNESS, my official signature and seal of the City of Oakwood, Hall County, Georgia on the 15th day of September 2009.

Tangee B. Puckett

Tangee Puckett
City Clerk
City of Oakwood, Georgia



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