# JACKSON COUNTY, GEORGIA
# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# COMMUNITY AGENDA

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**JACKSON COUNTY COMMUNITY AGENDA**
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
# Jackson County Comprehensive Plan
# Community Agenda, 2010-2030

This "Community Agenda" is the "plan" portion of the Jackson County comprehensive plan. It covers a twenty year planning horizon (2010 to 2030). It provides a policy basis (in addition to the Jackson County Unified Development Code) for evaluating all future development proposals, whether they are requests for rezoning, applications for special use permit or subdivision plat approval, and others. The Community Agenda is also intended to provide guidance for operating and capital improvement budgets. Topics covered in the plan include population, housing, economic development, natural resources, historic resources, character and land use, community facilities and services, and transportation.

Preceding the preparation of the community agenda, Jackson County prepared a Community Assessment, including a summary report and detailed chapters on the topics described above. Jackson County also prepared a community participation program which entailed working with an appointed comprehensive plan steering committee and the hosting of community workshops around the county. A questionnaire was also developed to inform county policymaking.

This Community Agenda is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the Community Agenda document. Chapter 2 describes all of the "issues and opportunities which were identified during the Community Assessment process and refined in the Community Participation process, with the exception of land use issues which are described in Chapter 3. The third chapter addresses character areas and land use. The fourth chapter provides a synopsis of the Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028. Chapter 5 focuses on implementation and includes a consolidated set of policies for all subject matters except for character and land use which are presented in Chapter 3, and a short-term (five-year) work program. A glossary of planning terms is provided at the end. Additional technical information on character areas and future land use is provided in Appendix A.

Nine cities are located in Jackson County: Arcade, Braselton (part), Commerce, Hoschton, Jefferson, Maysville (part), Nicholson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. Each of the cities has its own individual comprehensive plans, so they are not covered in this comprehensive plan, except in terms of countywide perspective and where countywide services or policies apply.

## Population and Housing Projections

Jackson County will increase its population from approximately 65,000 to 100,000 during the next two decades. Almost two-thirds (62.8 percent) of the population will reside in unincorporated areas by 2030. Housing units will increase from approximately 24,000 to 36,500 from 2010 to 2030, almost two-thirds of which will be in unincorporated areas in 2030.

## Natural Resource Protection

The community assessment provides numerous maps which will be used to evaluate future development proposals with regard to their impact on the environment. This community agenda calls for the designation of three major forest preserves, one along the Mulberry River, one in North Jackson County along the North Oconee River just south of Interstate 85, and one in the southern part of the county along the North Oconee. The character and land use maps (see discussion below) designate flood plains, the three forest preserves, and other areas for conservation. Over the long term greenways are envisioned along the county's three rivers

(Mulberry, Middle Oconee, and North Oconee). A multitude of greenspace preservation programs are suggested, starting with a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program which could eventually evolve into a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program, as well as protection through conservation easements and outright acquisition of fee-simple title.

**Historic Resource Protection**

When asked if it is important to protect the historic resources in Jackson County, survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed. The plan calls for an update to the countywide historic resources survey completed in 1976. Jackson County has created a Heritage Village site at its Hurricane Shoals Park, where historic buildings and structures from various places in the county have been saved from destruction and relocated in a village-type arrangement. The plan calls for two additional heritage villages in the county. Farms also comprise many of the county's historic resources as well as cultural landscapes. The plan calls for additional nominations to the Georgia Centennial Farm Program. Several early Native-American and frontier trails also extend through Jackson County; the plan calls for the county to initiate a program for marking important historic sites, trails, and cemeteries. The county should recognize and nurture the historic preservation efforts of municipalities. Strong consideration will be given to pursuing a countywide historic preservation program to protect resources in unincorporated parts of the county at least over a longer range planning horizon.

**Character and Land Use Maps**

Jackson County's plan for development management consists of a hierarchy of levels, starting first with the most generalized and progressing to increasingly more specific descriptions:

- The **settlement character map** shows distinct subareas of the county, including incorporated and unincorporated areas. It was prepared with the intention of aiding in the definition of character and allowing for an easier reference to different parts of the county. The settlement character area map has very limited regulatory significance – it is intended primarily to serve the purpose of community identification.

- The **existing character 2009 map** is a generalized version of existing land use, dividing all of the county into five categories based on character and urban form (conservation, agricultural, rural, suburban, and urban). This map is descriptive, not regulatory.

- **Character area maps for the years 2020 and 2030** show the desirable (generalized) development pattern in the year 2020 and 2030, using the same categories as the existing character map. This comprehensive plan requires consistency with the Character 2020 map in terms of the provision and extension of sanitary sewer service and also the relative intensity or density of development. Policies associated with the Character 2020 and 2030 maps are presented in Chapter 5.

- **Future land use plan maps for the years 2020 and 2030** work in tandem with the Character 2020 and 2030 maps. These maps show unincorporated areas only and divide the unincorporated land into several land use categories: intensive agriculture, agriculture/forestry, residential, public/institutional, commercial, industrial, transportation/ communication/ utilities, and parks, recreation and conservation. This comprehensive plan requires consistency with the 2020 future land use plan map in terms of land use.

- **The special overlays map** establishes special areas which have policies and regulations (some of which have not been written yet) that apply to development within them. The special areas include the SR 124 and SR 53 corridors (overlay districts at the time of plan adoption), the U.S. Highway 441 Corridor (proposed to apply in Commerce and Nicholson also), the SR 98 (Maysville Road) corridor in the Commerce area, the Jackson County Airport overlay, and the SR 334 scenic highway corridor.

The pace of development in Jackson County prior to the great recession of 2007-2010 was considered too fast. By way of context, market analysts have documented that Jackson County already has enough vacant lots and residential subdivisions to supply residential market needs during most if not all of the 20-year planning horizon and perhaps even for a much longer period of time depending on market conditions.

Consensus evolved around the following which guided the design of the county's development management program. There is support for a geographically dispersed population pattern throughout the county, except in areas designated as environmentally sensitive or agricultural preservation. On the other hand, the desired development pattern is to have contiguous, sequential growth in and around the county's municipalities and along major highway corridors, tied to availability of public water and in many cases sanitary sewer service, in order to leave other parts of the county agricultural and rural. In adopting this Community Agenda, Jackson County's leaders are placing stronger controls on the scatteration and sprawl of residences. The character area maps outline an overall pattern that minimizes additional scatter of subdivisions. The amount of residential development opportunities was reduced considerably when compared with the future land use plan map applicable at the time this Community Agenda was adopted.

**Economy**

Jackson County as of 2003 was not part of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), but it is surrounded on three sides by MSAs: the Atlanta MSA to the south; Gainesville MSA to the west; and the Athens MSA to the east (U.S. Bureau of Census 2003). Jackson County is strategically located at the edge of these three major labor markets and job centers. The county's economy is a combination of agriculture and agribusiness, heritage tourism, tourism, health care, racing venues, retail development, warehousing/distribution, and international investment, among others. The Jackson County Airport is viewed as a key economic stimulus, especially with plans for its expansion and further improvement.

The major initiative with regard to economic development is for the Chamber of Commerce to prepare a comprehensive, strategic economic development master plan. Plan components will include the county's participation in the Georgia Innovation Crescent and Georgia Work Ready Program, as well as pulling together strategies for each major component of the county's economy, as described above. The plan also calls for establishment of a welcome center at Interstate 85 (probably at U.S. Highway 129). The county is also pursuing a new interchange at SR 60 and Interchange 85, which will spur retail development in addition to improving access in west Jackson County.

Job growth is anticipated to be slow for most of the coming decade in Jackson County. Manufacturing in Jackson County is anticipated to stay relatively level in terms of employment. Construction is expected to grow but at a slow pace. The transportation and warehousing and administrative/waste management industries are forecasted to grow faster in the county than state and national trends, but overall employment increases in those sectors will likely be

relatively small. Jackson County will witness significant growth in health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and retail trade industries.

**Community Facilities and Services**

Respondents to the community survey exhibit satisfaction with the county's facilities and services. The plan calls into question the long-term viability of continuing service with independent fire districts relying mostly on volunteer firefighters; levels of service among fire districts are not uniform, and individual districts are not uniformly providing fire inspections or reviews of buildings and development with respect to fire codes.

Water and sewer planning has been tied much more closely with land use under this comprehensive plan when compared with the previously adopted plan. Jefferson and Jackson County are collaborating on securing a new water supply reservoir along Parks Creek, and the county has studied the long-term feasibility of other potential reservoirs to be constructed in the future to ensure long-term water supplies. Sewer service by the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority is relatively limited in terms of geographic scope, serving the Traditions master planned community and large areas along Interstate 85 which are slated for industrial development.

Although the county has come a long way in terms of its parks and recreation facilities in recent years, parks and recreation received the lowest satisfaction ratings of all the various facilities provided by Jackson County from respondents to the community questionnaire. A bond referendum for $15 million in parks and recreation improvements was held in February 2008, but it was not passed by the citizenry. The county completed a System-Wide Recreation Master Plan, 2003-2012, but that plan needs updating. Recommendations for new active parks are not provided in this comprehensive plan, pending revision of the parks master plan. However, the designation of greenspaces and the call for river greenways goes a long way toward satisfying some of the concerns about lack of recreation opportunities.

Jackson County is participating in the funding of libraries in the municipalities, but it does not have a library system to serve unincorporated residents. This plan suggests that during the 20-year planning horizon, Jackson County should seriously consider changing the loose confederation of individual municipal libraries into either a countywide system or officially merging all municipal libraries into the Piedmont Regional Library System. In any event, the county will have to anticipate the eventual need to construct libraries in unincorporated areas to supplement the level of service provided by municipal libraries.

Jackson County will need to give increasing attention to countywide stormwater management. Capital improvement programming has been slow to develop in the county lately but the plan calls for formalizing a capital improvement program and budget.

**Transportation**

A Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028, was prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. and is adopted by reference as if fully set forth in this comprehensive plan. This community agenda provides a synopsis of the plan. The Countywide Roadways Plan contains extensive inventories of the functional classification, traffic counts, levels of service, and safety considerations of major roads and bridges in the county. It specifically analyzed intercity connectivity and calls for designation of evacuation routes and the building of park-and-ride lots along Interstate 85. Policies of the plan are integrated into Chapter 5 of this Community

Agenda, and the work program for new roads and road improvements is also summarized in Chapter 5 in a separate major roads work program. Specific road improvements are too numerous to summarize here. Significant changes are called for to the county's Unified Development Code to implement the recommendations of the Countywide Roadways Plan.

The county does not have much presently in terms of a sidewalk system. The Countywide Roadways Plan calls for preparation of a countywide bicycle and pedestrian plan during the next five years. One major bikeway improvement recommended over the long range is a regional bicycle loop starting in Nicholson, extending into Commerce, then returning to Nicholson again.

**Intergovernmental Coordination**

The issue of intergovernmental coordination has been neglected in the past, but with the requirement to renegotiate the county's service delivery strategy and the desire to renew the Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), discussions among the county and its municipalities has increased considerably. This plan calls for formalized discussions on an annual basis with the municipalities and major service providers, and it suggests a number of additional intergovernmental agreements. The character policies of the plan outline some expectations with regard to where municipalities may annex in the future, thus attempting to bring more certainty to service provision and land use.

There are roads are only accessible via entrance into other counties. The plan suggests that Jackson County should consider intergovernmental agreements to have adjacent counties provide first responder service (if it is deemed adequate) by the adjacent county in cases such cases. Similarly, to the extent such roads place the same circumstances on other counties, Jackson County should express willingness to provide first responder services for emergency and public safety calls.

**Policies and Implementation**

This Community Agenda contains a chapter (#5) on policies and implementation – the policy statements are numerous and correspond generally with the topical areas described at the outset of this executive summary, but with even greater detail (subcategories). For policies on character areas and land use, see Chapter 3. The plan contains a short-term work program which will be used by Jackson County to implement the recommendations. A consistency requirement exists in the county's Unified Development Code to ensure that land use decisions are in compliance with the plan's recommendations. A major review and rewrite of portions of the Unified Development Code is called for in the short-term work program, though it does not require major overhaul.

# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes several introductory aspects of the comprehensive plan. First, the county and its nine municipalities are described in summary fashion, including its location, growth trends, and projections. An overview of the comprehensive plan documents is provided, and the organization of this document is summarized. A visionary outlook for the county as a whole provides a foundation for the comprehensive plan.

## ABOUT JACKSON COUNTY

### Location and Transportation Access

Jackson County is located northeast of the metropolitan Atlanta Region, northwest of the Athens-Clarke County metropolitan region, and east of the Gainesville urbanized area. Jefferson, the county seat, is situated approximately midway between Athens and Gainesville. Three major highways transect the county. Interstate 85, which links Atlanta to Greenville, SC, runs in a northeast-southwest direction for some 21 miles through the northern part of the county. U.S. Highway 129 links Athens and Gainesville and runs generally north-south in the western part of the county. U.S. Highway 441 links Athens and Commerce as well as the north Georgia Mountains to the north.

### Growth Trends and Characteristics

Jackson County is still mostly rural but rapidly suburbanizing. It is witnessing growth pressures from three directions – the Atlanta region from Gwinnett and Barrow Counties to the southwest, the Athens-Clarke County region to the southeast, and Gainesville-Hall County urbanization from the west. North and northeast of Jackson County is still largely rural and non-urbanized. One might describe Jackson County during the last decade as a “suburban frontier” of sorts, with huge numbers of suburban subdivisions planned. In 2000, almost two-thirds of the population (26,328 people, or 63.3 percent of the total county population) resided in unincorporated parts of the county. Jackson County’s population increased from 41,589 in 2000 (census) to 61,620 (census estimate) in 2008. The population growth rate during those eight years was 48.2 percent, thus surpassing the growth rate of all abutting counties except Barrow. See Tables 1.1 and 1.2 for projections of population and housing units.

While many of these suburban residential subdivisions have been developed and homes constructed within them, the great recession of 2007-2009 (and corresponding collapses of lending practices and giant increases in foreclosures) has left Jackson County with a huge surplus of platted but vacant lots in suburban residential subdivisions. The severe recession has influenced, and will undoubtedly continue to influence, the future population, housing, and employment growth anticipated in the county.

### Jackson County’s Municipalities

Nine cities are located in Jackson County: Arcade, Braselton (part), Commerce, Hoschton, Jefferson, Maysville (part), Nicholson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. The two largest and most significant cities in terms of population and economy are Jefferson and Commerce. Two cities are split between Jackson and one or more other counties – Braselton is split among Jackson, Barrow, Hall, and Gwinnett counties, and Maysville is split between Jackson and Banks counties. Tables 1.3 and 1.4 provide projections of municipal population and housing units.

**Table 1.1. Countywide Population Projections, 2010-2030**

| Population Projection | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Countywide Population | 64,564 | 72,531 | 81,409 | 90,287 | 99,165 |
| Unincorporated Population | 38,764 | 44,107 | 49,761 | 55,879 | 62,315 |
| Unincorporated Population (percent) | 60.0% | 60.8% | 61.1% | 61.9% | 62.8% |
| Incorporated Population (all municipalities) | 25,800 | 28,424 | 31,648 | 34,408 | 36,850 |

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2010.

**Table 1.2. Countywide Housing Unit Projections, 2010-2030**

| Housing Unit Projection | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Countywide Housing Units | 23,824 | 26,764 | 30,040 | 33,316 | 36,592 |
| Unincorporated Housing Units | 14,373 | 16,284 | 18,413 | 20,706 | 23,163 |
| Incorporated Housing Units | 9,451 | 10,480 | 11,627 | 12,610 | 13,429 |

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2010.

**Table 1.3. Municipal Population Projections, 2010-2030**

| Municipal Population Projection | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City of Arcade | 2,000 | 2,436 | 3,250 | 3,731 | 4,050 |
| City of Braselton (part in Jackson County) | 2,300 | 2,980 | 3,631 | 4,055 | 4,282 |
| City of Commerce | 6,600 | 6,970 | 7,259 | 7,878 | 8,407 |
| City of Hoschton | 1,725 | 2,153 | 2,594 | 2,815 | 3,202 |
| City of Jefferson | 8,850 | 9,274 | 9,885 | 10,672 | 11,088 |
| City of Maysville (part in Jackson County) | 775 | 800 | 852 | 903 | 929 |
| City of Nicholson | 2,200 | 2,373 | 2,560 | 2,617 | 3,048 |
| City of Pendergrass | 725 | 781 | 878 | 933 | 974 |
| City of Talmo | 625 | 657 | 739 | 804 | 870 |
| Incorporated Population (all municipalities) | 25,800 | 28,424 | 31,648 | 34,408 | 36,850 |

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2010.

**Table 1.4. Municipal Housing Unit Projections, 2010-2030**

| Municipal Housing Unit Projection | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City of Arcade | 687 | 837 | 1,117 | 1,282 | 1,392 |
| City of Braselton (part in Jackson County) | 813 | 1,053 | 1,283 | 1,433 | 1,513 |
| City of Commerce | 2,583 | 2,733 | 2,845 | 3,060 | 3,245 |
| City of Hoschton | 625 | 780 | 940 | 1,020 | 1,160 |
| City of Jefferson | 3,222 | 3,456 | 3,676 | 3,969 | 4,078 |
| City of Maysville (part in Jackson County) | 300 | 310 | 330 | 350 | 360 |
| City of Nicholson | 767 | 827 | 892 | 912 | 1,062 |
| City Pendergrass | 263 | 283 | 318 | 338 | 353 |
| City of Talmo | 191 | 201 | 226 | 246 | 266 |
| Total Incorporated | 9,451 | 10,480 | 11,627 | 12,610 | 13,429 |

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2010.

## OVERVIEW OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The first phase of the comprehensive planning process consisted of preparation of three reports: (1) a "Community Assessment," (2) a "Technical Appendix to the Community Assessment (which itself consisted of separate reports), and (3) a "Community Participation Program." The Community Assessment and Community Participation Program were accepted by the region and state in late 2009.

This document is the "Community Agenda," which was prepared following review of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. At its most basic level, a "Community Agenda" according to the administrative rules for local planning effective May 1, 2005, consists of at least the following: a summary of issues and opportunities; a future development map of character areas; policies; and a short-term work program. Implied within these requirements is supportive demographic information, such as population and employment projections.

## PURPOSES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Community Agenda is first, a physical plan intended to guide the physical development and redevelopment of the county by describing how, why, when, and where to build, rebuild, or preserve aspects of the community. Second, the Community Agenda covers a long-range planning horizon of 20 years (i.e., to the year 2030). Third, the Community Agenda is "comprehensive" in the sense that it covers the entire county limits (though it does not necessarily set policy for the municipalities in Jackson County), plus it encompasses all the functions that make a community work and considers the interrelatedness of functions. The Community Agenda is based on the foundation that if the County knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there.

The Community Agenda is intended to serve numerous purposes. It provides a primary basis for evaluating all future development proposals, whether they are requests for rezoning, applications for special use permit or subdivision plat approval, and others. The Community Agenda is also intended to provide guidance for operating and capital improvement budgets. Business persons, investors, real estate brokers, and developers can learn from the plan what the future vision of the community is, as well as the overall direction and intensity of new growth. Market analysts and researchers can draw on the wealth of data provided in the Community Assessment (a separate precursor document) for their own specific needs. Other local governments, regional entities, and state agencies also look at the contents of the Community Agenda as the best available statement of county policy and intent.

The ultimate clients, however, for the Community Agenda are the Board of Commissioners of Jackson County and the Jackson County Planning Commission. By adopting the Community Agenda, the Board of Commissioners has made an extremely important expression of their consent and support for the policies and work program contained in the Community Agenda.

Completion of the comprehensive planning process according to state rules allows a local government to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) status and, thus, maintain its eligibility to receive certain state grants and loans.

## AMENDMENT AND UPDATE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As an adopted expression of the County's policy, the Community Agenda must be maintained in a manner that still reflects the desires of the current Board of Commissioners. Developers, the general public, and other agencies have a right to rely on the adopted Comprehensive Plan as an expression of current policy. In cases where it is determined that a particular policy, goal, program, or statement is no longer a valid expression of the County's policy, then the plan needs to be amended. Otherwise, the validity of the plan is weakened, and those that have relied on the Community Agenda when it is not a reflection of current policy have then been, in effect, misled.

Local governments are required to update the Comprehensive Plan every five years, and at that time, they are encouraged to provide major rewrites of the Comprehensive Plan. Regardless, the Comprehensive Plan must be comprehensively revised every 10 years. Amendments may be considered by the Board of Commissioners anytime it believes it is productive to do so. When there is a significant change in policy by the Board of Commissioners, for instance a decision to drop a major capital improvement project that is described in the adopted plan, the plan should be amended. Plan amendments may also be proposed by individual property owners, for example an amendment to the future land use plan map, according to procedures and limitations spelled out in the Jackson County Unified Development Code.

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Community Agenda is organized into five chapters. This chapter introduces the Community Agenda document. Chapter 2 describes all of the "issues and opportunities which were identified during the Community Assessment process and refined in the Community Participation process, with the exception of land use issues which are described in Chapter 3. The third chapter addresses character areas and land use. The fourth chapter provides a synopsis of the Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028. Chapter 5 focuses on implementation and includes a consolidated set of policies for all subject matters except those that pertain to character and land use, which appear in Chapter 3, and a short-term (five-year) work program. A glossary of planning terms is provided at the end. There is also an appendix on character areas and land use that provides additional technical information.

## VISIONARY OUTLOOK FOR JACKSON COUNTY

*We the residents of Jackson County value our rural character and connection with agriculture, our county's historical roots, and the small town feel of our cities. Jackson County's agricultural land, cattle farms, and scenic pastures, along with old barns and farmhouses, distinguish it from Athens and the Atlanta region. We appreciate Jackson County's excellent location and convenient proximity to Athens and the Atlanta metropolitan area, but we don't want our county to be swallowed up by growth pressures of either region, with their traffic headaches, faster paces, and declining environmental qualities. Jackson County is close enough to Atlanta and Athens so we can enjoy "city" life, but come home to a quieter, slower pace of life, a cleaner environment, friendlier neighbors, and an agricultural/rural/pastoral setting with small towns. We are not, and refuse to become, "another Gwinnett County."*

*In order to maintain these desirable qualities and attributes, we support programs to protect historic resources, the county's farms, and its rural/scenic landscapes. It would be tragic if our county lost its historical and natural resources, its beautiful farmland and rural way of life, and the charming, small-town feel of our cities. We are concerned about keeping our taxes low and want to attract light industry and develop more work places to balance residential growth with a stronger non-residential tax base. We desire more retail development and quality services, including convenient health care. We recognize opportunities to partner with the University System of Georgia, and we seek to capitalize on those opportunities for purposes of economic development as well as natural resources protection.*

*We can achieve these aims with a carefully thought-out growth plan that concentrates workplaces in the cities and along major transportation routes (especially Interstate 85, U.S. Highway 441, and U.S. Highway 129), while keeping resource lands and rural places much the same as they are now. We welcome new residents who want to share the many positive attributes of our county, including the friendliness and helpfulness of our people. In the recent past, however, the rate of residential development and population gain has been too fast. We now have too many empty or partially developed residential subdivisions, and we don't seek new residential development in new areas until these homebuilding opportunities are largely exhausted. When more subdivisions are needed, we expect them to be constructed according to our growth plan and in a manner sensitive to the valuable historic, scenic, and environmental resources that we have, preserving them to the maximum extent possible. This means maintaining some of the land as greenbelts, wildlife corridors, open space, agriculture (livestock and crop production), and/or historic sites, rather than platting all of the land into lots.*

*Jackson County will embrace its elderly population and seek to become a more senior-friendly place. We also support new, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development in appropriate locations based on our growth plan. We recognize manufactured homes provide necessary, affordable housing, but we do not want to provide future opportunities for manufactured housing that would diminish our stated values and desirable characteristics of the county. We support more efforts to maintain and improve the aesthetics of the county. We will bridge any divisions between different parts of the county and will work collectively toward this unified vision. This means concerted efforts to cooperate among all local governments, school systems, and service providers.*

# CHAPTER 2
# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter is organized according to the various functional components of the comprehensive plan. Per the state's local planning requirements, the list of issues and opportunities provided in the Community Assessment (phase one of the planning process) has been refined as necessary during the community participation process. This chapter summarizes the issues and opportunities and describes how each issue or opportunity so identified is followed up with policies or implementation measures. In the case of character areas and land use, the issues and opportunities are described in Chapter 3 rather than here in Chapter 2.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Fundamental to any comprehensive planning effort is the identification (see maps in the natural resources chapter of the community assessment technical appendix) of natural resources and the adoption of policies, programs, and initiatives to sustain the air, land and water. In Jackson County there are forests, farms, minerals, soils, topographic conditions and water resources (rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes and ponds) that are proposed for management and protection.

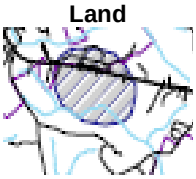
**North Oconee River (Hurricane Shoals)**

### Use of Natural Resources Inventory

Natural resources inventories are provided in the technical appendix of the Community Assessment document (see excerpts right). The county planning staff has previously underutilized those inventories. The community agenda establishes a set of policies for the county staff to regularly consult and apply the various maps of natural resources. In addition, this plan calls for regulations to be amended to make explicit how the natural resources inventories will be used in various development review processes.

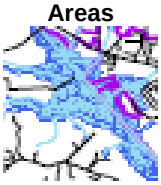
**Prime Agricultural Land**

**Soils with Development Limitations**



**Groundwater Recharge Areas**

**Steep Slopes**



**Wetlands**

**Flood Plains**

### Enforcement of Buffer around Bear Creek Reservoir

The Community Assessment identified an important enforcement issue with regard to encroachments by residential lot owners into the 150-foot buffer established per state environmental planning criteria for Bear Creek Reservoir which is a multi-county water supply reservoir. Jackson County's efforts to enforce that buffer are continuing, and plan policies address this issue by suggesting resolution in order to protect the integrity of a regional water supply.

**Unauthorized beach constructed within required 150 foot wide buffer for Bear Creek Reservoir**

### Refinement of the Land Use Plan to Preserve More Resource Lands

The Community Agenda expands the amount of land within the agricultural character area and strives to address more comprehensively the goal of agricultural preservation.

**Agricultural lands are abundant in Jackson County.**

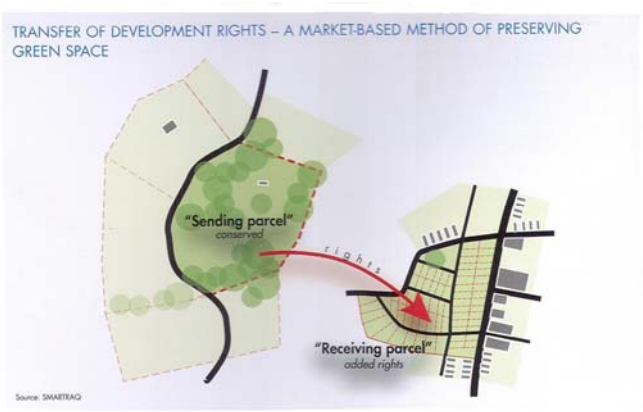
### Tools and Programs for Greenspace Protection

The 1998 comprehensive plan recommended that the county pursue a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program to protect agriculture and open spaces in the county.

During community participation interest in TDRs continued, but others suggested that TDRs should be considered just one of several possible tools and techniques for agricultural and open space preservation. (see sidebar)

## TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDRs): CAN JACKSON COUNTY IMPLEMENT THIS TOOL?

Under a TDR program, the owner of property in a "sending" area (that part of a community designated for protection or preservation) can "sever" the rights to build or develop on that property and sell those rights to another developer or use them himself in a designated "receiving" area. A conservation easement is typically recorded against the property in the "sending" area, from which the development rights are severed, thus protecting that land from further development.




The "transfer" of building and development to the "receiving" area helps meet goals of concentrating development in centers and corridors. TDRs are treated like any other commodity; development rights can be sold to anyone interested in buying them; and they can be sold at a profit or a loss.

One of the most successful TDR programs in the country is Montgomery County, Maryland's, which is a "mandatory" program (i.e., not a voluntary option) and which has reportedly protected approximately 40,000 acres of farmland. A TDR program must be designed so that the development credit gained via the TDR program is worth more to the developer than the seller (land owner) could make by selling the land for development. Experience indicates that an incentive can be created to use a TDR program if the rights allowed to be transferred are significantly higher than those allowed under the existing zoning. For example, there would be an incentive to capitalize on a TDR program if a landowner was allowed to transfer development rights amounting to one unit per two acres instead of the density allowed by zoning of, say, one unit per eight acres in Jackson County's A-2 zoning district.

TDR as a preservation tool has not yet "taken off" in Georgia, and there are only two instances (Atlanta and Fulton County) where TDR programs have been formally established. Other communities, such as Athens-Clarke County and Thomas County, Georgia, have studied the tool.[1] Ordinances must comply with enabling legislation passed in 1998 and amended in 2003 regarding transfer of development rights (see O.C.G.A. 36-66A).

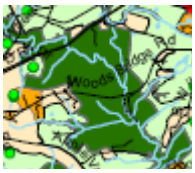
There are some noteworthy obstacles to implementation of TDRs. Communities may experience the difficulty of designating acceptable "receiving zones," since they will consist of higher density development than would normally be permitted. Establishing a market for

[1] Dorfman, Jeffrey H., et al. 2005. "The Feasibility of a Transferable Development Rights Program for Athens-Clarke County, Georgia." Alliance for Quality Growth, The University of Georgia, and the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. Atlanta, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Quality Growth Grant Program. See also Dorfman, Jeffrey H., Jamie Baker Roskie, Rick Pruetz, and Bill Bumback, "The Feasibility of a Transferable Development Rights Program for Thomas County, Georgia." Athens: Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics, The University of Georgia.

development rights (i.e., securing willing buyers for the development rights of sellers) can also be challenging. Some suggest a "TDR bank," to buy rights "as a last resort" if the market for the development rights doesn't function well. Indeed, the market for TDRs may not function by itself. Other potential complications include the following:

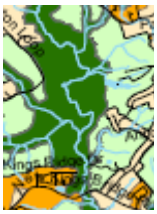
- Assigning a value to development rights.
- Securing funds to acquire development rights by the local government, land trust, or other non-profit organization.
- Avoiding other land use practices that may undermine a TDR program, such as approving changes to zoning that grant higher densities outside sending and receiving areas. If a developer can get higher zoning "for free" rather than paying for additional development rights, the less expensive option will often be pursued.
- Addressing complications in the event a city annexes a sending or receiving area. If a county plan keeps densities low in order to make a TDR program work, a city may annex the land and allow for higher density development, thus undermining the TDR program.
- Revising comprehensive plans so that the natural and historic resources elements support initiation of a TDR program, and amending community facilities and services plans to ensure that receiving areas have adequate infrastructure capacity to accommodate the additional development transferred from sending areas.
- Gaining acceptance from another local government to allow additional density from another local government, if transfers are to occur among local government jurisdictions.
- Determining whether TDR is an option or a requirement. If it is an option, one would expect less implementation than a mandatory requirement.

With regard to "sending areas," it would be no significant challenge to identify areas Jackson County would want to protect. However, determining appropriate receiving areas is one of the bigger implementation challenges in Jackson County. The technical complexity and lack of program experience in Georgia argue against this tool being implemented in Jackson County in short-term and perhaps the next decade.



**North (Hurricane Shoals)**

**West (Mulberry River)**



**Southeast (N. Oconee River)**

**Forest preserves (shown in green above) proposed in Jackson County are a high priority for conservation and could be designated as "sending areas" in a TDR program, or their development rights could be purchased under a PDR program.**

A viable alternative to a TDR program in Jackson County is the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) tool. It is recommended that the county establish a land conservation authority and/or work with existing or new land trusts to either acquire outright major conservation lands proposed for protection, or purchase and retire (rather than transfer) their development rights.

### Mapping, Designation, and Potential Preservation of Significant Rock Outcrops

While rock outcrops are referred to as potential conservation areas, they are not mapped in the natural resources inventory. The county's Unified Development Code (Sec. 918(b) identifies exposed bedrock and rock outcrops as "secondary conservation areas" which are encouraged but not required to be protected in the process of major subdivision. The idea of protecting rock outcrops did not gain any traction in the community participation process. This community agenda does not map rock outcrops; however, their development limitations should be acknowledged in any requirements for site analysis preceding land development approval.

### Adequacy of Existing Regulatory Measures for Wetlands

At issue is whether the existing requirements for protecting wetlands are adequate, and if not, what additional measures should be adopted. Review of the county's wetland protection requirements reveals that they are adequate, and no further recommendations are made with regard to regulatory protection of wetlands.

### Establishment of Policy with Regard to Wetland Mitigation Banks

As noted in the technical appendix for natural resources, wetland mitigation banks are becoming popular but are considered from a scientific standpoint to be inferior to policies and regulations that retain wetlands in their original locations in the ecosystem. In response to this issue, Jackson County's Community Agenda establishes policies for when wetland mitigation banks should be allowed to substitute for retaining existing wetlands on development sites.

### Protection of Areas with Steep Slopes

Steep slopes (25 percent or greater) typically require substantial alteration for building development and pose severe limitations to septic tank drain fields. Alteration of steep slopes also changes the natural landform and character of the area and can create serious erosion problems (1998 comprehensive plan). Steep slopes are referred to in the UDC as secondary conservation areas if they are 5,000 square feet or more in area, and the UDC recommends but does not require them to be protected during the process of developing major subdivisions. Additional policies are established in this Community Agenda for lands with steep slopes.

**This subdivision, located east of SR 124 just north of SR 11, was constructed on steep slopes.**

### River Corridor Protection

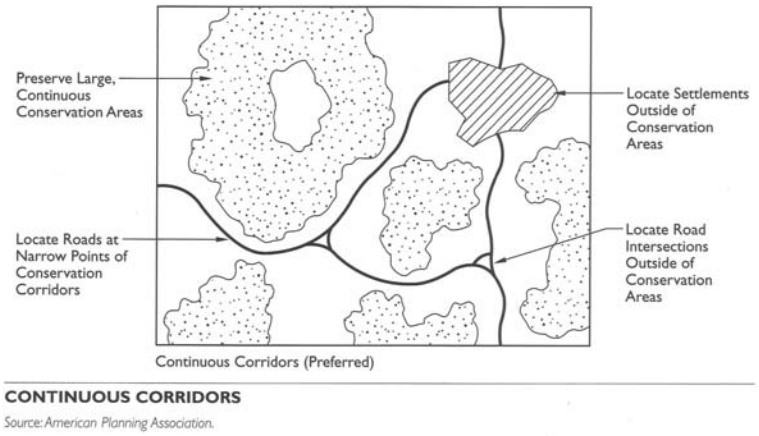
The Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (2004) has observed in its regional plan that many developments along stream corridors in the region do not provide for an adequate vegetative buffer. Jackson County's Unified Development Code defines the three major rivers in Jackson County as "protected rivers" under the state's environmental protection criteria, even though only one of them technically meets the standard for which such requirements apply. The

primary method mandated for the protection of river corridors is the establishment of natural vegetative buffer areas alongside each protected river. The minimum standards call for a one hundred-foot buffer on each side of the river channel, and Jackson County has adopted these environmental planning criteria specified for protected river corridors in the UDC.

The state environmental planning criteria and the regulations adopted by Jackson County allow a single-family dwelling to be located within the river corridor. In the case of state criteria, the dwelling must be on at least a two-acre lot; in Jackson County a minimum five-acre lot is established within river corridors. In the state rules, septic tanks may be, but drainfields may not be, located within the required river corridor buffer; in Jackson County both drainfields and septic tanks themselves are prohibited within the buffer. What is lacking in both the state environmental planning criteria and the county's regulations for river corridors is the establishment or re-establishment of vegetation within the 100 foot buffer where there is no vegetation, or a vegetative strip that is less than 100 feet. In such instances, the 25-foot wide buffer adjacent to all streams would still apply as per the state soil erosion and sedimentation act, but even then there may be instances where no natural vegetation exists adjacent to the river on some lots. Also, disturbance can occur within the required buffer for many different exempted activities, including single-family dwellings, although county regulations limit disturbance within 50 feet of any stream (see Sec. 906(b) UDC). On balance, the county's river corridor protection policies and regulations are considered adequate, though during the process of revising the UDC river corridor protection measures can be reassessed further.

**Habitat Conservation**

The 1998 comprehensive plan recognized the habitat value of the Middle Oconee, Mulberry, and North Oconee Rivers. Deer, beaver, and wood ducks have been sited along the Middle Oconee River. The Mulberry River provides habitat for deer, squirrel, rabbit, quail, woodcock, various songbirds and some turkeys; it is considered especially good habitat for waterfowl.




**Wildlife habitat depends on continuous, connected networks of forested open space.**

Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards, 2005 (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), p. 139.

The North Oconee River is considered good wildlife habitat for deer, squirrel, cottontail rabbit, swamp rabbit, raccoon, mink, muskrat, and beaver. The hardwood swamps and beaver ponds of the North Oconee River are considered excellent waterfowl wintering areas. Many resident and migratory birds use the riverine area, including, mourning doves, hawks, owls, quail, kingfishers, woodpeckers, and many species of songbirds (1998 comprehensive plan). Development decision-making does not include adequate consideration of habitat issues. As development pressures increase, the habitat for species will be reduced and fragmented so that there are insufficient contiguous habitats to support species.

Jackson County's UDC encourages the protection of critical wildlife habitats, but only in the context of major subdivisions, and the code does not define them or require their protection. Probably the most important habitat need is to protect the vegetation along river and stream corridors. The additional policies for the three major river corridors will help improve the maintenance of wildlife travel along the major riparian corridors in the county. In addition, the policies for use of natural resources maps in the land development review process will help ensure that protection of sensitive habitats is addressed. Of equal importance is the protection of riparian habitat along the streams feeding into the three major rivers. The Community Agenda recognizes the importance of connected, continuous greenways and establishes policies with regard to the various character areas to ensure that green spaces are left that ultimately result in a connected system of "green infrastructure."

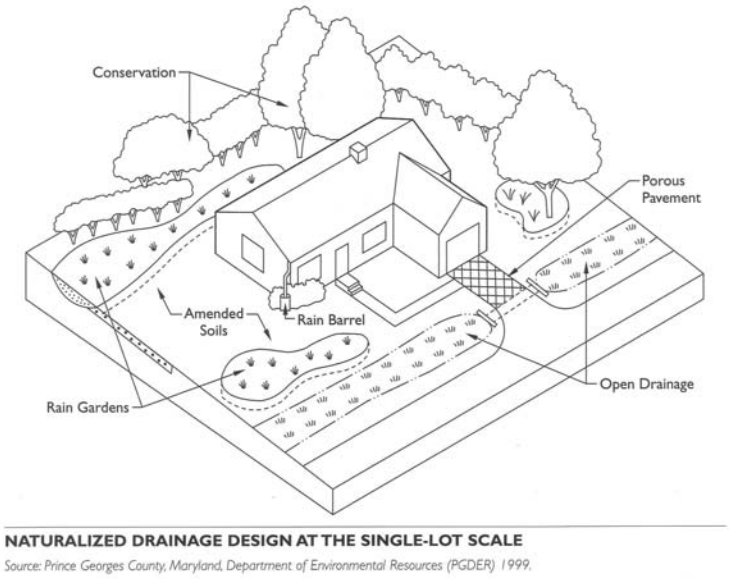
A third component to the county's strategy for habitat conservation is to identify and eventually ensure the permanent protection of forest preserves in the county (see prior figures under TDR). The largest of these is located at the North Oconee River south of Interstate 85, north and south of Woods Bridge Road west of Commerce. Other significant tracts that are identified for forest preserves include a large tract along the Mulberry River and another along the Oconee River southwest of Nicholson/east of Arcade.

**Water Pollution from Agriculture**

Participants of the community workshops raised concern about water pollution from agricultural land practices. Agriculture is typically exempted from soil erosion control ordinances, which gives some reason why the county should be concerned with this issue. It seems that the most appropriate response to this concern is some educational outreach to agricultural property owners with regard to use of best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture. Even though agriculture is exempt, agricultural land owners should be educated on the use of BMPs and encouraged to follow them. A work program item is included to that effect.

**Stormwater Management and Water Quality**

Although stormwater management is regulated by Jackson County's Unified Development Code, which is enforced by the Department of Public Development, citizens expressed concern with stormwater management practices and suggested that stormwater management be listed as an issue in the community assessment. Also, more attention can be given to promoting "low impact development," which has been defined as an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible.




Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards, 2005 (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), p. 334.

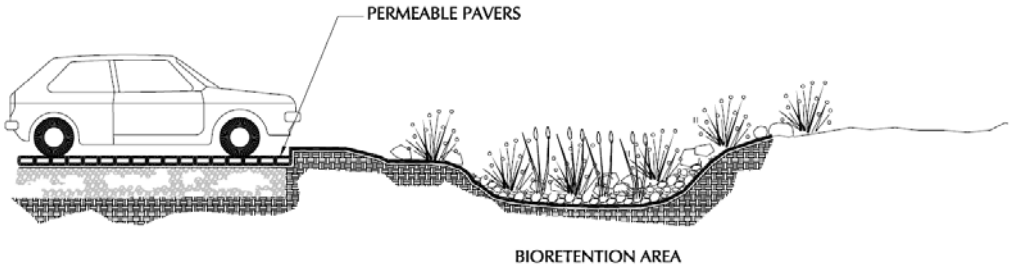
The low impact development approach designs the open space system first, then develops the housing and other land uses adjacent to the public open space. Clearly, we can do a better job of defining our streets and open spaces so that they serve natural ecological functions that fit into the overall need to reduce pollutants from stormwater. Rainwater needs to be considered a neighborhood resource, and stormwater management facilities should be designed so that they become neighborhood amenities.

Efforts are evolving at the county level to begin developing stormwater inventories and planning for more concerted, intergovernmental efforts to address stormwater management. One reason in particular why stormwater management should be elevated in terms of concern is that many residential subdivisions have detention ponds that are under the ownership and/or management of individual homeowners' associations which do not have money budgeted to maintain them. Chapter 5 contains policies regarding better stormwater management practices.

**Green Communities and Sustainable Development Practices**

There are a number of programs and practices that Jackson County could consider implementing, under the general title of "green communities and sustainable development." These include among others, the following:

- Identification and revitalization of "brownfield" (environmentally contaminated) sites
- Instituting water reuse (grey water) systems where feasible
- Conducting and/or encouraging private inventories of construction/demolition materials that can be reused and recycled (e.g., building materials deconstruction and reuse plans)
- Promotion of renewable energy resources such as solar electricity.
- Green building (e.g., green roofs) and green building code practices, such as but not limited to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System.
- Streambank stabilization using plant materials
- Other sustainable practices such as use of porous (pervious or permeable) materials and installation of rain gardens and bioretention areas (see figure below).



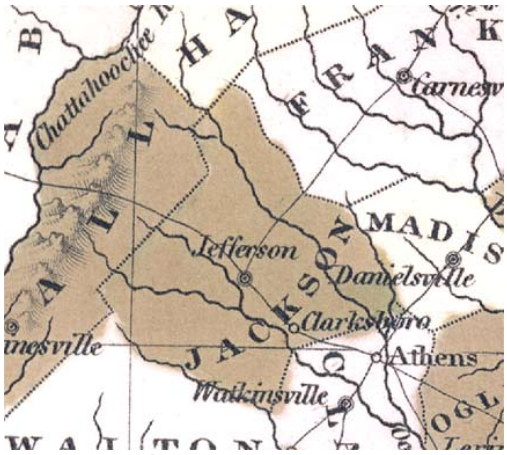

**Participation in Intergovernmental Efforts for Natural Resource Protection**

There are readily apparent opportunities for joint county river corridor assessments and planning. Also, Jackson County, Athens-Clarke County, and Oconee County all have active groups planning and promoting river-related greenways (sometimes called "blueways"). There is an obvious opportunity for cooperation in linking these efforts into a regional greenways effort. This Community Agenda calls for protected green corridors along the three major rivers, with

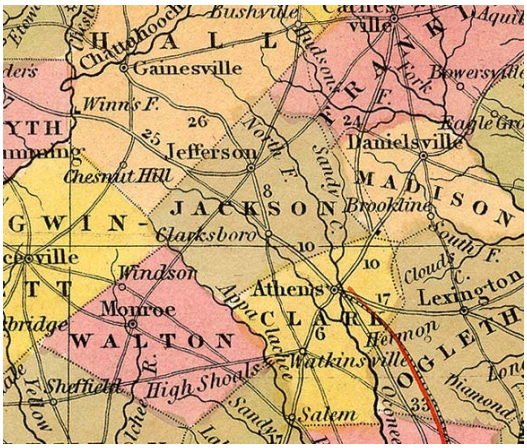
the first emphasis being the North Oconee River, as well as participation in a regional wildlife habitat inventory and planning effort if initiated by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

People move to and continue to reside in a given area for some reason or another. Often, the choice of where to reside relates to their historical roots, but also how comfortable folks are in a given place. History, comfort and the look and feel of a community contribute to its sense of place and character. The character of places, such as the rural nature of unincorporated Jackson County and the small towns within the county, will erode over time if market conditions are allowed to turn special places into placeless suburbs. Maintaining and promoting historic and rural character will not happen on its own. A concerted effort is warranted if Jackson County is to maintain and enhance its existing character, and equally important, promote some character and quality in newly developed places.

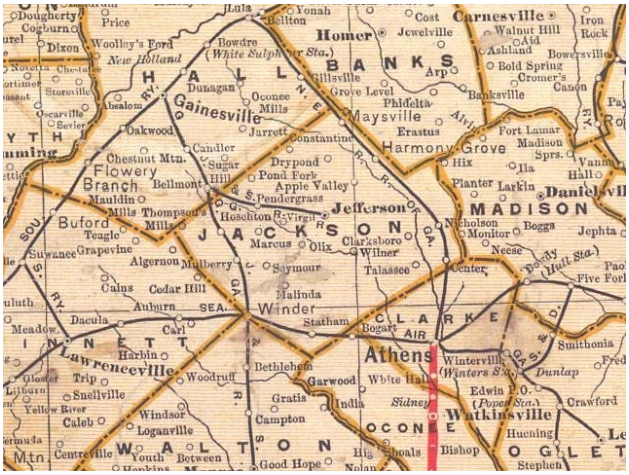



**Jackson County, 1822**
Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia




**Jackson County, 1846**
Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia

**Jackson County, 1883**
Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia




**Jackson County, 1899**
Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia

Of all things that might contribute to the "character" of a given area or community, it is the community's history and culture that are arguably the most important contributors to community character. When asked if it is important to protect the historic resources in Jackson County, survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed (Question 14). The historic maps shown below indicate how the boundaries of Jackson County have changed over time. A number of issues and opportunities have been identified with regard to historic preservation.

**Updated Survey of Historic Resources**

In 1976, Jackson County's historic buildings were surveyed to identify properties that appeared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. That inventory was partially field checked in 2009, and the county's GIS Department updated the maps of known historic resources (included in this section). Jackson County has not, since then, taken an active role in identifying or protecting private properties that are historic or have historic buildings and structures.

**Sells Mill, restored by Jackson County**

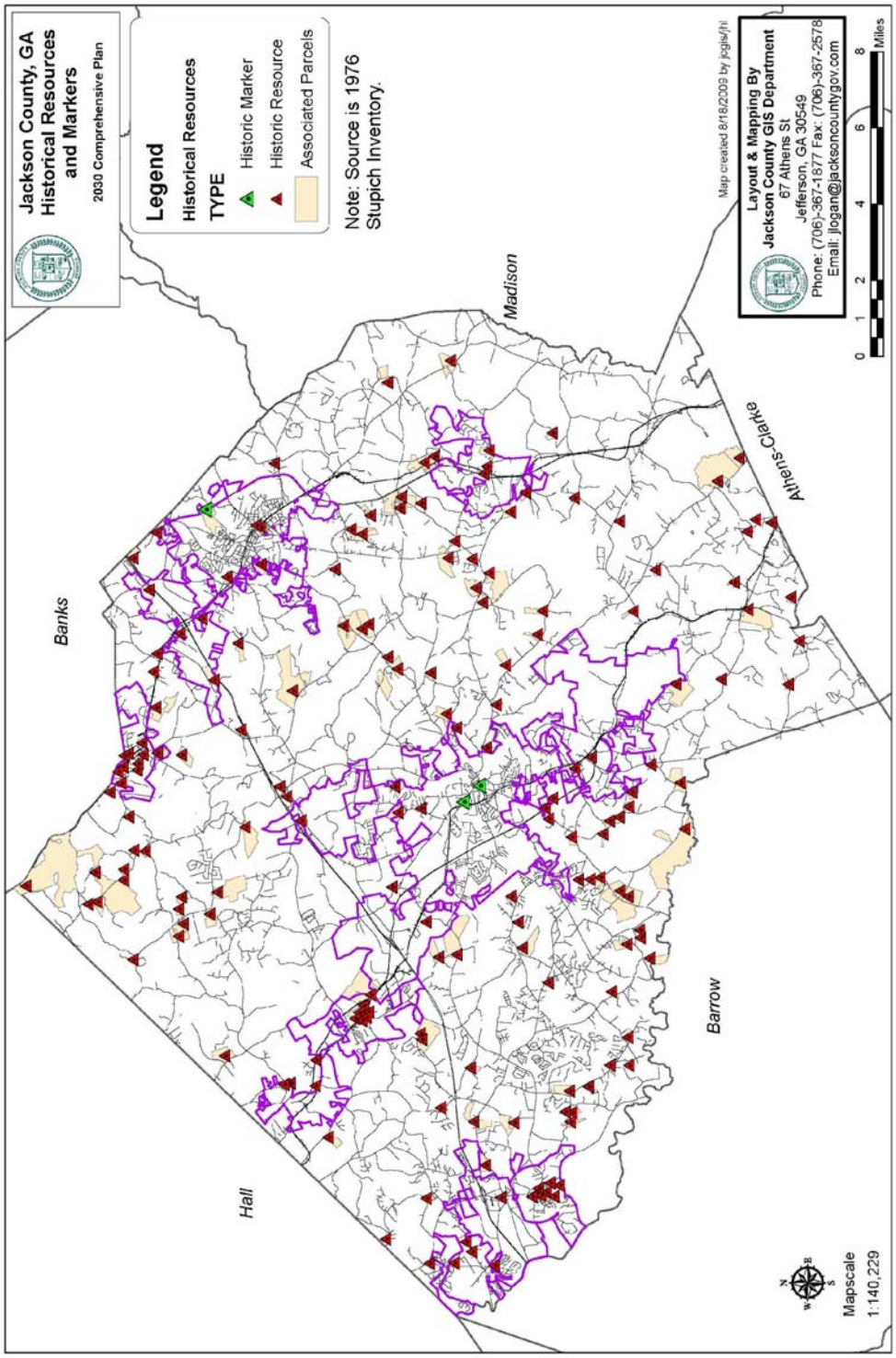
The county does not have a current, comprehensive historic resource survey, and without one, it is unable to be certain of just how important given properties, buildings, and structures are to the county's history. While the map provided represents the best available data, a new comprehensive survey of historic resources is needed and called for in the short-term work program.

**Additional Heritage Village Sites**

The county has restored the historic Sell's Mill on its Sells Mill park site (pictured above). Jackson County has created a Heritage Village site at its Hurricane Shoals Park, where historic buildings and structures from various places in the county have been saved from destruction and relocated in a village-type arrangement. Though when historic structures are removed from their original site they lose some of their authenticity, relocating historic resources is preferable to losing them altogether.

**Heritage Village at Hurricane Shoals Park**

The short-term work program calls for Jackson County to establish two additional heritage village sites in the county.



### Capitalizing on Jackson County's Farm Heritage

Jackson County's history indicates that farms played an important role in its economic development during the 19th and 20th centuries. Farms also comprise many of the county's historic resources as well as cultural landscapes. Farms in Jackson County, more generally, contribute to its rural character and its inherent qualities. The recognized farms not only represent important cultural resources, but may possess opportunities related to tourism and promoting the county's quality of life.

**Farmland in the New Lebanon Settlement Character Area**

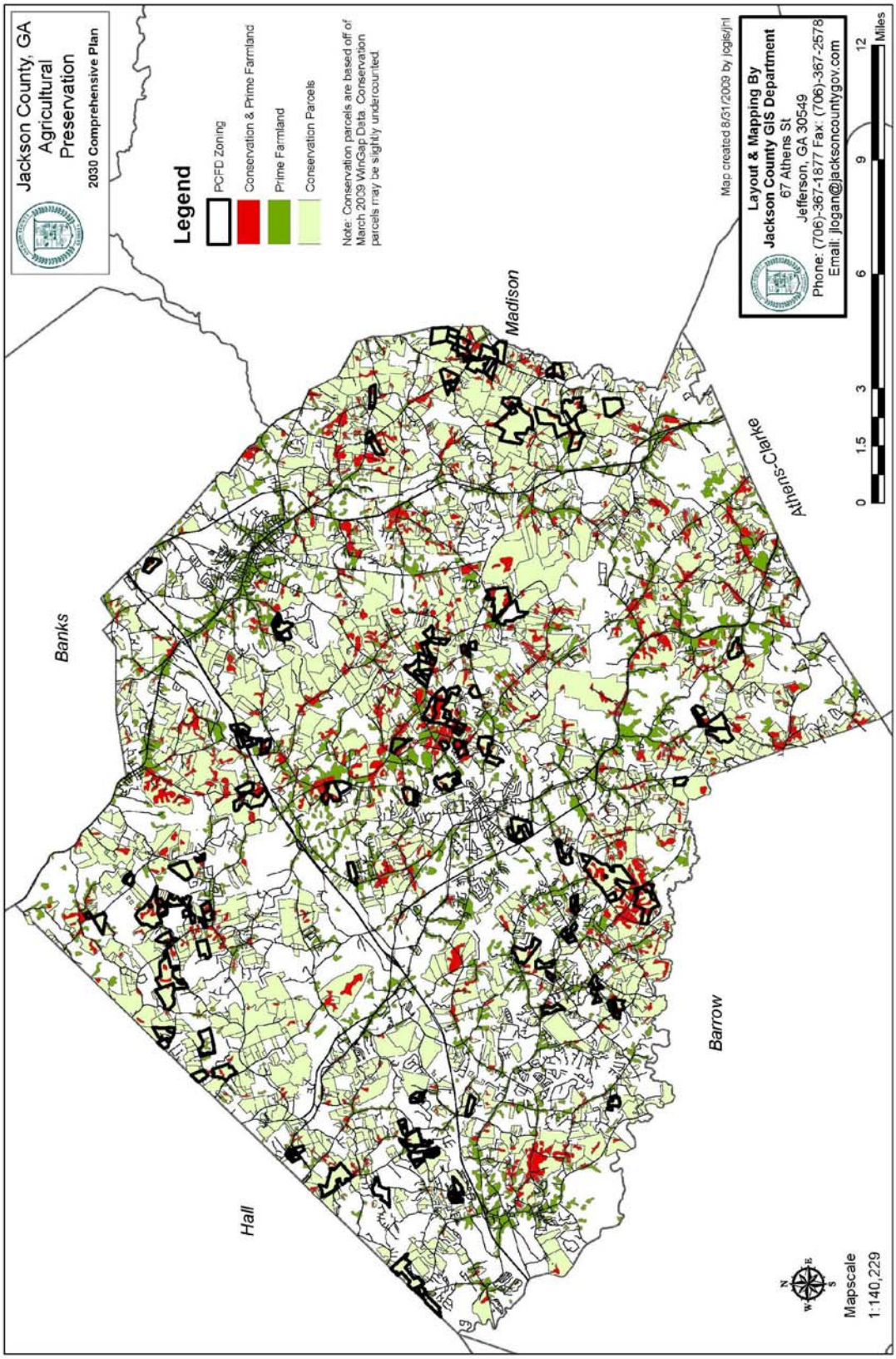
A map has been produced which combines conservation use assessment lands, Planned Commercial Farm District (PCFD) zoning, and prime agricultural soils; this map represents the county's most important farmlands worthy of continued protection in the future. The character area framework and land use plans for the county elevate the importance of agriculture in Jackson County. Within agricultural and rural character areas, agricultural outbuildings are strongly encouraged to be retained as land development occurs (see policies in Chapter 5). The economic development component of this Community Agenda stresses inclusion of heritage tourism as an element of a comprehensive economic development plan.

### Additional Listings to the Centennial Farm Program

In the state of Georgia, farms that contribute to the state's agricultural heritage are recognized by the Georgia Centennial Farm Program. This program is administered by the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the University of Georgia, College of Agriculture and Environmental Services, the Georgia National Fair and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

The Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm (pictured next page) has been a working farm complex since 1799. It was listed in the National Register on June 25, 1992, and a portion of the Farm was subsequently deeded to The Shields-Ethridge Farm Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization. The Farm was also recognized as a Georgia Centennial Heritage Farm by the Department of Natural Resources in 1993. The Shields-Ethridge Farm is included in the Northeast Georgia Regional Comprehensive Plan as a regionally significant historic resource.

Other officially designated centennial farms in Jackson County include Holder Plantation (Centennial Farm), Sarah and Clarence Carson Farm (Centennial Family Farm), and Johnson Farm (Centennial Family Farm). Because of Jackson County's strong associations with agriculture, many other farms may be eligible for recognition by the Centennial Farm program (opportunity). The work program calls for a historic resource inventory which should include agricultural resources, and that work could lead to additional designations of farms to the Centennial Farm Program.


Jackson County, GA
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Prime Farmland
Conservation Parcels
Note: Conservation parcels are based off of March 2009 WinGap Data. Conservation parcels may be slightly undercounted
Map created 8/31/2009 by jogis/jhl
Layout & Mapping By
Jackson County GIS Department
67 Athens St
Jefferson, GA 30549
Phone: (706)-367-1877 Fax: (706)-367-2578
Email: jlogan@jacksoncountygov.com
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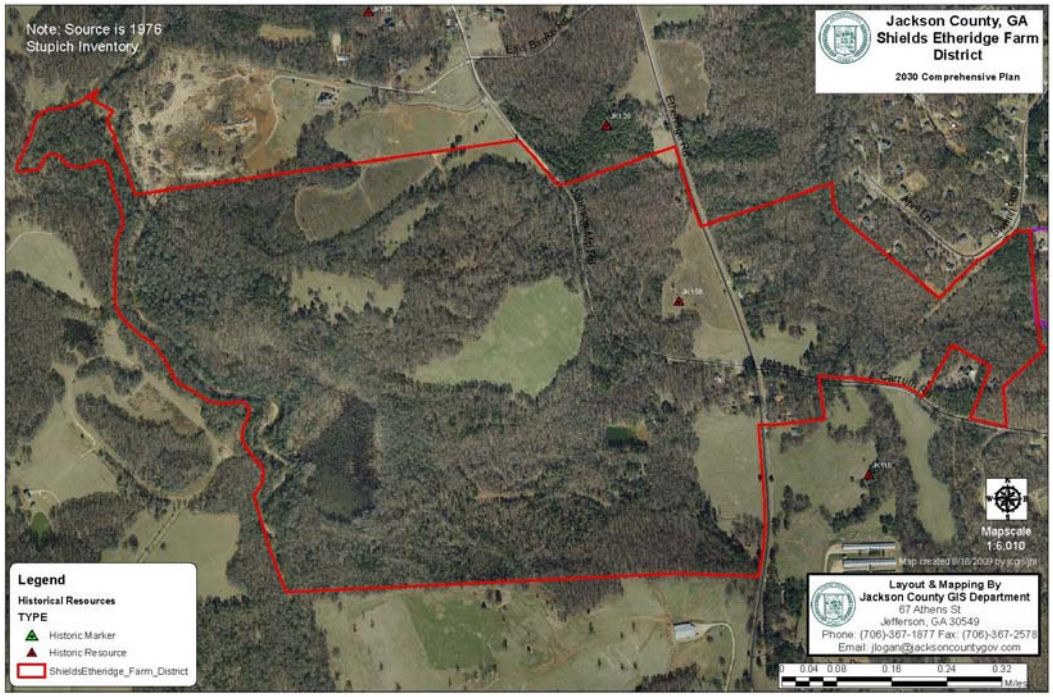



## Historic Trails and Marking of Resources

Several early Native-American and frontier trails extend through Jackson County. These trails were important in the development of the county, the northeast Georgia region, and the state of Georgia. Many of Jackson County's towns were founded sites of Native-American villages; Native-American history is important to the county's and cities' history. There at least three trails evident from prior analyses. Jackson Trail is an old Indian trail that crosses through Jackson County. The Locoda Trail, passing through Center, Nicholson, Commerce, and Maysville, was a historic Indian trail in the area. And the Okoloco Indian Trail, passed through the western part of Jackson County where the Hog Mountain Road is now located.

Participants of the community workshops held in September 2009 revealed the desire to ensure Jackson County knows where all of its historic trails, battle sites, cemeteries, and other resources are, and that they are appropriately marked. A program for marking important historic sites, trails, and cemeteries is including in the short-term work program of this Community Agenda.

**This historic home site along SR 330 is a representative example of the historic sites in Jackson County that need cataloguing and marking.**

## Formalizing Historic Preservation Programs

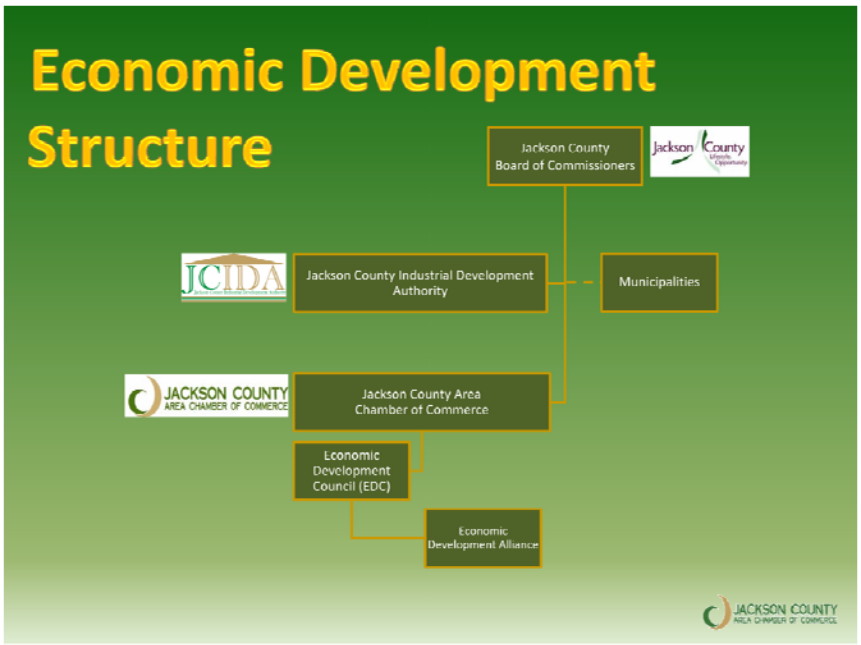
The county's focus on historic and cultural resources should consist of a two-pronged strategy, with various, multiple objectives for each. First, the county should recognize and nurture the efforts of municipalities in Jackson County, especially including Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Hoschton, and Maysville (but not neglecting any of the cities), and find a way to weave the individual municipal efforts together into a formalized municipal historic preservation program for Jackson County. Many of the cities in Jackson County are still too small to devote enough resources to historic preservation. Though private groups and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (as well as the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission with regard to Maysville) have done admirable work in terms of technical assistance and other support, a formal program needs to be established if preservation and its importance to heritage tourism and downtown revitalization are to be truly recognized and nourished in Jackson County.

**Downtown Maysville's historic commercial storefronts are a prime example of why Jackson County should take a more active approach to preservation. Without guidance and support from the county, historic resources may become further degraded and underutilized. On the other hand, a heritage tourism component of an economic development master plan will go a long way toward the county and its cities capitalizing on its culture and history.**

Secondly, in addition to a formal municipal preservation program assisted at the county level, Jackson County itself needs to strengthen and focus its efforts on the many agricultural and rural resources in the unincorporated areas of the county. Such efforts should include aggressive actions to nominate more properties for centennial farm status, a more thorough inventory of resources in the unincorporated parts of the county, an interim preservation protection ordinance, and ultimately, strong consideration needs to be given to pursuing a countywide historic preservation program to protect resources in unincorporated parts of the county. When asked to write in the types of development respondents wanted in the county in the future, the most frequent response (68) was "historic districts" (Question 4). The work program of the county incorporates provisions for historic preservation.

## GROWING THE ECONOMY

Jackson County desires to have a strong and sustainable economy. People need places to work, and while by choice not all of Jackson County's residents will work inside the county, it is critically important to maintain, nurture, and promote the economy of Jackson County. When asked if there are adequate job/ employment opportunities in the county, the vast majority of questionnaire respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (Question 16).




Concerted, coordinated efforts have been made to ensure that new manufacturing jobs can locate in the county. The infrastructure needed to support manufacturing growth (especially sewer and roads) is in place. The county has committed to the appropriate level of resources to provide technical training of the work force. Institutional arrangements are in place with the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce being the lead coordinating agent.

Although Jackson County as of 2003 was not part of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), it is surrounded on three sides by MSAs: the Atlanta MSA to the south; Gainesville MSA to the west; and the Athens MSA to the east (U.S. Bureau of Census 2003). Jackson County is strategically located at the edge of these three major labor markets and job centers (see figure)

Carl Vinson Institute of Government
University of Georgia

### Balancing Future Jobs with Labor Force Needs

Jackson County had, as of 2000, about 5,363 fewer jobs than it would need if it could arrange for all of its resident work force to work inside the county. While there may be fewer jobs in Jackson County than workers participating in the labor force, Jackson County has matched almost exactly the number of manufacturing jobs with the number of residents working in manufacturing industries. Jackson County had almost exactly the same amount of retail trade jobs as it had resident labor force participants working in that industry in 2000. Accommodation and food services and administrative and support and waste management services fall into a category of "surplus," or more jobs available than resident workers in the county. Those industries that had a "deficit" in terms of fewer jobs than resident workers in that industry in 2000, are in highest order of importance: educational services, construction, health care services, and transportation and warehousing.

### Preparation of an Economic Development Plan

There has never been a formal economic development plan adopted by either the Chamber or the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. The economic development plan needs to be comprehensive, going beyond the current emphasis on recruitment of manufacturers and bio-tech firms, to include agriculture and forestry, heritage tourism, tourism generally, and many other multi-faceted efforts. This Community Agenda, specifically the issues and opportunities discussed below, emphasize comprehensive approaches to economic development. The multi-faceted prongs of the county's comprehensive economic development strategy are discussed below (they are not presented in order of priority).

### Georgia Innovation Crescent

The Chamber has joined the core group associated with the Georgia Innovation Crescent. Georgia's Innovation Crescent is anchored by the nation's busiest airport, with Atlanta on one end and Athens-Clarke County, home of the University of Georgia, on the other. The Innovation Crescent is both a geographic area and a coalition of more than a dozen counties and entities focused on life sciences and economic development. Over the past decade, Georgia's Innovation Crescent has quietly emerged as a hub of life science in the Southeast. The mission of the Innovation Crescent Regional Partnership is to accelerate the growth of the Innovation Crescent through focused education and economic development activities, and support the development of life science companies, organizations, and institutions located in the Innovation Crescent (Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. July 2009). This is an opportunity that is reflected in the components of a comprehensive economic development master strategy called for in this Community Agenda.

### Georgia Work Ready Program

Jackson County is in the process of becoming certified as a Work Ready county. "Certified Work Ready Community" status is a designation showing the county has the talented workforce that business demands and the means to drive economic growth and prosperity. To be designated a Certified Work Ready Community, counties must drive current workers and the available workforce to earn Work Ready Certificates, demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates, and build community commitment for meeting these goals. The economic development master plan needs to acknowledge and reflect this important economic development readiness program.

### Agriculture and Agribusiness

Agribusiness in Jackson County consists most significantly of poultry farms. There is a clear and important connection to the regional poultry industry between Jackson County and Gainesville-Hall County. The character maps and land use plan maps of this Community Agenda promote retention and provide for expansion of poultry farms in the "intensive agriculture" designation of the 2020 and 2030 future land use plan maps. Following the poultry industry in terms of agribusiness in Jackson County are beef cattle production, some timber, and other livestock operations such as goats and horses.

What remains currently underemphasized today is Jackson County's vast potential for growing more "row crops" such as soybeans, grain, and wheat. There are also opportunities for the county to encourage the growing of fruits and vegetables, "recreational" farms such as "U-Pick" and pumpkin patches (which have a tourism component to them). One of the identified keys to advancing the agriculture agenda in Jackson County is leadership from organizations such as the Future Farmers of America (FFA), increasing education (re-training work forces in basics of agriculture), and expanding and capitalizing on new and innovative market opportunities. This opportunity meshes well with suggestions from citizens during the public participation process that Jackson County pursue more research and development firms as an economic development strategy.

Yet another opportunity is the connection of Jackson County to the University of Georgia's College of Agriculture, specifically agricultural-related companies. The Chamber has begun exploring opportunities to work with the college to expand the technologies of growing and processing food (e.g., scientific research in laboratories). There are discussions ongoing about pursuing a partnership with the University of Georgia to establish a "bio business center" which would have a business incubator and focus on research and development for farm companies.

### Heritage Tourism and Tourism Potential

When asked what type of future uses Jackson County should pursue, respondents to the community questionnaire indicate significant support (36 responses) for a tourism-based economy. Efforts are underway in that regard. The Chamber of Commerce has established a Tourism Council. "Rack cards" have been prepared for purposes of encouraging tourism. An "antiques trail" map has also been prepared.

As noted in the previous section on historic resources, there is great "heritage tourism" potential to capitalize on the historic resources within the various municipalities, as well as the agricultural heritage of Jackson County. The county has identified major attractions such as Tanger Outlet Mall, Mayfield Dairy, and major flea markets, all implying that tourism development is another opportunity for the economic development master plan to pursue. The county can also sponsor events, such as barbeque cookoffs, the Dizzy Dean World Series, horse and buggy rides, and organized bicycling events, as a part of its tourism development strategies.

### Health Care Industries

The health care industry is one of the few industries that has continued to grow during the extended recession from 2007 to 2009. There is support among the citizenry to try and grow the health care industry in Jackson County; in particular, residents of western Jackson County support additional, smaller health-related services in the Braselton-Hoschton area. Also, there

is some discussion of moving BJC Medical Center from its current campus to a larger site near Interstate 85 and SR 98. Such a move would allow for some growth of health care practitioners in addition to having more room for a larger hospital complex. The economic development master plan will determine with more precision the role of health care in the overall economic development framework.

### Racing Venues as Market Niches

The county and region have some unique niches, such as automobile racing, that should also be further developed as a component of the economic development strategic plan. There is also a movement to legalize horse racing in Georgia which could present a new economic development niche if authorized under state law. Indeed, discussion among steering committee members revealed a possible market niche for Jackson County in terms of the equestrian industry. Because of a substantial amount of agricultural land and a number of horse farms in the county, there may be opportunities to capitalize on those considerations as existing strengths and integrate equestrian activities into the county's overall economic development master plan.

**Private Oak Valley Farm has Racing Track**

### Aggressive Marketing for New Retail Development

There is consensus among Jackson County's residents that the county is "under-retailed." In other words, residents believe that the county can support considerably more retail development than currently exists. During community workshops, participants expressed interest in having more retail developments in the county. Some mentioned with dismay that they have to drive to Oconee County to visit a Wal-Mart or Home Depot store. However, residents were also clear that they wanted a different form of retail development, not strip centers and power supercenters (see also Chapter 3, "Control of Strip Malls").

In a community survey, when asked what Jackson County should strive to become (Question 4), 40 respondents chose "mixed use pedestrian centers," thus suggesting a preference for more walkable retail districts as opposed to automobile-oriented commercial developments. The economic development master plan will delve into future market needs with regard to retail and service uses. The future land use plan maps show the most appropriate locations for future retail (commercial) development.

### Welcome Centers

A related improvement discussed during the participation process was a welcome center. Actually, two welcome center opportunities have been identified and will be pursued in the short-term work program: a central tourism and welcoming center housed in the historic County Courthouse (presently being restored), and a smaller welcome center at Interstate 85, probably at or near the interchange of U.S. Highway 129.

### Jackson County Airport

The Jackson County Airport is an integral part of the county's overall economic development strategy. Expansions to and improvements of the airport are being planned with an eye toward how overall economic development policies of the county will be achieved. The economic development master plan will specifically acknowledge the important role of the airport in terms of generating new construction, spin-off industrial and commercial development, and more corporate interest in the county.

### New Interchange at Interstate 85 and State Route 60

A new interchange at SR 60 and I-85 is under investigation by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. as a part of its I-85 Corridor Study, and it is formally in the county's major roads plan to pursue in the long-term future. Such a project, if approved, will improve transportation access and increase economic development potential. Future land use plans reflect that potential for retail development at the new interchange, once funded and constructed.

### Warehousing and Distribution Centers

Due to its advantage of having 21 miles of Interstate 85, Jackson County is ripe for attracting additional warehousing and distribution centers. While attracting this type of industrial development is important and fits well with a significant segment of the county's labor force, the county is cognizant that this type of development involves very big buildings with relatively small amounts of employment and substantial truck traffic. The economic development comprehensive strategic master plan should assess the amount of need and further the desire for how much additional warehousing will be planned in Jackson County.

**Distribution Center in Jackson County**

When citizens were asked in the community questionnaire what type of land uses they wanted in the future, distribution centers (trucking) received low scores (17 responses) when compared to other choices (Question 4).

### Higher Education and Technical Training Opportunities

There are opportunities not only for possible extensions of the University of Georgia into Jackson County, but other colleges and technical training centers. The economic development master strategic plan will assess those opportunities further and as appropriate pursue one or more concrete prospects.

### International Investment

Jackson County's comprehensive plan steering committee identified international investment as a potential economic development opportunity. A number of investors from other countries

have capital and are interested in investing in the U.S. The economic development master plan should explore the possible contribution of international investment in Jackson County.

### Light Industry and Tax Breaks for Industry

When asked about what type of future land uses citizens would support in the county in the future, many (50) responded in support of light industry and development of industrial parks (Question 4). Indeed, Jackson County is already home to a number of industrial parks, most of which are located along the I-85 corridor. Two of these have rail access: Walnut Fork Industrial Park and Commerce 85 Business Park. Even so, during the community workshops held in September 2009, participants suggested there were opportunities for Jackson County to pursue more research and development firms as an economic development strategy (see prior discussion also under agribusiness).

**Industrial Park in Jackson County**

Many local governments take the position that they must subsidize industry with tax breaks in order to get manufacturing and other big employers to locate in the community. Clearly, there is significant competition among local governments, all of which seek to increase their tax bases. At issue is the extent to which future ad valorem real and personal property taxes should be abated in order to attract new industry in Jackson County. The economic development master plan should be specific regarding this issue. The community questionnaire, distributed as a part of the participation program, resulted in a mix of opinions about this issue, with 32 agreeing and 5 strongly agreeing but 17 strongly disagreeing and 24 disagreeing (18 were neutral or had no opinion) (Question 17).

### Working Relationship between Chamber of Commerce and Municipalities

Participants in the community workshops suggested that stronger relationships between individual cities and the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce need to be established, in order to more fully serve the economic development needs of the various municipalities. This issue is closely associated with the suggestion that heritage tourism in the various cities is an opportunity for economic development that has been largely unrecognized to date. Most if not all of the cities in Jackson County lack professional staffs to undertake economic development efforts (except within downtown business districts in the case of Jefferson and Commerce). Therefore, the economic development master plan needs to have individual components that address the economic development needs of each municipality.

### Industry Needs Analysis with Regard to Workforce

The Jackson County comprehensive plan steering committee also suggested that an industry needs analysis should be conducted to determine, first hand, what employers and prospective employers desire in terms of work force skills. The county reportedly conducted such an analysis some time ago but needs to revisit this tool for targeting workforce skills development in areas most closely associated with the needs of industries, manufacturers, and other

employers. This analysis is integrated into the recommendation to prepare a countywide economic development strategic master plan; as a part of that effort, such an analysis needs to be conducted.

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

### The United States, 2008 to 2018

Total employment in the U.S. is projected to increase by 15.3 million, or 10.1 percent, during the 2008 to 2018 time period. More than half of the new jobs will be in professional and related occupations and service occupations. National projections continue to reflect a continuing, long-term shift from the goods-producing sector of the economy to the service-providing sector. The two industry sectors expected to have the largest employment growth are professional and business services (4.2 million) and health care and social assistance (4.0 million). Goods-producing employment, as a whole, is expected to show virtually no growth. Employment in the construction industry is projected to increase by 1.3 million, but declines in manufacturing (-1.2 million) will largely offset that growth.

### State of Georgia, 2006 to 2016

Total employment from 2006 to 2016 in Georgia is projected to grow to almost five million jobs, an increase of 14.1 percent over 2006 or almost 620,000 new jobs. This equates to almost 62,000 newly created jobs per year and an annual job growth rate of 1.3 percent. Industry employment growth will be concentrated in the services-providing sectors of the economy, with virtually all of job growth in these sectors. The services-providing sectors will account for 4.3 million jobs and goods-producing sectors will account for 740,000. Education and Health Services will lead all sectors both in terms of new job growth and rates of growth, accounting for over one-third of all new job growth through 2016. Goods-producing sectors will remain relatively unchanged, actually declining slightly by a little over 1,000 jobs. The construction industry will be the only goods-producing industry sector to show gains, increasing 13 percent, for almost 28,500 new jobs. Manufacturing will remain relatively flat, losing roughly 13,000 jobs over the period.

### Jackson County, 2013 and 2018

Job growth is anticipated to resume in Georgia by mid-2010. It is unknown how many jobs have been lost in the county during the severe recession which began in 2007 and ended in 2009. Manufacturing in Jackson County is anticipated to stay level, even though nationally and statewide manufacturing is projected to decline slightly. Construction employment in the county, which fell from 2003 to 2008 (reflecting some of the recessionary effects) is forecasted to grow again but at a slight pace.

Due to its premier location along Interstate 85, the transportation and warehousing and administrative/waste management industries are forecasted to grow faster than state and national trends, but overall employment increases will likely be relatively small. Jackson County is relatively underdeveloped in terms of its information, finance, and professional services industries, but these sectors (which are growing nationally and statewide) are forecasted to post only small overall employment gains from 2008 to 2018.

Jackson County will witness significant growth in health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and retail trade industries – these three industry sectors are

forecasted to account for almost 40 percent of Jackson County's job increases from 2008 to 2018. Government employment, especially state and local, is forecasted to remain a growth industry, despite significant recent layoffs, especially in 2009. Much of the increase in government will be generated by expansion of the county's public school system, a major employer in the county (reportedly 825 employees in recent years). Growth in county government (some 400 employees now) will be much more modest, as will school employment growth in the city school systems.

**Table 2.1.**
**Employment by Industry, 2003 to 2018**
**Jackson County**

| Industry | Annual Average Employment History | | Projection Rates | | Jackson County Forecasts | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2003 | 2008 | U.S. Rate | GA Rate | County Rate | 2013 | 2018 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | nr | 99 | -0.4 | -2.2 | -1.0 | 94 | 89 |
| Mining | nr | nr | -1.6 | -2.2 | -1.8 | 55 | 49 |
| Construction | 1,239 | 995 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1,045 | 1,095 |
| Manufacturing | 4,043 | 4,537 | -0.9 | -0.3 | 0 | 4,500 | 4,500 |
| Wholesale trade | 1,094 | 1,076 | 0.4 | nr | 0.5 | 1,103 | 1,130 |
| Retail trade | 2,994 | 2,880 | 0.4 | nr | 0.5 | 3,600 | 4,320 |
| Transportation and warehousing | 206 | 759 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.8 | 827 | 895 |
| Utilities | nr | nr | -1.1 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 352 | 362 |
| Information | 103 | 103 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 107 | 111 |
| Finance and insurance | 216 | 341 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 351 | 361 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 183 | 177 | nr | nr | 1.5 | 190 | 203 |
| Professional, scientific, and technical services | 264 | 346 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 382 | 418 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | nr | nr | nr | nr | -- | 80 | 80 |
| Administrative and support and waste management services | 222 | 759 | nr | nr | 1.8 | 827 | 895 |
| Educational services | 40 | 19 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 21 | 23 |
| Health care and social assistance | 404 | 575 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 658 | 741 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 32 | 154 | 0.8 | 2.5 | 2.0 | 169 | 184 |
| Accommodation and food services | 1,025 | 1,143 | nr | nr | 2.3 | 1,274 | 1,405 |
| Other services (except government) | 198 | 265 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 282 | 300 |
| Government | 2,749 | 3,658 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 3,768 | 3,878 |
| Total | 15,464 | 18,368 | -- | -- | -- | 21,698 | 23,057 |

Notes and Sources: Year 2003 and 2008 data are annual average employment by industry reported by the Georgia Department of Labor for Jackson County. The "U.S. change rate" is the annual average rate of change (percent) from 2008 to 2018 as projected by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (News Release, December 10, 2009); Government nationally is projected to grow by 0.8 percent annually (state and local) and 0.3 percent (federal government, according to the U.S. Department of Labor; a 0.7 rate is used for Georgia. The "Georgia change rate" is the annual average rate of change (percent) from 2006 to 2016 as reported in *Georgia Workforce 2016: Beyond the Horizon: An Analysis of Long-term Employment Projections*, Georgia Department of Labor, October 2009. Jackson County forecasts by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., December 2009.

## HOUSING AND LIVING AREAS

Nothing touches people more stridently than things that impact their homes and neighborhoods. People have preferences about how they live, and there is a diversity of preferences. People and households are not always able to match their preferences with their economic means. Almost everyone who moves into Jackson County in the future will be a part of a "household" and thus the plan needs analyze, predict, and/or forecast the demands and needs for housing that will be created in the future (see projections of housing units in Chapter 1 of this Community Agenda). Planning is about ensuring that people have places to live, and that to the extent possible within their own means, it is affordable and as desirable as possible. Everyone wants a neighborhood with relative peace and quiet, and this chapter moves Jackson County toward these objectives. A number of issues and opportunities related to housing and living areas are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Jackson County's total housing stock has increased from 16,455 housing units in 2000 to 23,572 units in 2007. That is a remarkable increase of 43 percent in just seven years. Geographically, the vast majority of housing units in Jackson County are located outside of the nine municipalities. As of 2000, more than 9 over every 10 housing units in Jackson County was a single-family detached home or manufactured home. Jackson County has very few multi-family units, due in large measure to a lack of sanitary sewer for residential development in the unincorporated areas. But even including the various municipalities, there is still a small percentage of multi-family units. Almost one in three (30.8 percent) homes in Jackson County as of 2000 was a manufactured home.

### Housing Affordability

Average wages have not kept up with inflation, while housing prices have been soaring (at least until recently as a result of the recession and major foreclosures). In 1999 (2000 Census), about one in every five owner-occupied household in Jackson County was cost burdened or severely cost burdened with respect to housing costs. Estimates available from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2005-2007 reveal that cost burdens have increased significantly since 1999 – it is now more than one out of every four owner-occupied households that are cost burdened or severely cost burdened.

By and large, respondents to the community survey believe that Jackson County already has adequate and affordable housing. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "There is an adequate supply of housing that is affordable in Jackson County," (Question 11), 25 strongly agreed and 37 respondents agreed, while 21 disagreed and only 4 respondents strongly disagreed. Regardless of these survey results, all housing policies and regulatory practices should be cognizant of the overall affordability crisis the residents of Jackson County face, now and in the future.

### Housing for the Disabled

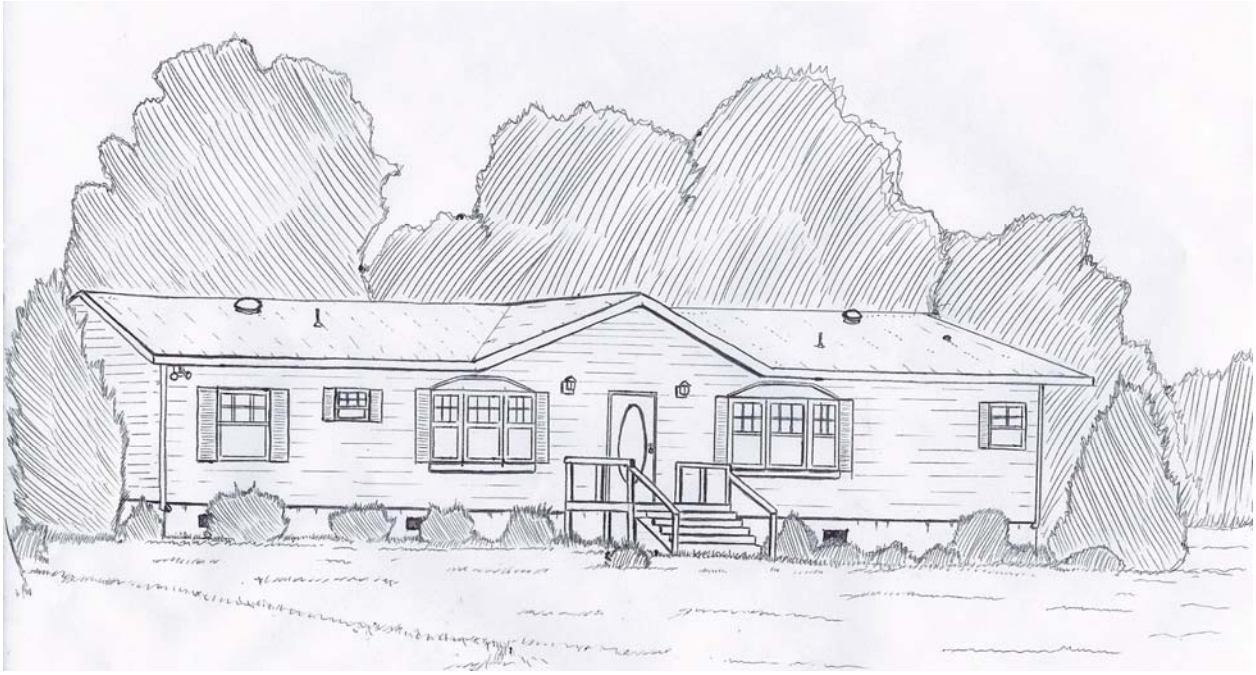
People with mental illnesses and other disabilities are often released from institutions with nowhere to go. Land use regulations and neighborhood resistance can pose barriers to the development of community living arrangements, congregate living facilities and other arrangements to house such persons. Local zoning regulations need to be evaluated to ensure that they provide appropriate housing opportunities for disabled populations, without discrimination by other households in the neighborhood. This Community Agenda establishes

policies to accomplish the objectives of fair housing for the disabled. The rewrite of the Unified Development Code will also need to address the issue of housing for the disabled.

**Manufactured Housing**

Manufactured homes are often less expensive than traditional stick-built homes of comparable size. Therefore, manufactured housing provides an important role in terms of affordable housing in rural areas and small towns. Policy makers need to recognize that allowing manufactured housing is one of the few existing policies that contribute to affordable housing objectives in rural areas. Nonetheless, exclusionary practices with regard to manufactured homes are common in some of Jackson County's municipalities.

Local government officials sometimes adopt zoning regulations in response to concerns by the owners of stick-built homes that fear the installation of manufactured homes will lower their property values. Indeed, in Jackson County, 48 respondents indicated in response to a question that manufactured home devalue stick-built homes and properties nearby (Question 12). There are also some widespread social biases against the less affluent households who reside in manufactured homes, due to their possible status as renters, transients, and minorities. Indeed, 53 respondents to the community survey indicated that manufactured housing should be subject to greater restrictions than presently exist (Question 12). Local officials are also sometimes concerned about the potential impacts of manufactured housing on public or social services in the community, or the fiscal impacts such developments create. Indeed, this concern about fiscal impacts was raised as an issue in the Jackson County comprehensive plan adopted in 1998.



**Manufactured housing, if required to be set up with compatibility standards such as pitched roofs, skirting, and other architectural embellishments, need not be considered a threat to devalue stick-built homes.**

If older manufactured homes cannot be replaced with new manufactured homes on the same site, then the county may lose affordable (but perhaps substandard) housing units. It seems that a replacement policy for existing manufactured homes would have a small but measurable impact on meeting affordable housing needs.

Manufactured home parks are also often raised as a significant issue in rural areas and small towns, particularly if they have deteriorated into substandard environments. In such cases, attention might be given to upgrading or eliminating them using methods including, but not limited to, code enforcement, urban renewal, relocation assistance, utility extensions, and condemnation with appropriate compensation. One idea posed to improve manufactured home parks is for local nonprofit organizations and developers to partner to create new subdivisions with better amenities and qualities that will make them more suitable places to live.

**Accessory Housing Units**

An accessory apartment or dwelling unit is a second dwelling unit that is added to the structure of an existing site-built single family dwelling, or as a new freestanding accessory building (e.g., residential space above a detached garage) on the same lot, for use as a complete, independent living facility for a single household, with provision within the attached accessory apartment for cooking, eating, sanitation and sleeping. Such a dwelling, whether attached or detached, is considered an accessory use to the principal dwelling.

Zoning ordinances can provide for the establishment of attached accessory units in existing single-family subdivisions as another method of meeting needs for affordable housing. When the regulations in the Unified Development Code are reviewed and revised, the county should carefully consider whether appropriate opportunities are provided for accessory apartments.

**Inclusionary Zoning and Mixed Income Housing Strategies**

Inclusionary zoning or land use policies require or encourage developers to set aside a portion of residential projects for low- and moderate-income housing. There is evidence that inclusionary zoning programs have produced more housing in areas where they are used than have federal housing programs. Mandatory set-asides of a portion of the total units for low- and moderate-income households should be considered, but one has to acknowledge some legal obstacles to making such a program mandatory. A policy is included which suggests that planned unit developments and master-planned mixed use developments include housing for different income levels.

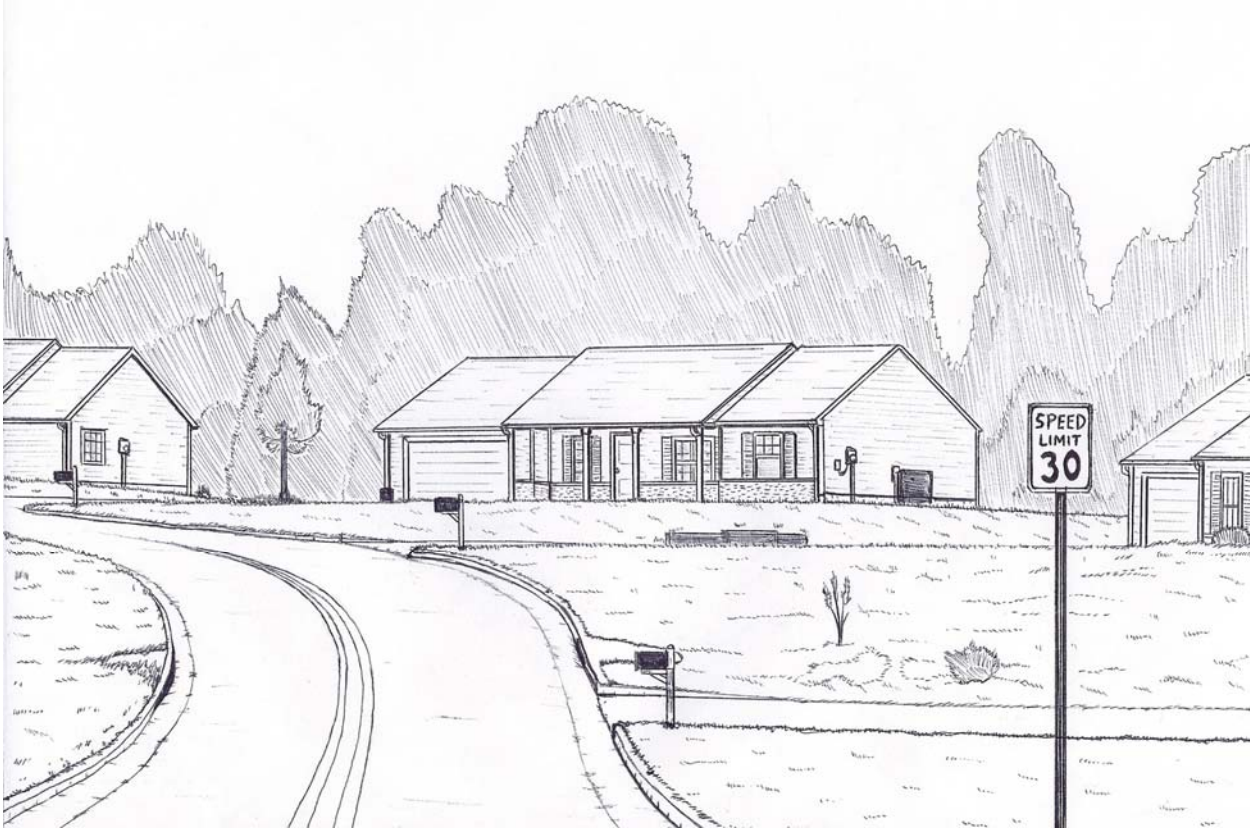
**Housing for Seniors**

Planners and housing market analysts are increasingly aware that the typical, suburban subdivision is losing attractiveness in terms of the increasing senior population. Seniors and near-seniors (e.g., 55 years and above) have exhibited increasing preferences for housing arrangements that are different from what the market has been providing. In particular, seniors

do not want to be burdened with the maintenance of yards and other chores normally associated with homeownership. Condominium forms of ownership therefore tend to appeal to seniors. They also tend to need smaller homes, usually single-story dwellings, so that they do not have to climb stairs. Also, various living arrangements for seniors can combine some care along with independent living. Jackson County's housing policies are supportive in these regards, specifically encouraging continuing care retirement communities, active adult retirement communities, and other forms of housing more appropriate for seniors.

**Dispersed Opportunities for Starter and Workforce Housing**

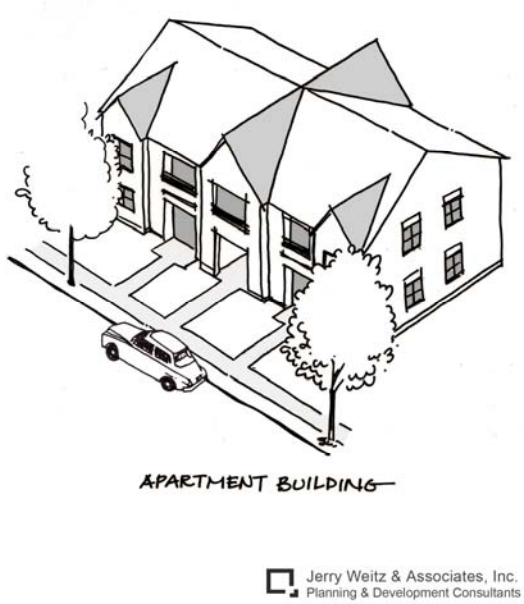
Generally, starter housing can be defined as housing that is affordable for first-time homebuyers to own. The term usually refers to detached, single-family dwellings, but it is not necessarily limited to that context. During the community workshops held in September 2009, participants suggested that starter housing should be available in different locations around the county, not concentrated in one particular area of the county. The future land use plans provide for appropriate geographic distributions residential use throughout much of the county, which in turn should be sufficient allowances for starter housing. See also "house sizes" discussed below. Typically, pricing calculations define "workforce housing" as costing no more than 30 percent of household income. Workforce housing usually refers to single-family, detached homes for sale at prices that workforce households can afford, but it can also include alternative housing opportunities such as rental apartments and rental homes, townhouses, and condominiums. This housing issue clearly overlaps other housing issues such as housing affordability, manufactured housing, mixed-income housing, and others.




**Starter Housing Available in Jackson County**

### Apartments and Condominiums

Higher density housing such as apartments and condominiums can be controversial with existing residents. On the one hand, there are some residents who believe that apartments, condominiums, and other forms of higher density housing are necessary and appropriate. Others would prefer that apartment complexes not be built at all in Jackson County. Yet others suggest that it is the responsibility of the municipalities in Jackson County to ensure sufficient supplies of higher density housing, since unincorporated Jackson County generally lacks sanitary sewer to service higher density residential development.




Specifically, when asked what type of future Jackson County should strive for, the only fixed response choice that received lower approval responses than apartment communities (9 respondents) was “extension of the metro Atlanta area” (4 respondents).

This Community Agenda acknowledges the preferences of community participants not to have widespread opportunities for higher density housing in the form of apartment complexes. However, higher density housing does have a future role to play in serving the needs of future residents in the county, particularly lower income retail, service, and low-paying light industry jobs. The community plan would not be complete, nor would it be consistent with state housing goals and the housing opportunities quality community objective evaluated in the community assessment report without acknowledging the need for higher density housing. Furthermore, it seems that residents are not so much opposed to higher density housing if it is quality development and located in the proper locations, specifically within “mixed use pedestrian centers” (about which 40 respondents expressed support in the community survey; see question 4). In addition, condominium ownership of attached units can be acceptable and compatible within suburban neighborhoods if held to high quality standards and kept at densities comparable to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Policies in Chapter 5 reflect these points.

### Excess of Unoccupied Homes

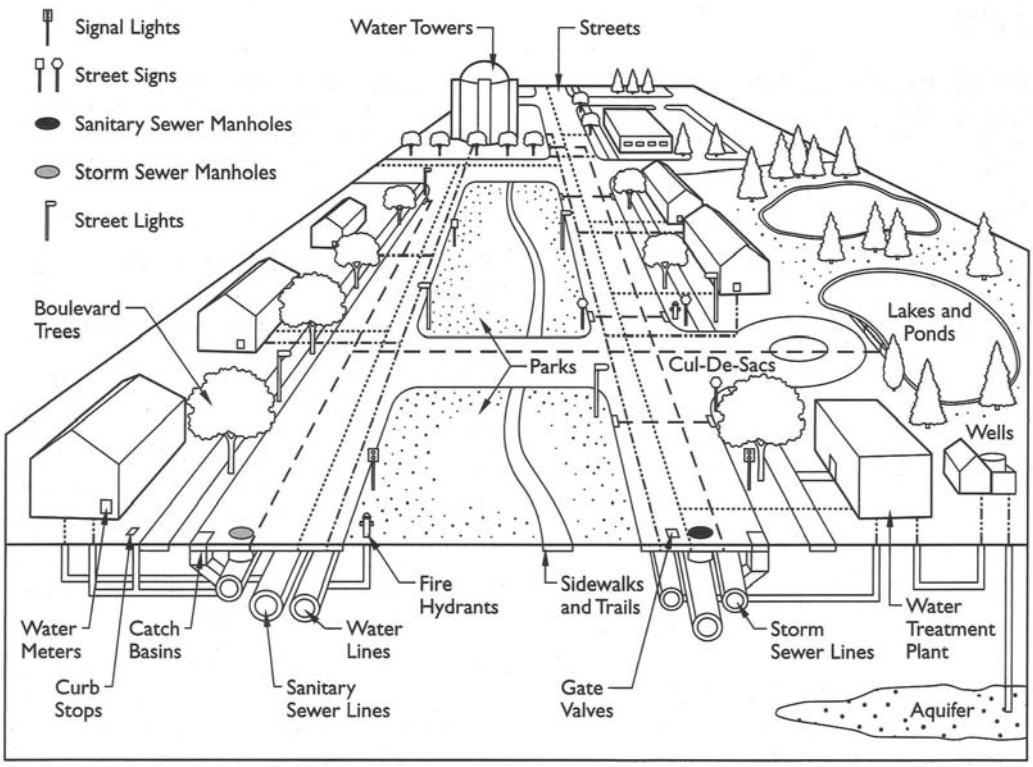
Because Jackson County has been a suburban frontier of sorts, with much new housing constructed during the next decade, it is not surprising that the severe economic recession and “housing bust” has resulted in an excess of homes for sale. As noted in the discussion of land use (see Chapter 3 of this Community Agenda), there are many subdivided lots that have yet to be built upon, confounding the problem. Future residential areas have been scaled back in the future land use plan in order to allow existing supplies of homes and lots catch up with market demand.

### House Size Versus Housing Quality

During the community workshops held in September 2009, participants suggested that the quality of housing should be considered more important than the size of the home. In other words, zoning ordinances tend to emphasize the size of homes, placing minimum thresholds for the size (minimum heated floor area requirements) for new homes. On the other hand, there may not be enough emphasis on ensuring the quality of new homes. Vinyl siding was cited as an example of lack of quality by one or more participants in the community workshops. Jackson County's housing policies suggest that additional quality measures are needed. The housing policies also strive to achieve an appropriate balance between such quality considerations and their effects on affordable, starter, and workforce housing.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Infrastructure is an overused buzzword, but it captures all of the underlying systems that are needed to support the built environment (see figure). Planning is about recognizing and anticipating the needs for and demands on community facilities and services as the area increases its population and employment. These new pressures of growth create a need for additional fire stations, more schools, expanded water systems, larger sewer treatment plants, more government personnel in various departments, and expansion of many other different services like mental health, social services, libraries, and hospitals.




**EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Source: Burnsville, Minnesota, 2003.*

Source: *Planning and Urban Design Standards*, 2006. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2006, p. 37.

A good plan puts some science behind the observations about future growth and generates reliable forecasts of how these facilities and services will need to be expanded as growth occurs. In our preoccupation with planning new facilities and services, one must not forget about the needs (and considerable costs) associated with maintaining the facilities that exist in the county today. Sustainability means making smart choices about investing in new infrastructure but also in maintaining or replacing existing facilities. Here, when mistakes are made, they are among the most costly a community can make, and such mistakes are largely irreversible. Making efficient and smart decisions about capital investments is integral to the success of any community's comprehensive plan.

## Community Satisfaction with County Facilities and Services

Respondents to the community questionnaire administered in 2009 reveal they are largely satisfied with all of the facilities (see maps which follow) and services Jackson County provides. Responses to questions in the survey about community facilities are tabulated below (# respondents shown).

**Overall, I am satisfied with the services and facilities that the county provides.**

| 1 | 27 | 13 | 51 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral/No opinion | Agree | Strongly Agree |

**Please rate your satisfaction with the following specific county capital facilities:**

**Roads and Streets**

| 5 | 21 | 5 | 53 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Park, Recreation, and Open Space Facilities and Properties**

| 7 | 26 | 17 | 28 | 14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Sanitary Sewer**

| 6 | 15 | 39 | 24 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Public Water**

| 8 | 15 | 26 | 36 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Drainage/Stormwater Management**

| 2 | 10 | 32 | 30 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Sheriff**

| 4 | 6 | 18 | 43 | 24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Fire Protection**

| 6 | 9 | 12 | 37 | 28 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Libraries**

| 5 | 16 | 13 | 38 | 24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Public Schools**

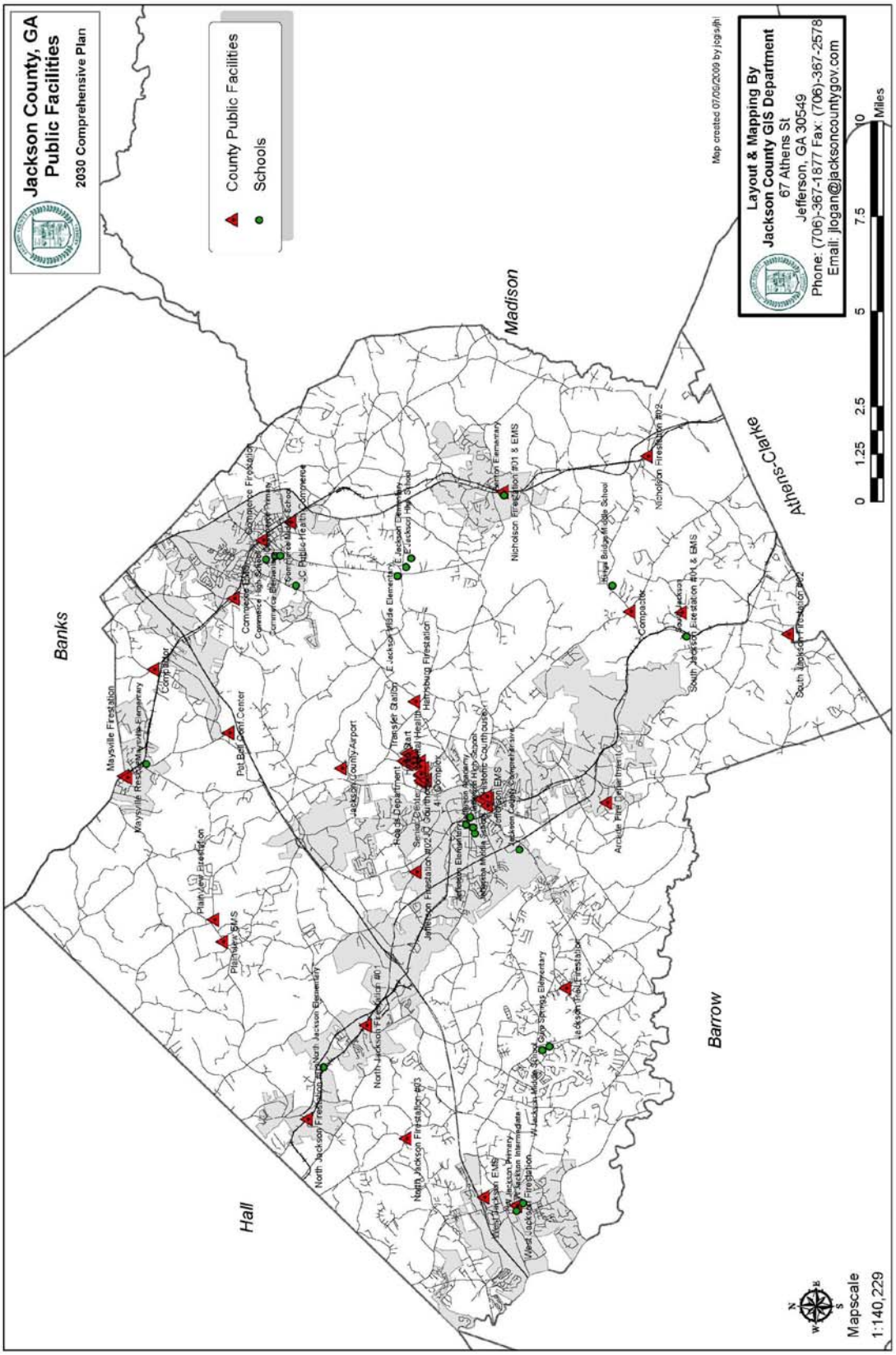
| 8 | 17 | 19 | 29 | 21 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Government Offices (Courthouse)**

| 7 | 11 | 19 | 35 | 19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

**Government Offices (Administration Buildings)**

| 8 | 12 | 20 | 36 | 17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Dissatisfied | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Neutral/No opinion | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied |


Jackson County, GA
Public Facilities
2030 Comprehensive Plan
County Public Facilities
Schools
Map created 07/06/2009 by jlogan
Layout & Mapping By
Jackson County GIS Department
67 Athens St
Jefferson, GA 30549
Phone: (706)-367-1877 Fax: (706)-367-2578
Email: jlogan@jacksoncountygov.com
0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10
Miles
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Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Mapscale
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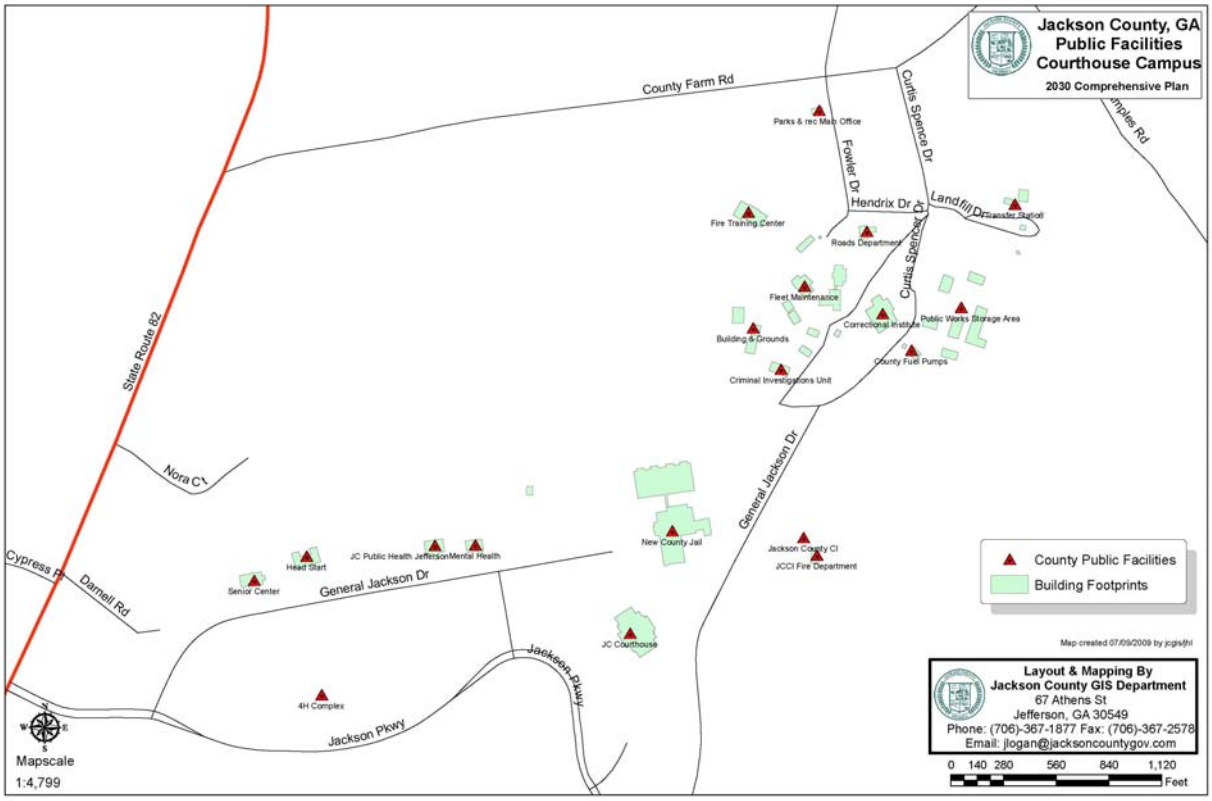



## Fire Services: Arrangements and Assessment

Fire services in Jackson County are provided by a number of separate fire districts (see map). As noted above, though provided via separate districts, respondents to the community survey reveal considerable satisfaction with fire services in the county. About half of the fire districts now have part-time paid personnel and are therefore no longer relying entirely on volunteers. The West Jackson fire district has some full-time personnel.

**Maysville Area Fire Station**

While survey respondents appear satisfied, there are some issues that will need to be addressed with fire services during the planning horizon. First, there is no overall unified control of fire services by the county since separate fire districts exist. The separation has led to different fire districts purchasing equipment, such as ladder trucks, which may not be essential given the development now existing in their respective districts, but they are purchased nonetheless because each district has its own tax revenues. A countywide fire chief should be appointed by the Board of Commissioners to assume the overall role of coordination and budget control. Secondly, the individual districts are not uniformly providing fire inspections or reviews of buildings and development with respect to fire codes. Under the countywide fire chief, divisions need to be established for fire prevention program, training and fire code plan review.

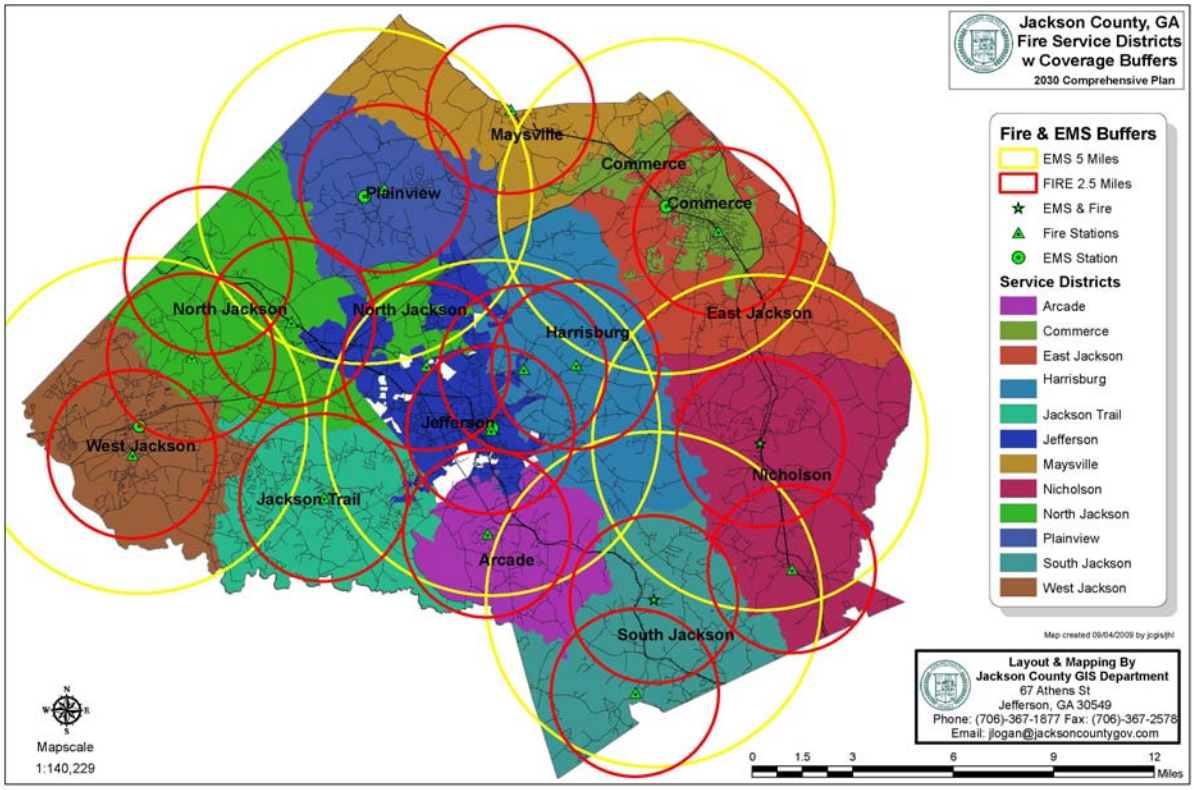



**Table 2.2. Fire and EMS Stations with Coverage Areas by Fire District, Jackson County**

| Fire Service District | Station | Address | Construction Date | Square Footage | No. of Bays | ISO Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Jackson | 1 | 22 Railroad St. Pendergrass | 1996 | 1,500 | 2 | 5 |
| North Jackson | 2 | 541 Main Street Talmo | 1986 | 1,500 | 2 | 5 |
| North Jackson | 3 | 2689 Highway 60, Pendergrass | 1980 | 1,000 | 2 | 5 |
| Plainview | 1 | 4346 Plainview Rd. Maysville | 1981; 1995 | 3,800 | 3 | 6 |
| Maysville | 1 | 9223 Gillsville Rd, Maysville | 1988 | 7,400 | 6 | 6 |
| East Jackson/ Commerce | 1 | 1491 S. Elm St., Commerce | 1985 | 9,300 | 4 | 4/7 |
| Nicholson | 1 | 4562 US Hwy. 441, Nicholson | 1985 | 12,000 | 6 | 5/9 |
| Nicholson | 2 | 9371 US Hwy. 441, Center | 1985 | 1,800 | 2 | 5/9 |
| South Jackson | 1 | Crooked Creek Road | 1983 | 1,750 | 6 | 6 |
| South Jackson | 2 | SR 330 | 1990 | 1,500 | 2 | 6 |
| Arcade | 1 | 483 Swann Road | 1993 | 4,800 | 2 | 6 |
| Harrisburg | 1 | Thiatyra Community Church Rd. | | 4,000 | 3 | 6 |
| Harrisburg | 2 | Jackson Co. Correctional Inst. 255 Curtis Spence Dr. | 1992 | 3,396 | 3 | |
| Jefferson | 1 | 147 Athens St. Jefferson | 1970 | 10,376 | 3 | 4 |
| Jefferson | 2 | U.S. Hwy. 129 N. Jefferson | | | 2 | 4 |
| Jackson Trail | 1 | 3343 Jackson Tr. Rd. | 1978 | 2,400 | 5 | 7 |
| West Jackson | 1 | 69 West Jackson Rd. | 1973;1988 | 5,500 | 5 | 6 |
| Ga. Forestry Comm. | 1 | SR 11 | Mid-1950s | 800 | 4 | |

Source: Jackson County Community Assessment, Technical Appendix, Community Facilities and Services. Revised 2010 based on information from Steve Nichols, Jackson County Emergency Services Director.

### Emergency Medical Services

EMS station locations are shown on the fire service district map, and the inventory of facilities is shown in the table below. There is a perceived need for an additional EMS unit in the Jackson Trail area of the county, plus weather siren coverage in that area. These needs are reflected in the short-term work program.

**Table 2.3. Rescue and EMS Facilities by Fire District in Jackson County**

| Fire Service District | General Area (Municipalities and unincorporated surroundings) | Fire Stations | Rescue | EMS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| West Jackson | Braselton; Hoschton | Yes (#3) | Yes (#3) | Yes (#3) |
| North Jackson | Talmo; Pendergrass | Yes (#4) (Pendergrass) | Yes (#4) (Pendergrass) | No |
| Plainview | All unincorporated | Yes (#10) | Yes (#10) | Yes (#5) |
| Maysville | Maysville | Yes (#5) | Yes (#5) | No |
| East Jackson | Commerce | Yes (#1) | Yes (#1) | Yes (#1) |
| Nicholson | Nicholson | Yes (#2) | Yes (#20) | Yes (#4) |
| South Jackson | All unincorporated | Yes (#7) | Yes (#6) | Yes (#6) |
| Arcade | Arcade | Yes (#6) | Yes (#6) | No |
| Jackson Trail | All unincorporated | Yes (#9) | Yes (#9) | No |
| Jefferson | Jefferson | Yes (#11) (two stations, City #1 and City #2) | Yes (#2) | Yes (#2) |
| Harrisburg | All unincorporated | Yes (#8 and #15) | No | No |

Source: Jackson County Community Assessment, Technical Appendix, Community Facilities and Services. Revised 2010 based on information from Steve Nichols, Jackson County Emergency Services Director.

### Public Safety Master Plan

The 2007 Partial Plan Update called for preparation of a public safety master plan and indicated its preparation was ongoing. Such a master plan will provide more detailed assessments and identification of future facility needs. This item is included in the short-term work program.

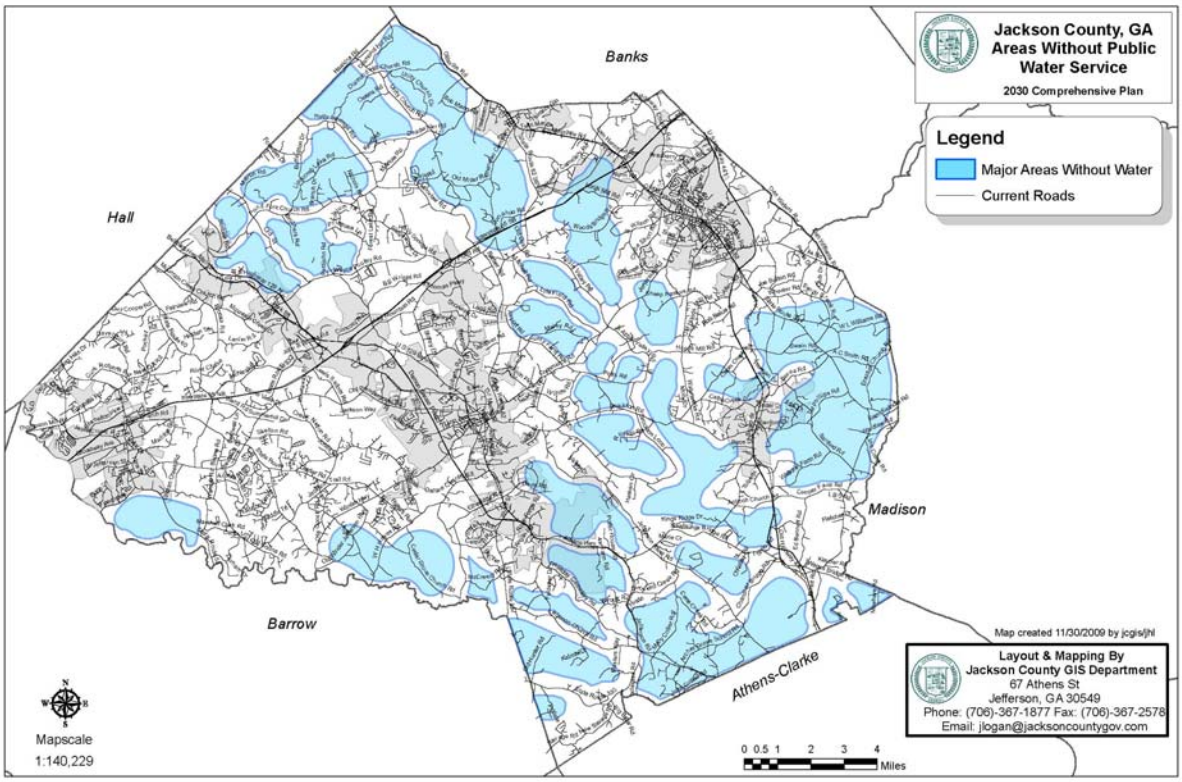
### Water

The Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority (JCWSA) is an authority created by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority Act, Georgia Laws 1986. The Authority owns and operates a water and sewerage system that primarily serves the unincorporated area of Jackson County, Georgia. Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Hoschton, Maysville, and Nicholson (through its Water Authority) provide water distribution service for their respective service areas. The Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority was formed in 1994 in response to the demand for the growing water supply needs of its four member counties: Athens-Clarke, Oconee, Barrow and Jackson. The vast majority of the water supplied by the JCWSA is purchased from the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority from its Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant, which is located immediately adjacent to its Bear Creek Reservoir located on Georgia Route 330 in southwest Jackson County.

Specific issues and opportunities regarding water are described in the community assessment. Major issues associated with water supply and distribution include planning for a new water

supply reservoir, possible unification and consolidation of water systems, and plans for extending existing water service areas. Jefferson and Jackson County are collaborating on securing a new water supply reservoir along Parks Creek. Jefferson is managing the permitting process which has been delayed due to wetland mitigation issues. The site for the Parks Creek Reservoir has been selected but the land is still in private ownership; the future land use plan reflects this location and shows the reservoir site as conservation. The short-term work program calls for land acquisition and reservoir design, with reservoir construction being considered long range.

Jackson County has also studied the feasibility of an additional water source for potable water to meet long-term needs. An engineering study investigated several sites and narrowed possibilities to three sites which were further investigated. Presently, the county is not pursuing any of these potential sites for future water supply reservoirs given a lack of funding. Therefore, future water supply planning will be addressed in a more long-range time frame. As shown on the map below, there are a number of areas within unincorporated Jackson County that are not served with public water. The water and sewer master plans (called for in the short-term work program) will need to address priority areas for water line extensions, which should be based on the character map for the year 2020 as provided in this Community Agenda.



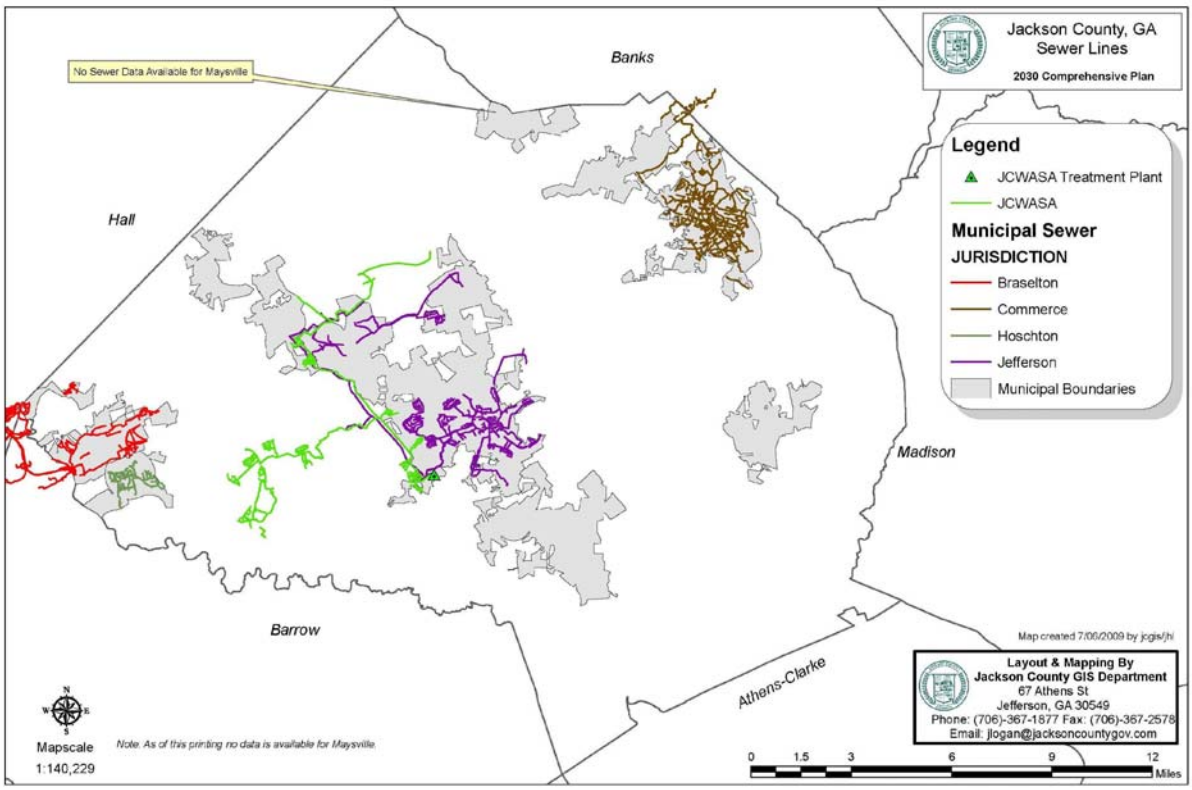

At this time, the Community Agenda does not recommend pursuit of consolidation among the various water providers in the county.

**Sanitary Sewer**

Jackson County through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority has a wastewater permit and provides sanitary sewer services in parts of unincorporated areas of the county and the cities of Pendergrass and Talmo. Presently, the service area is limited mostly to two areas

of the county – a mostly residential area including the Traditions planned community in west Jackson County, and the industrial area north of Interstate 85 above Jefferson's city limits.

Issues with regard to the sewer system include planning for additional treatment capacity, possible unification and consolidation of sewer systems, and plans for extending sewer service areas. The water and sewer master plan, called for in the short-term work program, will need to address these issues. With regard to sewer extensions, the comprehensive plan establishes policies for sewer service not to extend beyond urban and suburban areas as shown on the character area maps provided in Chapter 3 of this Community Agenda.



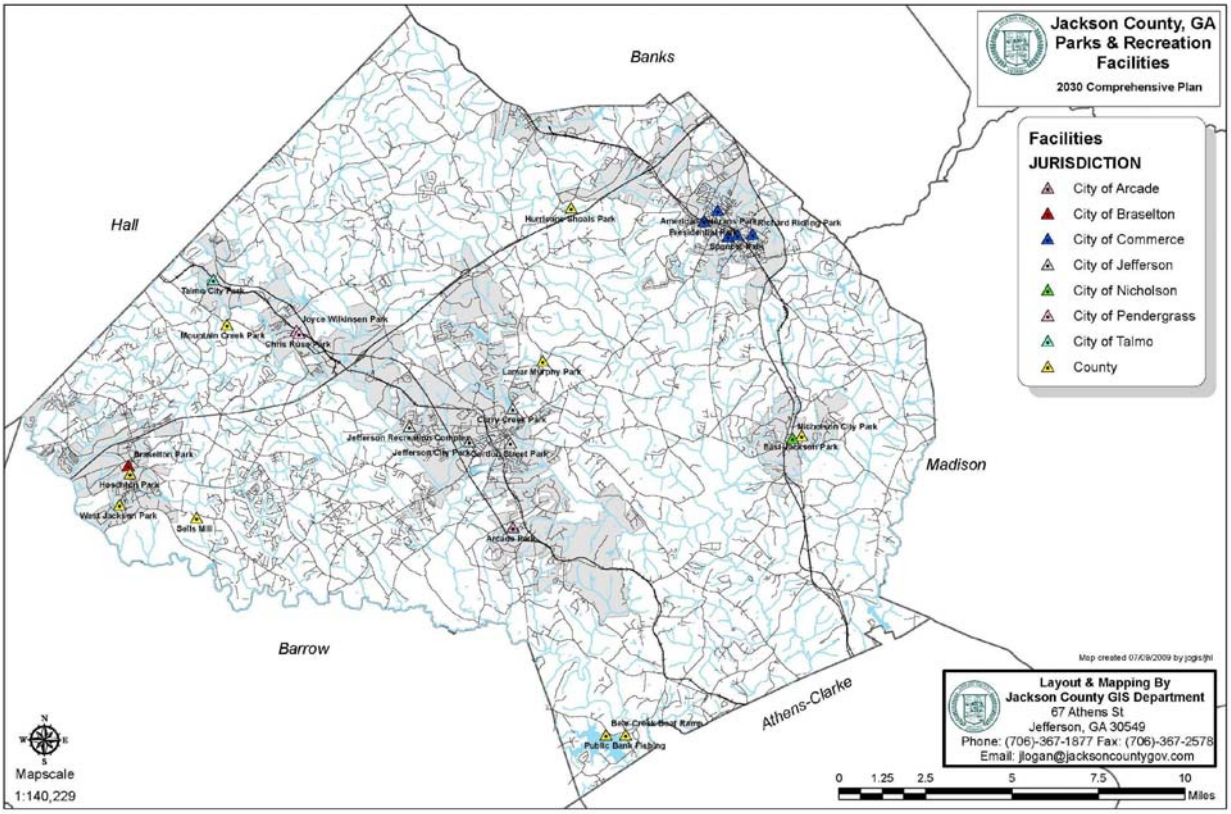

## Long Range Planning for Utilities

Among members of the comprehensive plan steering committee, there was some discussion about whether the comprehensive plan should get into issues of utilities, such as electricity and natural gas. Indeed, the City of Commerce is a provider of electricity and natural gas, so this question is elevated in importance to the extent there is already a local government involved in service provision. One resident suggested that the county should establish a gas authority and get into the natural gas business. The Community Agenda does not address this issue, but utilities plans within Jackson County should be addressed more specifically during the 20-year planning horizon.

## Parks and Recreation

Jackson County provides parks and recreation facilities at five locations: Hurricane Shoals Park, Lamar Murphy Park, Sell's Mill Park, West Jackson Park (Hoschton) and East Jackson Park (Nicholson). Jackson County owns the Pat Bell Conference Center located at 7020 Highway 82 Spur which is generally considered to be a part of the Hurricane Shoals Park

complex. In addition, the county is in the process of developing an access point on the Bear Creek Reservoir. The county Parks and Recreation Department also utilizes five Jackson County Schools recreation sites that have indoor and outdoor facilities for practice and game purposes.




Of all the various facilities provided by Jackson County, parks and recreation received the least satisfaction ratings from respondents to the community questionnaire (see tabulations at the beginning of this section on Community Facilities). According to the FY 2009 county budget document, there is a need to provide greenways and trail systems throughout the county, as well as at individual parks, particularly Sells Mill Park, which is presently underdeveloped. Input from the public during the course of preparing this community assessment revealed a consensus that Jackson County does not have enough parks and needs to provide more facilities for not only youth but the elderly as well. There is also a great need for indoor facilities; with the exception of the old gymnasium at Center Park (now in private hands) and facilities at county schools, there are no indoor recreation facilities available for use by county residents. Residents during the community workshops held in September 2009 also suggested that the county build a cultural arts facility. They also suggested that the county pursue a YMCA for youth activities.

To address growing needs for parks and recreation in Jackson County, a bond referendum for $15 million in parks and recreation improvements was held in February 2008, but it was not passed by the citizenry. Though the parks and recreation bond referendum failed, the list of needs is retained for future capital improvement programs; furthermore, as needs mount, however, a new referendum for parks and recreation may be warranted.

In 2002, the county completed a System-Wide Recreation Master Plan, 2003-2012. That plan needs updating to account for several new initiatives and improvements made, and the short-term work program calls for such a plan update. The highest priority for active parkland should be in the area of West Jackson. Park sites might also provide for the co-location of other public facilities needed in the future, such as new EMS stations or fire stations. With respect to greenways, the future land use plan specifically identifies conservation areas along the three major river systems in the county, which are suggested to provide for riparian greenways during the long range planning horizon. In regard to other facilities, recommendations should emanate from the revised system-wide recreation master plan, to be prepared.

**General Administrative Facilities**

The county has a large property complex for the addition of facilities in the future – participants during the community workshops raised a question of what the county plans to do with the land that is currently banked at the county's major facility campus. It has also been suggested by citizens that the county should use the property it has, before buying any more properties. The county is currently preparing a master plan for the campus of the county facilities complex.

The County Administration Building, at 67 Athens Street in Jefferson, was constructed in the 1930s and consists of approximately 26,000 square feet. It is by no means considered adequate to continue in its current role of housing county administrative offices, including the public development department, GIS, and tax assessment offices among others. This Community Agenda does not resolve what should be done in terms of this building, but the master plan for county facilities will ideally present recommendations with regard to the disposition of the county's administrative building.

**Road and Bridge Construction and Maintenance**

The Service Delivery Strategy calls for establishment of countywide road and bridge construction standards, uniform road classifications, and countywide transportation master planning. These issues are addressed under the topic "transportation" in this Community Agenda.

**Planning and Zoning**

During the public participation process, at least one participant suggested that the county staff should be more open to working with individual property owners on zoning matters, as opposed to simply telling them that they cannot do what they want with their land. One reason for potential discontent with planning and zoning functions is the regulatory nature of the service itself – there is usually little administrative discretion in the application of county land use and zoning regulations. Another potential reason for discontent is that the Public Development Department staff has been substantially downsized as a result of the great recession. As a result of layoffs, existing staff are under increasing pressure to handle inquiries. The short-term work program calls for the county to refill one position in the public development department which should go a long way to maintain appropriate service levels, allow the department to have a more patient, working relationship with property owners, and also to handle increasing responsibilities implied in this Community Agenda for the Public Development Department. Another effort, the rewrite of the Unified Development Code which is included in the short-term work program, should also address possibilities for making regulations more flexible.

## Geographic Information Systems

Jackson County has a GIS Department which serves the mapping needs of all county departments, especially the tax assessor, as well the municipalities in Jackson County. GIS services represent an opportunity for intergovernmental joint service delivery by the county's GIS Department. The short-term work program calls for the development of intergovernmental agreements with interested municipalities to provide GIS services, which is something that has already taken place on an informal basis during the past two years.

## Public Schools

The Jackson County comprehensive plan steering committee suggested that the comprehensive plan needs to include a review of the five-year facility plans for each of the three school systems and acknowledge/integrate those plans into the comprehensive plan. These five-year plans were not available during the time the Community Agenda was prepared. With regard to county schools, it appears that the most immediate need is a new middle school in the West Jackson area. Since the Jackson County Board of Education is responsible for school facilities planning, there is nothing in the county government's work program in that regard.

**Maysville Elementary School**

## Public and Environmental Health; Hospitals

The comprehensive plan in 1998 identified the long-term need to provide more convenient health services to residents of southern Jackson County. Otherwise, south Jackson residents have to drive several miles to Jefferson or Commerce for public health assistance. Though recognizing limitations to funding, the 1998 plan also indicated that health-related transportation was needed, such as to and from the BJC Medical Center. During the public participation process of preparing this community assessment, participants suggested there were needs for non-hospital emergency health facilities, particularly in West Jackson County. There is a growing consensus that Jackson County is in need of a full-service hospital and more health facilities in the Braselton-Hoschton area of the county.

The short-term work program calls for a long-range cooperative effort between Nicholson and Jackson County to secure public facility space and develop it as a part of a new downtown in Nicholson. With regard to health and hospitals, it is anticipated that the private market will need to address these needs, as the county does not have its own hospital authority and is unlikely to be able to expand public health services in west Jackson County. Health-related transportation is available presently only through the county's rural transportation program.

### Library Funding and Capital Provision

Under current arrangements, and with no countywide facilities plan, the municipal libraries are expected to continue serving Jackson County's growth, the vast majority of which is expected to occur in the unincorporated portions of the county. This is creating a serious fiscal disparity that raises funding equity issues. The cities cannot be expected to continue funding improvements to municipal libraries to serve a burgeoning unincorporated population.

**Public Library in Commerce**

Clearly, Jackson County is participating in the funding of libraries in the municipalities, but at issue is the extent to which municipal library expansion can be expected to meet the needs of unincorporated residents without substantial increases in funding from the county government, or without the county becoming a library service provider itself (or considering a regional service alternative). While the equity issue will persist, respondents to the questionnaire actually exhibited satisfaction with the current library system in Jackson County. That satisfaction will undoubtedly decrease, however, as population increases in the county. The negotiations for revising the county's service delivery strategy are not anticipated to result in any change in the current service arrangements for libraries. However, during the 20-year planning horizon, Jackson County should seriously consider changing the loose confederation of individual municipal libraries into either a countywide system or officially merging all municipal libraries into the Piedmont Regional Library System. Clearly, the county will need to better address the demands of unincorporated residents on municipal libraries. Even if funding and support for municipal libraries is increased in the future, during the planning horizon there will likely be a need for the county to construct libraries in unincorporated areas.

### After School Child Care

Participants in the community workshops suggested that Jackson County should consider the need for after school child care. Child care is a service that has been traditionally provided by private providers and non-profits institutions like churches. At this time, this service is not considered an appropriate role for Jackson County itself given so many other competing service demands. The ability to develop more dispersed child care facilities should be considered in the county's efforts to revise its Unified Development Code.

### Capital Improvement Programming

The Board of Commissioners, during the FY 2007 budget hearings, was apprised and agreed to the need to establish a Capital Improvement Program in order to address restoration, maintenance and preventative maintenance of the County's facilities. Previously, decisions about capital facilities funding were made on a year-to-year, ad hoc basis. Recognizing a growing funding shortfall in terms of maintaining existing facilities, and the need to anticipate major capital improvements to address growth pressures, Jackson County formally adopted a policy to pursue capital improvement programming. However, progress has been somewhat slow. The capital improvement programming effort would achieve two goals espoused by

citizens during the community workshops held in September 2009 – optimal use of existing facilities to maximize their potential use, and purchase in advance of land for schools and fire stations (also called "land banking"). Continued programming of capital improvements is called for in the short-term work program.

### Existing and Future SPLOST Monies

During community workshops, a few members of the citizenry raised some concern whether all SPLOST funds were being spent for their original purposes. The future use of SPLOST monies is also an important issue that is receiving attention presently.

Decisions about future uses of a SPLOST program if extended were being considered at the time this Community Agenda was first written. The overall direction or consensus at that time was there was a grave need for the county to use future SPLOST funds to pay down debt, rather than to finance additional capital facilities.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Issues with the Road System

Many of the issues and opportunities with regard to the major road system are addressed separately in the countywide roadways plan. Because of that parallel effort, specific comments from the community workshops about roads have been omitted here. For more information, please consult the Countywide Roadways Plan (for a synopsis, see Chapter 4 of this document).

**U.S. Highway 441 south of Nicholson**

### Jackson County Airport Airspace Protection and Land Use Compatibility

The airspace surrounding Jackson County Airport affects the surrounding unincorporated parts of Jackson County but also the City of Jefferson. The flight paths of incoming and outgoing aircraft need to be mapped, and regulations may be needed (or existing regulations already in place evaluated) to protect air space (e.g., conical height limits in local zoning ordinances). Airport noise may be incompatible for some types of land uses and should therefore be assessed. The airport approach zones are mapped on the Special Overlays map of this Comprehensive Plan, and regulations are already in place to protect the airspace. The county is also in the process of preparing an overlay district for the airport area.

### Railroads

While freight and passenger railroads do not necessarily require conventional planning by the locality, since they are usually private, they pose a number of public issues of concern. There is, of course, the land-use perspective of planning compatible land uses along railroad tracks due to noise and vibration generated by trains. Equally if not more important are the access implications. There are also beautification and aesthetic considerations.

**Railroad Between Commerce and Maysville**

If streets cross railroad tracks at grade, they need to have adequate crossing restrictions (gates), flashing lights, and warning signs. At-grade crossings of railroads should sometimes be eliminated if they pose safety concerns. Railroad crossings also can affect public safety response times by if road access is delayed or constrained by a railroad crossing, when a train is traveling through. Finally, there is potential for cooperative agreements with railroad companies for installing improvements such as additional safety features, pedestrian crossings, and beautification efforts (e.g., planting in the railroad right-of-way). These considerations are important and should be addressed as long-range issues in the future.

Another rail-related issue to consider is the extent to which Jackson County may be served in the longer term by either commuter rail or high speed rail. Given that state funding for transportation facilities has been deferred, the community agenda does not specify what may be the implications of long or very long-range plans for commuter and high speed rail, including along the Interstate 85 corridor from Atlanta to Charlotte.

### Attention to Pedestrian and Bicycle Needs

Sidewalks and bicycle lanes are critical transportation infrastructure elements necessary for providing alternative travel options versus automobile traffic. Providing connectivity to existing community facilities (such as schools, libraries, and parks) is an important use of the pedestrian and bicycle network. At issue is the extent to which Jackson County is willing to begin providing for the needs of pedestrians and beginning to plan a system for bicycle travel. The Northeast Georgia's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2005) is a good starting point.

Despite major support among the public for providing a network for pedestrians and bicycles, it is apparent that the county will not be in a position financially to construct sidewalks or bike lanes in the short-term future. The vast majority of development with a critical mass creating demands for pedestrian and bicycle facilities is located within the unincorporated areas of the county. Jackson County will need to rely on policies and regulations which it has put in place with this Community Agenda and the Unified Development Code, respectively, to ensure that such facilities are constructed within urban and suburban character areas at the time private development occurs, as a condition of development approval.

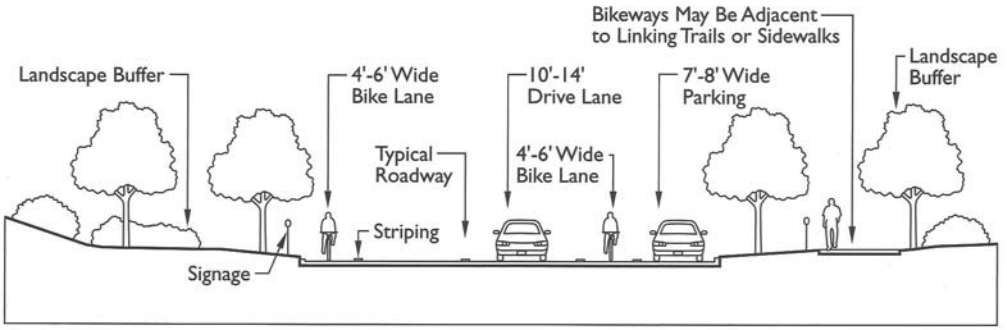
This Community Agenda also furthers this need by providing a broad framework for the eventual acquisition and construction of greenways (which can include multi-use trails) along the three

rivers in the county. The North Oconee River greenway is considered the highest priority in this Community Agenda, and the updating of the system-wide recreation plan will be a positive first step toward greenway acquisition and development in Jackson County.

One additional effort is called for in this Community Agenda which is supportive of the desire to develop bicycling opportunities. This plan and the plan for Nicholson and Commerce all support the establishment of a regional bicycle loop route originating in Nicholson and which would follow SR 334 north to the Commerce area, then return southbound along Waterworks Road and eastward along SR 335 back to Nicholson (see map on following page). There is also a possible alternative to Waterworks Road, the North Oconee River Greenway, depending on timing of acquisition and construction. The regional bicycle loop route is included in the short-term work program but is considered long-range since funding sources for the bike loop have not been identified.

### Bicycle Facility Improvement Specifications

There is a need to develop cross-sections and minimum specifications for all types of bike facilities, including shared-use, bike lanes on roads, bike lanes on shoulders, and off-street bike paths and multi-use trails. This needs to be addressed in the update of the Unified Development Code.




Bike lanes are often found along urban road sections, where maneuvering space is limited and a defined lane is needed for rider safety.

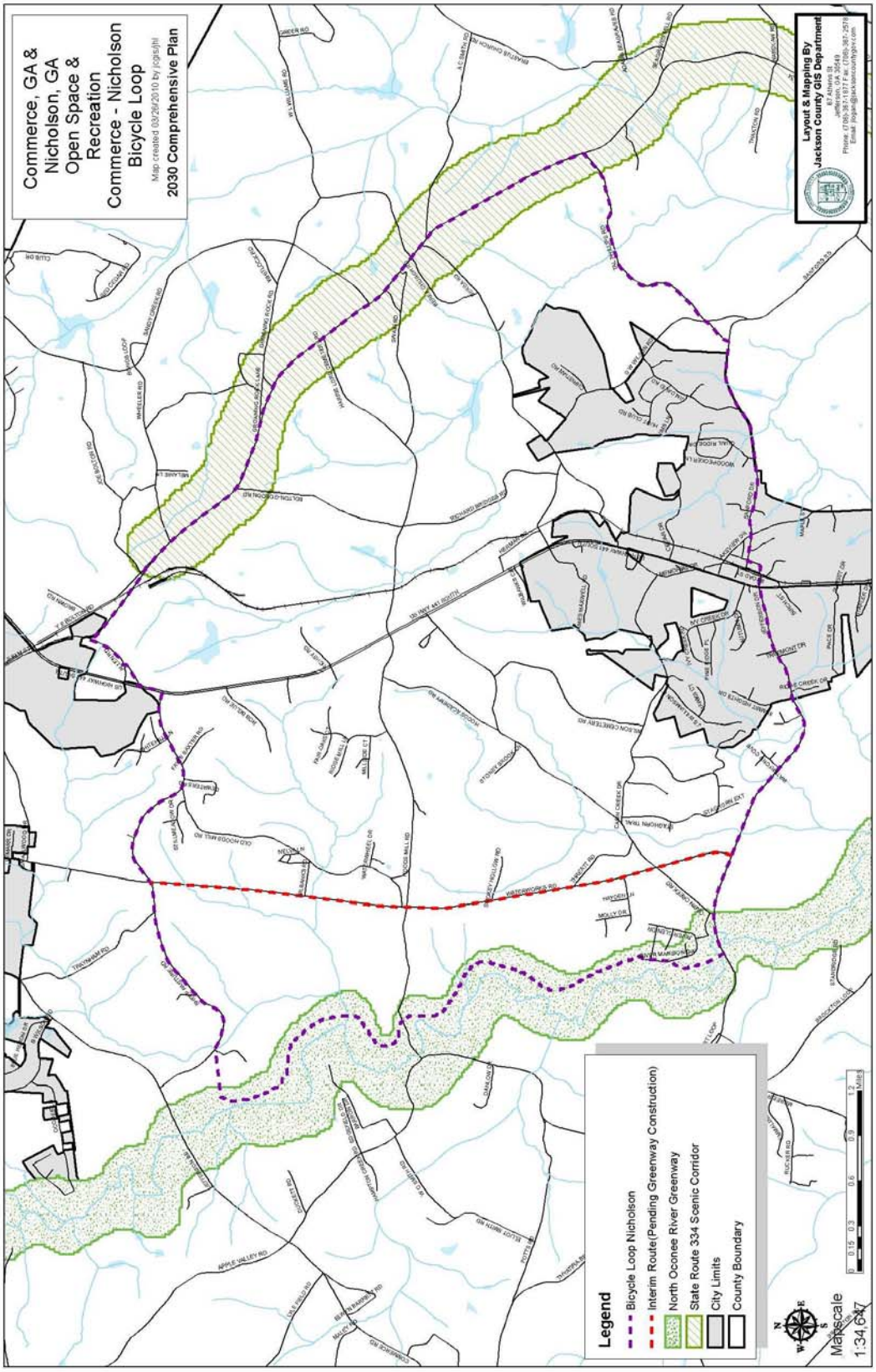
**BIKE LANE**

*Source: Brauer & Associates, Ltd. 2004.*

Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards, p. 259 (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006)

### Critical Review of Existing Sidewalk Requirements

Where sidewalk systems exist, policies and implementing regulations need to require connection of private land developments to the public sidewalk system. Plans and implementing regulations have been reviewed to determine the extent to which sidewalks are required for private land developments and whether those requirements are adequate. This consideration is not included in the list of items to be considered in amending the Unified Development Code, since the Board of Commissioners has recently reconsidered and established policy with regard to this issue.


Commerce, GA &
Nicholson, GA
Open Space &
Recreation
Commerce - Nicholson
Bicycle Loop
Map created 03/26/2010 by jcgis(jh)
2030 Comprehensive Plan
Layout & Mapping By
Jackson County GIS Department
Legend
Bicycle Loop Nicholson
Interim Route(Pending Greenway Construction)
North Oconee River Greenway
State Route 334 Scenic Corridor
City Limits
County Boundary
Mapscale
1:34,647

### Improving Rural Transit Service

Jackson County's rural transit program provides one of the only means of travel for some people. At issue is the level of commitment Jackson County will provide in the future as these needs grow. The short-term work program calls for maintenance and improvement of rural transit service if additional funding can be secured.

### Access Management along Major Roads

Transportation plans need to establish policies for separating (minimum distances between) street intersections and driveways, principles for lining up driveways on both sides of streets, and placing road median breaks, among others. Because access management relates primarily to safety considerations, it deserves prominent treatment in transportation plans. At issue is the extent to which the county's current regulations provide adequate controls for access points on local and major roads. This consideration is included in the list of specific items to be considered in the review and revision of the Unified Development Code. Additionally, access management is a principal reason why this Community Agenda calls for jointly developed regulations between Commerce and Jackson County for the SR 98 and U.S. Highway 441 corridors.

### Alternative Street Standards for Areas of Varying Character

Community building has become more context sensitive over time, and communities have become increasingly critical of wide subdivision street cross-sections that were developed when engineering considerations were dominant. Jackson County should consider whether it needs to re-evaluate and change street right-of-way and pavement standards so they are not excessive, or at least provide greater flexibility in New Urbanist developments, conservation subdivisions, and other "context sensitive" places. This need will be addressed in a subsequent revision to the major roads plan of Jackson County, and in the Unified Development Code.

### Scenic Road Designations and Appropriate Standards

Many communities desire to preserve the rural, historic, or scenic character of a given roadway. There highways and roads in Jackson County that deserve designation as scenic, and the transportation plan should consider and if appropriate designate scenic roads and highways in Jackson County, then establish the appropriate improvement standards and land use regulations to protect the character of those designated scenic roads. This Community Agenda designates most of the SR 334 corridor in eastern Jackson County as a scenic highway and calls for regulations to implement that concept (see Special Overlays map in Chapter 3). Implementation will take place via amendments to the Unified Development Code.

### Requirements and Guidelines for Traffic Impact Studies

Transportation plans and implementing regulations should establish policies for when a traffic impact study is required. At issue is the extent to which Jackson County should specify when traffic impact studies are required, and if so, what their contents should be. This work item is included on the list of potential items to be amended in the Unified Development Code.

### Zero Emissions Transportation Technologies

The county's comprehensive plan steering committee suggested that the county should be proactive in planning for zero emission transportation technologies. Specifically, it was suggested that the county should anticipate the eventual conversion of gas-powered vehicles to electric vehicles, and being to impose new requirements such as requiring electric chargers in parking lots for electric vehicles. Though this Community Agenda does not address these issues, a future amendment to the Jackson County's comprehensive plan should anticipate new technologies and the vast changes that will be associated with implementing them.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The issue of intergovernmental coordination generally appears to have been neglected in the past. Jackson County, in its partial plan update prepared in 2007, identified some significant deficiencies in terms of intergovernmental coordination. A number of issues were identified in the community participation process with regard to intergovernmental coordination.

### Communication via an Annual Summit

To improve coordination and intergovernmental cooperation, the Partial Plan Update (2007) proposed that an annual meeting be held with all elected officials and managers of all local governments to share information. This item is included in the short-term work program.

### Formal Coordination with Other Counties with Regard to Braselton and Maysville

There are two cities in Jackson County that cross into other counties: Maysville is partially within Banks County, and Braselton extends into three other counties besides Jackson County: Barrow, Gwinnett, and Hall. Braselton and Maysville may be receiving county level services from Jackson or some other county, or a combination from more than one county. This means there are opportunities, if not obligations, to be sure that the municipalities are provided with county-level facilities and services that are the most cost effective possible. No action is proposed in the short-term work program in this regard, but the county administration should continue to be cognizant of this issue and respond appropriate.

### Regional Comprehensive Plan, Short-term Work Program

The regional comprehensive plan short-term work program is a document that covers the time period of 2009 to 2013. Some of the work program items list local governments as a responsible implementing partner. Therefore, it is important that Jackson County anticipate those suggestions and integrate them as appropriate into its comprehensive plan. Also, it should monitor and participate in current and ongoing efforts as the regional comprehensive plan is being updated by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (included in work program).

### Watershed Protection and Stormwater Management

Watersheds do not adhere to political boundaries of counties and cities. It is not uncommon for watersheds to cross over several cities and counties. Therefore, protection of watersheds and (by extension) stormwater management programs must also be treated as intergovernmental issues. Cities are generally too small to take on many of the important watershed protection

and stormwater management functions that are likely to be needed during the planning horizon, and there are important economies of scale in terms of performing watershed assessments and providing for regionwide stormwater facilities. Furthermore, there is growing concern that Jackson County and its municipalities have not comprehensively addressed the needs for stormwater management. While subdivision developers are required to provide drainage facilities for their subdivisions, it is apparent that not enough attention is being paid to the long-term maintenance (or even the ownership) of stormwater facilities. Often, the stormwater facilities are left to homeowners associations to maintain, or worse, there is no association at all and the individual lot owner is held responsible.

Neither of those approaches (home owners associations or individual lot owners) have the capital needed to maintain expensive stormwater management facilities, which can involve significant repair, dredging, replacement, etc. All of these observations lead to the suggestion that countywide stormwater management maintenance will be needed during the planning horizon (even if not mandated by a higher level authority). Then, there is also the issue of how to fund a stormwater utility, if one is created. Increasingly, local governments are imposing stormwater utility fees in order to provide for the maintenance of stormwater facilities, the needs of which have gone unrecognized so far or are basically ignored. The short-term work program calls for the county and cities to begin a countywide stormwater planning program which may ultimately lead to development of a stormwater utility program.

### Curry Creek Watershed Protection

The Curry Creek water supply watershed, which provides water for Jefferson's reservoir, is mostly encompassed within the city limits of Jefferson but also extends into unincorporated Jackson County. Thus, there is a need for joint efforts of the city and county to protect the watershed for public water supply. Specifically, since Jackson County and Jefferson both control land use decision-making in this watershed, there needs to be a cooperative agreement with regard to holding impervious surfaces to the maximum 25 percent allowable under the environmental planning criteria for water supply watersheds. This is included in the short-term work program.

### Annexation Planning

The pursuit of annexation plans by municipalities is particularly important in Jackson County, since annexations by Jefferson result in changes to fire district boundaries (and have also in Commerce) in some cases, and annexation by those two municipalities also results in a change over from county to city school systems. In fact, there is an apparent incentive on some residents' part to annex into Jefferson simply to become a part of that city's school system. During one of the community workshops in support of this community assessment, one citizen raised concern about the ability of the City of Commerce to annex parallel access roads built by Jackson County in the Interstate 85 corridor. That concern raised the question of whether something could and should be done with regard to those annexation practices.

While the county cannot regulate the annexation practices of cities, this Community Agenda establishes some parameters for the county's future expectations with regard to municipal annexations. The character area policies in Chapter 3 of this Community Agenda specify that the county is likely to object to annexations proposed by cities into agricultural and rural character areas. While the city may annex property even if the county objects, these policies set the tone for future agreement between the county and the respective cities with regard to future annexations.

### Economic Development

Presently, none of the local governments in Jackson County have full-time personnel dedicated to economic development matters. The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce provides all services related to economic development for the county and its municipalities. Hence, this service is consolidated on a countywide basis. At issue, however, is the extent to which the Chamber of Commerce is responsible for the unique needs of the smaller cities with respect to developing, redeveloping, and promoting their "main street" downtowns. If the municipalities are to have the healthy main street downtowns that many of them aspire to have, more logistical efforts (staffing and resources) will be needed.

The short-term work program suggests the economic development strategic master plan also include components for individual cities, if they want to participate; municipal participation would most likely require some financial contribution to the planning effort.

### Historic Preservation

Most if not all of the cities and towns in Jackson County have significant historic resources, and there are still significant historic resources in unincorporated Jackson County. Because the smaller cities lack staff devoted to historic preservation, there is an opportunity to provide a more coordinated approach to preservation in the county. At issue is whether a countywide historic preservation commission should be created and/or whether the county and various interested municipalities can pool resources in favor of a coordinated, countywide historic preservation program.

Consideration of a historic preservation commission and ordinance is mentioned as a possible long-range activity in this Community Agenda. However, the short-term work program calls for an additional staff person to be added to the Public Development Department. That new professional would be charged in part with technical assistance on a countywide basis with regard to historic preservation, thus responding at least in part to this identified need and opportunity for fostering a countywide historic preservation program.

### Water and Sewer Service Areas

As noted in the preceding sections, several cities provide their own water and sewer services, and the county provides those services to selected areas of the county through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority. At issue is the adequacy of existing service areas. There is a need to comprehensively reassess those service area boundaries, and to clarify the formal boundaries in light of municipal annexations. These issues are being addressed at the time the Community Agenda was being written, as a part of renegotiations of the countywide service delivery strategy.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

There is an informal effort which has been underway during the last 18 months to move Jackson County toward a countywide GIS system with services to municipalities. Previously most GIS services for municipalities were provided by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (now Regional Commission). Commerce is one exception; due to its utilities department it provided for its own GIS needs at least until recently, when the county has assisted with map updates. As GIS systems take expertise and resources to operate, it is beyond the budget

capabilities of most if not all cities in Jackson County to provide regular updates of maps and meet the needs for specialized maps and studies involving geographic data. There is an opportunity to formalize a countywide partnership for GIS services to all municipalities. As already noted, the short-term work program includes this item.

### Roads Accessible Only through Other Counties

There are examples where portions of roads are only accessible via entrance into other counties. For instance, B.T. Minish Drive and Ingram Hancock Road intersect with SR 98 (Ila Road) in Madison County, east of Commerce, but extend into Jackson County. There is no way to access those portions of these roads within Jackson County without exiting the county through Madison County. Similarly, southeast of Nicholson, off Nowhere Road which extends into Madison County, off Nowhere Trail there is Beth Haven Road in Jackson County which is only accessible via Madison County.

Similarly, there are subdivision streets within western Jackson County, south of Harmony Church Road, which are accessible only through Hall County. These subdivision streets include Fountain Drive, Silverwood Drive, Dogwood Court, Rolling Ridge, Saddlewood Court and the end of Pond Fork Way. In yet another area, there is a small segment of Rustic Oak Lane in Jackson County which is only accessible via Hall County off of Ellison Farm Road. And there are planned subdivision streets in Jackson County off of Guy Cooper Road which extend into unincorporated Hall County, with the only access from Hall County's standpoint through Jackson County.

These examples (and there are probably others) suggest that Jackson County should consider intergovernmental agreements to have adjacent counties provide first responder service (if it is deemed adequate) by the adjacent county. Similarly, to the extent such roads place the same circumstances on other counties, Jackson County should express willingness to provide first responder services for emergency and public safety calls.

This same issue of concern can be applied to municipal limits as well in certain cases. If there are unincorporated islands within a municipality that provides police service, the same principle should apply. Jackson County should identify and pursue coordination strategies for all such areas that are identified.

### Intergovernmental Agreements for Law Enforcement

Since Jackson County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement (in effect the police force) to certain cities, it should have intergovernmental service agreements in place, and should periodically re-evaluate and update those agreements. This item is included in the short-term work program.

### Intergovernmental Agreements Generally

Review of the county's service delivery strategy reveals there are not very many formal agreements with municipalities with regard to certain services. There is an opportunity to formalize many of the service arrangements with formal agreements that will avoid potential conflicts later. The countywide service delivery strategy itself is probably not going to provide sufficient detail to reconcile confusion or conflicts, when they develop. Jackson County should be opportunistic in this regard, rather than waiting for a critical impasse or serious issue force the parties into a reactive effort. The short-term work program reflects this identified activity.

# CHAPTER 3
# CHARACTER AND LAND USE

This chapter of the Community Agenda provides descriptions and maps designed to help Jackson County manage future development in a way that protects resources, maintains existing and desired character, ensures compatibility with existing development, and establishes efficient growth patterns. Jackson County's plan for development management consists of a hierarchy of levels, starting first with the most generalized and progressing to increasingly more specific descriptions: (1) settlement character areas; (2) character areas 2020 and 2030; (3) future land use 2020 and 2030; and (4) the special overlays map. Policies corresponding to these maps are also articulated this chapter to guide future development within the respective areas.

## UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER AND LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT MAPS

It is important that the reader understand the meaning and intentions of each of the major maps associated with land use. This section is intended to ease that understanding. More detailed descriptions of these maps are provided later in this chapter.

### Official Zoning Map

The Official Zoning Map was adopted as a part of the Unified Development Code. It divides all of unincorporated Jackson County into agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial districts. This map is the most important in terms of regulations – it describes what land uses are permitted "as of right" and what other uses may be possible if an application is filed and approved by the Board of Commissioners. Consulting the zoning map and permissions is the first step, because if the proposed land use and development is consistent with the zoning district shown on the Official Zoning Map (and as described in the Unified Development Code), that land use and/or development is allowable regardless of what the other maps summarized in this section suggest. The Official Zoning Map is a regulatory map and is not produced in this Chapter or provided in this Community Agenda document.

### Existing Land Use

This map shows how land is used currently (2009). It has no regulatory significance. It divides the county into land use classifications simply to describe how each property is being used now. It does not reflect character, future land use, or zoning. It is provided in the community assessment document only and does not appear here in this chapter.

### Settlement Character

This map shows distinct subareas of the county, including incorporated and unincorporated areas. It was prepared with the intention of aiding in the definition of character and allowing for an easier reference to different parts of the county. The settlement character area map has very limited regulatory significance – it is intended primarily to serve the purpose of community identification. There are a limited number of policies associated with this map in Chapter 5.

### Existing Character 2009

This map is a generalized version of existing land use, divided into a smaller number of categories based on character and urban form (conservation, agricultural, rural, suburban, and urban). This map has no regulatory significance but was used as a basis for drafting character areas for the years 2020 and 2030.

### 2020 and 2030 Character

These maps show the desirable (generalized) development pattern in the year 2020 and 2030, using the same categories as the existing character map. The 2020 map has significance in terms of rezoning requests, special use approvals, variances, major subdivision plats, and municipal annexations. This comprehensive plan requires consistency with the Character 2020 map in terms of the provision and extension of sanitary sewer service and also the relative intensity or density of development. A proposed rezoning, special use, variance, major subdivision plat, or municipal annexation must be consistent with this map in terms of sanitary sewer and density/intensity. The Character 2030 map shows the desirable development pattern for the year 2030, using the same categories as the existing character and 2020 character map. The 2030 map is described the same way as the Character 2020 map, except that it shows ten years more of desired development patterns. It is intended to apply from the year 2021 through 2030. Policies associated with the Character 2020 and 2030 maps are presented in Chapter 5.

### 2020 and 2030 Future Land Use

These maps are intended to be reviewed in conjunction with the Character 2020 and 2030 maps. The Future Land Use 2020 map is consistent with the Character 2020 map but specifies details with respect to land use at the parcel level (i.e., whether residential, commercial, industrial or other land use is appropriate). While the character maps establish parameters for sewer service, density/intensity, and desired design, the future land use map also needs to be consulted along with the Character 2020 map because it shows whether the land use proposed in a rezoning or special use application, or municipal annexation will be considered appropriate (i.e., consistency is required). The 2020 map applies through the year 2020, and the 2030 map applies from the year 2021 through 2030. Policies associated with land uses are presented in Chapter 5.

### Special Overlays Map

This map establishes special areas such as road corridors which have policies and regulations (some of which have not been written yet) that apply to development within them. See a later section in this chapter for more information and Chapter 5 for policies applicable within the special areas shown on this map. This map has regulatory significance even with development that is consistent with the official zoning map.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section examines the various issues and opportunities identified in the Community Assessment which have land use implications. In addition to those issues specifically identified under “land use,” there are others identified in the Community Assessment under the subtopics of “growth preparedness” and “economic development” which are also addressed here.

## Amount of Growth Desired (Population Target)

The Community Assessment report raised the issue of whether the comprehensive plan should establish expectations for the amount of population increase desired. The community participation program sought to determine generally how much citizens wanted Jackson County to grow in terms of population.

The questions of (1) how much residential growth (and future population) was desired, and (2) how much total population was possible under the county's previously adopted land use plan, were examined by the county's consulting planner.[1] Projections of population reveal that the county's total population (including municipalities) in 2030 is expected to be approximately 100,000 at minimum, with other (higher) population projections ranging up to 145,000 people. With respect to the "buildout" of the county's previously adopted land use plan, it was estimated that the plan would ultimately provide for a population of 287,420 people in 106,059 housing units. In unincorporated areas alone, the county's land use plan provided for an estimated 221,162 people and 81,610 housing units. Given the substantial potential of land use plans of the cities and the county (unincorporated areas only), the county's consulting planner suggested significant downsizing of future residential growth.

Results of a community survey are also informative with regard to this issue. We found the following:

- Out of 98 responses, almost three-quarters (73 percent) answered that the pace of development in Jackson County was "a little fast" or "way too fast" (Question 5).
- When asked if new residential subdivisions occurring in the county were "desirable," the respondents were generally mixed, with 44 respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing but 34 agreeing (Question 6).
- When asked if one-acre lots should be allowed anywhere outside of environmentally sensitive areas and farmland protection areas, a majority of respondents (60) agreed or strongly agreed, while 36 disagreed or strongly disagreed (Question 8).
- Tabulations reveal that survey respondents value designing for a smaller population total than provided in the county's previously adopted plan. Results also strongly suggest maintaining the rural character of the county (Question 1).
- While many respondents did support additional residential subdivisions, they favored protected farming and rural development more, and alternatives of having "gated communities" and "golf course" communities received much lower approval scores (Question 4).

Because public sentiment is mixed on future residential development and since no specific suggestion was made to adopt a "population target," there is no population target established in this plan. Another factor arguing against adoption of an overall countywide target population is the fact that Jackson County has nine municipalities and it is difficult for the county to envision and strive for a "target" population when land use control in the county is shared with so many different municipalities. What we can offer here, however, is that the county's character maps and land use plans provide for a substantial downsizing of future residential growth when compared with the land use plan previously adopted. More is said about future population totals later in this chapter (see discussion under "character areas").

[1] Memo from Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. to Gina Mitsdarffer, dated October 12, 2009, titled "Forecasted Residential Buildout Under Adopted Future Land Use Plan and Implications for Revising the Future Land Use Plan."

### Geographic Distribution of Population Generally

Jackson County has a dispersed development pattern. The Community Assessment raised the issue of whether the mostly scattered pattern of population growth, in virtually all areas of the county, was desirable (see also the next section). The community questionnaire again helps us answer this question. As already noted, when asked if one-acre lots should be allowed anywhere outside of environmentally sensitive areas and farmland protection areas, a majority of respondents (60) agreed or strongly agreed, while 36 disagreed or strongly disagreed (Question 8). This issue was also indirectly informed by questions about whether there was support to extend water and sewer services to all lands throughout the county. When asked if "public water service should eventually be extended to all private lands in unincorporated portions of Jackson County," 43 respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 36 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (Question 19). And when asked about public sanitary sewer service, 40 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that sewer should be extended throughout the county, while 37 agreed or strongly agreed (Question 20). Furthermore, during the community workshops held in September 2009, one or more participants suggested that "starter" housing should be available in different locations around the county, not concentrated in one particular area of the county.

Together, these questionnaire results appear to support a geographically dispersed population pattern throughout the county, except in areas designated as environmentally sensitive or agricultural preservation. On the other hand, respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "future development in the county should be concentrated mostly within/along major highway corridors and in the various cities, in order to leave other parts of the county rural/agricultural" (Question 7). The implication is, therefore, that outside areas designated for protection, residential growth opportunities should be accommodated in different parts of the county as opposed to concentrating population growth in one area over another part of the county. That implication certainly does not mean, however, that sprawl and scattered subdivisions throughout the county are supported by a majority of the questionnaire respondents.

### Geographic Distribution between Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas

The community assessment suggested that the division of future population among rural and municipal populations should be considered and debated in the community participation process. This suggestion was made because there are huge amounts of vacant land within the municipal limits of most cities in Jackson County, and it was determined that most if not all of the countywide future population growth could be accommodated within the cities alone, without the need to develop residentially in unincorporated areas. The implication of that issue was that perhaps there should be a policy statement favoring incorporated (municipal) over unincorporated residential growth. But that idea never received any "traction" from a policy standpoint. Besides, to recommend something of this sort would be somewhat unrealistic, given just how much residential development is already slated for unincorporated parts of the county.

### Residential Scatteration and Rural Sprawl

In adopting this Community Agenda, Jackson County's leaders are placing stronger controls on the scatteration and sprawl of residences. The character area maps (see description later in this chapter) outline an overall pattern that minimizes additional scatter of subdivisions. The

character area maps also guide the timing of development, by designating the county's future in a ten-year development management plan as well as the required 20-year planning horizon. Consistent with policies of the prior comprehensive plan, the desired development pattern is to have contiguous, sequential growth in and around the county's municipalities and along major highway corridors, tied to availability of public water and in many cases sanitary sewer service. The character area maps provide for significant additional rural residential growth, but those designations generally represent a substantial "downsizing" in terms of growth since many of the areas now designated as "rural" were designated in the previous plan as suburban growth areas.

### Over-subdivision and Lack of Market Need for Areas Designated Residential

Market analysts have documented that Jackson County already has enough vacant lots and residential subdivisions to supply residential market needs during most if not all of the 20-year planning horizon and perhaps even for a much longer period of time depending on market conditions. As noted in the Community Assessment, the excess supply of buildable lots is considered so vast that it raised the question of whether strict limits (or a moratorium) on the creation of new subdivisions should be instituted until market trends are largely caught up with the available supply.

**This vacant subdivision street in the River Bend Subdivision is representative of literally dozens of subdivisions that lie mostly or totally vacant; victims of excess subdivision, a flat housing market economy, and subject to vandalism and theft.**

The character area maps for 2020 and 2030 (and accompanying policies) provide stricter controls on new residential subdivisions. Due to the large supply of residential subdivision lots, the character map for the year 2020 "downsizes" substantially the amount of future suburban residential development during the next decade. The idea is that during the next ten years there will be relatively few new/additional suburban residential subdivisions planned, or if they occur they will be restricted to locations where existing lot platting has already established a precedent for suburban subdivisions. After the year 2020, some additional suburban residential areas will be added, per the 2030 character area map.

### Excess of Unoccupied Homes

Jackson County has been a suburban frontier of sorts with a huge boom in housing during much the last decade, but the severe economic recession (2007-2009) and its "housing bust" has resulted in an excess of homes on the market and a huge excess of subdivided lots that have yet to be built upon. The Community Assessment indicated that the county's land use plan must consider the amount of existing homes that are already available to accommodate future populations and the numbers of vacant, subdivided residential lots, before planning new areas for future residential growth. As described in this chapter, the county's character area and future

land use maps address this issue by limiting future residential development areas and also by phasing in new residential development as market needs improve.

### Coordination of Water and Sewer and Land Use Plans

The Community Assessment highlighted the need to coordinate land use decisions with the provision of water and sewer service by the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority as well as municipal service providers. This chapter describes how the character area maps (and the recommended development patterns) promote a phasing of development in two time periods (2010 to 2020, and 2021 to 2030), with all urban development and most suburban development being limited to those areas that have both water and sewer service (or reasonable extensions thereof).

### Balance of Tax Base for Lowest Possible Tax Rate

Like all local governments, there is concern in Jackson County about generating a property tax base that is sufficiently reliant upon non-residential development, so as to keep the burden on residential tax payers as low as possible. Since recent development in Jackson County has been heavily imbalanced in favor of residential development, there is growing concern that future tax burdens will fall disproportionately on the county's residents. The Community Assessment indicated that the county's land use plan and economic development strategies must consider an appropriate balance of non-residential and residential tax bases. The character area and future land use maps take into account the county's desire to have a better balance between nonresidential and residential development lands, and those maps scale back future residential development opportunities in a way that strives to better attain this objective. As noted more fully in the following section, a lot of this issue has to do with industrial lands.

### Land Available for Industry and Consumption of Industrial Lands before Designating Others

Zoning in the county and the various cities within Jackson County establishes many opportunities to establish future manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and other industries. As indicated in the Community Assessment, countywide (including municipalities) there are 10,851 acres of land zoned for industrial use. That constitutes almost 5 percent (4.93 percent) of the total county land area. With regard to the prior county land use plan, it designated 9,409 acres, or 4.28 percent of the unincorporated land area, for industrial development. Counting the land use plan for unincorporated areas and the existing industrial zoning within municipalities, there was some 7.5 percent of the total land area in Jackson County available or planned for industrial development.

The Community Assessment noted that Jackson County should not pre-plan or pre-zone too much land for industrial development, in its efforts to ensure a balanced economic base. One or more community workshop participants wanted to ensure that existing industrially designated lands get developed before planning and zoning for additional industry. To a large extent, this issue is addressed, again, with the development management phasing approach adopted in this chapter. Specifically, by dividing Jackson County's 20-year future into two separate time periods (2010 to 2020, and 2020 to 2030) on both the character area and future land use maps, the county's plan is designed to avoid the premature designation of additional industrial land. However, the plans do not indicate a significant "downsizing" of future industrial land use.

Furthermore, the concern about phasing industrial development and the potential for too much land designated for industrial growth was specifically discussed by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners during the course of preparing this comprehensive plan. After presenting an analysis[2] that the county's adopted land use plan provided a significant surplus of industrial land, Commissioners emphasized the importance of reserving lands appropriate for industrial development even if the market may not support industrial development in the near future, given the need to balance the county's property tax base with quality, non-residential development. Additionally, concern was raised that if prime industrial tracts were not designated industrial, they might be consumed with other uses such as residences at low densities. Given these concerns and policy direction from the Board of Commissioners, the land use plans for 2020 and 2030 designate supplies of industrial land that exceed forecasted needs.

### Character Area Implementation

The Community Assessment stated that Jackson County may need additional measures, such as more overlay districts, in order to implement the recommendations for character areas. When asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Jackson County is doing enough to protect the aesthetic character of the county," 54 respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed, and only 19 agreed (and one strongly agreed); 20 respondents were neutral or had no opinion (Question 20). Jackson County's Community Agenda is responsive to this opportunity by designating additional overlay districts to the future land use plan maps (discussed later in this chapter). This specifically includes a scenic highway designation, which was another opportunity identified in the Community Assessment.

### Consistency between Character/Future Land Use Maps and Zoning

Jackson County's Unified Development Code already requires that rezoning decisions be made in accordance with the future land use plan. There is strong support for maintaining that requirement. However, as currently implemented, the consistency requirement has resulted in "spot" land use plan changes (and corresponding zoning amendments) simply to accomplish the development of small subdivisions or even a single lot with a size smaller than the land use category (and accompanying zoning district allows). The consistency issue is maintained in this comprehensive plan and refined with principles of interpretation, so that determinations of consistency can be made as clearly as possible.

### Transitions of Land Use

Community workshop participants identified the need to have more suitable transitions in land uses. The perceived need for better transitions is evident in the county's prior land use plan, which had some very abrupt changes from industrial to rural places and agriculture. The need is also evident in reviewing the county's rather haphazard zoning patterns. The character area and future land use plan maps pay much greater attention to the need to step down or transition in character and land uses from farmland, to rural places, to suburban residences, then ultimately to urban areas. Therefore, this issue is fully implemented in this Community Agenda.

[2] Memorandum from Jerry Weitz and Associates, Inc. to Gina Mitsdarffer, dated December 7, 2009, titled "Demand and Supply Analysis for Industrial Lands in Jackson County."

### Residential Lot Sizes

The community participation process revealed a divergence of opinions with respect to lot sizes. Some residences would like lot size requirements to be increased, while others believe that smaller lot sizes are needed. As already noted, there is also some mixed opinion reflected in the community questionnaire about whether one-acre lots should be allowed in most parts of the county outside of agricultural protection areas and environmentally sensitive lands (Question 8). Given the divergence of opinions on this issue, the Community Agenda does not call for much change to the residential density framework established in the prior land use plan. There are some notable differences, however. For example, rural clustering is strongly encouraged if not required for major subdivisions in rural areas; this means smaller lots will be allowed but at no overall increase in density. In certain intensive agricultural areas, minimum residential densities are proposed to decrease, while still affording opportunities for minor subdivisions with small lots. This plan is based on the premise that it is the overall residential density, rather than the lot size, that matters most.

### Areas for Mixed Uses and Live/Work/Play Communities

During the community workshops held in September 2009, several small groups reported that Jackson County should designate areas for mixtures of land uses. Residents were particularly interested in the prospects for promoting “live-work-play” or “complete” communities. A new future land use category has been added to accommodate this opportunity. Its application is limited to urban areas near certain municipalities. However, it should be acknowledged that the county’s unified development code allows for “planned development” which can mix different land uses together, and such mixed use development can occur in other character areas besides the urban character area.

### Incentives for Innovative Development

Participants of the community workshops suggested that good, innovative development should be rewarded with incentives. To a large extent, this is an issue that needs to be refined in the process of amending the county’s unified development code. However, there are policy statements adopted in this Community Agenda that support this opportunity, such as encouraging more planned unit development opportunities and encouraging if not requiring conservation subdivisions in rural areas.

### Healthy/Fitness Communities

Closely associated with the issue already described above (mixed use and live-work-play communities) is the notion that communities should be designed with personal health and fitness in mind. This means, for the most part, that communities should be more “walkable.” This Community Agenda advances that opportunity by designating settlement character areas and suggesting that future development in the more rural parts of the county should be oriented (with pedestrian access) to the central points of the settlement, which are typically churches presently but which may include neighborhood-serving retail and services if so designated on the future land use plan maps (see next subsection). The Community Agenda provides a stronger and more coherent framework for encouraging pedestrian access and amenities as additional development occurs.

Another evolving component of the “healthy communities” movement is to incorporate opportunities for growing produce locally. This Community Agenda seeks to advance that

notion further, by encouraging community garden plots and by encouraging much more crop cultivation in Jackson County than now exists.

**Commercial Development Close to Neighborhoods**

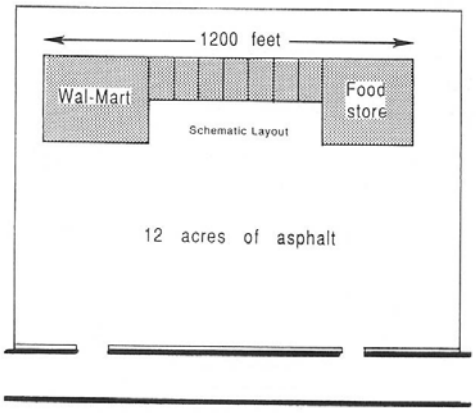
There is a growing sense among certain citizens that the separation of residential neighborhoods from commercial areas in Jackson County may have a negative impact on the county's quality of life in the future, especially given the recent, rapid increases in the costs of gasoline. Some citizens have suggested that Jackson County consider allowing a more dispersed pattern of small, neighborhood serving retail uses that are accessible from adjacent residential areas by foot, or bike, or with a shorter drive time than exists now.

The county's future land use plan maps have been developed with these opportunities in mind. The settlement character area map (see discussion in the next section) is representative of how original settlements developed in rural Jackson County, and the center points of those settlement character areas are the most accessible to the prevailing settlement patterns in rural Jackson County. One or more of the central points of settlement character areas may be appropriate for small neighborhood commercial centers, but only if they are built based on market needs and constructed in a manner that is sensitive to the particular context of the settlement character area. The future land use plan indicates specific locations.

It should be noted here that the revised character area maps and land use plan maps improve on the previous land use plan in two important ways. First, the nodal "centers" for activity in the previous land use plan were designated somewhat arbitrarily, without consideration of settlement character or probable future development concentrations. Secondly, by using a three-part strategy of settlement areas, character areas, and future land use designations, the county is better positioned to ensure such neighborhood-serving commercial areas as designated on the future land use plans are more compatible with the settlement and rural character the county wishes to preserve.

**Control of Strip Malls**

Some Jackson County residents have expressed concern that the county's character will be negatively impacted if the same type of "strip mall" commercial development which has been built in other places occurs in Jackson County. On the other hand, there is clearly much support in Jackson County for more opportunities for retail commercial development. In short, residents want more opportunities for shopping, but they desire a different sort of commercial product than that found in most suburban developing areas.




Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 3-1, p. 28. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

**Residents want retail but do not wish to see conventional strip mall development patterns.**

The Community Agenda addresses this issue by increasing the attention given to aesthetics of commercial development and by articulating site development principles for commercial

development along major highways that will help to mitigate the conventional “strip mall” design that is otherwise likely to occur.

### Moratorium on Subdivisions and Mobile Home Parks

During the process of developing the community assessment, the idea of a moratorium on subdivisions and mobile home parks was suggested, and it was therefore identified as an issue. With regard to the surplus of subdivided lots, rather than calling for a moratorium, this plan uses a growth phasing approach and limits the amount of additional vacant land that are proposed to be converted to residential subdivisions during the next decade. Coupled with the consistency requirement of this plan, it is anticipated that these measures will be strong enough to avoid placing a moratorium on new land subdivisions. Moratoria must be for a specified purpose and be for a limited duration, in order to be legally upheld, and they are harsh enough of a policy that they should only be considered as a last resort.

The possibility of a moratorium on mobile home parks or manufactured homes was also identified as an issue in the participation process. The community survey provides some insights as to community perceptions about manufactured homes. At minimum, a majority of respondents indicated their belief that manufactured homes devalue stick-built homes and nearby properties, and further, a major of respondents favored stricter regulations on the location and placement of manufactured homes (Question 12). As noted above, a moratorium is a harsh policy response that should be used only as a last resort. This Community Agenda does, however, address in greater detail the issue of manufactured home compatibility and placement, though it does not alter significantly current permissions in terms of the location of manufactured homes in the unincorporated parts of the county.

### Equestrian Subdivisions

“Equestrian subdivisions” are designed to accommodate individual ownership of horses on larger lots. They were identified as a potential opportunity in the Community Assessment. However, other observers suggested that there was not much of a market need and that those equestrian subdivisions the county does have now are not very suitably developed. This Community Agenda addresses this issue in terms of policy guidance.

### Property Rights

As noted in the Community Assessment, the steering committee specifically agreed that property rights should be listed as an issue to be addressed. Every land use planning effort must be cognizant of property rights, but Jackson County’s Community Agenda goes further than what is typically done by specifically articulating property rights as a policy. It is recognized, however, that in any scheme of land use planning and regulation, some property owners will benefit (with “windfalls”), while others will be denied opportunities to pursue development of their own choice (i.e., faced with “wipeouts”). The future land use planning process has been undertaken with property rights in mind and has been drafted to ensure that property owners have a reasonable economic use, but not necessarily the “highest and best” use, as that term is customarily understood to mean by property owners.

### Review and Revision of Unified Development Code

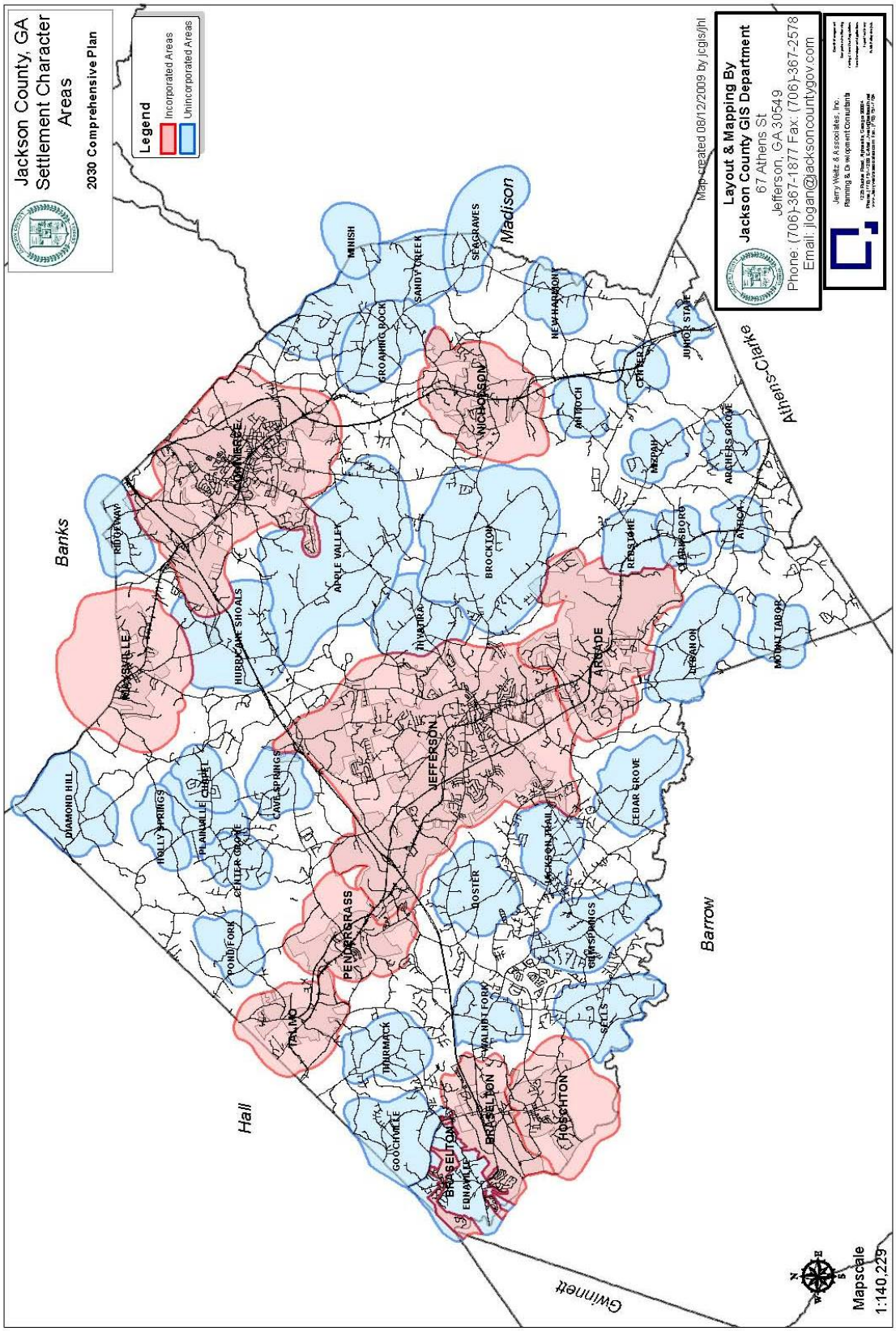
The short term work program calls for a code reassessment process and a comprehensive revision of the county's unified development code, in order to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

## SETTLEMENT CHARACTER AREAS

In historical context, Jackson County developed in a series of mostly rural and urban settlements spanning across almost all of Jackson County. The map titled "Settlement Character Areas" shows some 45 distinct subparts of Jackson County, corresponding to incorporated and unincorporated places, though not covering the county's entire geography. The settlement character areas map serves three primary purposes. First, a large county is difficult to generalize about, and it can be difficult to even refer to different subareas of the county unless there are names associated with the parts. This map allows the community to refer to smaller subareas of the county that would otherwise be difficult to describe without the aid of a map of this sort.

**Historic Lebanon Church is a community focal point in the "Lebanon" settlement character area, which is in south Jackson, south of Arcade, and bisected by SR 82, Lebanon Church Rd. and B. Whitfield Rd.**

Second, any attempt to describe character on a countywide basis should be cognizant of the original settlement pattern of the community. The settlement character map is thus an attempt to capture the historic roots of early settlement patterns. The map includes urban areas that correspond with municipal limits generally as they exist today. Some of the areas on this map are recognized by the community today as distinct, unincorporated communities and even have their own identifying signs along roads and highways (e.g., "Brockton" and "Apple Valley"). The names of other settlements were identified from maps of the county, such as the Georgia Department of Transportation's general highway map and the commercially produced Aero Atlas. Names such as "Clarksboro" and "Attica" appear on them, reflecting the fact that some unincorporated communities have taken on their own, unofficial names. Other settlements were assigned names based primarily on the existence of churches and/or the names of roads. Yet others have names rooted in the earliest (e.g., Indian) history of Jackson County. Third, the settlement character map was thought to have potential to influence character area policies in Jackson County. The link to the character area maps (existing, 2020, and 2030) is made with the following table, which summarizes the locations of each settlement character area and generalizes existing and future character as shown on the character area maps. A limited set of policies apply to the settlement character areas (see the next section).


Jackson County, GA
Settlement Character Areas
2030 Comprehensive Plan
Legend
Incorporated Areas
Unincorporated Areas
Map created 08/12/2009 by jcgis/jhl
Layout & Mapping By
Jackson County GIS Department
67 Athens St
Jefferson, GA 30549
Phone: (706)-367-1877 Fax: (706)-367-2578
Email: jlogan@jacksoncountygov.com
Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Planning & Development Consultants
Mapscale
1:140,229
Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Barrow
Gwinnett
Hall
DIAMOND HILL
HOLLY SPRINGS
PLAINVILLE
CENTER GROVE
CAVE SPRINGS
POND FORK
PENDERGRASS
TALMO
THURMACK
GOOCHLAND
BRASELTON
EUHARLEE
BRASELTON
WALNUT FORK
BOSTER
JEFFERSON
HOSCHTON
JACKSON TRAIL
CEDAR SPRINGS
SELLS
CEDAR GROVE
ARCADE
LEGAHON
MOUNT LAKE
REDBONE
CLARKSBORO
ATHICA
ARCHER
ARCHER GROVE
MCNAY
ATTOCH
CENTER
JUNIOR STATE
NEW HARMONY
NICHOLSON
BROCKTON
TIVATICA
APPLE VALLEY
HURRICANE SHOALS
COMMERCE
MASSELL
RUTHERFORD
GROANING ROCK
SANDY CREEK
SEAGRAVES
MINISH

## Table 3.1
## Settlement Character Area Locations and Description of Development Futures

| Settlement Name | Location Description Including Major Roads | Summary of Character and Change 2020 and 2030 |
|---|---|---|
| Braselton | West Jackson, N and S of I-85, mostly south of SR 53 | Urban and suburban; developed and developing; influenced by growth from metro Atlanta area; urban and suburban expansion with sewer |
| Ednaville | West Jackson, N of I-85 between city limits of Braselton, Ednaville Rd. | Suburban; developed and developing; influenced by growth from metro Atlanta area; sanitary sewer |
| Hoschton | City of Hoschton and southern surroundings; SR 53 | Urban and suburban; developed and infill development potential; suburban and rural growth along SR 53 toward Barrow County; conservation along Mulberry River; includes agricultural fringe at eastern side of settlement character area |
| Goochville | West Jackson, N of SR 53 along Davenport Rd. and Guy Cooper Rd. | Mix of rural, suburban, and agricultural; influenced by metro Atlanta and Gainesville-Hall County growth pressures; limited suburbanization/rural growth |
| Thurmack | West Jackson, along SR 60 north of I-85, including New Orr Rd. and Fairview Rd. | Predominantly agricultural and rural, limited suburban; limited change; agricultural and rural preservation |
| Walnut Fork | West Jackson, E of Braselton along Zion Church Road at SR 60 and Sam Freeman Rd. and SR 124, south of I-85 | Rural and agricultural with limited suburbanization; rural growth north of Zion Church Road/SR 124; agricultural preservation south of Zion Church Road/SR 124; future suburban growth at I-85 and possible new interchange with SR 60 |
| Sells | West Jackson, E of Hoschton, along SR 53 to Barrow County, including Jackson Trail Rd. | Predominantly suburban approaching “Traditions;” some rural; conservation along Mulberry River; future suburban and rural growth; limited agriculture |
| Gum Springs | West/South Jackson, along Gum Springs Church Rd. and Jackson Trail Rd., including SR 11 (Winder Hwy.) corridor to Barrow County | Suburban in western part including “Traditions;” mostly agricultural rural southeast of Jackson Trail Rd.; maintenance of agriculture; limited suburban and rural growth mostly in western part; agricultural/rural in SR 11 corridor |
| Doster | West Jackson S of I-85 along SR 332; Creek Nation Rd. | Mix of rural and agricultural with scattered existing suburbanization; predominantly rural growth area; maintenance of agriculture |
| Jackson Trail | Easternmost part of West Jackson along SR 11 (Winder Hwy.) and N/S of SR 124 | Predominantly suburban developed and suburban developing along SR 124; mostly rural along SR 11; suburban expansion; maintenance of agriculture |
| Cedar Grove | South Jackson, west of SR 11 (Winder Hwy.), including W.H. Hayes Rd., Ebenezer Church Rd. and Cedar Grove Church Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with concentrations of rural development; suburban in north part near Jackson Trail and Jefferson settlements; limited development activity; agricultural and rural preservation area |
| Talmo | West Central Jackson, City of Talmo and surroundings, along U.S. 129, including Mountain Creek Church Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with rural/suburban town center without sewer; existing suburban along Old Gainesville Hwy; Suburban growth along U.S. 129 and Old Gainesville Hwy. |
| Pendergrass | West Central Jackson, City of Pender-grass and surroundings, along U.S. 129; including SR 332 | Predominantly urban and suburban; developed and developing; urban expansion with sewer; suburban growth along SR 332 |
| Jefferson | Central Jackson, 2 interchanges along I-85, U.S. 129, U.S. 129 Bus., SR 11, SR 82, and SR 335; City of Jefferson and surroundings | Predominantly urban and suburban; developed and developing; urban expansion with sewer and suburban expansion mostly with sewer; contiguous growth expansion along major highway corridors |
| Arcade | South Central Jackson, along U.S. 129 at U.S. 129 Bus. and SR 82; City of Arcade and surroundings | Mostly suburban and rural without sewer; substantial suburban growth planned including Town Center (4W Farms); north of U.S. 129; sewer planned long-range |

| Settlement Name | Location Description Including Major Roads | Summary of Character and Change 2020 and 2030 |
|---|---|---|
| Lebanon | South Jackson, south of Arcade, bisected SR 82 to Barrow County and Lebanon Church Rd., B. Whitfield Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with rural concentrations; very limited change; agricultural and rural preservation |
| Mount Tabor | South Jackson along SR 330 west of Bear Creek Reservoir; Old Hunter Rd. | Almost exclusively agricultural; limited rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| Pond Fork | Northwest Jackson northeast of City of Talmo, Pond Fork Church Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| Center Grove | Northwest Jackson, Pond Fork Church Rd. and Holly Springs Rd. | Predominantly rural with some suburban; agricultural at fringes; limited rural growth |
| Holly Springs | Northwest Jackson N and S of Holly Springs Rd. at Lipscomb Lake Rd. and Deadwyler Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| Plainview | Northwest Jackson, Holly Springs Rd. and Plainview Rd. | Rural and agricultural; very limited change; agricultural/rural preservation |
| Chapel | Northwest Jackson, N and S of Plainview Rd. E of Plainview settlement | Suburban with significant rural; agricultural at fringes; very limited change from mix of additional growth; agricultural preservation at fringes |
| Cave Springs | Northwest Jackson, N. of I-85 along Holly Springs Rd. and Wayne Poultry Rd. | Current mix of urban, suburban, and agricultural; developing urban and future suburban; area is served with sanitary sewer and is substantial growth area |
| Redstone | South Jackson along U.S. 129 and New Kings Bridge Rd., SE of City of Arcade | Predominantly agricultural and rural, with limited suburban; rural growth area; agricultural preservation |
| Clarksboro | South Jackson along U.S. 129 at Crooked Creek Rd. and Breck Rd. | Mostly rural with some suburban; agricultural at fringes; limited rural growth; agricultural preservation |
| Attica | South Jackson along U.S. 129 at Lebanon Church Rd., Holiday Cemetery Rd and SR 330 | Mix of suburban, rural, and agricultural; limited change at fringes along U.S. 129 |
| Hurricane Shoals | Northwest Jackson N and S of I-85 at SR 82 Spur, including part of City of Commerce; Woods Bridge Rd. | Currently rural and agricultural but slated for urban growth mostly in Commerce; some suburban along Woods Bridge Rd. Includes proposed forest preserve |
| Apple Valley | North Central Jackson along Apple Valley Road, Lyle Field Rd. and SR 15 Alt.(Commerce Rd.), SW of Commerce | Predominantly agricultural with rural enclaves; Includes proposed forest preserve; very limited rural growth; agricultural preservation |
| Thyatira | Central Jackson east of Jefferson along SR 15 Alt. (Commerce Rd.), County Farm Rd. and Thyatira Brockton Rd. | Existing rural and agricultural; rural growth in south part and agricultural preservation in north part |
| Brockton | East Central Jackson along SR 335 E. of Jefferson and W. of Nicholson; Brockton Loop | Predominantly agricultural and rural; limited rural growth, agricultural preservation, conservation of Little Curry Creek and Middle Oconee River floodplains; possible location for reservoir |
| Mitzpah | Southeast Jackson, N and S of Jefferson River Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with rural enclaves; little to no change; agricultural preservation |
| Archers Grove | Southeast Jackson, between U.S. Highway 129 and Jefferson River Rd. along Archers Grove School Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with rural enclaves; very limited rural growth; agricultural preservation |
| Diamond Hill | Northwest Jackson S of SR 53 abutting Hall and Banks Counties | Agricultural and mostly under single ownership (Diamond Ranch); little if any change until approved major planned suburban development is constructed |
| Maysville | North Jackson along SR 98 and SR 82 Spur abutting Banks County, including City of Maysville and surroundings | Mix of urban, suburban, rural, and agricultural; some limited growth pressures; suburban growth to 2020 at fringes especially along SR 98, 98 corridor becoming urbanized with sewer extension by 2030; agricultural preservation at western and southern fringes |

| Settlement Name | Location Description Including Major Roads | Summary of Character and Change 2020 and 2030 |
|---|---|---|
| Ridgeway | Ridgeway Church Rd abutting Banks County, north of I-85 and Commerce | Agricultural and rural with urban at eastern edge adjacent to Banks Crossing; some rural growth; agricultural preservation |
| Commerce | North Jackson mostly S of I-85 and along SR 98 and U.S. 441, including City of Commerce and surroundings | Mostly urban and suburban but with agriculture and rural also; urban and suburban growth area with sanitary sewer; some preservation of agriculture and rural areas at fringes |
| Nicholson | East Central Jackson along U.S. 441 and SR 335, including City of Nicholson and surroundings | Suburban with rural enclaves, some agriculture; Small urban town center by 2020 with limited sewer; some suburban and rural growth |
| Antioch | East Jackson, S of Nicholson, W of U.S. 441, along Antioch Church Rd. and Old Kings Bridge Rd. | Rural along county roads and agricultural; some rural growth; agricultural preservation; includes University of Georgia conservation land |
| Center | Southeast Jackson, along U.S. 441; New Kings Bridge Road and Chandler Bridge Rd. (mostly formerly incorporated) | Rural concentration at U.S. 441 and along county roads, limited suburban; rural growth area, unserved by sewer |
| Junior State | Southeast Jackson, W and E of U.S. 441 just north of Athens-Clarke County | Some suburban and rural; some suburban and rural growth; agricultural preservation at eastern fringe |
| Groaning Rock | Northeast Jackson, along SR 334 and Groaning Rock Road | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| Sandy Creek | Northeast Jackson abutting Madison County; W. L. Williams Rd., Erastus Church Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| Minish | Northeast Jackson (surrounded by Sandy Creek settlement); W. L. Williams Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| Seagraves | East Jackson S of Sandy Creek settlement, along SR 334 at Seagraves Mill Rd | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |
| New Harmony | East Jackson SE of Nicholson along SR 334 at Cooper Farm Rd. | Predominantly agricultural with some existing rural settlement; very limited change; agricultural preservation |

Note: Descriptions of existing and future character in this table are generalized. Refer to character area maps for specifics. Policies for settlement character areas can be found in Chapter 5.

## Settlement Character Area Policies

1. **Use Map as Identification Tool.** When rezoning or discretionary land use applications are filed, the Public Development Department should identify the settlement area within which the application is located, for purposes of community identification.

2. **Subarea or Refinement Plans.** Any subarea or refinement plans developed in the future by Jackson County should use the settlement character area map as a basis for defining the boundaries for such plans.

3. **Signage and Gateway Features.** Jackson County's comprehensive plan (this community agenda) supports and encourages private, community, and public efforts to install signage and unique gateway features that identify the settlement, especially the community focal point(s).

4. **Development to Preserve Character and History.** When development occurs within a given settlement character area, that development should respect and preserve the

existing pattern, character of the settlement. The architecture of new development should be compatible with the existing, built environment. Any historic churches, cemeteries, farmsteads, historic sites, and other unique, man-made features in the settlement should be allowed to dominate, or at least not be obscured or overpowered by new development. Pedestrian access to community focal points in the settlement should be provided where appropriate.

## CHARACTER AREAS OVERVIEW

The character area maps in Jackson County's comprehensive plan (this community agenda) are a critically important tool for countywide growth management. Jackson County's strategic approach to character area mapping is consistent with the primary purpose of character area planning as articulated in local planning rules of the state, which is generally to maintain, preserve, and enhance the unique characteristics of the county's places. The character mapping approach used in Jackson County, however, goes beyond that basic objective by incorporating countywide growth management principles such as land classification, urban and suburban containment, urban service area boundaries, growth phasing, adequate public facilities, and annexation planning. In short, the countywide growth management strategy interjects a "timing" component and city-county cooperation mechanisms that are missing from most county comprehensive plans and which are difficult to implement when only the most conventional land use planning and zoning techniques are employed.

This plan provides three character maps. The first one shows "existing" character as of 2009. A second map shows the desired development pattern of the county in the year 2020. The third map shows desired character in 2030. All three maps assign all land in the county, including incorporated areas, to one of the five character areas. The maps use a typology of five generalized land classifications:

- Conservation
- Agricultural
- Rural
- Suburban, and
- Urban

The character areas are described in detail in the following pages. There is some additional analysis of the acreages involved in the character area maps and how the county's character will change during the next ten and twenty years. Since that information is important for technical analysis but does not have a bearing on everyday decision making, it is placed in an appendix of this community agenda (see Appendix A, Character Area Supplement).

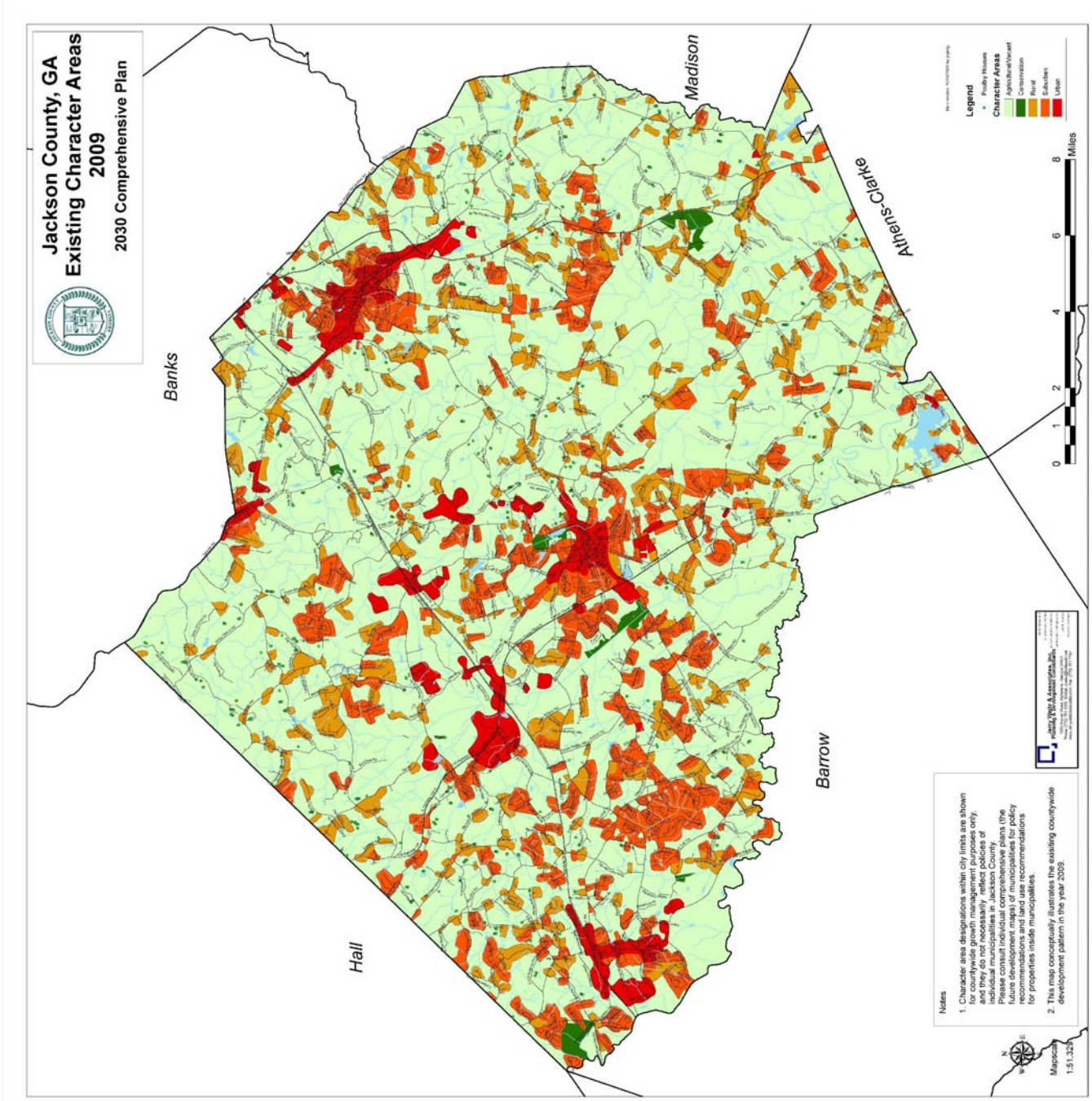
For all character areas, the principle implementation technique is the zoning ordinance, which is contained within the county's Unified Development Code (UDC). Jackson County divides all of the unincorporated area into zones which, by and large, already implement the comprehensive plan. Added to the zoning districts is the principle of consistency, which requires that zoning changes must be made in accordance with the character area and future land use plan maps. The consistency principle is already in existence in the county's Unified Development Code. It is instructive to note that during the public participation process stronger controls such as moratoria on manufactured home parks and new subdivisions were suggested. Such stronger measures were considered in the process of developing this community agenda but were not adopted.

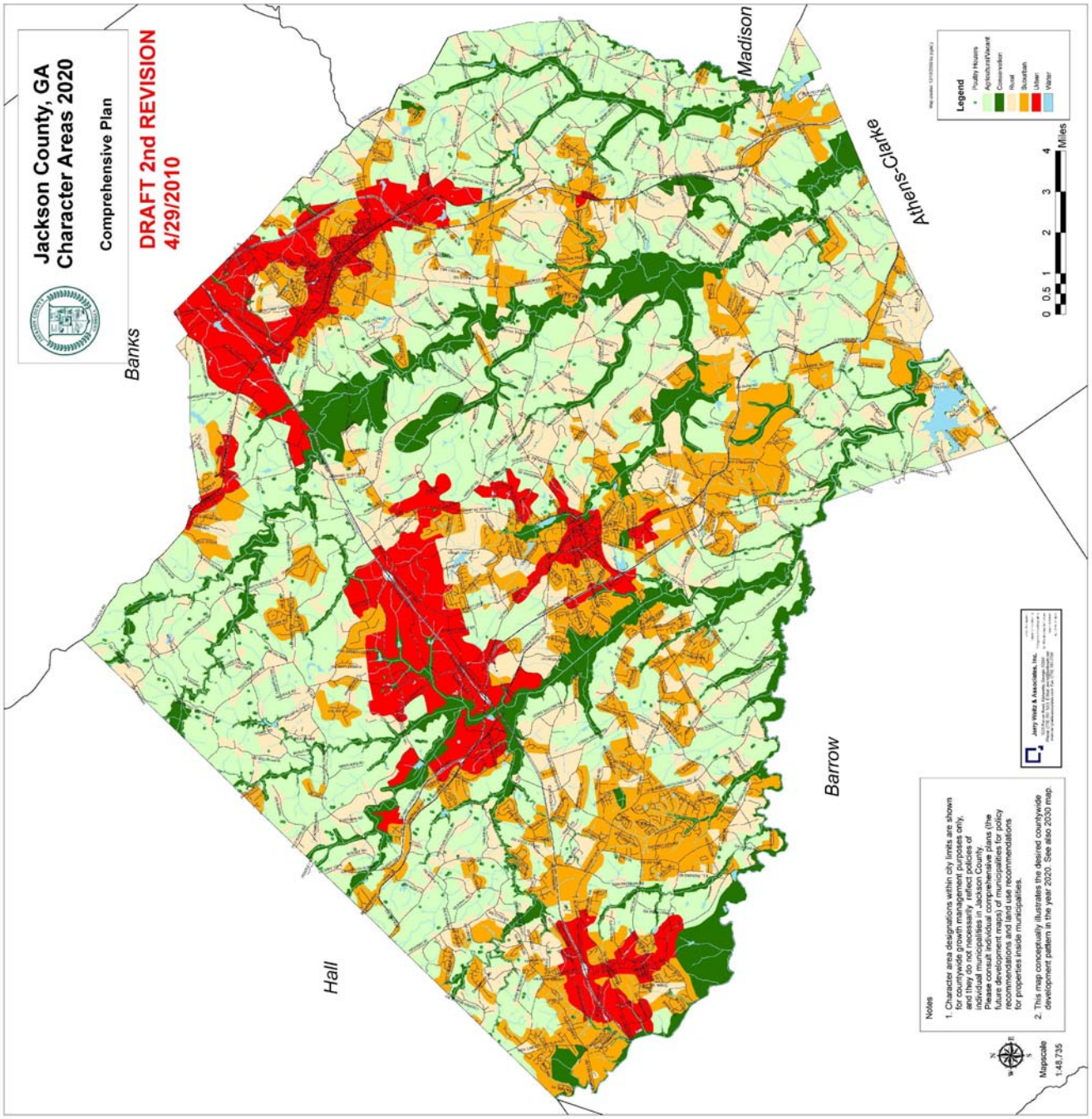
Although the county's UDC provides a regulatory framework that necessitates few if any major changes in terms of structure to implement the character areas, a significant amendment to the UDC is called for in the short-term work program, nonetheless. The implementation chapter (Chapter 5) is specific in terms of the changes needed to the UDC to implement the community

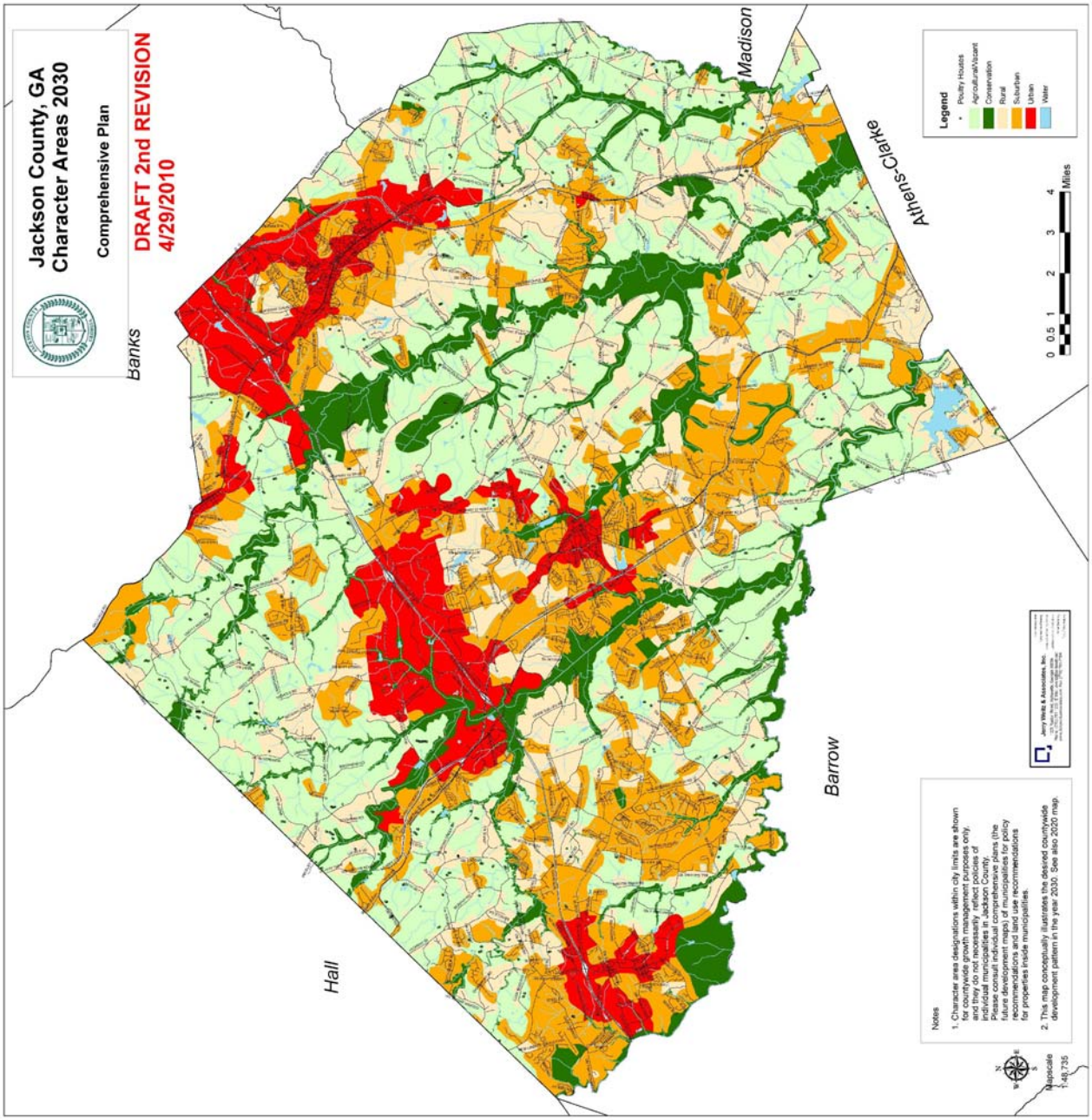
agenda, including character areas. Those changes include the establishment of new overlay districts (see the section “Special Overlays”).

During the process of preparing the community agenda, the preparation of subarea plans was considered as to whether they were needed to implement the character area maps. The first draft of the community agenda recommended preparation of a small-area plan for the “Center” area, given that it was previously incorporated, has a somewhat concentrated development pattern, and may need refinement during the planning horizon in terms of land use issues and the maintenance of character. However, preparation of a small area refinement plan for Center was struck from the short-term work program given other priorities for the use of limited funds. No other subarea plans are considered necessary, and none is called for in this community agenda.

As noted previously in this chapter, participants of the community workshops suggested that good, innovative development should be rewarded with incentives. To a large extent, this is an issue that needs to be refined in the process of amending the county’s unified development code. However, there are policy statements adopted in this Community Agenda that support this opportunity, such as encouraging more planned unit development opportunities.


Jackson County, GA
Existing Character Areas
2009
2030 Comprehensive Plan
Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Legend
Character Areas
Agricultural/Forest
Conservation
Rural
Suburban
Urban
Miles
0
1
2
4
6
8
Notes
1. Character area designations within city limits are shown for countywide growth management purposes only, and they do not necessarily reflect policies of individual municipalities in Jackson County. Please consult individual comprehensive plans (the future development maps) of municipalities for policy recommendations and land use recommendations for properties inside municipalities.
2. This map conceptually illustrates the existing countywide development pattern in the year 2009.
Mapscale
1:51,328


Jackson County, GA
Character Areas 2020
Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT 2nd REVISION
4/29/2010
Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Legend
Poultry Houses
Agriculture/Pasture
Conservation
Rural
Suburban
Urban
Water
0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Miles
Notes
1. Character area designations within city limits are shown for countywide comprehensive planning purposes only, and they do not necessarily reflect policies of individual municipalities in Jackson County. Please consult individual comprehensive plans (the future development maps) of municipalities for policy recommendations and land use recommendations for properties inside municipalities.
2. This map conceptually illustrates the desired countywide development pattern in the year 2020. See also 2030 map.
Mapscale
1:48,735


Jackson County, GA
Character Areas 2030
Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT 2nd REVISION
4/29/2010
Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Legend
Poultry Houses
Agricultural/Vacant
Conservation
Rural
Suburban
Urban
Water
0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Miles
Notes
1. Character area designations within city limits are shown for countywide growth management purposes only. Jackson County does not control the actions of individual municipalities in Jackson County. Please consult individual comprehensive plans (the future development maps) of municipalities for policy recommendations and land use recommendations for properties inside municipalities.
2. This map conceptually illustrates the desired countywide development pattern in the year 2030. See also 2020 map.
Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Mapscale
1:48,735

## Consistency Matrix

Table 3.2 provides a comprehensive listing of how the character area maps align with future land use plan map categories and zoning districts shown on the county's official zoning map (and described in the Unified Development Code). Table 3.2 is the most essential information used for consistency determinations and overrides individual descriptions of character areas in the event of conflict or inconsistency.

**Table 3.2**
**Character, Land Use and Zoning District Consistency Matrix**

| Character Map | Future Land Use Map | Zoning District(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Conservation | Parks/Recreation/Conservation | (as zoned) |
| Agricultural | Intensive Agriculture | Planned Commercial Farm District (PCFD) |
| | | Agricultural Rural Farm District (A-2) |
| | Agricultural/Forestry | Agricultural Rural Farm District (A-2) |
| | Residential | Agricultural Rural Farm District (A-2) |
| | Public/Institutional | Agricultural Rural Farm District (A-2) |
| | Transportation/Communication/Utilities | (as zoned) |
| Rural | Agricultural/Forestry | Agricultural Rural Farm District (A-2) |
| | | Agricultural Residential (AR) |
| | Residential | Agricultural Residential (AR) |
| | | Manufactured Housing (MH) |
| | Public/Institutional | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | Commercial | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | Transportation/Communication/Utilities | (as zoned) |
| Suburban | Residential | Single-family Detached (R-1) |
| | | Medium Density Residential (R-2) |
| | Public/Institutional | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | Commercial | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | | Community Retail Commercial (CRC) |
| | Master-Planned Mixed Use | Planned Development (Special Use) |
| | | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | | Medium Density Residential (R-2) |
| | | Single-family Detached (R-1) |
| | Transportation/Communication/Utilities | (as zoned) |
| Urban | Residential | Single-family Detached (R-1) |
| | | Medium Density Residential (R-2) |
| | | Multi-family Residential (R-3) |
| | Public/Institutional | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | Commercial | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | | Community Retail Commercial (CRC) |
| | | Highway Retail Commercial (HRC) |
| | Master-Planned Mixed Use | Planned Development (Special Use) |
| | | Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) |
| | | Community Retail Commercial (CRC) |
| | | Highway Retail Commercial (HRC) |
| | | Multi-family Residential (R-3) |
| | | Medium Density Residential (R-2) |
| | | Single-family Detached (R-1) |
| | Industrial | Light Industrial (LI) |
| | | General Industrial (GI) |
| | | Heavy Industrial (HI) |
| | Transportation/Communication/Utilities | (as zoned) |

## THE CONSERVATION CHARACTER AREA

| PRINCIPLE(S) AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs) | | GENERAL LAND USE FRAMEWORK | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overarching Principle(s) | Environmental Protection | Overarching Land Use(s) | Mostly natural state |
| Environmental Protection | Chief emphasis | General Intensity of Development | Very low if any; development discouraged if permitted at all |
| Open Space Protection | Leading role of character area; required | **SPECIFIC LAND USE PERMISSIONS (see Table 3.2 for future land use districts)** | |
| Growth preparedness | Inapplicable | Land Subdivision Permissions | Restricted or prohibited |
| Appropriate Business | Inapplicable | Agriculture and Forestry | Restricted |
| Employment Options | Inapplicable | Residential Density "Target" | Less than 1 unit per 10 acres |
| Educational Opportunities | Inapplicable | Residential Density Maximum | Not specified |
| Housing Opportunities | Inapplicable | Manufactured Housing | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged |
| Traditional Neighborhood | Inapplicable | Multi-Family Housing | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged |
| Infill Development | Inapplicable | Institutional (Churches, Schools, etc.) | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged |
| Heritage Preservation | Mostly inapplicable | Commercial | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged |
| Regional identity | Contributing role | Industrial | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged |
| Sense of Place | Contributing role | Semi-Public Uses | Case by case basis |
| Regional Cooperation | Leading role (conservation) | **PRIMARY LAND USE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES** | |
| Transportation Alternatives | Greenways/multi-use trails may be included | Existing Base Zoning District(s) | None |
| Jobs-Housing Relationship | Inapplicable – built environment is discouraged | New/Modified Base Zoning District(s) | Consider new district as may be needed |
| | | Existing Overlay District(s) | 100-year floodplains; wetlands; others |
| **WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AVAILABILITY** | | New Overlay District(s) | None identified |
| Sanitary Sewer Available? | No | Special Tool(s): Land Acquisition for Open Space | Conservation easements; PDR; TDR |
| Public Water Available? | Not usually | Special Tool: Corridor Map | Reserve future facilities/routes |
| **DESIGN-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)** | | **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS** | |
| Overall Building Form/Pattern | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged | Primary Mobility Option | Not applicable |
| Building Setback from Road; Orientation | Inapplicable-buildings discouraged | Road Service and Surfacing | Not provided except where essential crossings are needed |
| Desired Design Principles | None – leave in natural state | Road Design Features (Improvements) | Environmental considerations dominate where provided |
| Special Design Features | Natural or environmentally sensitive features only | Access Management | Inapplicable – no access |
| Stormwater Management | Natural system | Connectivity | Not encouraged |
| Parking Areas | None except recreational based; environmentally sensitive design | Sidewalks | Not required but multi-use trails may be planned |

**Conservation**

**Trail Head at Sells Mill Park**

**Hurricane Shoals**

### Conservation Character Area Implementation Summary

Conservation areas emphasize implementation of the environmental protection Quality Community Objective (QCO), but they also implement regional identity and sense of place QCOs (see summary table above). Conservation areas consist primarily of flood plains and three forest preserves. The community assessment provides numerous maps which will be used to evaluate future development proposals with regard to their impact on the environment. Consulting and applying those maps will both discourage inappropriate development and encourage development patterns that protect the environment and natural resources of Jackson County. As noted in the executive summary, a multitude of greenspace preservation programs are suggested, starting with a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program which could eventually evolve into a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program, as well as protection through conservation easements and outright acquisition of fee-simple title. Jackson County will also use regulation, such as its flood plain management ordinance contained within the UDC, to restrict inappropriate development in flood plains, floodways, and wetlands.

In terms of infrastructure and public improvements, over the long term, greenways are envisioned along the county's three rivers (Mulberry, Middle Oconee, and North Oconee) so that residents and visitors can enjoy the county's riparian conservation areas. Conservation character areas do not require other public investment or infrastructure improvement.

### Conservation Character Area Policies

1. **Open Space.** When a major subdivision (6 or more lots) or land development of 5 acres or more involves land designated as conservation, such subdivision or land development should protect as permanent open space all (or at least the vast majority) of the land designated as conservation.

2. **Preferred Methods.** Preferred methods of the permanent protection of conservation lands as open space include dedication to a public entity (if dedication is acceptable locally) and/or a conservation easement with management by an approved land trust.

3. **Purchase of Development Rights.** Subject to county initiation of a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, the purchase of development rights will also be a preferred method of permanent open space protection.

4. **Acceptable Method.** Ownership and management by a homeowners, condominium, or property owners association may also be an acceptable method of permanent open space protection. The use of such conservation lands for crop cultivation may be permitted.

5. **Passive Recreation.** Jackson County intends conservation lands to be publicly accessible for passive recreational opportunities, particularly when public access is supported by specific policies for public open space acquisition and/or parks and greenway plans.

6. **Private Exclusion.** The set aside of conservation lands for private use (i.e., only the residents or users of the subject development) will not be considered acceptable unless it can be demonstrated public access is impractical, unnecessary, or otherwise unsupportive in terms of county policies.

7. **Land Development Impacts.** If land development within a conservation area is permitted, it needs to minimize the impact on water quality and the environment. Acceptable mitigation practices for land development in conservation areas may include limiting pavement and impervious surfaces, natural buffers, and low impact development designs which feature naturalized designs for stormwater management.

8. **Annexation.** If a municipality annexes land designated as conservation, it should provide for the permanent protection of the land designated as conservation by appropriate means in a manner consistent with county policies for the conservation character area.

## THE AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER AREA

| PRINCIPLE(S) AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs) | | GENERAL LAND USE FRAMEWORK | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overarching Principle(s) | Resource Protection | Overarching Land Use(s) | Predominantly agriculture and agriculture homesteads |
| Environmental Protection | Focus on agricultural best management practices | General Intensity of Development | Very low |
| Open Space Protection | Farmland as private open space | **SPECIFIC LAND USE PERMISSIONS (see Table 3.2 for future land use districts)** | |
| Growth preparedness | Mostly inapplicable | Land Subdivision Permissions | Restricted to minor lot platting |
| Appropriate Business | Agribusiness | Agriculture and Forestry | Permitted and encouraged |
| Employment Options | Agribusiness | Residential Density "Target" | 1 unit per 10 acres |
| Educational Opportunities | Inapplicable | Residential Density Maximum | 1 unit per 8 acres with additional allowances |
| Housing Opportunities | Mostly inapplicable | Manufactured Housing | Permitted with fewest restrictions |
| Traditional Neighborhood | Inapplicable | Multi-Family Housing | None unless farm-worker housing is permitted by special use |
| Infill Development | Inapplicable | Institutional (Churches, Schools, etc.) | Discouraged except for existing |
| Heritage Preservation | Leading role of character area | Commercial | Limited to farm-related activities only |
| Regional identity | Contributing role | Industrial | Restricted; generally prohibited |
| Sense of Place | Leading role of character area | Semi-Public Uses | Discouraged |
| Regional Cooperation | Leading role (economy and resource protection) | **PRIMARY LAND USE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES** | |
| Transportation Alternatives | Not feasible/ not provided except rural public transit | Existing Base Zoning District(s) | PCFD; A-2 |
| Jobs-Housing Relationship | Relatively balanced and self-sustaining | New/Modified Base Zoning District(s) | Exclusive or intensive farmland (modify existing) |
| | | Existing Overlay District(s) | None identified |
| **WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AVAILABILITY** | | New Overlay District(s) | SR 334 Scenic Corridor |
| Sanitary Sewer Available? | No | Special Tool(s): Land Acquisition for Open Space | Conservation easements; PDR; TDR |
| Public Water Available? | No | Special Tool: Corridor Map | Reserve future facilities/routes |
| **DESIGN-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)** | | **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS** | |
| Overall Building Form/Pattern | Farmstead | Primary Mobility Option | Automobile |
| Building Setback from Road; Orientation | Usually very large (100'+) and variable | Road Service and Surfacing | Unimproved, mostly private; some paved county roads and state routes |
| Desired Design Principles | Agrarian -- rural | Road Design Features (Improvements) | Irregular, lack standards except for fire accessibility |
| Special Design Features | Not applicable except those related to farmland protection | Access Management | Mostly inapplicable |
| Stormwater Management | Unimproved sheet flow to watershed lakes | Connectivity | Not necessary |
| Parking Areas | Not regulated | Sidewalks | Not feasible/ not provided |

**Agricultural**

**Intensive Agriculture: Poultry Farm**

**Hay Field**

## Agricultural Character Area Implementation Summary

Agricultural character areas emphasize many QCOs, including agribusiness development, sense of place, regional identity, environmental protection, and agricultural heritage preservation. As with the conservation character area, the county planning staff and development applicants will consult and apply natural resource and development constraint maps which will help discourage inappropriate development within agricultural areas and encourage development patterns that protect agricultural resources in Jackson County. In particular, the resource maps in the community assessment show prime agricultural soils, and an overall (composite) map of the most important agricultural resources underscores the importance of protecting the county's unincorporated agricultural lands.

The consistency principle will ensure that rezoning of agricultural land does not take place unless the plan is amended first. The county already has in place a number of agricultural zoning districts which will adequately implement the vision for the agricultural character area, including all land uses which are desired, permitted, and prohibited. There are some additional subdivision permissions that are needed in order to implement the desired development patterns for the agricultural character area. By amending the agricultural zoning districts to permit a limited number of lots for residences, the county will ensure that plan amendments from agricultural to rural or suburban, or for residential use, will not further erode or encroach on the agricultural character area.

As noted in the executive summary, farms comprise many of the county's historic resources as well as cultural landscapes. The plan calls for additional nominations to the Georgia Centennial Farm Program, which will preserve important agrarian resources in the county. By updating its historic resources inventory and pursuing a countywide historic preservation program to protect resources in unincorporated parts of the county during the long range planning horizon, Jackson County will implement the desired development patterns in the agricultural character area. By consulting the settlement character area map, the county is more likely to retain the unique characteristics of different parts of the county, especially those with an agricultural heritage or distinct rural character. One additional regulatory implementation measure proposed in this plan and included in the short-term work program is the establishment of a scenic highway corridor for SR 334; by establishing that overlay district, Jackson County will help preserve the agricultural and rural character of eastern Jackson County, one of its most scenic places.

Agricultural areas do not require infrastructure improvement or additional public investment, nor are subarea plans necessary. As noted under "intergovernmental coordination" (see also the executive summary), the character policies of the plan outline some expectations with regard to where municipalities may annex in the future. In articulating these policies, the county is making an important statement to municipalities that it does not want them to annex and "upzone" areas within the agricultural and rural character areas. The county policies also indicate the county's intent to object to annexations by municipalities into agricultural and rural character areas unless a compelling need exists.

## Agricultural Character Area Policies

1. **Sewer.** The extension of public sewer service into this character area is not contemplated and highly discouraged.

2. **Land Subdivision and Development.** Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) for non-agricultural purposes are inconsistent with this character area and should not be allowed. Land developments of 2 acres or more, when unrelated to agriculture, forestry, resource land use or public or semi-public use, are inconsistent and should not be allowed.

3. **Small Subdivisions.** Small or "de minimus" land subdivisions (i.e., creation of no more than three lots in any given three-year period) for purposes of intra-family land transfer or public sale are consistent with this character area, if consistent with other stated character area policies. Successive practices over time of such subdivisions to the point that more 6 or more lots are created on the same original lot of record is inconsistent with this character area and should be precluded via regulation.

4. **Septic Tank Limitations.** Where flexibility permits, new lots when permitted should be located and designed to avoid soils with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields, as mapped and provided in this comprehensive plan.

5. **Farmland Impact of Subdivisions.** In cases where the subdivision of land is permitted in the agricultural character area, as a prerequisite for plat approval, the subdivider should be required to demonstrate the subdivision's impact on prime farmland soils will be minimized. This may be achieved by excluding (where options exist) prime farmland soils from the boundaries of subdivided lots, by locating lots at the edges of resource lands (rather than in the middle where it might disrupt farming potential or render large scale farming activities difficult), and limiting the size (area) of such lots to within a range of 1.5 acre minimum to 2.0 acres maximum.

6. **Public and Semi-Public Uses.** The siting of public uses (especially schools) and quasi- or semi-public uses within agricultural character areas is strongly discouraged, unless such uses are resource dependent in terms of location.

7. **Acknowledgement of Nuisance Impacts.** As a prerequisite for a building permit to construct a single-family dwelling or manufactured home, or as a condition of subdivision plat approval, in the agricultural character area, the applicant should sign an acknowledgment form which indicates that the applicant is proposing to build or subdivide in an agricultural area with potential nuisances to occupants of residential dwellings.

8. **Agricultural Outbuildings.** The maintenance and repair of barns and other agricultural buildings which contribute to agrarian and/or rural character is specifically and strongly encouraged. Proposals for subdivision or land development, where permitted, should be required to indicate whether such outbuildings exist on site and provide a plan for maintaining and preserving them, or in the alternative, provide an opportunity for alternative plan for preservation or relocation to another approved historic settlement site.

9. **Manufactured Housing.** In agricultural character areas, the fewest possible restrictions will be placed on the installation of manufactured housing, where homes are otherwise permitted. This means that, other than the basic, applicable code standards, aesthetic standards (e.g., roof pitch, skirting, heated floor area requirements, etc.) will not be applied to manufactured housing unless fronting on or visible from a county public road, in which case only rudimentary compatibility standards should be imposed.

10. **Farm Worker Housing.** Temporary housing for migrant farm workers is generally not considered necessary in Jackson County but if a need exists may be permissible only via conditional or special use permit.

11. **Annexation.** Annexation by a city of land designated as agricultural character is not contemplated and highly discouraged. Jackson County may object to a municipal annexation of agricultural land, unless a compelling need is demonstrated.

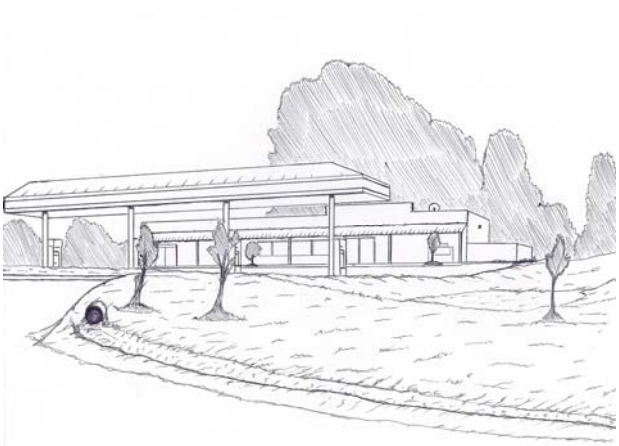
## THE RURAL CHARACTER AREA

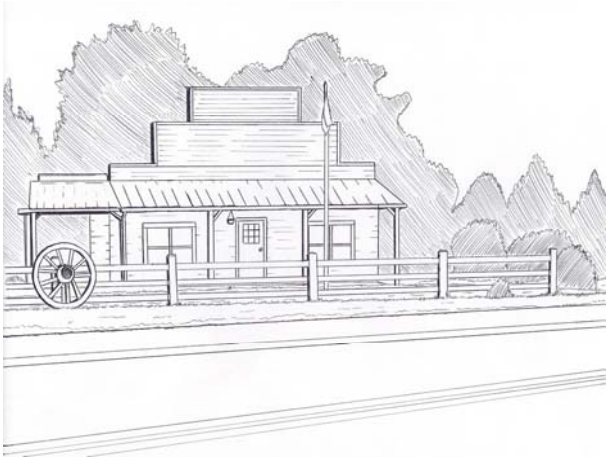
| PRINCIPLE(S) AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs) | | GENERAL LAND USE FRAMEWORK | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overarching Principle(s) | Maintenance of Identity | Overarching Land Use(s) | Predominantly agriculture and residences |
| Environmental Protection | Achieve through low intensities | General Intensity of Development | Low |
| Open Space Protection | Rural areas as private open space | **SPECIFIC LAND USE PERMISSIONS (see Table 3.2 for future land use districts)** | |
| Growth preparedness | Mostly inapplicable | Land Subdivision Permissions | Permitted |
| Appropriate Business | Mostly inapplicable or negligible | Agriculture and Forestry | Permitted and encouraged |
| Employment Options | Mostly inapplicable or negligible | Residential Density "Target" | 1 unit per 3 to 5 acres |
| Educational Opportunities | Mostly inapplicable or negligible | Residential Density Maximum | 1 unit per 1.5 acres |
| Housing Opportunities | Contributing role | Manufactured Housing | Permitted with limited restrictions |
| Traditional Neighborhood | Mostly inapplicable | Multi-Family Housing | None except for existing manufactured home parks |
| Infill Development | Mostly inapplicable | Institutional (Churches, Schools, etc.) | Limited mostly to existing churches and cemeteries |
| Heritage Preservation | Contributing role | Commercial | Provisions for "country stores" and other low-intensity uses |
| Regional identity | Contributing role | Industrial | Discouraged and restricted with exceptions |
| Sense of Place | Leading role of area | Semi-Public Uses | Discouraged |
| Regional Cooperation | Mostly inapplicable | **PRIMARY LAND USE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES** | |
| Transportation Alternatives | Not feasible/ not provided except rural public transit | Existing Base Zoning District(s) | A-3; AR |
| Jobs-Housing Relationship | Imbalanced in favor of housing; limited employment | New/Modified Base Zoning District(s) | Conservation subdivision (permit in multiple districts) |
| | | Existing Overlay District(s) | Rural Design |
| **WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AVAILABILITY** | | New Overlay District(s) | SR 334 Scenic Corridor |
| Sanitary Sewer Available? | No | Special Tool(s): Land Acquisition for Open Space | Conservation easements; PDR; TDR |
| Public Water Available? | Maybe | Special Tool: Corridor Map | Reserve future facilities/routes |
| **DESIGN-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)** | | **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS** | |
| Overall Building Form/Pattern | Irregular and not predictable | Primary Mobility Option | Automobile |
| Building Setback from Road; Orientation | Large (50-100'); irregular orientation | Road Service and Surfacing | County roads, paved and unpaved |
| Desired Design Principles | Rural – conservation subdivisions | Road Design Features (Improvements) | Rural cross-section standard (no curb and gutter); context sensitive |
| Special Design Features | Use of natural materials (stone, wood) | Access Management | Limited applicability |
| Stormwater Management | Mostly sheet flow; limited structures | Connectivity | Not necessary |
| Parking Areas | Unpaved (gravel) lots encouraged; off-street parking required | Sidewalks | Not required; natural trail systems encouraged |

**Rural**

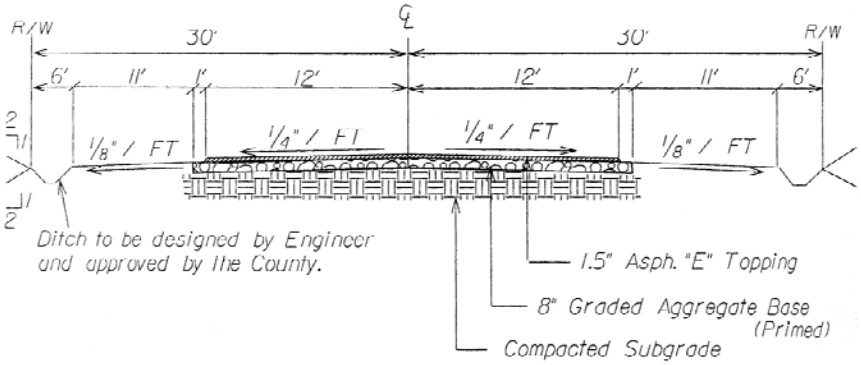
**Scene Typical of Rural Character Areas**

**Dirt Roads Common in Rural Areas**

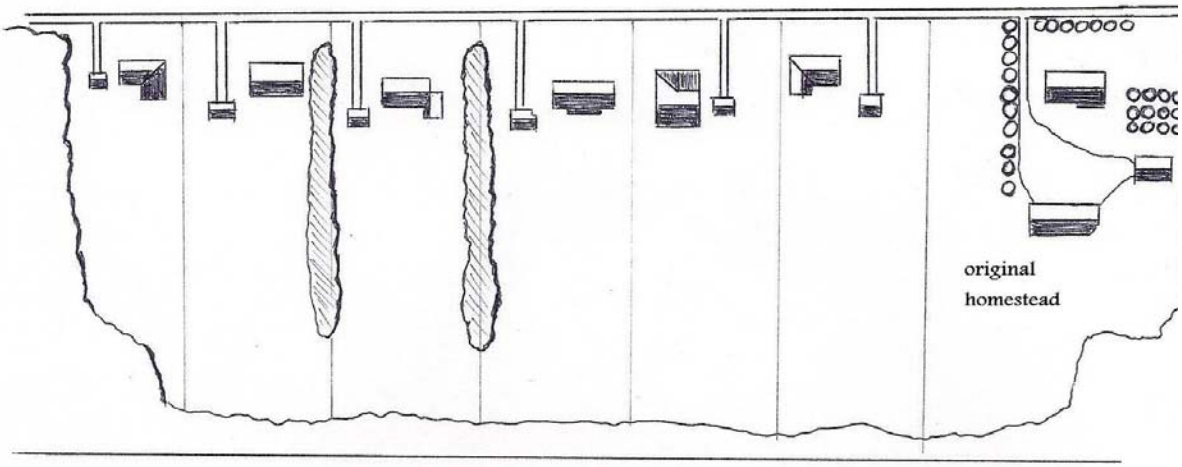




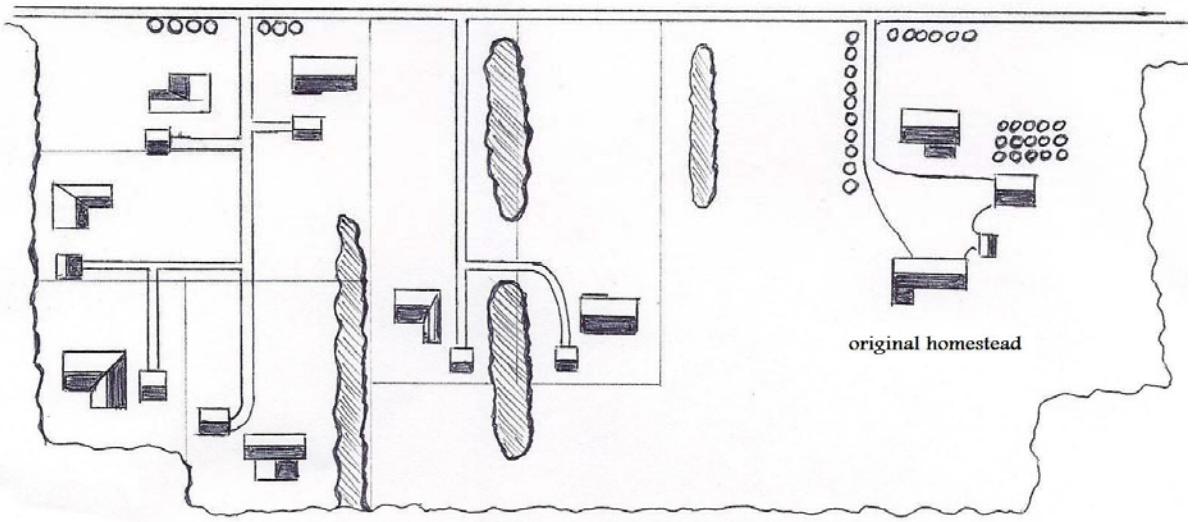
**Commercial Development Compatible with Rural Character Areas**




**Rural Road Cross-section**




Conventional




Rural Cluster

CONVENTIONAL VERSUS CLUSTER RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Rural Character Area Implementation Summary

The rural character area will consist primarily of residences, but it can also include different land uses if rural character is maintained, as shown on the future land use plan maps. Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) in the rural character area are strongly encouraged, if not required, to follow principles of conservation subdivision and design (see rural character area policies in the next section). Many of the observations about the agricultural character also apply to the rural character area and therefore need not be reiterated here. Rural settlements are recognized on the settlement character area map. Further identification of the individual settlements is encouraged by settlement area policies.

The character area maps outline an overall pattern that minimizes additional scatter of subdivisions. Jackson County will implement the desired development patterns in the rural character area through a variety of regulatory techniques, many of which already exist in the county's Unified Development Code. One additional regulatory implementation measure proposed in this plan and included in the short-term work program is the establishment of a scenic highway corridor for SR 334, which will help to protect and preserve the rural and agricultural character in the eastern part of the county. Additional changes to the Unified Development Code will also be implemented. By design, there will be little public investment in rural character areas.

## Rural Character Area Policies

1. **Sewer.** The extension of public sewer service into rural character areas is not contemplated and highly discouraged.

2. **Septic Tank Limitations.** Where flexibility permits, lot arrangements should be located and designed to avoid soils with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields, as mapped and provided in this comprehensive plan.

3. **Conservation Principles.** Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) in a rural character area are strongly encouraged, if not required, to follow principles of conservation subdivision and design, either as generally accepted by the planning profession or as specifically stated in county regulations.

4. **Subdivision Lot Design.** When land is subdivided, regular or recurring patterns of lots are discouraged; instead, lot layouts that maintain the informality of existing and nearby property ownership patterns is encouraged to maintain rural character. In cases of minor subdivisions (5 or less lots) "flag" or "panhandle" lots and shared access easement arrangements may be consistent with this character area and permitted.

5. **Access to Abutting Conservation Lands.** Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.

6. **Public and Semi-Public Uses.** The siting of public uses (especially schools) and quasi- or semi-public uses within rural character areas is discouraged, unless it can be demonstrated that other suitable locations in suburban and/or urban character areas do not exist or there are clear location advantages to siting such uses in rural areas.

7. **Agricultural Outbuildings.** The maintenance and repair of barns and other agricultural buildings which contribute to agrarian and/or rural character is specifically and strongly encouraged. Proposals for subdivision or land development, where permitted, should be required to indicate whether such outbuildings exist on site and provide a plan for maintaining and preserving them, or in the alternative, provide an opportunity for alternative plan for preservation or relocation to another approved historic settlement site.

8. **Non-Residential Building Sizes.** Where permitted (see future land use plans for guidance), non-residential building space should not exceed the following (gross square feet):

| Nonresidential Type | Maximum Gross Square Feet Individual Establishment | Maximum Gross Square Feet Total Building, Multiple Tenants |
|---|---|---|
| Public/Institutional | 10,000 | 20,000 |
| Office or Commercial | 5,000 | 12,500 |
| Light Industrial | 10,000 | 10,000 |

9. **Roads and Parking.** New roads or road improvements should not include curb and gutter unless demonstrated need exists. Roads may be surfaced with non-asphalt (e.g., gravel) materials and drained by roadside ditches in order to maintain rural character. The same is applicable for parking lots, where permitted.

10. **Subdivision and Project Identification.** Minor subdivisions (5 lots or less) should not be identified with subdivision entrance signs or monuments. Any entrance signs or monuments for major subdivisions (6 lots or more) should be pedestrian scale (no less than four feet in height), small in area (not exceeding 24 square feet), and constructed of natural (wood or stone) materials only. Where such signs are permitted, they are encouraged to incorporate the settlement name as shown on the county's settlement character map if applicable.

11. **Manufactured Housing.** In rural character areas, some restrictions will be placed on the installation of manufactured housing, where homes are otherwise permitted. Manufactured home parks will not be permitted. Manufactured home subdivisions are permitted subject to meeting county requirements. Manufactured homes placed on lots outside of designated manufactured home subdivisions are permitted subject to meeting aesthetic standards (e.g., roof pitch, skirting, heated floor area requirements or requirements for double-section homes, etc.); exceptions may be made when the manufactured home does not fronting on or is not visible from a county public road, in which case only rudimentary compatibility standards should be imposed.

12. **Annexation.** Annexation by a city of land designated as rural character is not contemplated and discouraged. Jackson County may object to a municipal annexation of rural lands, unless a compelling need is demonstrated, particular if density higher than that contemplated in the county's rural character area is proposed.

## THE SUBURBAN CHARACTER AREA

| PRINCIPLE(S) AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs) | | GENERAL LAND USE FRAMEWORK | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overarching Principle(s) | Neighborhood Protection | Overarching Land Use(s) | Predominantly residential but multiple uses permitted |
| Environmental Protection | Achieve through regulation of the built environment | General Intensity of Development | Moderate |
| Open Space Protection | Set-aside; opportunities exist | **SPECIFIC LAND USE PERMISSIONS (see Table 3.2 for future land use districts)** | |
| Growth preparedness | Leading role of area | Land Subdivision Permissions | Permitted |
| Appropriate Business | Applicable in limited contexts | Agriculture and Forestry | Permitted |
| Employment Options | Applicable in limited contexts (retail/service) | Residential Density "Target" | 1 unit per 0.5 acres |
| Educational Opportunities | Applicable in limited contexts | Residential Density Maximum | 1 unit per 0.33 acres |
| Housing Opportunities | Contributing role | Manufactured Housing | Prohibited or substantial restrictions |
| Traditional Neighborhood | Encouraged but not anticipated | Multi-Family Housing | Permitted only if sewer exists and then only at low densities |
| Infill Development | Leading role of character area (essential need) | Institutional (Churches, Schools, etc.) | Permitted if compatible scale and character |
| Heritage Preservation | Contributing role | Commercial | Provisions for neighborhood retail and service uses |
| Regional identity | Contributing role | Industrial | Generally not anticipated and discouraged; exceptions |
| Sense of Place | Contributing role | Semi-Public Uses | Permitted |
| Regional Cooperation | Leading role of character area (municipal-county service delivery) | **PRIMARY LAND USE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES** | |
| Transportation Alternatives | Feasible and encouraged if not required | Existing Base Zoning District(s) | R-1; R-2; MH; NRC |
| Jobs-Housing Relationship | Imbalanced with housing; some employment | New/Modified Base Zoning District(s) | Add Planned Unit Development (PUD) |
| | | Existing Overlay District(s) | SR 124/SR 53 |
| **WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AVAILABILITY** | | New Overlay District(s) | Commercial Corridor Design (SR 98, US 129, US 441) |
| Sanitary Sewer Available? | Not usually; some places | Special Tool(s): Land Acquisition for Open Space | Set-asides with development; minimum open space requirements |
| Public Water Available? | Yes, connection required | Special Tool: Corridor Map | Reserve future facilities/routes |
| **DESIGN-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)** | | **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS** | |
| Overall Building Form/Pattern | Predictable and repetitive | Primary Mobility Option | Automobile |
| Building Setback from Road; Orientation | 25-40' predictable and repetitive; facing street | Road Service and Surfacing | Paved county roads and state highways |
| Desired Design Principles | Conservation and conventional subdivisions | Road Design Features (Improvements) | Curb and gutter; suburban standard; mostly curvilinear with cul-de-sacs |
| Special Design Features | Planned, monumental entrances | Access Management | Regulated |
| Stormwater Management | Engineered/ required | Connectivity | Encouraged |
| Parking Areas | Paved off-street parking required (minimums and maximums) | Sidewalks | Required and provided as development occurs |

**Suburban**

**Conventional suburban subdivisions need better site planning to connect subdivision streets and connect the subdivision as a whole with greenspaces.**

**Improvements are needed to the conventional suburban development pattern, which separates all uses and does not provide sufficient connections among developments.**

## Suburban Character Area Implementation Summary

The overriding purpose of the suburban character area is the preservation of neighborhoods. However, institutional, commercial, and other uses are also permitted (see summary table above). It therefore implements multiple QCOs, including housing opportunities, employment options, and appropriate business. The county's UDC already establishes zoning districts that will implement the vision and desired development patterns for the suburban character area. Furthermore, the county already has established overlay districts for the SR 124 and SR 53 corridors, thus ensuring that development will attain the desired quality characteristics envisioned in the suburban character area. With regard to additional implementation measures, the plan calls for establishment of two new overlay districts for the U.S. Highway 441 and SR 98 corridors; establishing these additional corridor overlays will also help the county attain the desired, quality commercial development patterns along those corridors.

Public investment and infrastructure improvements will also help implement the vision for the suburban character area. As one example, the county is pursuing a new interchange at SR 60 and Interchange 85, which will spur retail development in addition to improving access in west Jackson County. Water and sewer planning has been tied much more closely with land use under this comprehensive plan when compared with the previously adopted plan. Future water and sewer plans will be prepared to emphasize service to suburban and urban character areas, and policies contained in this community agenda strongly discourage or prohibit extensions of sewer beyond suburban and urban character areas. This community agenda also calls for an updated System-Wide Recreation Master Plan to ensure that as suburban and urban areas continue to develop, adequate park facilities will be available. Other changes to facility provision, including fire districts and libraries, are recommended to ensure adequate and consistent levels of service across all suburban and urban areas of unincorporated Jackson County. Furthermore, the policies for suburban and urban character areas require adequate public facilities at the time of development.

In addition to an undersupply of parks and libraries, another piece of infrastructure lacking in suburban character areas is pedestrian facilities. The plan calls for the county to prepare and adopt a bicycle and pedestrian system plan that will begin to address these needs and outline a more coherent strategy for capital investment in sidewalks and bike paths. The major roads plan will provide for a number of road improvements that will serve growing suburban and urban areas and alleviate potential traffic congestion in the future.

## Suburban Character Area Policies

1. **Sewer.** Land development and land subdivisions in the suburban character area should be connected to public sanitary sewer as a condition or prerequisite of development approval, where public sanitary sewer is within reasonable proximity (i.e., 1,000 feet or less) of the land being developed and practical to do so, as determined by planning, public works, and environmental health officials of the county.

2. **Conservation Principles.** Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) in suburban character areas are encouraged (not required), where opportunities exist, to follow principles of conservation subdivision and design.

3. **Access to Abutting Conservation Lands.** Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land

dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.

4. **Pedestrian Facilities.** Major subdivisions (6 or more lots) are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide sidewalks within the subdivision and linking to public sidewalks planned for or provided outside the subdivision and connecting to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties. Land developments are strongly encouraged, if not required to provide pedestrian facilities interior to the development and linking to public sidewalks planned for or provided outside the land development and connecting to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on abutting properties.

5. **Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Major subdivisions designed based on accepted principles of traditional neighborhood development (a.k.a., "new urbanism") are consistent with this character area if compatible in density and consistent with other stated policies for the suburban character area.

6. **Adequate Public Facilities.** As a condition of approval, major subdivisions (6 or more lots) and major land developments should be required to demonstrate availability of public water, fire protection, law enforcement, roads, stormwater management, parks and recreation, and public school facilities. Major subdivisions and major land developments that cannot demonstrate all such facilities are available or planned at the time of development or within a reasonable period of time thereafter may gain approval only if they mitigate the lack of such facilities, through the dedication of land in the subdivision or off-site, on-site and/or off-site improvements, payment of impact fees if imposed by the county, or payment of in-lieu fees or other acceptable arrangements via development agreements.

7. **Manufactured Housing.** Manufactured home parks, manufactured home subdivisions, and manufactured homes on individual lots are strongly discouraged if not prohibited by regulation.

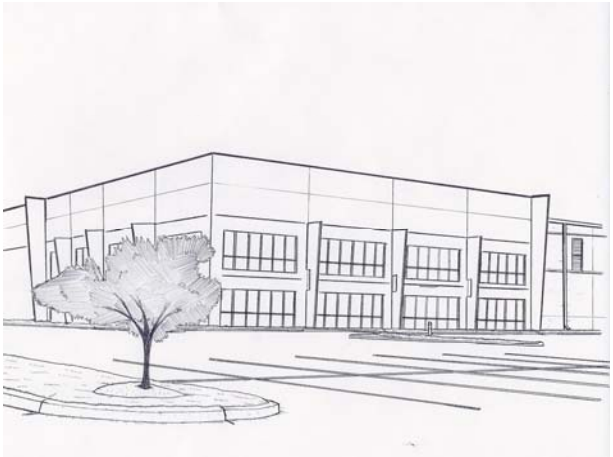
8. **Non-Residential Building Sizes.** Where permitted (see future land use plans for guidance), non-residential building space should not exceed the following (gross square feet):

| Nonresidential Type | Maximum Gross Square Feet Individual Establishment | Maximum Gross Square Feet Total Building, Multiple Tenants |
|---|---|---|
| Public/Institutional | No Maximum | No Maximum |
| Office or Commercial | 60,000 | 240,000 |
| Light Industrial | 60,000 | 120,000 |

## THE URBAN CHARACTER AREA

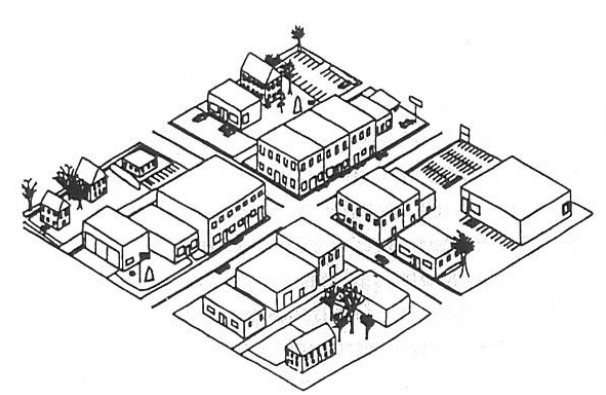
| PRINCIPLE(S) AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs) | | GENERAL LAND USE FRAMEWORK | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overarching Principle(s) | Efficient growth and Adequate Public Facilities | Overarching Land Use(s) | Multiple uses; mixed uses encouraged |
| Environmental Protection | Achieve through regulation of the built environment | General Intensity of Development | High |
| Open Space Protection | Set-aside as opportunities exist | **SPECIFIC LAND USE PERMISSIONS (see Table 3.2 for future land use districts)** | |
| Growth preparedness | Leading role of area | Land Subdivision Permissions | Permitted |
| Appropriate Business | Leading role of area | Agriculture and Forestry | Permitted but discouraged |
| Employment Options | Leading role of area | Residential Density "Target" | 1 unit per 0.33 acres |
| Educational Opportunities | Leading role of area | Residential Density Maximum | Variable based on specific locations |
| Housing Opportunities | Leading role of area | Manufactured Housing | Discouraged if not prohibited |
| Traditional Neighborhood | Encouraged | Multi-Family Housing | Permitted in locations per plan |
| Infill Development | Leading role of character area (opportunities) | Institutional (Churches, Schools, etc.) | Permitted and encouraged in locations per plan |
| Heritage Preservation | Contributing role | Commercial | Permitted and encouraged in locations per plan |
| Regional identity | Contributing role | Industrial | Permitted and encouraged in locations per plan |
| Sense of Place | Diverse opportunities | Semi-Public Uses | Permitted |
| Regional Cooperation | Leading role of character area (municipal-county service delivery) | **PRIMARY LAND USE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES** | |
| Transportation Alternatives | Required based on opportunities | Existing Base Zoning District(s) | R-3; CRC; NRC; CRC; LI, GI |
| Jobs-Housing Relationship | Usually imbalanced in favor of employment | New/Modified Base Zoning District(s) | Add Master-Planned Mixed Use; PUD |
| | | Existing Overlay District(s) | SR 124/SR 53; Airport Zone |
| **WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AVAILABILITY** | | New Overlay District(s) | Commercial Corridor Design (SR 98, US 129, US 441) |
| Sanitary Sewer Available? | Yes (required or planned) | Special Tool(s): Land Acquisition for Open Space | Set-asides with development; minimum open space requirements |
| Public Water Available? | Yes, connection required | Special Tool: Corridor Map | Reserve future facilities/routes |
| **DESIGN-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)** | | **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS** | |
| Overall Building Form/Pattern | Concentrated and diverse | Primary Mobility Option | Automobile |
| Building Setback from Road; Orientation | 0-30'; Regular but variable and flexible depending on use | Road Service and Surfacing | Paved county roads and state highways |
| Desired Design Principles | New Urbanism – traditional neighborhood | Road Design Features (Improvements) | Curb and gutter; urban standard applied; grid or modified grid pattern encouraged |
| Special Design Features | Variable based on land use and intensity | Access Management | Regulated |
| Stormwater Management | Engineered/ required | Connectivity | Required |
| Parking Areas | off-street parking required (minimum and maximums) | Sidewalks | Required and provided |

**Urban**



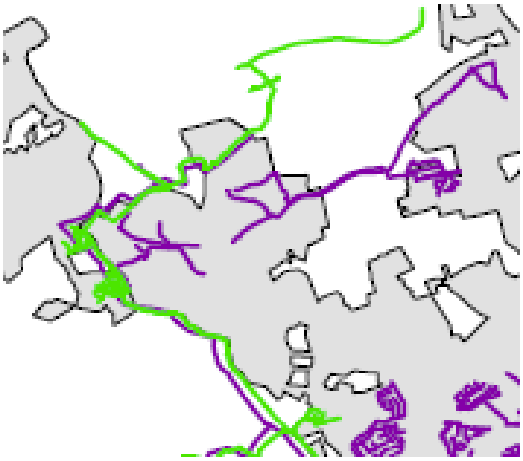
**Industrial Workplaces are "Urban"**

**"Urban" Includes Residential, such as the Jackson Hills Apartments Outside Commerce**



Source: Arendt, Randall, et al. *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, Figure 9-2, p. 118. (Chicago: Planners Press, 1994).

**Scale and Character Representative of Urban Areas**



**Urban areas are, or will be, served by sanitary sewer, such as lines by the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority (shown in green) or one of the cities, like Jefferson (shown in purple).**

## Urban Character Area Implementation Summary

The desired development pattern is to have contiguous, sequential growth in and around the county's municipalities and along major highway corridors, tied to availability of public water and in many cases sanitary sewer service, in order to leave other parts of the county agricultural and rural. Sanitary sewer is required in the urban character area, and through more refined sewer master planning (subject to funding) the county will promote and ensure the implementation of urban land uses in the urban character area. Most of the description of the suburban character area is also applicable to the urban character area and therefore does not need repeating.

With regard to infrastructure improvements and public investment, Jackson County has already made an admirable commitment to providing sewer and parallel roads along Interstate 85 to serve its future industrial base. Because the county has planned sewer and road infrastructure

in advance of needs, there are not any substantial additional infrastructure investments needed to implement urban character areas, although the county will complete the parallel road network along Interstate 85 and implement its major roads plan which will certainly advance prospects for quality commercial and industrial growth in the urban character area. The character area maps are phased (for the years 2020 and 2030) so that infrastructure provision will be more affordable and targeted to the areas that will witness development first.

Improvements to Jackson County Airport are also already programmed, which will advance economic development activities and support additional growth in the urban character area. The airport is already master planned, and the county has established design guidelines for new development around the airport and protected the airport approach zones to ensure safe flight paths. Therefore, a subarea plan for the airport area is not necessary. The transportation plan also calls for the building of park-and-ride lots along Interstate 85 in order to better facilitate carpooling for commuters, and an improved major road network (as specified in the major roads plan) will provide for better movement within and among the urban areas of the county.

**Urban Character Area Policies**

1. **Sewer.** Land development and land subdivisions in the urban character area should be connected to public sanitary sewer as a condition or prerequisite of development approval.

2. **"Dry Sewer."** If the immediate connection of land development or land subdivisions to public sanitary sewer is not practical, the installation of "dry" sanitary sewers for purposes of later connection to the public system may be acceptable.

3. **Interim Development Without Sewer.** Interim development with little sewage disposal generation or "low flow" demands that can be handled with a septic or other on-site sewage management system, as approved by the Jackson County Environmental Health Department, may be authorized.

4. **Pedestrian Facilities.** All subdivisions and land developments are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide sidewalks within the subdivision and linking to public sidewalks planned for or provided outside the subdivision and connecting to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.

5. **Adequate Public Facilities.** As a condition of approval, all subdivisions and land developments should be required to demonstrate availability of public water, fire protection, law enforcement, roads, stormwater management, parks and recreation, and public school facilities. Subdivisions and land developments that cannot demonstrate all such facilities are available or planned at the time of development or within a reasonable period of time thereafter may gain approval only if they mitigate the lack of such facilities, through the dedication of land in the subdivision or off-site, on-site and/or off-site improvements, payment of impact fees if imposed by the county, or payment of in-lieu fees or other acceptable arrangements via development agreements.

6. **Manufactured Housing.** Manufactured home parks, manufactured home subdivisions, and manufactured homes on individual lots are strongly discouraged if not prohibited by regulation.

## PRINCIPLES FOR ENSURING CONSISTENCY WITH CHARACTER MAPS

The county seeks to ensure that future zoning decisions are made in a manner consistent with the character area maps for 2020 and 2030. The legal requirement to be consistent with the county's comprehensive plan is contained in the county's unified development code. However, with the revision of the comprehensive plan, there will be a need to revise the unified development code. In order to assist with determining consistency, a number of principles are articulated here which should be consulted when interpreting the character maps and the consistency requirement.

1. **Generalized patterns.** The 2020 and 2030 character maps do not show property ownership boundaries. Those maps were intentionally drawn that way, so as to gain a generalized picture of the overall pattern. Because of the generalized nature of the character maps in relation to actual property lines, the following rule of interpretation will apply:

   Rule of Interpretation: When a particular property in question has more than one character designation, if it is less than five acres the more permissive (less restrictive) character area may be deemed applicable to the entire parcel of record. If split into one or more character areas and the lot is more than five acres, the parcel of record in question will be interpreted as being in more than one character area as shown on the character map.

2. **Descriptions and policy statements.** This chapter (Table 3.4) contains a detailed description of the intentions for development within each character area, and Chapter 5 contains policies for each character area. Those descriptions and policies must be consulted when a zoning change, special use permit, variance, preliminary subdivision plat, or any other "discretionary" land use application is filed for consideration with the Jackson County Planning Commission and/or Board of Commissioners. Applicants should be required to indicate in a letter of intent or other written and/or graphic analysis (e.g., site plan) how the development proposal meets with the parameters described for the given character area and the policy statements articulated for that character area.

3. **Consistency determinations.** Although the final determination is left to the county, it is the obligation of the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed development will be consistent with the descriptions and policies applicable to the character area in which the property and application are located.

   Rule of interpretation: Sanitary sewer. Any discretionary development proposal (e.g., rezoning, special use permit, variance, preliminary subdivision plat, etc.) that would necessitate extension of sanitary sewer service or use of a community sewerage system in an agricultural or rural character area is prima facie evidence of inconsistency, and the county will not accept such development proposals for consideration since there is no way to mitigate or alter the development proposal to be consistent with the character area description and policies.

   Rule of interpretation: Density/intensity. Any proposal that would exceed the maximum density or intensity parameters, or the maximum building size, specified for the applicable character area is prima facie evidence of inconsistency, and the county will not accept such development proposals for consideration since there is no way to

mitigate or alter the development proposal to be consistent with the character area description and policies.

Rule of interpretation: applicable zoning district(s). Application for rezoning to a zoning district other than those listed in Table 3.4 (existing zoning districts in the UDC as of September 2010) or any additional zoning district prepared to be compatible a given character area), is prima facie evidence of inconsistency, and the county will not accept such rezoning applications for processing.

Rule of interpretation: mitigation. A development proposal that on first review appears to be inconsistent with the description for the character area and character area policies may still be considered, if there are clear proposals by way of voluntary conditions of zoning or development approval that would mitigate the inconsistent aspects of the subject proposal. In such cases the applicant must indicate in writing the conditions that will satisfactorily mitigate inconsistencies. Density/intensity and sewer service inconsistencies cannot be mitigated.

4. **Timing considerations: 2020 and 2030.** In several instances a given property may have a different designation on the character maps if one compares 2020 and 2030. Those differences, where they exist, are by design and intentional. If an applicant wants to pursue development consistent with a character area designation on the 2030 map and the 2020 map does not reflect that same designation, then it cannot be considered consistent until at least the year 2021. Exceptions for good cause shown may be permitted, if the applicant demonstrates consistency with one or more of the following:

   (a) Sanitary sewer is shown to be available or could be reasonably extended to the property in question (i.e., sewer is within one-quarter mile of the subject property);
   (b) Approval of the development would not be considered a “leapfrog” beyond existing development of the same land use (i.e., more than one-quarter mile along the same or major fronting roadway);
   (c) Evidence is presented that there is a market need for the subject proposal, as documented by other development in the vicinity or along the same road or highway corridor as the subject property;
   (d) Property rights objections are made, alleging that the property does not have a reasonable use as currently designated; including an analysis of interim development possible under the current character area designation until the year 2021.

5. **Current zoning.** Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a property owner from developing according to existing zoning permissions, despite the character area designation.

## FUTURE LAND USE

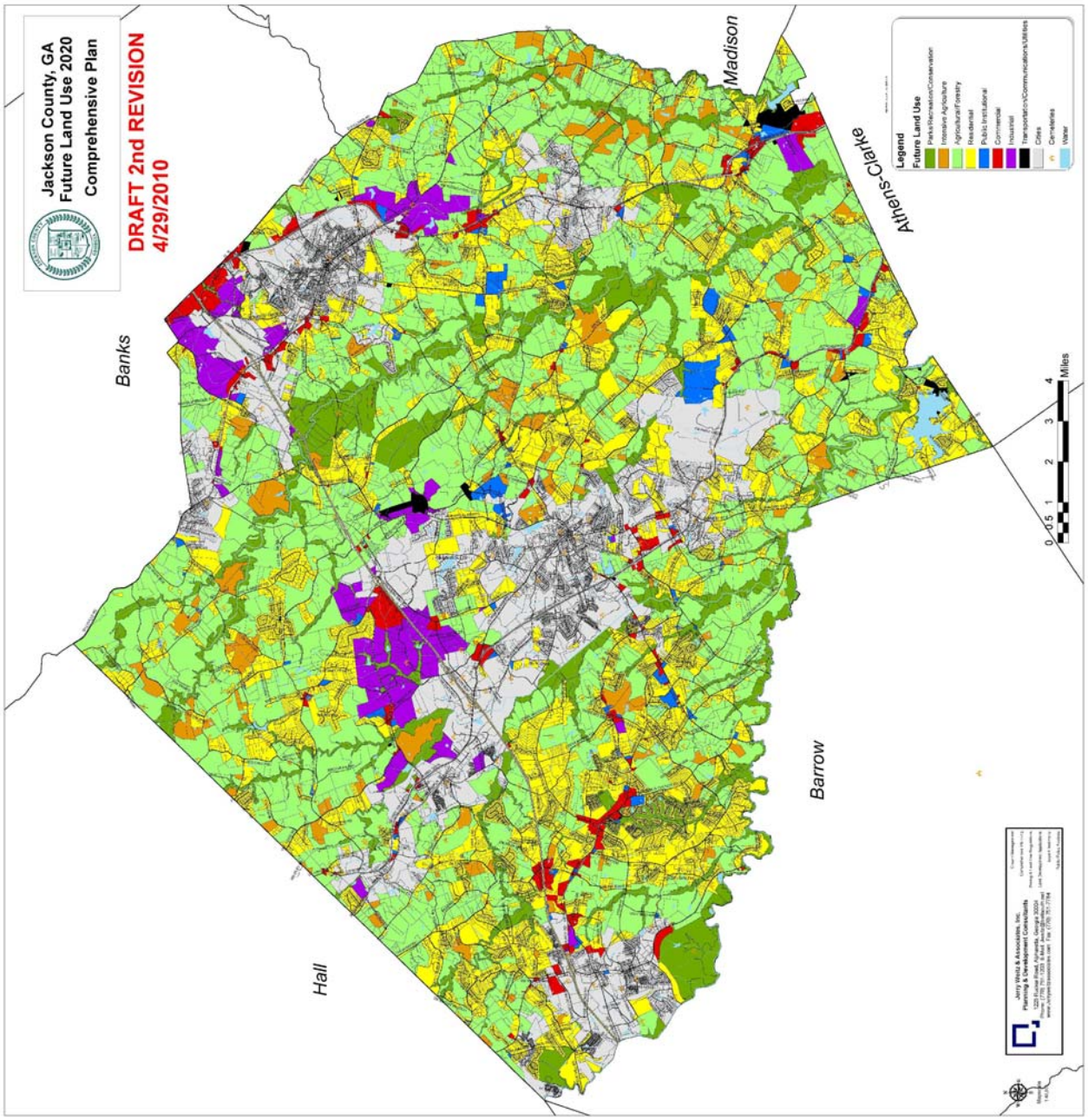
The character area maps for the years 2020 and 2030, described in the previous section, provide an overarching policy framework for character but do not provide sufficient policy guidance for specific, individual land uses. Therefore, this Community Agenda includes future land use plan maps in addition to the character area maps described and presented in the prior section. Some additional information about land use is provided in the appendix of this Community Agenda.

The future land use plan maps divide all of unincorporated Jackson County into one of the categories described below. Each future land use plan category is described in this section, along with applicable land use policies. The category for an individual property may not be the same on the 2020 map as it is for the 2030 map. That is to say, a given property may be slated for residential development in 2030 but is not shown as residential on the 2020 future land use plan map. Therefore, it is critical that both the 2020 and 2030 future land use plan maps be consulted. Consult Table 3.2 (see section on character areas) for the essential consistency relationship between character areas, future land use categories and zoning districts. Table 3.3 provides a summary of acreage by land use in 2009, 2020, and 2030.

**Table 3.3**
**Land Use Acreage by Land Use Category, 2009, 2020 and 2030**
**Unincorporated Jackson County as of April 2010**

| Land Use Category | 2009 Acres | % Total Unincor-porated Area | 2020 Acres | % Total Unincor-porated Area | 2009-2020 Change in Acres | 2030 Acres | % Total Unincor-porated Area | 2009-2030 Change in Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intensive Agriculture | n/c | -- | 7,120 | 4.2 | +7,120 | 7,079 | 4.1 | +7,079 |
| Agricultural/Forestry | 136,761.1 | 77.4 | 80,141 | 45.9 | -56,620 | 68,723 | 39.4 | -68,038 |
| Residential | 26,672.6 | 15.1 | 51,131 | 29.3 | +24,458 | 60,423 | 34.6 | +33,750 |
| Public/Institutional | 1,054.0 | 0.6 | 2,589 | 1.5 | +1,535 | 2,863 | 1.6 | +1,809 |
| Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities | 437.1 | 0.2 | 663 | 0.3 | +226 | 663 | 0.3 | +226 |
| Commercial | 724.9 | 0.4 | 3,961 | 2.2 | +3,236 | 5,423 | 3.1 | +4,698 |
| Master Planned Mixed Use | n/c | -- | 0 | - | -- | 175 | 0.1 | +175 |
| Industrial | 1,350.6 | 0.8 | 6,771 | 3.9 | +5,420 | 7,183 | 4.1 | +5,832 |
| Parks, Recreation, and Conservation | 1,549.8 | 0.9 | 22,076 | 12.7 | +20,526 | 22,114 | 12.7 | +20,563 |
| Vacant/Undeveloped | 8,178.5 | 4.6 | 0 | - | -8,179 | 0 | - | -8,179 |
| Subtotal Unincorporated | 176,728.6 | 100.0 | 174,452 | 100.0 | -- | 174,646 | 100.0 | -- |

Source: Jackson County GIS Department (Revised May 3, 2010)


Jackson County, GA
Future Land Use 2020
Comprehensive Plan
DRAFT 2nd REVISION
4/29/2010
Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Legend
Future Land Use
Parks/Recreation/Conservation
Intensive Agriculture
Agricultural/Forestry
Residential
Public/Institutional
Commercial
Industrial
Transportation/Communications/Utilities
Cities
Cemeteries
Water
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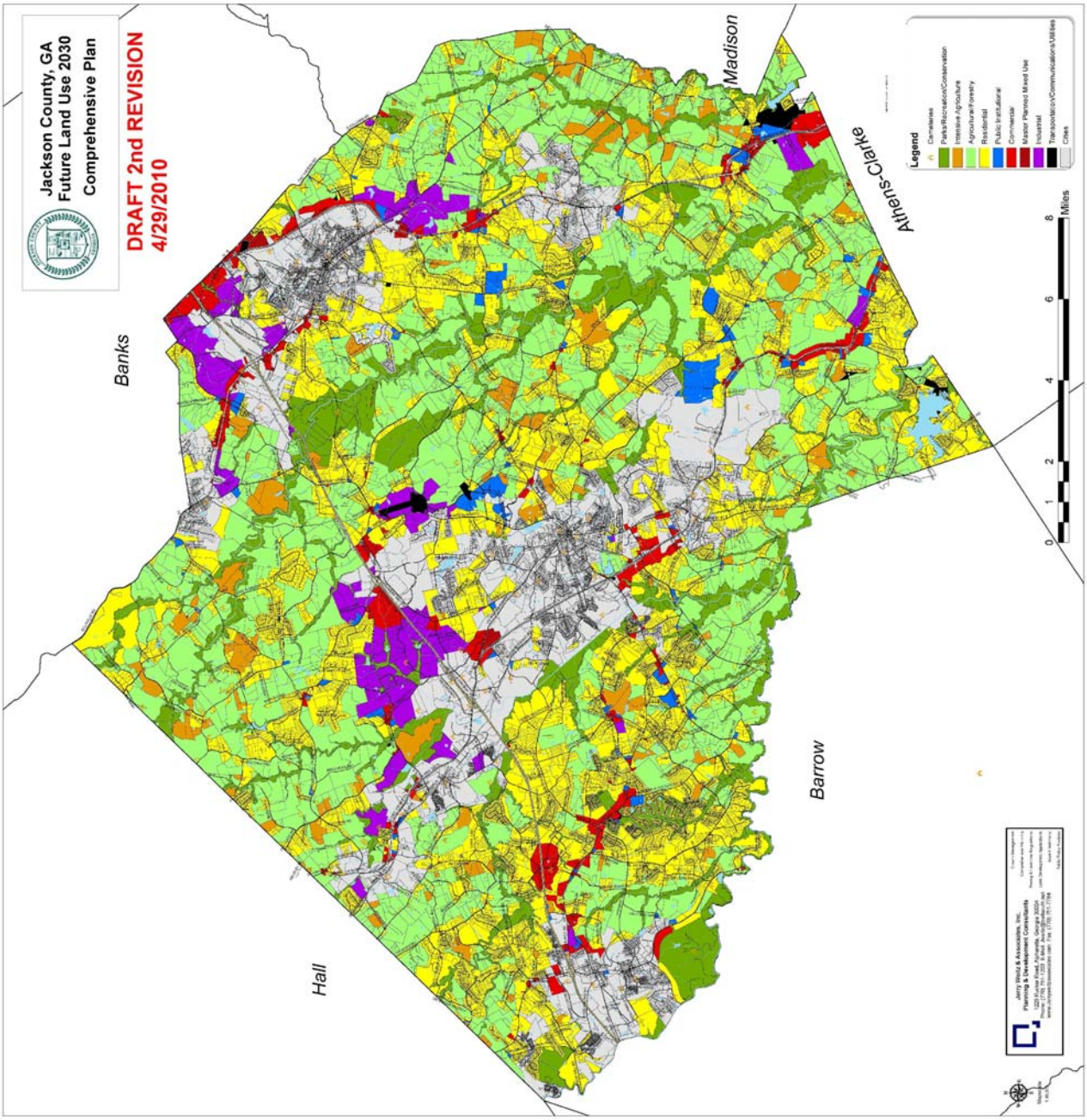
Miles


Jackson County, GA
Future Land Use 2030
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Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Legend
Cemeteries
Parks/Recreation/Conservation
Intensive Agriculture
Agricultural/Forestry
Residential
Public/Institutional
Commercial
Master Planned Mixed Use
Industrial
Transportation/Communications/Utilities
Cities
0 1 2 4 6 8
Miles

## Land Use Policies Generally

1. **Efficient Development Patterns.** Use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with exurban, rural, suburban, and urban sprawl.

2. **Property Rights.** In applying land use plans and regulations, all property owners must be afforded some reasonable economic use of their properties, but not necessarily the "highest and best" use as that term is understood in the real estate appraisal profession. The fact that a property would be valued more highly if rezoned is not in itself a sufficient reason for rezoning. However, a showing that property cannot be reasonably used in accordance with the existing regulations may be considered among other reasons for approving a land use amendment and/or changing the zoning district applicable to a given property.

3. **Balance.** In land use planning and individual decisions about land use, Jackson County strives to balance non-residential and residential development in order to reduce the burden of taxes on residents. This means that Jackson County will strive to protect parcels designated for commercial and industrial uses rather than rezoning such parcels to uses that do not support sustained economic health and higher wage jobs in the county.

4. **Compatibility.** Rezonings if approved should result in land development that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property. Development should not adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

5. **Public Facility and Service Impacts.** Development should not occur or be approved which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, schools, or other publicly-provided facilities and services.

6. **Buffers and Screening.** Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices. Utilize buffers to separate potentially conflicting or incompatible land uses.

7. **Transitions.** Avoid harsh or abrupt changes of land use or character, by encouraging a logical and compatible relationship of land use and character, transitioning from one property development to another. In terms of land use, the ideal progression of land use compatibility is from residential to public-institutional (including private office), to commercial, to industrial. In terms of character areas, the ideal progression of character compatibility is from agricultural, to rural, to suburban, to urban. If harsh or abrupt changes in land use or character cannot be avoided, the transition should be better facilitated with special design techniques, step downs in intensity or density, and/or conditions of approval relating to building height, building setbacks, buffers, and limitations on incompatible operating characteristics.

8. **Prevailing Land Use Patterns.** Respect and maintain prevailing land use patterns, unless the future land use plan clearly suggests changes are appropriate.

9. **Spot Zoning and Spot Land Use Amendments.** Decisions about amendments to the future land use plan maps and official zoning map should not result in the creation of an

isolated future land use designation or isolated zoning district unrelated to adjacent and nearby land use or zoning districts.

10. **Land Use-Transportation Connections.** Coordinate land use and transportation decisions.

11. **Creativity and Flexibility.** Encourage creativity in development design and provide for design flexibility. Jackson County is open to considering land planning and development concepts that may be new to the county but have been implemented successfully in other places.

12. **Redevelopment.** Encourage redevelopment of obsolete or deteriorating buildings, properties, and areas.

13. **Development Approval Process.** Continually monitor the time frames required to review development proposals and shorten them or make them more efficient where possible.

14. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** Coordinate land use decisions between the county and municipalities. Land use decisions made by municipalities at the time of annexation should respect and be consistent with the character and future land use plans previously approved by Jackson County. Municipalities should anticipate formal objections by the county when annexations are for zoning and development inconsistent with the county's comprehensive plan.

15. **Architectural Requirements.** Promote the highest quality of development. Reevaluate and reconsider architectural and site design standards as appropriate to encourage increased quality of site development, architectural detailing and materials. Implement design controls through requirements in the Unified Development Code, and through other appropriate means.

16. **Sustainable Development Practices.** Communities and individual land developments which are developed consistent with generally accepted principles of sustainable development should receive priority consideration over developments relying on conventional designs and features. Any available incentives should be used to reward development which meets generally accepted sustainable development principles**.**

**Park/Recreation/Conservation**

This category includes lands dedicated to both active and passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned, and they may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, forest preserves, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. All of the lands within the "conservation" character area are designated as park/recreation/conservation on the future land use plan maps. Park/recreation/conservation lands also exist in other character areas, such as a developed recreation complex in an urban character area, or a neighborhood park in a suburban neighborhood. Park/recreation/ conservation lands will constitute 12.7 percent of the unincorporated land uses in 2020 and 2030.

In addition to the flood plains of major rivers and streams, the following are areas designated park/recreation/conservation on the 2020 and 2030 future land use plan maps:

- The State Arboretum property north of Braselton.
- Forest land owned by the University of Georgia on the west side of U.S. Highway 441 between the city of Nicholson and the unincorporated Center community.
- The open space complex of wetlands just west of and including some of the city limits of Jefferson, along the Middle Oconee River.
- A large forest preserve south of Interstate 85, north and south of Woods Bridge Road, extending along both sides of the North Oconee River. This is believed to be the largest collection of contiguous tracts of heavily forested land and is considered the highest priority for protection as green infrastructure.
- A large forest preserve south of Hoschton extending also along the Mulberry River. This area rivals if not equals the size of the forest preserve proposed south of Interstate 85 along the North Oconee River.
- The area surrounding the proposed Parks Creek Reservoir, in between Apple Valley Road and Lyle Field Road. This area is being planned by the City of Jefferson with the cooperation of Jackson County for a water supply reservoir. The land is not presently under the ownership and control of the city or county. Upon approval of the reservoir, the land surrounding it is proposed to be purchased for open space, watershed protection, and limited passive recreational activities.
- Extensive areas of flood plain along the North Oconee River from the Athens Clarke County line to the south side of SR 335 (Brockton Road).

**Intensive Agriculture**

This category includes poultry farms and is designated separately from the more general Agricultural/Forestry future land use category. In these areas, land owners have made significant investments, predominantly in the production of chickens, other major agricultural pursuits. Intensive agricultural areas include residential land uses by definition, including manufactured homes. The future building of dwellings or manufactured homes that are not farm-related are restricted, except for an allowance to subdivide a small number of small tracts over time for “minor subdivisions.” Intensive agricultural land uses lie almost exclusively within the “agricultural” character area, though some poultry farms may be classified as rural on the character area map if the farm is isolated and/or in an area expected to transition out of intensive agricultural use to rural residential use during the next ten or twenty years.

These areas need to be treated differently from hay fields and private forests because they have potential nuisance impacts on abutting or nearby residents. It is important to the future economy of Jackson County that intensive farming operations be protected from major subdivision tract development. Although Georgia has a right-to-farm law, in many instances it does not fully protect active farming operations from nuisance claims and lawsuits, even if the intensive farm operation existed prior to building the home or homes nearby.

Intensive agricultural areas are basically the same in 2030 as in 2020, constituting more than 7,000 acres or about 4.1 percent of unincorporated land uses. While intensive agricultural areas are spread out among most of the non-urbanized unincorporated parts of the county, the most notable concentrations are as follows:

- Multiple poultry farms north of Interstate 85, especially between the Banks County line and Plainview Road, including concentrations south of Deadwyler Road west and east of Dixon Bridge Road.

- South and southeast of Maysville, north of Interstate 85.
- Southwest of Commerce along the east side of B Wilson Road.
- North and south of Thyatira-Brockton Road east of Wilhite Road and west of Elliot Smith Road.
- Along Brockton Loop Road south of SR 335 (Brockton Road) south of South Apple Valley Road.
- South of SR 124 east of Mark Dodd Road.
- Along parts of Lebanon Church Road and Gum Springs Road.
- Several farms in eastern Jackson County, especially between U.S. Highway 441 and the Madison County line.

**Agricultural/Forestry**

Much of the land in this category is simply vacant or undeveloped, but other tracts are forested and there may be some raising of livestock or cultivation of crops in this future land use category. Residential land uses are allowed but they are limited to single-family, stick-built homes on individual lots and manufactured homes on individual lots. Like with the intensive agricultural category, residential uses by definition are included but they primarily relate to the larger agricultural or forestry tract. The future building of dwellings or manufactured homes that are not farm-related is restricted, except for an allowance to subdivide a small number of small tracts over time for "minor subdivisions." Agricultural/Forestry areas can exist within the rural and even suburban character areas, but they are generally not designated within conservation character or urban character areas. Once designated urban character, farming in such areas is allowed to continue but is not expected to perpetuate.

As noted in the discussion of land use problems and issues, the 2020 and 2030 future land use plan maps have sought to retain the agricultural character as much as possible, considering needs for future conversion of farmland for residential uses. Unlike the previously adopted future land use plan, the 2020 and 2030 future land use plans in this Community Agenda promote the preservation of agricultural and forestry lands in many different non-urban unincorporated parts of the county. Even so, agricultural and forestry use (not counting land in the intensive agricultural category which will be retained) will decline as a percentage of all unincorporated land uses from 77.4 percent in 2009 to 46.5 percent in 2020 and 39.6 percent in 2030. One has to note that some 7,000 acres of intensive agriculture are also retained, along with some 20,000 acres of open space, a significant portion of which is probably converted from agriculture/forestry to the park/recreation/conservation category.

**Land Use Policies: Intensive Agriculture and Agricultural/Forestry**

1. **Preservation.** Preserve and encourage agricultural land use and operations, especially poultry farms which are vital to the county's economy.

2. **Avoid Conflicts.** Avoid, reduce, and mitigate the occurrence of conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.

3. **Notices.** Applicants for building permits for buildings or for uses on non-agricultural land abutting agricultural land or operations should be required to be supplied with notice about the county's support of the preservation of agricultural lands and operations and the potential for nuisance-type operations emanating from active farm operations.

4. **Buffers.** New non-agricultural land developments adjacent to intensive agricultural operations (excluding lands designated in the agricultural/forestry future land use plan category) should provide a sizeable buffer (i.e., at least 100 feet in width) to reduce the potential conflicts between intensive agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.

5. **Residential Lot Platting.** When new lots are platted pursuant to residential land use allowances in intensive agriculture and/or agricultural/forestry future land use plan categories, the lots should be designed so that they are large enough for a well (if unserved by public water supply) and septic tank (i.e., at least one acre) but small enough to not take away land from potentially viable future agricultural use (i.e., not more than two acres). Such lots should be located at the edge of agricultural fields and farm operations as opposed to being in the middle of the tract or otherwise making existing or future farming operations more difficult or less efficient.

6. **Best Management Practices.** Although agricultural operations are normally exempted from state and local soil erosion and sedimentation controls, agricultural property owners should be educated on the proper application of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and encouraged to apply them.

7. **Commercial Sales and Agri-tourism.** Avoid regulations and policies that would prevent agricultural areas and farms from offering to the public the commercial sale of farm products produced on the premises (e.g., farm produce stands) in agricultural and rural character areas. Also, avoid restrictions that would have the effect of preventing or discouraging recreational-based agri-tourism opportunities on farms and in agricultural areas (e.g., “U-Pick” farms, pumpkin patches, etc.).

8. **Development Standards.** Agricultural-related land development within intensive agriculture and agricultural/forestry land use classifications should be subjected only to the most minimal development regulations, i.e., those that are essential to public health, safety, and welfare.

**Residential**

This category includes dwellings of all types. Most commonly, they consist of single-family, detached dwelling units on individual lots but the type of housing unit (e.g., stick-built versus modular or manufactured) is not differentiated according to this future land use category. Residential uses are allowed in all but the conservation character area, and even then some residences may exist in areas designated for conservation. Within urban character areas, residential designations may include higher density housing, including duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, apartments, and residential condominiums. Multi-family and/or attached housing may be permissible in suburban areas but at lower densities than permitted in urban areas. Manufactured home permissions are guided by the character area policies which treat manufactured homes differently according to character area. Residential use densities also differ remarkably among the various character areas.

Residential land will almost double from 26,673 acres in 2009 to 50,072 acres in 2020. By 2030, there will be 32,895 acres more of residential land use in unincorporated Jackson County than existed in 2009. As a share of total unincorporated land use, residential development will increase from 15.1 percent in 2009 to 28.7 percent in 2020 and 34.1 percent in 2030.

Residential development between 2010 and 2020 will primarily stay within existing residentially developed areas in many different parts of unincorporated Jackson County. Primary existing residential corridors and areas currently exist along the following and will witness additional residential development:

- Residential development will expand in a logical, sequential fashion south of the city limits of Commerce and to a lesser extent around the city limits of Maysville.
- Along both sides of Ila Road (SR 326) east of Commerce.
- Along the U.S. Highway 441 corridor between Commerce and Nicholson.
- Along much of Waterworks Road between Commerce and Nicholson.
- South of Interstate 85 along SR 82, the western part of Woods Bridge Road, and along the south side of Apple Valley Road.
- The SR 82 corridor north of Interstate 85 and along the north side of Pond Fork Church Road (the Holly Springs area).
- North of Interstate 85 northeast of SR 53, emanating outward from the Braselton area's residential growth.
- Much of the already residential developed areas along SR 124, Doster Road, and Jackson Trail Road.
- Residential infill on large tracts west of Braselton and west-southwest of Hoschton.
- Some residential development east of Jefferson north and south of SR 335.
- Infill residential developments along Jefferson River Road between New Bridge Road and Chandler Bridge Road.
- Extensive additional rural residential growth around the area of Bear Creek Reservoir (but without access to the reservoir), and along SR 330 in the southernmost triangle of the county.

Between the years 2021 and 2030, new residential areas will develop in the following areas (in addition to extensive residential development within municipalities, particularly within Arcade):

- The most significant addition of residential development during this time period in unincorporated areas will be the Diamond Ranch residential development.
- Significant residential expansion will occur around the cities of Commerce and Maysville between 2021 and 2030.
- The SR 82 Spur corridor north of the city of Jefferson and south of Interstate 85 will develop into a mostly residential corridor (including Dry Pond Road, Barber Road, and Raford Wilson Road).
- Significant conversion of agricultural lands along the north and south sides of Interstate 85 between Jefferson and Braselton, especially on the north side of I-85 along SR 332 and on the north side of McNeal Road.
- Residential development will extend in a linear fashion along SR 53 southeast of Hoschton.
- Continued conversion of farmland to residential subdivisions along SR 124 and north of Doster Road.
- New residential development of will occur along Storey Porter Lane, between the developed portions of Jefferson and the industrial development along Hog Mountain Road.
- New residential development south of Jefferson and southwest of Arcade, along the south side of U.S. Highway 129 (Damon Gause Parkway).

- Limited, dispersed, non-uniform development along U.S. Highway 129 between Arcade and the Athens-Clarke County line.
- Infill residential tracts along SR 82 and north of Double Bridges Road, south of the city limits of Arcade.
- Residential development will begin to infill along both sides of U.S. Highway 441 between Nicholson and the unincorporated community of Center, and extend west of unincorporated Center along New Kings Bridge Road.

**Land Use Policies: Residential**

1. **Protect Residences from Incompatible Land Uses and Nuisances.** Where designated residential on the future land use plan maps, maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of residences at low (or current) densities. Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods. Protect residential areas (whether rural, suburban, or urban) from nuisances (e.g., excessive noise, odor, traffic and lighting) and from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

2. **Preservation of Residential Neighborhoods.** The consideration of the preservation of the integrity of residential neighborhoods shall be considered to carry great weight in all land use plan amendment and rezoning decisions.

3. **Transitional Properties and their Impacts on Residential Neighborhoods.** In those instances in which property proposed for change in future land use category or rezoning from residential to nonresidential use fronts on a major thoroughfare and also adjoins an established residential neighborhood, the factor of preservation of the residential area shall be considered to carry great weight in all land use plan amendment and rezoning decisions.

4. **Natural Areas, Open Space and Recreation.** New residential development should preserve the natural amenities of the land through maintenance of conservation areas and open spaces. When new major residential subdivisions or any multi-family complexes are developed, there should be a minimum of 20 percent of the total development area set aside for green space, open space, and active or passive recreational opportunities.

5. **Densities**. The density of residential development should be guided by the character area designations (agricultural, rural, suburban, and urban), with increasing densities permitted as development transitions from agricultural to urban.

6. **Market for Single-family Homebuilding Opportunities.** Encourage homebuilding on existing, vacant, residential subdivision lots prior to plating of new residential lots. Jackson County strongly encourages the consumption of available inventory of single-family lots prior to rezoning for new single-family residential subdivisions. Jackson County will consider the market need for housing in decisions whether to rezone for new single-family detached residential subdivisions.

7. **Neighborhood Interconnectivity.** Encourage intra- and inter-connectivity within, between, and among residential neighborhoods. Roads ending in cul-de-sacs are discouraged in all character areas but where provided should be limited to suburban character areas.

8. **Residential Use Adjacent to Water Supply Reservoirs.** New residential development is highly discouraged along the shorelines of public water supply reservoirs.

**Public/Institutional**

This category includes federal, state, or local government uses, and a wide variety of institutional land uses. Government uses include county-owned facilities, fire stations, post offices, and schools. Private institutional uses include schools, colleges, churches, cemeteries, and private non-profit meeting halls, among others. The public/institutional category also specifically includes private office development and which may include selected, low-intensity personal service establishments and other quasi-commercial land uses.

Public-institutional uses can be found and are permissible in virtually all character areas: urban, suburban, rural, and agricultural. In rural areas, public-institutional uses take the form of mostly historic churches and cemeteries and small meeting halls for private, non-profit groups. The scale and size of public-institutional uses are guided by the policies for character areas. The siting of public uses such as schools is generally discouraged in agricultural and rural character areas if other practicable alternatives exist. As an example if a church wants to locate in a rural character area, the size and other characteristics must be consistent with the rural character area description.

It is difficult to generalize the existing and future pattern of public-institutional uses. However, it is noted here that this category is used in many places as a transitional land use category between residential uses and commercial or industrial uses. Furthermore, it should be noted that the 2020 and 2030 future land use plans depart from the previously adopted future land use plan in its attempt to anticipate and reserve appropriate vacant sites for future public-institutional land uses. Public-institutional land use will almost triple in acreage from 2009 to 2030, an absolute increase of 1,857 acres.

**Land Use Policies: Public-Institutional**

1. **Reservation for Certain Uses.** Certain properties, particularly those at key road intersections with sufficient acreage, are suggested to be reserved for institutional uses such as churches, other places of worship, private schools, non-profit clubs and lodges, institutional residential facilities such as nursing homes and care centers, and public or other semi-public uses. Priority should be given to these uses prior to establishing other uses permitted in the public-institutional future land use category, such as private offices.

2. **Intensities.** The intensity (floor-area ratio or building space per acre) of institutional development should be guided by the character area designations (rural, suburban, and urban), with increasing densities permitted as development transitions from rural to urban.

3. **Transitional Nature.** The public-institutional future land use category is considered a transitional designation to buffer residential uses from commercial and/or industrial uses, as shown on the future land use plan maps.

4. **Site Plan Review.** Regardless of which character area within which it is located, all institutional developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should

not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, and signage.

**Commercial**

This category applies to lands dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, offices, services and entertainment facilities. As with public-institutional uses, commercial uses can be appropriate in a variety of character areas, so long as they meet the parameters for commercial use specified in character area policies. For instance, the future land use plan may designate new commercial development within a rural character area – however, in order to be consistent with the rural character area policies, development must remain small in scope and have architectural characteristics that resemble a rural area (see “rural character area”).

Commercial land use will increase by a factor of 6.7 times the current commercial acreage by 2030. The 2020 future land use plan provides for an increase of 3,109 acres over 2009 commercial acreage, and the 2030 plan provides for 5,881 acres of new commercial development beyond the 725 acres existing in 2009 in unincorporated Jackson County.

Extensive additional commercial development will occur in the following unincorporated areas between 2010 and 2020 (these are in addition to extensive additional commercial development anticipated within the city limits of Commerce and Jefferson):

- West of U.S. Highway 441, north of the city limits of Commerce, in the Banks Crossing area.
- Along U.S. Highway 441 east of the city limits of Commerce.
- Along the SR 98 corridor between Interstate 85 and downtown Commerce, as well as interchange-related commercial development expansion west of Interstate 85 along SR 98.
- A small neighborhood-scale commercial node will form at the intersections of Pond Fork Church Road and CR 242.
- Commercial development will expand incrementally southward from existing commercial development at the southwest quadrant of Interstate 85 and Dry Pond Road (SR 82).
- A commercial node will form at the intersection of U.S. Highway 129 (Damon Gause Parkway) and U.S. Highway 129 Business.
- Limited, infill commercial development on smaller tracts between U.S. Highway 129 and Old Gainesville Highway between the cities of Pendergrass and Talmo.
- Additional, highway-oriented interchange commercial uses will develop along SR 53 north of the Interstate 85 interchange.
- A commercial node serving suburban residential neighborhoods will continue developing along SR 124 at its intersections with SR 332 and Gum Springs Church Road.
- A suburban commercial node will form at SR 124 and Mark Dodd Road and Creek Nation Road.
- Commercial development will extend in a linear fashion along SR 53 southeast of the city of Hoschton.
- Infill commercial development along Athens Street (U.S. Highway 129 Business) between the cities of Jefferson and Arcade.
- A commercial node will form at the intersection of U.S. Highway 129 (Damon Gause Parkway) and Ethridge Road. Commercial development will also occur on the northeast side of U.S. Highway 129 (Damon Gause Parkway) between Ethridge Road and Galilee Church Road between Jefferson and Arcade.

- Commercial development will form mostly on the south side of U.S. Highway 129 between Arcade and the Athens-Clarke County line, at the intersections of Mary Collier Road, SR 330, Lebanon Church Road, and New Kings Bridge Road.
- Significant, mostly smaller-scale commercial development will form in the Center unincorporated area at the intersection of U.S. Highway 441 and SR 334 as well as U.S. Highway 441 and Old Commerce Road extension.
- A neighborhood commercial node will form on the west side of U.S. Highway 441 at Old Kings Bridge Road just south of the city limits of Nicholson.
- Small, rural convenience commercial development will occur at the intersections of Brockton Road (SR 335) with Thyatira-Brockton Road and South Apple Valley Road.

Between 2021 and 2030, the following unincorporated areas will witness significant additional commercial growth:

- Additional commercial development will logically extend along the east side of U.S. Highway 441 southwest and south of Commerce.
- The SR 98 corridor west of the interchange of Interstate 85 to the city limits of Maysville is expected to convert from a mostly residential corridor to a commercial corridor during this decade, once sanitary sewer is extended through this corridor to Maysville.
- Commercial development at the southwest quadrant of Interstate 85 and SR 82 (Dry Pond Road) will expand along the south side of Wayne Poultry Road as new industry develops west of that location.
- Commercial development will extend logically from the industrial/commercial complex at I-85 and Dry Pond Road northeast to the intersection of Dry Pond Road and Plainview Road.
- Commercial development will form at the intersection of U.S. Highway 129 (Damon Gause Parkway) and Galilee Church Road and between Galilee Church Road and Winder Highway (SR 60) on the south side of Damon Gause Parkway.
- Commercial will develop along the west side of U.S. Highway 441 across from the J & J Flea Market and northward from the Athens-Clarke County line.
- A new commercial node will form at Storey Porter Lane and Hog Mountain Road, serving new industrial and residential developments in the vicinity during the decade.

**Land Use Policies: Commercial**

1. **Patterns.** Discourage patterns of “strip” commercial development. Encourage building designs which do locate all of the off-street parking provided on the commercial lot between the road and the building.

2. **Efficient Use.** Encourage the re-occupancy of existing retail space prior to the construction of new retail spaces.

3. **Intensities**. The intensity (floor-area ratio or building space per acre) of commercial development should be guided by the character area designations (rural, suburban, and urban), with increasing densities permitted as development transitions from rural to urban.

4. **Site Plan Review.** Regardless of which character area within which it is located, all commercial developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should

not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, and signage.

5. **Long-term Quality versus Short-Term Maximizing of Investment.** Unless specifically designated as an interim use (where long-term development of a more permanent nature is contemplated), commercial developers need to consider the long-term impact of their development on the surrounding community. Efforts to maximize return on investment with little consideration to the long-term community impact will be judged by the county accordingly.

6. **Highway Commercial Uses.** The fact that an existing lot has frontage on a state or federal highway is one consideration but is not in itself prima facie evidence that such property should be or will be allowed to be used commercially. The creation of new highway business districts without frontage on a state highway is strongly discouraged. Great scrutiny will be given to any requests for land use amendments or rezonings to extend highway commercial zoning districts beyond those areas designated on the future land use plan maps. Substantially compelling evidence of the need for additional highway business uses in the county must be presented to support such a change.

7. **Architectural Harmony among Phases and Outparcels.** When commercial development occurs in phases, and for commercial development with outlots reserved for future commercial development, the property owner or developer should ensure that the designs of building forms are interrelated and architecturally harmonious.

8. **Neighborhood Commercial.** Where commercial is designated at corners of intersections of local roads, the commercial land uses within such neighborhood-serving commercial nodes should not contain highway-oriented commercial developments such as but not limited to lodging, auto sales, auto service, and open air business establishments. With the exception of convenience stores with gasoline pumps, neighborhood commercial areas do not permit or accommodate automotive uses or other types of more intensive highway business activities, or those uses that generate excessive traffic, noise, odors, pollution, safety hazards, or other adverse impacts which would detract from the desirability of adjacent properties for residential use. Commercial development within neighborhood commercial nodes should be small-scale commercial uses of a convenience nature serving nearby residential neighborhoods as opposed to a regional market. Uses within neighborhood commercial areas generally occur within enclosed buildings with no outside storage and limited (if any) outdoor display of goods and merchandise.

9. **Interstate 85 Frontage.** Commercial developments with frontage on Interstate 85 should maintain trees immediately adjacent to the interstate right of way, to buffer noise emanating from the interstate highway and reduce impacts noise will have on nearby properties. A natural, undisturbed buffer of 50 feet in width should be maintained along the property's frontage on Interstate 85. Such a buffer will allow for a significant view corridor into the site while mitigating some of the noise impacts compared with commercial sites that are clearcut all the way to the Interstate right of way.

10. **Impervious Surfaces.** Within water supply watersheds and other sensitive environmental areas, strong consideration should be given by site designers and land developers to special design techniques that will reduce surface water runoff. Impervious surfaces should be limited in such areas to no more than 60 percent of the

total site area. Pervious pavement and gravel parking should be permitted in order to allow site developments to meet this criterion.

**Master Planned Mixed Use**

This category does not apply to any existing development in Jackson County. It is appropriately applied only in urban areas which have water and sewer service. This category encourages an appropriate mix of residential, office, civic-institutional, retail-service, and open space in a planned environment.

Relatively little land is designated in this category (175 acres in unincorporated Jackson County). From 2021 to 2030, mixed use development is projected to occur on the east side of U.S. Highway 441 east of Commerce, south of SR 59, and in the triangular area formed by U.S. Highway 129 and U.S. Highway 129 Business in the Jefferson (unincorporated) area.

**Land Use Policies: Master Planned Mixed Use**

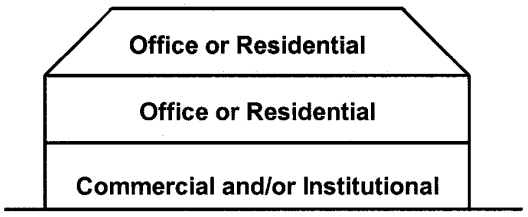
1. **Densities and Intensities.** The density of residential development and intensity of non-residential development (floor-area ratio or building space per acre) of commercial development should be guided by the character area designations (rural, suburban, and urban), with increasing densities permitted as development transitions from rural to urban. Within a master planned mixed use development, densities and intensities should be greatest at road intersections and/or along major road corridors and the least at the fringe along property lines abutting less intensive development.

2. **Housing Variety.** Encourage a variety of home styles, housing types, densities and price ranges, including mixed-income housing, within mixed-use developments.

3. **Attached and Group Quarters Housing.** Attached housing and group quarters housing are encouraged to be located within mixed-use developments.

4. **Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities.** Within mixed use developments, encourage “life cycle” or “mixed generation” communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.

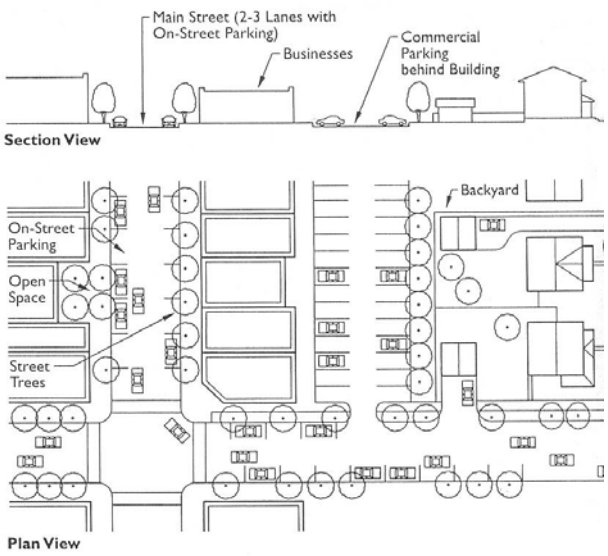
5. **Vertical Mixed Use.** Within master-planned mixed use developments, the vertical mixing of residential with office and commercial land uses is desirable.




**Vertical Mixed Use Desirable**

6. **Pedestrian Retail.** A pedestrian-oriented retail district should be planned and provided for mixed use developments large enough to support such a district.

7. **Jobs-Housing Balance.** Having 1.5 jobs for each housing unit is considered a good balance of residential and nonresidential development. This policy should be used as a guide in planning development in this category, but it is non-binding.




## Industrial

This category includes lands dedicated to industrial uses, including warehouses, wholesale trade facilities, research and development facilities, and manufacturing operations, processing plants, factories, and mining or mineral extraction activities. While it is possible to have light industrial uses in suburban areas, they are relegated predominantly to urban character areas given their need for urban-type facilities such as water, sanitary sewer, and collector roads or highways. Some extraction or mining operations may exist in rural character areas and be appropriately sited in remote places designated for rural or agricultural character, subject to specific land use policies.

By 2020, there will be a potential capacity for new industrial land use of 5,405 acres from the existing acreage of 1,351 acres in 2009. By 2030, the additional industrial land designated in the future land use plan constitutes an increase of 5,817 acres more than exists in 2009 in unincorporated Jackson County.

There are several unincorporated areas that are designated for future industrial development. These are in addition to substantial industrial development planned within the city limits of Commerce along Interstate 85 and in Jefferson near the SR 82 (Dry Pond) interchange of Interstate 85. By 2020, industrial development will expand in the following unincorporated areas:

- Adjacent to existing industry in Maysville, along the south side of SR 98.
- West of the commercial interchange area development at SR 98 and Interstate 85.
- Along Steve Reynolds Industrial Parkway north of SR 98.
- Smaller scale expansion of the industrial area east of the city limits of Commerce and U.S. Highway 441 along SR 334.
- Development of sites within existing industrial parks and areas north of Interstate 85 between Valentine Industrial Parkway and Dry Pond Road (SR 82), along Raco Parkway (west of the Dry Pond Road interchange with I-85), and along Valentine Industrial Parkway and Bonnie Valentine Way, as well as north of Wayne Poultry Road.
- Along the south side of McClure Industrial Parkway.
- North of I-85 between SR 98 and the Banks County line.

- Infill industrial development north and south of U.S. Highway 129 in the Pendergrass and Jefferson areas west of I-85.

Between 2021 and 2030, industrial development will expand further in the following unincorporated areas (in addition to considerable opportunities for additional industrial development within the cities of Jefferson and Commerce):

- Additional industrial development will occur along the south side of Wayne Poultry Road and between the south side of I-85 and Hog Mountain Road.
- New industrial development will take place In the vicinity of Jackson County Airport along and east of SR 82 Spur.
- Between Wayne Poultry Road and Interstate 85.
- North of U.S. Highway 129 between the cities of Pendergrass and Talmo.

**Land Use Policies: Industrial**

1. **Appropriate Locations.** All industrial land uses should be limited to areas with relatively level topography, adequate water and sewerage facilities, and access to arterial streets.

2. **Expansion of Existing Suburban Industrial Areas.** Zoning for existing industrial uses designated "suburban" on the character area map should not be expanded unless sanitary sewer is provided and expansion takes place in an "urban" character area.

3. **Light versus Heavy Industry.** New industrial operations should be limited to those that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions. However, in areas designated for industry which are clearly removed from residential areas, heavy manufacturing and heavy industrial uses, including those creating objectionable conditions, are considered appropriate.

4. **Industrial Park and Campus Designs.** Future industrial developments serving more than one industry are strongly encouraged to be developed within planned industrial parks which are designed with campus-style layouts including generous building setbacks from exterior roads and landscaping.

5. **Interstate 85 Frontage.** Industrial developments with frontage on Interstate 85 should maintain trees immediately adjacent to the interstate right of way, to buffer noise emanating from the interstate highway and reduce impacts noise will have on nearby properties. A natural, undisturbed buffer of 50 feet in width should be maintained along the property's frontage on Interstate 85. Such a buffer will allow for a significant view corridor into the site while mitigating some of the noise impacts compared with industrial sites that are clearcut all the way to the Interstate right of way.

6. **Impervious Surfaces.** Within water supply watersheds and other sensitive environmental areas, strong consideration should be given by site designers and land developers to special design techniques that will reduce surface water runoff. Impervious surfaces should be limited in such areas to no more than 60 percent of the total site area. Pervious pavement and gravel parking should be permitted in order to allow site developments to meet this criterion.

7. **Reservation of Prime Industrial Sites with Publicly Subsidized Sewer for High Employment-Generating Uses.** In areas designated for future industrial development, priority should be placed on attracting industrial developments with significant employment densities (i.e., jobs per acre of land or per acre of building space). Jackson County may not elect not to approve rezoning for industrial development in such areas if the development proposed is for low density employment industrial uses such as warehousing, so as to reserve prime industrial sites that have been subsidized with regard to sanitary sewer service for the highest employment generating industrial uses.

**Land Use Policies: Mining and Extraction Industries**

1. **Land Use Districts.** Rock quarries are only appropriately located in industrial future land use districts and highly incompatible in suburban character areas.

2. **Blasting Operations.** Vibrations that result from blasting must be continually monitored with seismographs by a qualified professional. Warning signs need to be posted at regular intervals (1,000 feet approximately, recommended) along the perimeter of the site involving blasting operations.

3. **Access and Traffic.** Primary access onto at least a major collector street is required. The access drive should be curvilinear or meandering in such a way it will not provide an unobstructed straight-line view of interior buildings, structures, or mine operations from the primary access road. Unimproved (dirt or gravel) haul roads need to be watered regularly during dry seasons. A traffic impact study is required at the time of rezoning or special use approval.

4. **Buffers.** Buffers of 2000 feet should be provided on all rock quarries despite surrounding land uses. If permitted in a rural character area, there needs to be a minimum buffer of 750 feet adjacent to all property lines *(which may include berms and access roads)*, a minimum 1,000-foot setback from all property lines for crushers and asphalt and concrete plants, and minimum setbacks for roads of 250 feet from property lines (i.e., allowed within the inner part of the required buffer). The minimum site area for a rock quarry to adhere to these requirements is approximately 250 acres.

5. **Complaints.** The applicant for approval of a mining operation or extractive industry needs to submit a plan specifying procedures for handling complaints received directly from citizens or property owners and those forwarded by the local government from complainants.

### Transportation/ Communications/Utilities

This category applies primarily to electricity facilities like power substations and major transmission lines and cell towers. As essential public facilities, they are generally allowed in all character areas as needed. There is change in quantity of this land use from the 2020 to 2030 future land use plan maps.

**Power Substation on SR 334**

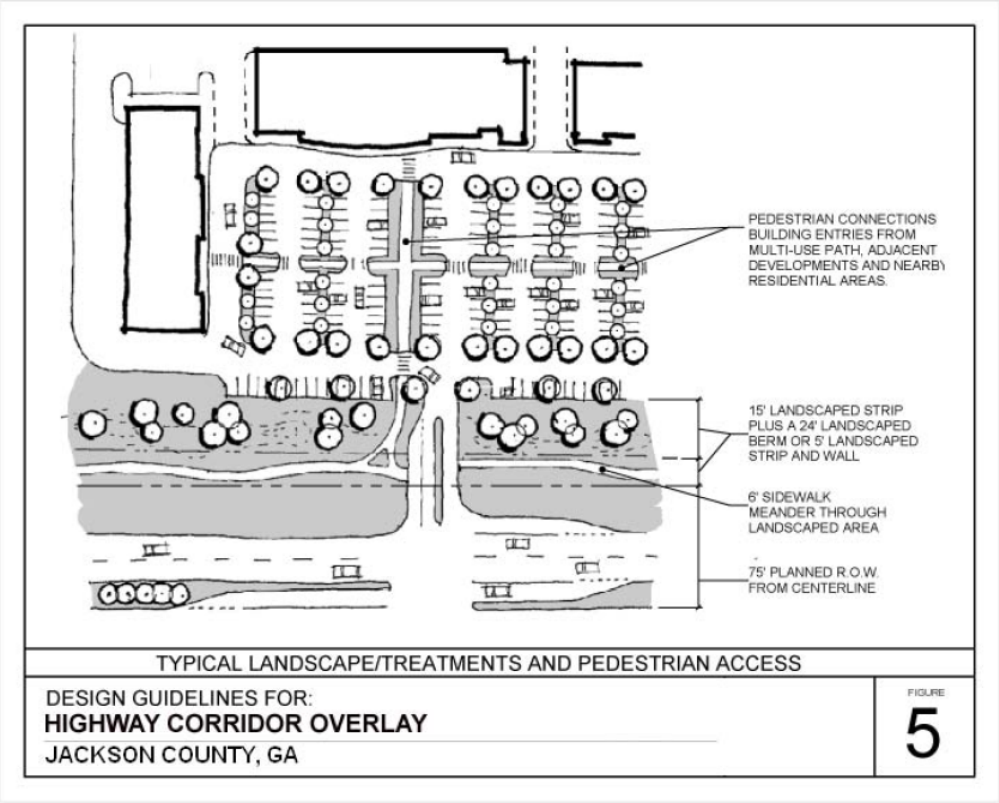
The relationship of future land use categories to character areas is summarized in Table 3.2 (see the section, "Character Areas").

## SPECIAL OVERLAYS

When asked in the community survey (2009) whether Jackson County is a place that has its own unique character, the vast majority of respondents to the community survey strongly agreed (18) or agreed (62) while only seven disagreed or strongly disagreed (Question 3). When asked whether Jackson County is doing enough to protect the aesthetic character of the county (Question 15), 10 respondents strongly disagreed, 44 disagreed, 20 were neutral or had no opinion, 19 agreed, and 1 strongly agreed. Overlay districts with design and architectural regulations and guidelines are the most common method of providing additional control and guidance with regard to land development.

### SR 124 and SR 53 Corridors

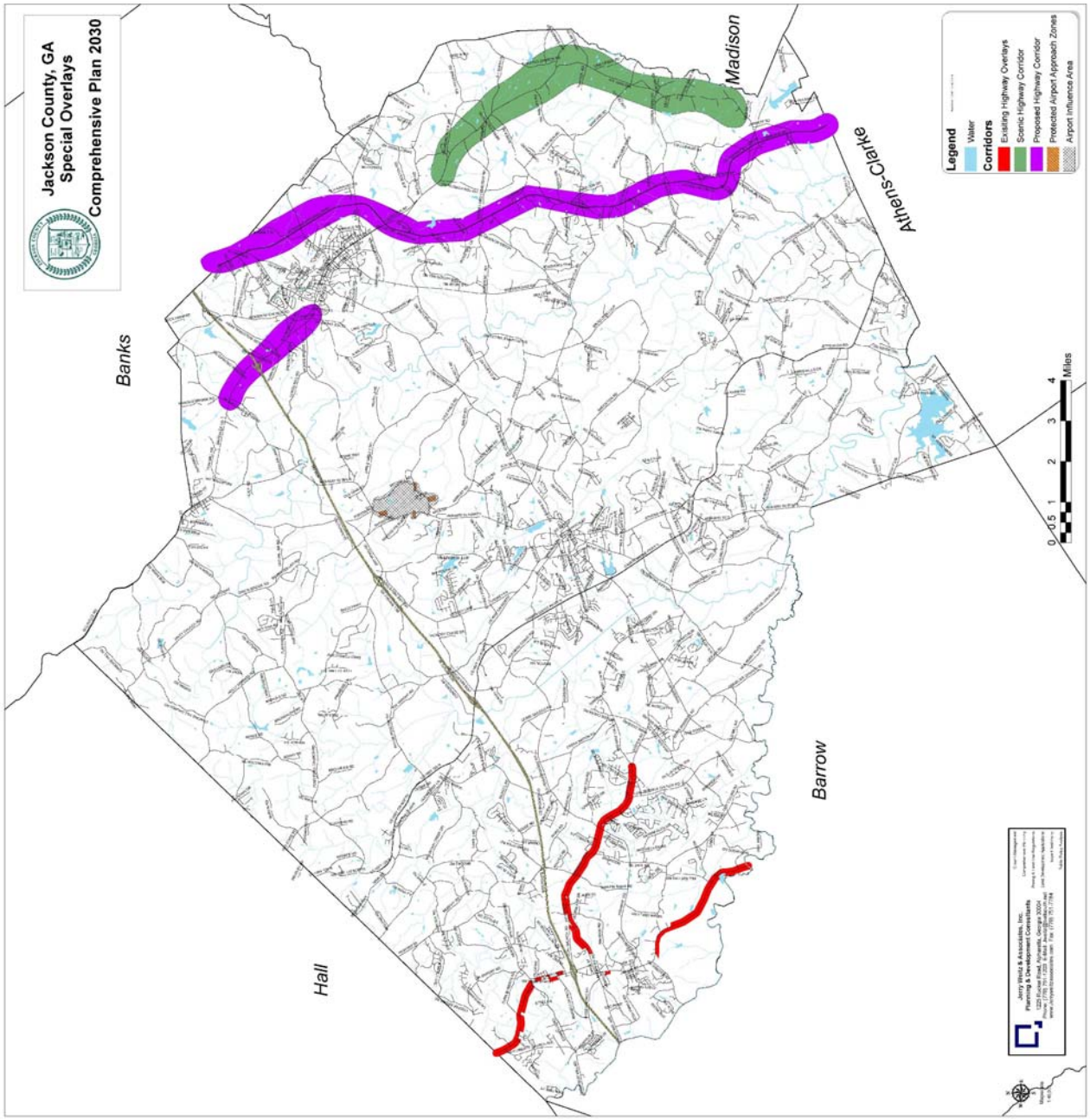
Jackson County has adopted corridor overlay districts for the SR 124 and SR 53 corridors. Applicants for development in these corridors are required to submit building plan applications showing proposed building materials and demonstrating consistency with a number of regulations and guidelines pertaining to uses, ground floor area limitations, lot standards, access management, landscaping, environmental controls, parking, dumpsters, lighting, architecture, and signage (see Sec. 206(q) and Secs. 510 through 514 of the Unified Development Code). These corridors are recognized in the special overlays map of this Community Agenda.




**One of several design guidelines provided for the SR 124 and SR 53 Overlays In Article 5 of the Jackson County Unified Development Code**

## U.S. Highway 441 Corridor

The Community Agenda calls for the extension of the existing highway overlays regulation to additional highway corridors in Jackson County. Of immediate concern are the highway corridors with shared land use jurisdiction – such as U.S. Highway 441 in the Commerce area (where much of the west side of the highway is in Commerce and most of the east side is unincorporated). In order to have consistent, coherent, quality development in this corridor, it is essential that access management and site development regulations and guidelines be prepared and adopted by Cities of Commerce and Nicholson and unincorporated Jackson County. Development in the U.S. Highway 441 corridor is likely to be similar to that anticipated in the SR 124 and SR 53 corridors, except that U.S. Highway 441 is a four-lane highway with a median. The county's highway overlay district regulations and guidelines may be appropriately applied to this corridor, although another set of regulations and guidelines cross-accepted by Commerce, Nicholson and Jackson County would be needed, given that the U.S. Highway 441 corridor is much wider than the two-lane highway corridors for which overlays already exist.


Jackson County, GA
Special Overlays
Comprehensive Plan 2030
Banks
Madison
Athens-Clarke
Hall
Barrow
Legend
Water
Corridors
Existing Highway Overlays
Scenic Highway Corridor
Proposed Highway Corridor
Protected Airport Approach Zones
Airport Influence Area
0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Miles
Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Planning & Development Consultants

### SR 98 (Maysville Road) Corridor in the Commerce Area

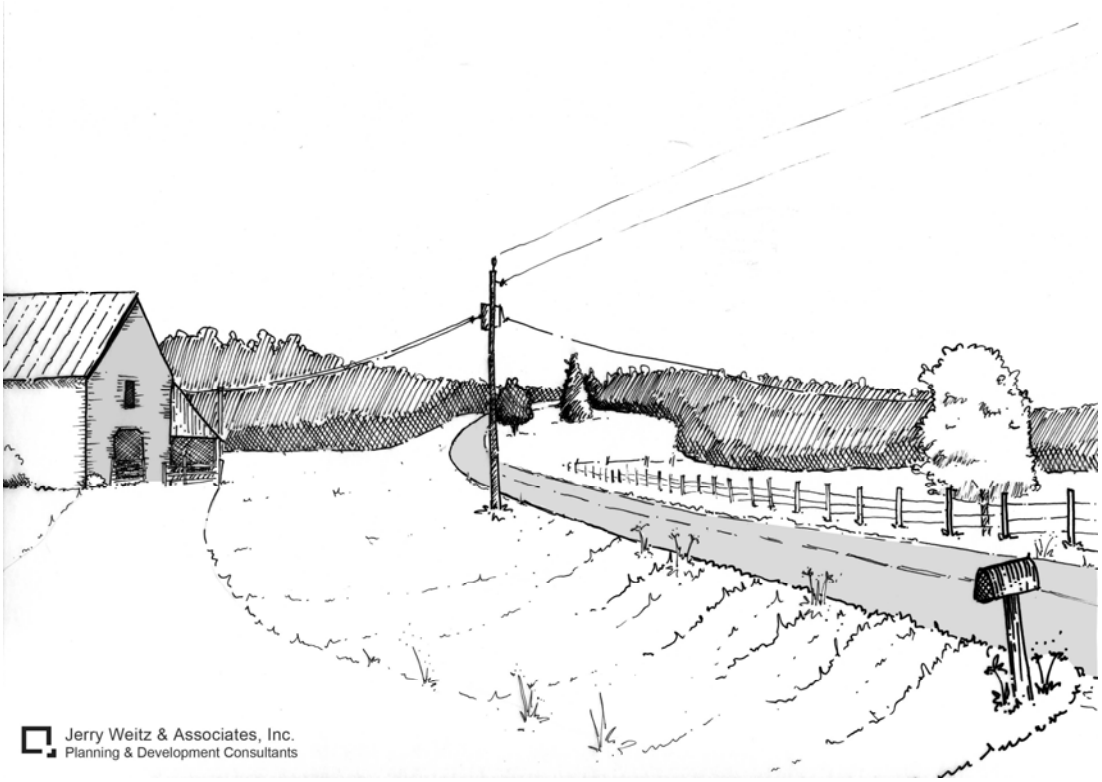
Another corridor which has shared land use jurisdiction is the SR 98 corridor between downtown Commerce and extending west to the north side of Interstate 85. Around the Interstate 85 interchange and along that segment between I-85 and the downtown, land use jurisdiction falls in and out of Commerce. That is, one property may be unincorporated, then the next one is in Commerce, then land use jurisdiction falls back to the unincorporated county again. This corridor differs from the SR 124 and SR 53 corridors in that much of the land is already developed for commercial uses. Aesthetic improvement is needed. This may mean a specialized set of overlay regulations are needed for this corridor. Like the U.S. Highway 441 corridor, regulations and guidelines should be prepared and cross-accepted by both Commerce and Jackson County.

### Jackson County Airport Overlay

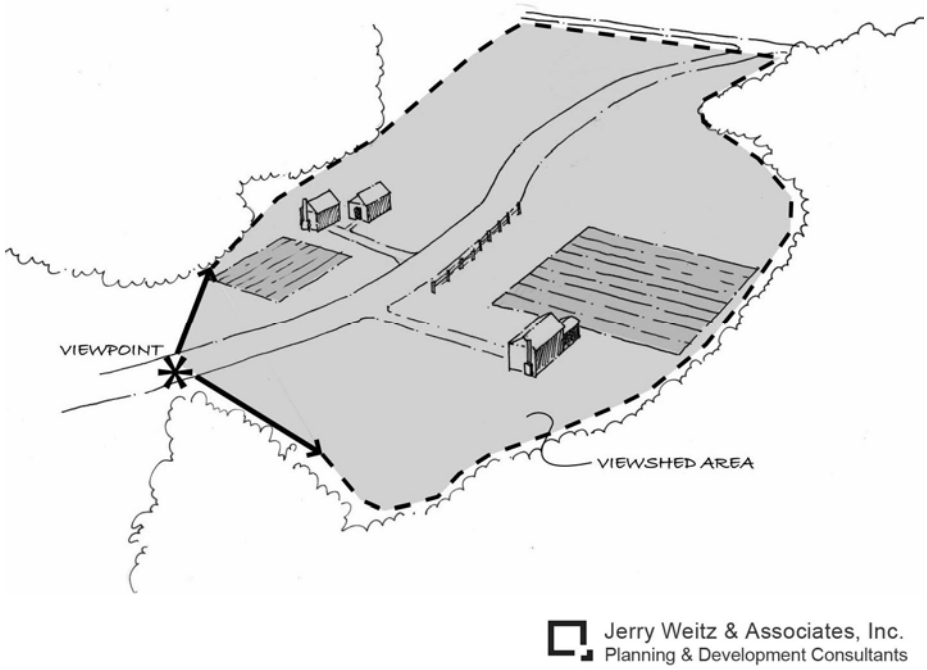
Another existing overlay that is already established in the Jackson County Unified Development Code (Sec. 206(p)) is the airport zone overlay. The airport overlay has been adopted in order to protect the flight approach areas to the airport, in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements. In the overlay, heights of buildings and other obstructions are regulated in order to ensure save flight/aviation operations. The airport zone overlay is specifically recognized on the special overlays map of this Community Agenda.

### SR 334 Scenic Corridor

The Community Agenda calls for designation of much of SR 334 south of the city limits of Commerce, to its termination near U.S. Highway 441, as a scenic road corridor. This part of the SR 334 corridor is proposed to remain almost entirely agricultural with scattered existing residences. In order to protect the outstanding rural scenic qualities along this highway, special regulations and guidelines within the SR 334 viewshed are proposed and called for in the short-term work program (see figures next page).




**SR 334 Corridor: Existing Conditions**




**Illustrative "Viewshed" (Area of Concern)**

# CHAPTER 4
# SYNOPSIS OF COUNTYWIDE ROADWAYS PLAN

This chapter of the Community Agenda provides a summary of the Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028, which was prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. and is adopted by reference as if fully set forth in this comprehensive plan. The document is some 268 pages and combines detailed inventories of road conditions in addition to plans for short-term and long-range road system improvements. This synopsis does not substitute for the plan itself, but rather is designed to facilitate the reader's overview of its contents and recommendations. Until this plan was prepared, Jackson County had never prepared a long-range roadways plan integrating land use and transportation decision-making, identifying existing and future roadway capacity and operational problems, formulating transportation goals, objectives and policies that guide future growth, and preparing a long-range list of capital projects to resolve present and future needs in a financially feasible manner.

The scope of services went beyond the typical scope of work associated with comprehensive transportation plans and studies. The roadway inventory and analysis included not only included the types, location, and capacity of the various existing major roadways, but also a field survey which identified current substandard road features and safety issues or signage problems along the major roadways within the county. The survey addresses 168 roadway segments and identifies 442 safety and signage concerns. Accident histories are thoroughly documented. Special attention was provided to the Interstate 85 (I-85) corridor and its future needs to enhance Jackson County's potential economic development efforts, in particular a parallel road system and potential new interchange.

## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADS

Some 88 of the major roadways within the county were evaluated for their consistency with the current GDOT functional classification system, and 21 roads were recommended to be reevaluated by GDOT to reclassify those roadways based upon their current usage and characteristics.

## EXISTING AND FUTURE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Existing year 2008 average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes for 183 roadway segments were evaluated to determine their current levels of service (LOS). Traffic forecasts were prepared for each of the five-year analysis periods from 2013 to 2028 and, subsequently, the levels of service were determined to evaluate the future traffic operations on the existing major roadways in Jackson County. These analyses indicate future needs for roadway improvements. The future roadway operational analysis included an analysis of historical traffic growth trends and travel patterns, a review of the future land use designations established by Jackson County and the anticipated future growth areas, and an analysis of the currently programmed and planned projects of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and Jackson County.

## FUTURE PARK AND RIDE LOTS

Jackson County does not have any existing park and ride facilities at the present time. In order to better serve residents' commuting needs and to utilize I-85 more efficiently, it is recommended that Jackson County plan for and construct five park and ride parking lots near existing and future interchanges.

## BRIDGES

There are 128 bridges in Jackson County, of which 57 are owned by GDOT. The majority of the 71 remaining bridges are owned by Jackson County. All of the bridges were analyzed for low sufficiency rating scores and the presence of posted load limits to identify those bridges with potential replacement or modification improvement needs. There are 26 bridges with low sufficiency ratings and another 27 bridges need to be replaced or improved.

## INTERCITY CONNECTIVITY

It was expressed by Jackson County officials early in the process that intercity connectivity was an important issue that should be evaluated. The purpose of that evaluation was to identify where future road improvements could be made and result in better connectivity between existing municipalities within the county. Of some 24 possible routes considered, the plan narrowed the list to six and recommends pursuit of three improvements – Braselton to Talmo to Gainesville, Braselton to Pendergrass, and Braselton/Hoschton to Maysville.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION ROUTES

It is recommended that I-85 and several minor arterials and major collectors (SR 53, SR 124, US 129, SR 82 SR 98 and US 441), be officially designated as emergency evacuation routes and that an emergency evacuation plan be prepared and adopted.

## POLICIES

Policies articulated in the Countywide Roadways Plan are integrated into Chapter 5 of this Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda. In addition, access management goals and principles are recommended in Subsection 6.6.

## RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Unified Development Code (UDC) was reviewed to assess its capabilities to provide uniform minimum standards for the provision of the requisite road rights-of-way, and proper design and construction standards for roads and related signage. Based upon that review, 27 changes were recommended (Subsection 6.4).

## ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

### Programmed Projects

Figure 8 of the plan, reproduced at the end of this chapter, shows major road improvements which are already programmed by the Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Department of Transportation, and Jackson County. Major projects programmed include the following proposed and constructed by Jackson County as a part of its economic development road program bond funding:

1. Parallel frontage roads along Interstate 85, including Commerce Retail Boulevard, Bana Industrial Boulevard.
2. Interchange study at Interstate 85 and SR 60.
3. Hospital Road Connector to U.S. Highway 441 in Commerce.
4. SR 82 airport connector road to Interstate 85.
5. Hog Mountain Road improvement in and near Jefferson.
6. Improvements to Zion Church Road and SR 53 in the Braselton area.

### Unprogrammed Projects

Projects that have been proposed but which are currently unfunded include the following:

1. Widening of I-85 from North of SR 211 in Barrow Co. to North of SR 53.
2. Widening of I-85 from North of SR 53 to north of U.S. Highway 129.
3. Widening of I-85 from north of U.S. Highway 129 to north of SR 82 (Dry Pond Road interchange).
4. Widening of I-85 from north of SR 82 to north of SR 98 interchange.
5. Widening of I-85 from north of SR 98 to the Banks County line and beyond.
6. Construction of passing lanes on SR 15 Alt. between Jefferson and Commerce.
7. Widening of SR 124 From CR 171/Josh Pirkle Road to SR 11/US 129.
8. Widening of SR 53 From I-85 to CR 167/Tapp Wood Road.
9. Widening of SR 53 from I-85 to SR 211 in Hall County.
10. Intersection improvements at SR 11 at SR 24/Galilee Church Road
11. New bridges and alternative for SR 15 Alt. and SR 82 in Jefferson.
12. Various bridge reconstruction or replacement projects.

### Interstate 85 Widening

The traffic analysis for I-85 indicates that by the year 2013, all segments of I-85 will reach their full capacity of operation with the existing lane configuration. By the end of the planning horizon, year 2028, all of the I-85 sections will be operating at LOS F, which means they are failing, and will need to be widened. The I-85 segment from the Barrow County line to SR 53 will need to be widened to 8 lanes, while the remaining I-85 sections from SR 53 to the Banks County line will need widening to 6 lanes.

The only Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) programmed project located in Jackson County is BA-008, I-85 North from SR 211 in Barrow County to SR 53 in Jackson County. The sponsor of the project is GDOT, and the existing 4-lane interstate is planned to be widened to 6 lanes between the years 2014 to 2020. The total length of the improvement is approximately 3.3 miles long. A total of $35,858,000 has been allocated for construction in the ARC's Transportation improvement Program (TIP), but the current GDOT estimate is $50,803,000. The projected cost in 2014 dollars is $82,752,733.72 according to GDOT. Engineering has already been authorized. The previously scheduled let date for construction was October 8, 2009, but GDOT shelved the project until sufficient funding has been acquired which is presently anticipated in the year 2020.

### Other Roadways with Forecasted Failure of LOS

By 2028, SR 11 Business route from Oak Avenue to Cobb Street in Jefferson (a 2-lane roadway) will have a LOS E. However, the roadway plan does not recommend the improvement of this segment of SR 11 Business. SR 98 from Stark Street to Homer Road/SR 15 Alternate in the City of Commerce is operating at LOS F, which is failing. However, it will be very difficult and costly to widen that section of SR 98. The most practicable solution to the traffic congestion problem is a new B. Wilson Road Extension route extending from SR 98 east of US 441 to SR 98 west of Commerce. That project will necessitate preparation of an environmental document, and the planning and engineering design, and right-of-way acquisition process is expected to take 7 to 12 years to complete.

### Additional Road Improvement Projects

Major future road projects called for in the plan include, among others, the Jefferson East By-pass, the extension of SR 60/Sam Freeman Road South to SR 53, and the Possum Creek Road Connector in the Jefferson area. These are illustrated on Figure 33 of the plan which is reproduced at the end of this chapter. Several projects are summarized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**
**Recommended New Roadway Connections, Priorities, and Costs**

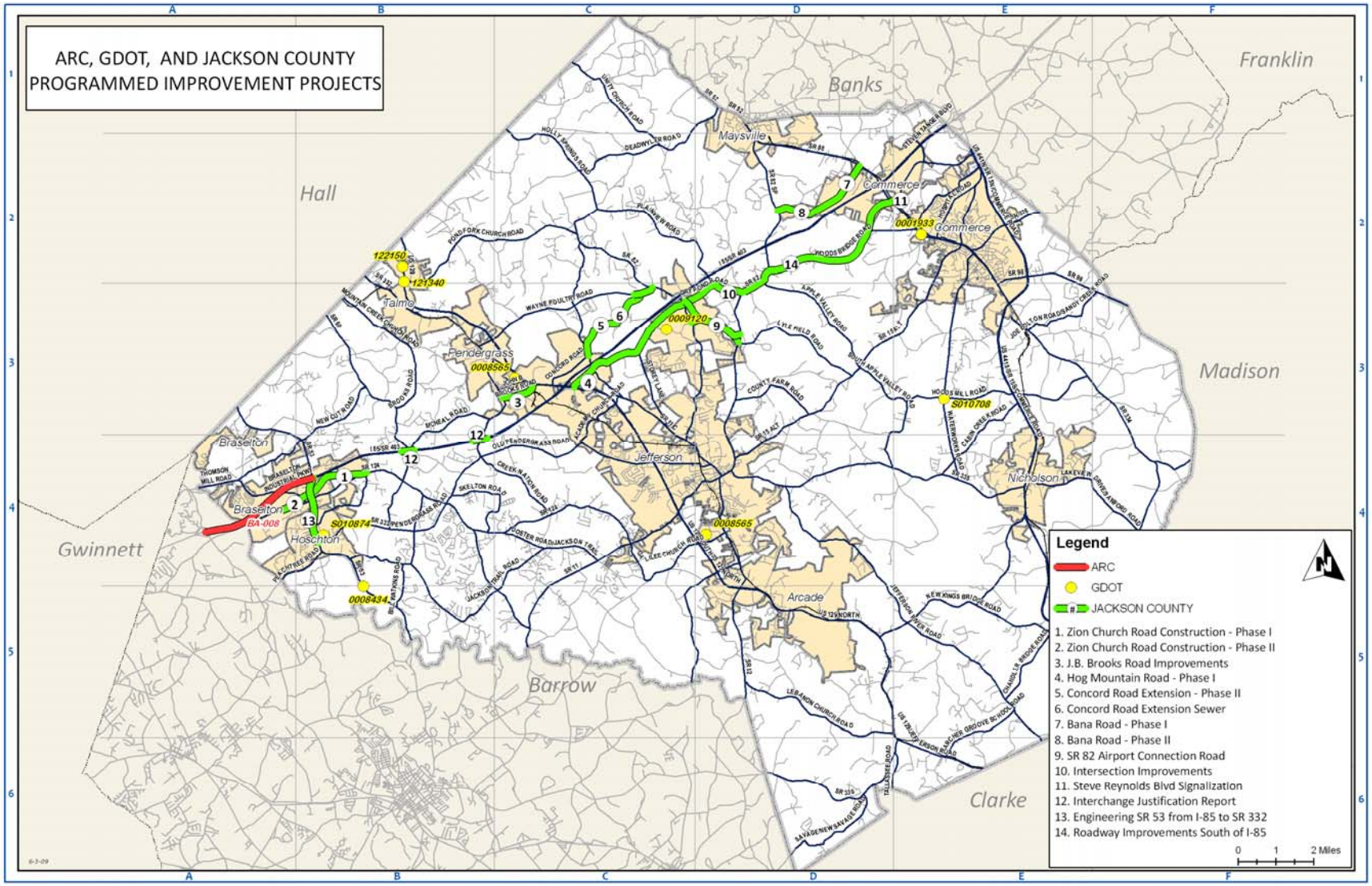
| Priority | Improvement Name | Length of Construction | Cost Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|

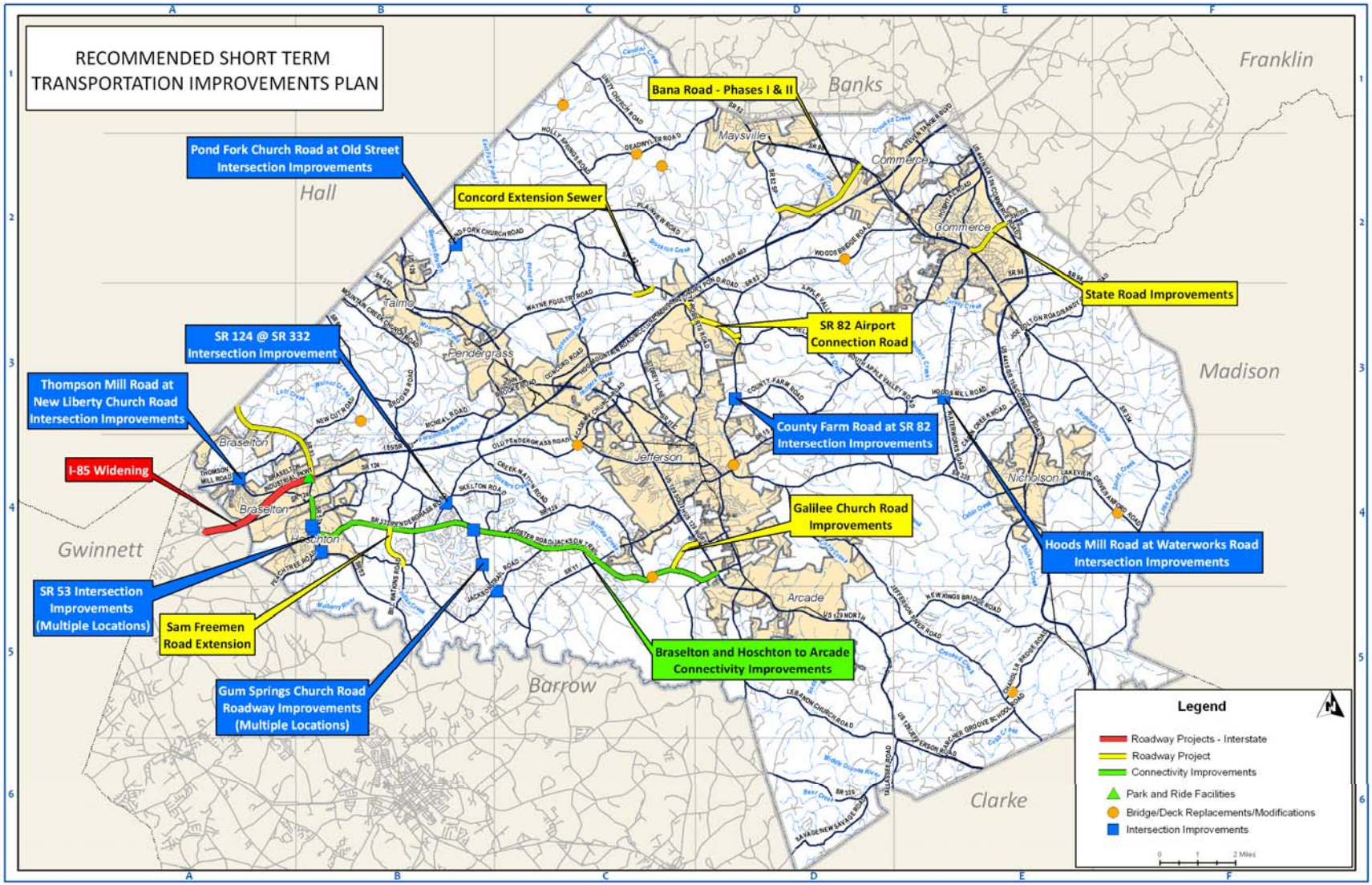
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | South Extension of Sam Freeman Road to Bill Watkins Road | 1.1 Miles | $13,248,000 |
| 2 | Braselton Industrial Parkway Extension | 3.5 Miles | $27,882,000 |
| 3 | Jefferson East By-pass | 2.7 Miles | $13,348,000 |
| 4 | Possum Creek Road Improvement and Bridge Replacement | 0.7 Miles | $4,313,000 |
| 5 | Braselton to Talmo to Gainesville Connectivity Improvement | 1.6 Miles | $9,045,000 |
| 6 | Braselton to Pendergrass Connectivity Improvement | 1.2 Miles | $9,951,000 |
| 7 | Braselton/Hoschton to Maysville Connectivity Improvement | 2.7 Miles | $12,639,000 |
| 8 | B. Wilson Road Extension Improvements | 5.4-8.7 Miles | $185,000,000 |

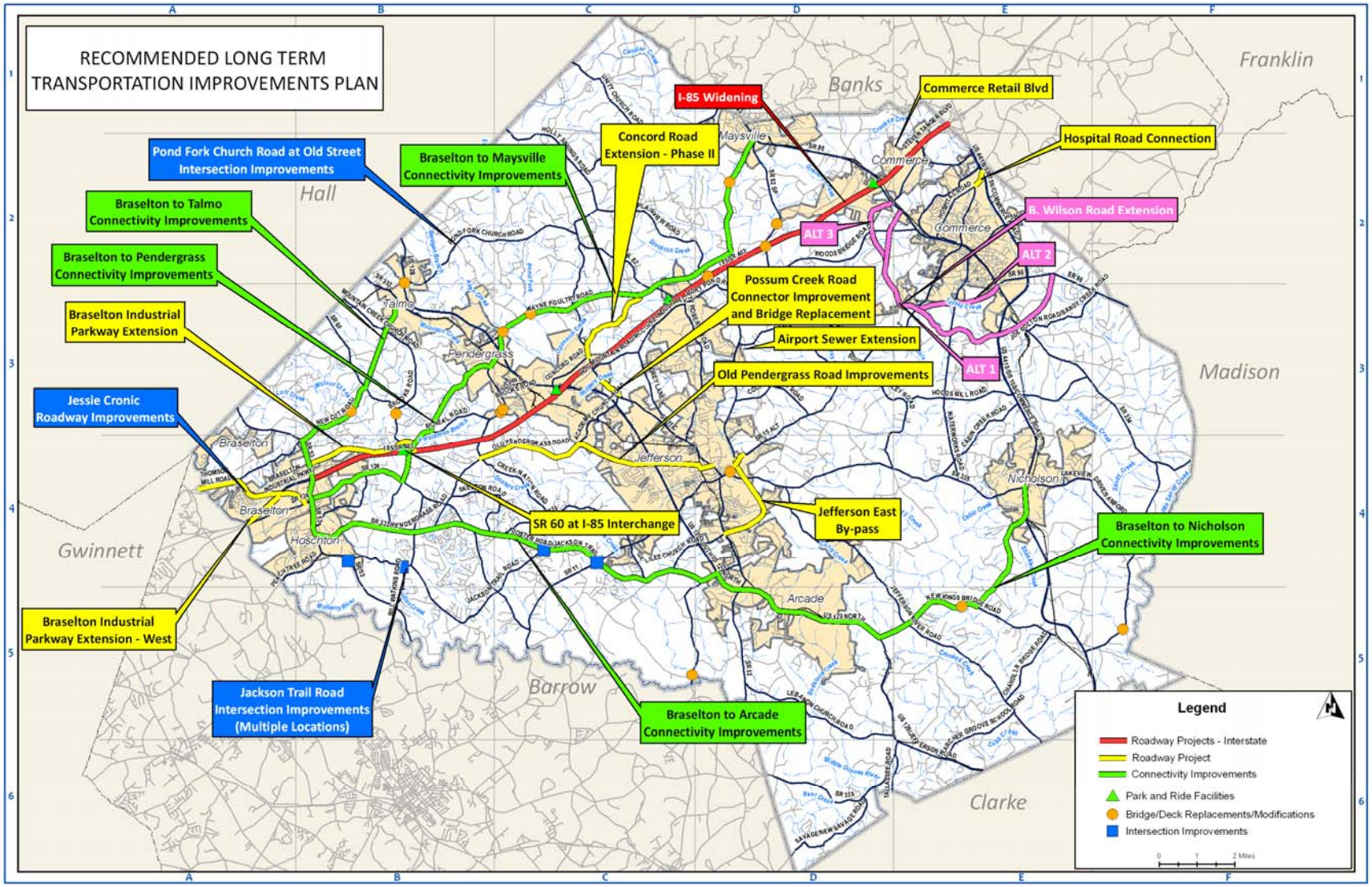
Source: Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028, Table 82, by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. 2009.

## WORK PROGRAMS

The short-term work program prepared as a part of the Countywide Roadways Plan has been included as a table in Chapter 5 of this Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda. The Countywide Roadways Plan includes a long-range work program (2015-2028). It is reproduced in Chapter 5 of this Community Agenda.


ARC, GDOT, AND JACKSON COUNTY
PROGRAMMED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
Franklin
Banks
Hall
Madison
Gwinnett
Barrow
Clarke
Maysville
Commerce
Talmo
Pendergrass
Braselton
Hoschton
Jefferson
Nicholson
Arcade
122150
121340
0008565
0009120
0001933
S010708
S010874
BA-008
0008434
Legend
ARC
GDOT
JACKSON COUNTY
1. Zion Church Road Construction - Phase I
2. Zion Church Road Construction - Phase II
3. J.B. Brooks Road Improvements
4. Hog Mountain Road - Phase I
5. Concord Road Extension - Phase II
6. Concord Road Extension Sewer
7. Bana Road - Phase I
8. Bana Road - Phase II
9. SR 82 Airport Connection Road
10. Intersection Improvements
11. Steve Reynolds Blvd Signalization
12. Interchange Justification Report
13. Engineering SR 53 from I-85 to SR 332
14. Roadway Improvements South of I-85
0 1 2 Miles


RECOMMENDED SHORT TERM TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
Bana Road - Phases I & II
Pond Fork Church Road at Old Street Intersection Improvements
Concord Extension Sewer
State Road Improvements
SR 82 Airport Connection Road
SR 124 @ SR 332 Intersection Improvement
Thompson Mill Road at New Liberty Church Road Intersection Improvements
County Farm Road at SR 82 Intersection Improvements
I-85 Widening
Galilee Church Road Improvements
Hoods Mill Road at Waterworks Road Intersection Improvements
SR 53 Intersection Improvements (Multiple Locations)
Sam Freemen Road Extension
Braselton and Hoschton to Arcade Connectivity Improvements
Gum Springs Church Road Roadway Improvements (Multiple Locations)
Franklin
Banks
Hall
Madison
Gwinnett
Barrow
Clarke
Maysville
Commerce
Talmo
Pendergrass
Braselton
Hoschton
Jefferson
Nicholson
Arcade
Legend
Roadway Projects - Interstate
Roadway Project
Connectivity Improvements
Park and Ride Facilities
Bridge/Deck Replacements/Modifications
Intersection Improvements


RECOMMENDED LONG TERM
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
I-85 Widening
Commerce Retail Blvd
Hospital Road Connection
Concord Road Extension - Phase II
Pond Fork Church Road at Old Street Intersection Improvements
Braselton to Maysville Connectivity Improvements
Braselton to Talmo Connectivity Improvements
Braselton to Pendergrass Connectivity Improvements
Braselton Industrial Parkway Extension
B. Wilson Road Extension
ALT 3
ALT 2
ALT 1
Possum Creek Road Connector Improvement and Bridge Replacement
Airport Sewer Extension
Old Pendergrass Road Improvements
Jessie Cronic Roadway Improvements
SR 60 at I-85 Interchange
Jefferson East By-pass
Braselton to Nicholson Connectivity Improvements
Braselton Industrial Parkway Extension - West
Jackson Trail Road Intersection Improvements (Multiple Locations)
Braselton to Arcade Connectivity Improvements
Franklin
Banks
Hall
Madison
Gwinnett
Barrow
Clarke
Maysville
Commerce
Talmo
Pendergrass
Braselton
Hoschton
Jefferson
Nicholson
Arcade
Legend
Roadway Projects - Interstate
Roadway Project
Connectivity Improvements
Park and Ride Facilities
Bridge/Deck Replacements/Modifications
Intersection Improvements

# CHAPTER 5
# POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter provides all of the policies in this community agenda, with the exception of those that pertain to settlement character areas, character areas, and land use, which are presented in Chapter 3 of this community agenda. This chapter also describes implementation measures and provides a short-term work program.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Generally

1. **Adoption of Natural Resource Maps.** The natural resources maps provided in the Community Assessment Technical Appendix (see Natural Resources) and in the Community Assessment Report are adopted by reference as if fully set forth in this document, specifically including the following: wetlands; groundwater recharge areas, water supply watersheds; floodplains; steeply sloping soils; areas of prime farmland; and scenic views and corridors, and soils unsuitable for septic tanks absorptions fields.

2. **Use of Natural Resource Maps.** The Jackson County Department of Public Development and development applicants are expected to consult, as applicable, the maps of natural resources which are published in the Community Assessment. Where specific policies are articulated in this chapter for natural resources, applications for comprehensive plan amendments, rezoning, special uses, variances, and subdivision plats are expected to conform to those specific policies, and departure from them may be the basis for disapproval. After review by the Department of Public Development of applications or land development proposals in relation to these natural resource maps and supporting policies, the Department may propose and the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners may impose conditions of approval intended to mitigate impacts on natural resources or alter development proposals to mitigate or minimize impacts on such resources.

3. **Wetlands – Preservation and Mitigation.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).

4. **Wetlands – Review for Development Impacts.** Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):

   - Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
   - Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
   - Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
   - Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
   - Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.

- Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as "Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
- Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

5. **Wetlands – Buffers.** When a development proposal is located close to a wetland, it should establish and maintain a minimum 25 foot wide protective buffer around the wetland.

6. **Wetlands – Uses.** Uses of wetlands may include: Timber production and harvesting; wildlife and fisheries management; wastewater treatment; recreation; natural water quality treatment or purification; and other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Unacceptable uses may include: receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste or other contaminants; and hazardous or sanitary waste landfills.

7. **Groundwater Recharge Areas.** Maintain in the Unified Development Code regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for groundwater recharge areas (391-3-16-.02, "Criteria for Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas").

8. **Water Supply Watersheds.** Maintain in the Unified Development Code regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds (391-3-16-.01, "Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds"). This includes regulations for "small" water supply watersheds in Jackson County: Bear Creek, Curry Creek, Grove Creek, Sandy Creek, and Little Curry Creek (proposed).

9. **Water Supply Watersheds – Future.** If/when Jackson County or another local government makes a decision to secure another public water supply reservoir in Jackson County, the County should immediately apply regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds (391-3-16-.01, "Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds") to lands within that future water supply watershed. This includes the Parks Creek Reservoir in unincorporated Jackson County and may include others.

10. **Water Supply Watersheds – Land Acquisition.** In any future land acquisition efforts or programs, Jackson County should (all other considerations being equal) give priority to acquiring land within small water supply watersheds, in order to supplement existing regulations designed to protect water quality.

11. **Water Supply Watersheds – Enforcement of Buffer around Bear Creek Reservoir.** Step up efforts to enforce the required 150-foot buffer around the Bear Creek Reservoir in order to ensure regional watershed protection, and development programs and take enforcement actions in order to mitigate encroachments into the buffer. Seek assistance from the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission if needed to arbitrate conflicts between the county's enforcement staff and individual property owners with encroachments on the buffer. (See also short-term work program).

12. **River Corridor Protection.** Maintain in the Unified Development Code regulations that meet and exceed the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for River Corridor Protection (391-3-16-.04, "Criteria for River Corridor Protection") for the North Oconee River, the Middle Oconee River, and the Mulberry River.

13. **River Corridor Supplemental Buffer Policies.** In addition to the regulations of Sec. 905 of the UDC which implement the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for River Corridor Protection (391-3-16-.04, "Criteria for River Corridor Protection"), Jackson County hereby adopts the following policies (and intends to revise its regulations to implement this policy) for protected river corridors along the North Oconee River, the Middle Oconee River, and the Mulberry River:

    - No dwelling or building should be constructed within 50 feet of the river bank.
    - When a single-family dwelling is proposed in a river corridor, the dwelling should be sited on non-vegetated (open) parts of the required 100 foot buffer.
    - For all building uses except for single-family dwellings, when that half of the buffer closest to the river is not fully forested or vegetated, it should be replanted with native vegetation.

14. **Floodways and Floodplains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters.

15. **National Flood Insurance Program.** Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

16. **Floodways and Floodplains – Observed But Not Mapped.** Extend floodplain management, flood hazard area prevention, and floodway prohibitions to areas of flooding which are not officially mapped but are known through additional study or observation to experience flooding. Maintain and share data on such additional floodways and floodplains with the public and development applicants.

17. **Prime Farmland Soils – Generally.** Jackson County's prime farmland soils are hereby declared to be important natural resources worthy of protection for future crop cultivation in support of the county's future food security.

18. **Prime Farmland Soils – Protection.** Outside "urban" character areas, consult the map of prime farmland soils in the Community Assessment (see technical appendix) in future development proposals with an eye toward preventing building and development encroachment within them, if possible. Outside "urban" character areas, prevent the inclusion of prime farmland soils within residential subdivision lots, where permitted, if alternative designs are feasible. Where subdivision is permitted outside "urban" character areas, promote the clustering of development and the arrangement of subdivision lots in a way that will maximize the future use of prime farmland soils for cropland cultivation.

19. **Soils with Severe Limitations on Septic Tank Absorption Fields.** When the subdivision of land is proposed without sanitary sewer service or a community sewage system being available, the map of soils with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields (see Community Assessment) should be consulted. If such soils exist on property proposed for subdivision and on-site sewage management systems, lot arrangements should be designed to avoid any lot with a majority or more of its land area containing such soils; alternatively, the subdivider should be required to demonstrate the feasibility of septic tank operations on each lot or that alternative on-site sewage management systems as may be approved by the Jackson County Environmental Health Department will work effectively.

20. **Steep Slopes.** The following policies apply to lands with steep slopes (25 percent or more as mapped in the Technical Appendix; or as may be shown on topographic surveys):

    - When conservation subdivisions are proposed, steep slopes should be set aside as secondary conservation areas per the Unified Development Code.
    - No lot should be created with more than 50 percent of its area containing steep slopes, and lot subdividers should demonstrate that each lot has a suitable building envelope outside steeply sloping areas.
    - If a building site must be created with steep slopes, all buildings and structures on such building sites should have foundations which have been designed by a civil engineer or other qualified professional.
    - When development must occur within steeply sloping areas, site designers are also encouraged to propose and apply innovative concepts for slope and soil stabilization, and limitations on grading.

21. **Habitat Conservation.** The following policies apply:

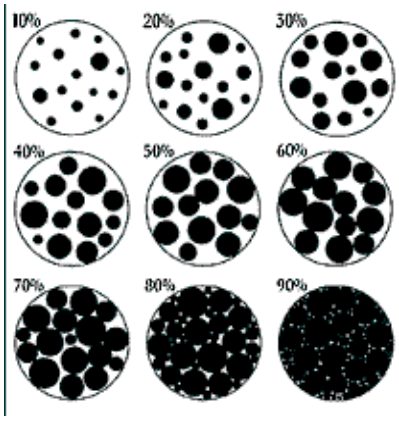
    - Participate in any regional inventory of important (not necessarily endangered) habitats and any regional habitat conservation plan if initiated by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.
    - Consider habitat information in review of land developments, including but not limited to the database of the DNR Natural Heritage Program, USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species and the DNR Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities.
    - Promote and pursue principles of landscape ecology when reviewing large developments and major subdivisions.

22. **Trees and Tree Canopy.** The following policies apply:

    - **Street Trees.** Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
    - **Tree Protection.** Restrict the cutting of trees, require the replacement of trees with trees of like species and value.
    - **Tree Canopy.** Preserve and enhance tree canopy, by adopting, amending, and enforcing tree preservation regulations in the Unified Development Code. Unless more restrictive requirements are adopted by regulation, use the following goals,

recommended by American Forests (2002) for the preserving tree canopy, as a guide in development planning:

40 percent tree canopy overall
50 percent tree canopy in suburban character areas
25 percent tree canopy in urban areas




23. **Water Conservation.** Promote the conservation of water by residents, businesses, industries, and institutions, to meet local, regional and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.

24. **Stormwater Management.**

- Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and to be amenities for the development.
- Sites should be designed where possible to drain to the rear or side, where detention ponds are more appropriately located. Fenced detention ponds in front yards are strongly discouraged if not prohibited altogether.
- When stormwater detention or drainage is placed adjacent to the right-of-way, slopes should be gentle enough to avoid fencing requirements, and the area should be attractively landscaped.
- New, major residential subdivisions should be required to ensure that adequate funding is available for maintenance of any on-site stormwater detention facilities.

25. **Sustainable Development Practices.**

- Identify and revitalize “brownfield” (environmentally contaminated) sites.
- Institute water reuse (grey water) systems where feasible.
- Conduct and/or encourage private inventories of construction/demolition materials that can be reused and recycled (e.g., building materials deconstruction and reuse plans)
- Promotion of renewable energy resources such as solar electricity.
- Promote, and reward if possible through incentives, “green building” (e.g., green roofs) and green building code practices, such as but not limited to the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System
- Institute stream bank stabilization using plant materials, where needed.
- Encourage other sustainable practices, such as use of porous materials and installation of rain gardens.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. **Energy Efficiency.** Reduce energy consumption through comprehensive planning and urban design, and promote energy-efficient development.

2. **Support Programs to Increase Energy Efficiency.** Support programs to increase energy efficiency and reduce life-cycle costs of all construction projects, including public and institutional projects.

3. **Encourage Renewable Energy Applications.** Develop and encourage appropriate applications of renewable energy.

4. **Efficient Lighting Practices.** Develop lighting design guidelines that promote energy efficiency and safety while reducing light pollution or "sky-glow," light trespass on adjacent properties, and glare.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. **Compatible Character.** 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 (Quality Community Objective, Historic Preservation).

2. **Historic Resources Generally.** Identify, preserve and protect historic resources.

3. **Incentives.** Provide incentives to protect and preserve historic resources.

4. **Historic Resources Survey.** Maintain and update the county's survey of historic resources at regular intervals (no less than 10 years).

5. **Relation to Economic Development.** Ensure that historic preservation and heritage tourism become components of the county's overall economic development strategies.

6. **Countywide Emphasis.** Jackson County's programs for historic preservation should take a countywide focus, emphasizing the interrelationships between the various cities as well as historic places in unincorporated areas.

7. **National Register Listings.** Encourage property owners to add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

8. **Georgia Centennial Farms.** Encourage property owners to add eligible farms to the Georgia Centennial Farm Program.

9. **Reuse of Historic Buildings.** The reuse of historic buildings is encouraged, provided the architectural character of the building is retained.

10. **Movement of Historic Buildings.** When it is not feasible to retain a historic building or structure on its original site, as opposed to demolition, the historic building or structure should be moved intact to one of the county's heritage village sites (one existing, two proposed).

11. **Salvage of historic materials.** When a historic building or structure can neither be preserved on its original site or moved intact to one of the county's heritage village sites (one existing, two proposed), the building or structure should be carefully deconstructed and the most historically or culturally significant features and materials retained and donated to the county or historic society.

12. **Partnership with Historical Society.** Jackson County should partner with the Jackson County Historic Society in efforts to educate the citizenry and property owners about the importance of preserving and protecting historic resources in the county.

13. **Technical Assistance to Municipalities.** The county should strive to provide technical assistance to municipalities in their own historic preservation programs.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **Appropriate Businesses.** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in Jackson County should be suitable in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the county or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities (Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business).

2. **Range of Jobs Available.** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce (Quality Community Objective, Employment Options).

3. **Education and Training.** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in the county to permit residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions (Quality Community Objective, Educational Opportunities). Increase skill levels of the resident labor force, in order to attract higher paying employers.

4. **Economic Development Generally.** Expand the economic base and increase employment opportunities while protecting environmental, historic, and community character.

5. **Diversity of Economic Development Approaches.** Prepare economic development strategies and plans that are comprehensive in nature, such that all economic activities are addressed, including but not limited to agriculture and agribusiness, tourism, heritage tourism, health care, retail, services, material moving and warehousing, biotechnology, industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and small business/home occupations.

6. **Infrastructure.** Provide and maintain sanitary sewer capacity and road capacity in order to attract new industry and manufacturing and commercial activities. Reserve such capacity for the types of industries and businesses that need the infrastructure.

7. **Positive Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the county.

8. **Promotion and Recruitment.** The county should actively and deliberately promote the county to business interests worldwide, recruiting industry and commerce.

9. **Relation to Land Use Plan.** Designate and reserve sufficient land for industrial and commercial development on the future land use plan maps.

10. **Home Occupations.** Home occupations, when compatible with the neighborhood, are recognized as part of the overall county's economic development strategy and are encouraged, subject to compliance with applicable zoning laws.

11. **Balanced Regulation.** Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.

12. **Public Participation.** Promote and facilitate public participation in future economic development planning.

13. **Municipal Participation.** Consider the needs of individual municipalities in future economic development planning.

**HOUSING**

1. **Housing Opportunities.** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the county (Quality Community Objective, Housing Opportunities).

2. **Housing Variety.** Encourage a variety of home styles, densities and price ranges in locations that are accessible to jobs and services to ensure housing for individuals and families of all incomes and age groups.

3. **Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities.** Encourage "life cycle" or "mixed generation" communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.

4. **Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.

5. **Design and Location of Senior and Disabled Housing.** Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity or with appropriate access to health care services.

6. **Avoid Regulatory Barriers.** In amending zoning and development regulations, the county should consider the potential impact of such amendments on housing affordability, in order to possibly avoid creating or sustaining "regulatory barriers."

7. **Nonprofit Housing Organizations.** Encourage the creation of, and cooperate with, community-based housing organizations in the pursuit of more affordable workforce housing.

8. **Substandard Housing.** Require that substandard or dilapidated housing be brought up to applicable codes or demolished if code compliance is not feasible.

9. **Housing and Property Standards Codes.** Allocate appropriate resources to enforce housing and property maintenance codes.

10. **State and Federal Housing and Community Development Programs.** Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs to improve areas of substandard housing and improve neighborhoods and communities.

**SETTLEMENT CHARACTER, CHARACTER AREAS, AND LAND USE**

See Chapter 3.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. **Level of Service Standards.** Establish and maintain level-of-service and/or performance standards for the major community facilities and services provided by the county. Unless specified by facility-specific master plans and adopted as superseding policy, Jackson County should strive to maintain the following minimum level of service standards.

   (a) **Water:** 300 gallons per day per equivalent residential unit or 100 gallons per day per functional population (residents plus employees) within the given service area, whichever is less.
   (b) **Sewer:** 225 gallons per day per functional population (residents plus employees) within the given service area.
   (c) **Roads:** No worse than a Level of service "D" (a condition with heavy traffic operating at tolerable speeds, although temporary slowdowns in flow may occur) for county roadways and state highways.
   (d) **Law Enforcement:** 2 sworn officers for each 1,000 functional population (residents plus employees) within the given service area.
   (e) **Emergency Medical Services:** One EMS station and vehicle for every 10,000 residents countywide.
   (f) **Fire Stations and Rolling Stock:** 1.0 square feet of fire department building space per functional population and 1 fire engine per 4,000 functional population.
   (g) **Parks and Recreation:** 2.0 acres of developed park and recreation facilities per 1,000 residents, and 2.5 acres of passive county recreation and/or open space land per 1,000 residents (excluding state owned facilities), for a total of 4.5 acres per 1,000 residents in the service area. (note: this standard is well below those recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association).
   (h) **Libraries:** 0.5 square feet of library space for each resident countywide. (note: estimated countywide service level is 0.46 square feet per capita in 2010)
   (i) **Administrative Space:** 0.5 square feet of administrative space per functional population (residents plus employees).

2. **Departmental Mission Statements.** Prepare and adopt, and revise periodically as may be needed, mission statements for each individual department of county government (and divisions, as appropriate).

3. **Long-term Water Supplies.** Continue to investigate the feasibility of additional long-term sources of water supplies.

4. **Water System Contingencies.** Contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding.

5. **Expansion of Public Water Service.** Expand the county's public water system where essential for purposes of fire protection and public health. Water line extensions into previously unserved areas need to be consistent with countywide character area maps and future land use plans for unincorporated Jackson County. Require developer extension of water lines into areas of new development within suburban and urban areas as shown on the county's character maps. Developers of new subdivisions should be

required to install the water mains and appurtenances through or along the tract and deed the facilities to the county.

6. **Sewer Service Generally.** Manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment. Convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant or site without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.

7. **Sewer.** Coordinate with the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority and municipal sewer service providers to expand sewerage services commensurate with growth projections in the comprehensive plan, promoting increased opportunities for all types of development within urban and selected suburban areas as designated on the character area maps. Require developer extension of sewer lines (or dry sewers if sewage service is not presently available) into areas of new development within all urban areas as shown on the county's character maps. Review sewer plans for consistency with the county's character and future land use plan maps.

8. **Water and Sewer Service Areas.** Delineate and adopt, and revise periodically as appropriate as a part of the county's service delivery strategy, water and sewer service areas for each municipal service provider and the county's Water and Sewerage Authority. Revise service area boundaries biennially to account for municipal annexations.

9. **Standard Construction Details and Specifications.** Maintain and periodically update standard construction specifications and standard drawings for water and sewer systems.

10. **Water and Sewer Financial Considerations.** The revenue produced by water and sewer systems should be sufficient to pay for all necessary capital expenditures, operation and maintenance costs, debt service, administrative costs, and provide a contingency fund for emergencies.

11. **Oversizing of Water and Sewer Mains.** Regulations should establish a policy for the "oversizing" of water and sewer mains so that when a larger water or sewer main is needed than would serve the subdivision or development, the county can contribute a prorated share of the cost to construct a water or sewer main that serves a larger population or area.

12. **Law Enforcement.** Maintain a level of service of no more than a seven-minute response to all law enforcement calls. Consider the provision of satellite service centers such as in Nicholson and at Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 129, as opportunities present themselves. Consider the co-location with other county or city facilities where feasible to save capital costs. Seek private donation of small office spaces within large private commercial developments for periodic law enforcement personnel use.

13. **Fire Protection.** Expand the countywide fire protection function to include fire prevention activities, fire training, budget coordination among individual fire districts, and review of development plans for fire code compliance.

14. **Fire District Boundaries.** Revise fire district boundaries as appropriate based on service provision equity principles.

15. **Fire Hydrants.** Install fire hydrants at minimum of 1,000 feet intervals where public water lines exist, and at 750 foot intervals in suburban and urban areas.

16. **ISO Ratings.** Continue to reduce Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings where possible.

17. **Emergency Preparedness.** Periodically conduct community hazard vulnerability analyses to identify the types of environmental extremes (e.g., floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes), technological accidents (e.g., toxic chemical releases,), and deliberate incidents (e.g., sabotage or terrorist attack involving chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, or explosive/flammable materials) to which their communities may be exposed. Periodically review and revise the disaster preparedness and emergency management plans for the county based on such vulnerability analyses and update them as appropriate.

18. **Impact of Development on Schools.** Planning staff and development applicants should use the following school system pupil generation multipliers to evaluate impacts of residential development on the public school systems, unless updated multipliers are published by one or more of the public school systems in Jackson County:

**Table 5.1**
**Public School Student Generation Multipliers Per Household (Occupied Housing Unit)**
**Jackson County (All Three School Systems Combined; Year 2007 Data)**

| Grade | Student Generated Per Household 2007 |
|---|---|
| **(pre-k through 2nd grade)** | **0.1350** |
| Pre-k | .0149 |
| Kindergarten | .0418 |
| 1st grade | .0392 |
| 2nd grade | .0391 |
| **3rd through 5th** | **0.1118** |
| 3rd grade | .0389 |
| 4th grade | .0361 |
| 5th grade | .0368 |
| **6th through 8th** | **0.1149** |
| 6th grade | .0389 |
| 7th grade | .0379 |
| 8th grade | .0381 |
| **9th through 12th** | **0.1290** |
| 9th grade | .0423 |
| 10th grade | .0316 |
| 11th grade | .0291 |
| 12th grade | .0260 |
| **Total Per Household** | **0.4908** |

19. **Capital Facilities Plans and Capital Improvement Programs.** Maintain a five-year capital facilities plan and capital improvement program, updated annually. In considering the prioritization of facility projects, the county should consider the following criteria (suggestive):

- ***Facility plans.*** Has a space needs study ever been conducted for the facility or service, and have capital plans been developed to meet needs identified?
- ***Legal requirements.*** Are there federal or state mandates with respect to the operation of the facility, and if so, are they met? If not, what is required to comply?
- ***Location and accessibility.*** When planning for new facilities, do they need to be located at a central point in the service area?
- ***Centralization versus decentralization***. Can the facility or service be provided in smaller, decentralized locations? Or is it important for efficiency that all operations of the facility or service be located in one, centralized place?
- ***Age and condition.*** How old is the facility? When was it constructed and last renovated? Does it have roof leaks, old HVAC equipment, or other immediate maintenance and replacement needs?
- ***Obsolescence.*** Is the facility obsolete in the sense that it has not been modernized to keep up with advances? Were parts of the building designed for certain uses but are now used for other purposes? If so, what are the potential renovation costs, and are they prohibitively expensive?
- ***Expansion potential.*** Is there any expansion potential for the existing building, or does it consume the vast majority of the lot or site on which it is located, thus preventing expansion?
- ***Adequacy of parking.*** Does the facility receive visitors? Are enough parking spaces provided? Is ingress and egress adequate, especially for public safety vehicles?
- ***Adequacy of office space for personnel.*** Are work spaces provided for each employee, and are they adequate? Does office and other equipment spill into halls and entrance ways?
- ***Restrooms facilities and employee support space.*** Are the restrooms adequate and ADA accessible? Is there a "break" room or kitchen for personnel?
- ***Adequacy of storage and on-site records space.*** Has the facility outgrown its storage capacity? To what extent do overcrowded storage spaces increase the time of retrieval and decrease efficiency of departmental operations? Has all existing storage space been maximized in terms of efficiency? Does the department or office have records or equipment stored off-site?

20. **Maintenance and Repair.** Anticipate maintenance and repair needs for all existing county facilities, and include in the capital improvement program as necessary.

21. **Consultation of Appropriate Boards and Commissions.** County staff should consult appropriate boards, commissions, groups, and agencies (e.g., Planning Commission and Historic Society) prior to formalizing and adopting capital improvement programs.

22. **Solid Waste Management.** Implement the county's (regional) comprehensive solid waste management plan. Pursue waste diversion, composting, and recycling strategies.

23. **Beautification.** Maintain the county's participation in the state Keep Georgia Beautiful Program, administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

24. **Public-Private Co-Delivery.** Identify, and capitalize on, opportunities for innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various county facilities and services.

25. **Major Equipment.** Computers, GIS systems, and rather sophisticated software programs are needed to manage countywide mapping, property tax systems, business registration, budgeting and accounting work, and other functions. The county should identify and fund the purchase of major equipment to maintain state-of-the art professional capabilities in each department.

26. **Facility and Substantive Master Plans.** When facility plans such as water and sewer, parks and recreation, and economic development strategic plans are prepared, they should be adopted by reference as a part of the comprehensive plan. At the time of integration into the comprehensive plan, the content of this Community Agenda should be amended as appropriate to ensure consistency.

**ROADWAYS**

***Note: The goals, policies, and objectives listed here are from Section 8.5 of the Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028. Where the policies in this section relate to land use, they shall not be interpreted in a manner supplemental to but not inconsistent with land use policies specifically articulated and adopted in this chapter.***

**Goal:** The establishment of a convenient, energy-efficient and financially feasible transportation system that minimizes environmental impacts and also efficiently and effectively serves all travel needs of Jackson County employers, residents, and visitors, as safely as possible.

**Objective #1: As Jackson County grows, expand the availability of transportation options to the public to include a surface transportation road network, mass transit services, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.**

- Policy 1.1. The existing roadway network will be reevaluated at least every 10 years in order to identify capacity and safety issues related to roads and their intersections, and program the necessary funds in the Capital Improvements Program.

- Policy 1.2. Continue to work with GDOT in the provision of rural transit services funded through the Federal Transit Administration 5311 Rural Public Transit Program.

- Policy 1.3. New subdivisions shall provide internal sidewalks and within the closest right-of-way line of abutting external roadways fronting the development.

- Policy 1.4. As funding becomes available, bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be provided along those major collector and arterial roadways serving large residential areas.

- Policy 1.5. Jackson County shall place its county logo at the beginning of each road name on all street signs associated with county-owned and maintained roadways, as part of the county's proposed annual Sign Maintenance Program. That will allow all residents to quickly identify all county roadways and those without such designation would be city streets, unless it has a state or federal designation as part of the road name.

- Policy 1.6. The Board of Commissioners shall prepare and adopt a Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan that serves the long-term cycling and walking needs of all residents in Jackson County, and update that plan on a regular basis.

- Policy 1.7. The Board of Commissioners shall provide for the protection of existing and future rights-of-way from building encroachment.

**Objective #2: Establish a hierarchy of roadways that serves the access needs of all property owners and road users by continuing to work with GDOT to revise the roadway functional classification system and to secure federal and state transportation funding, where available.**

- Policy 2.1. The Board of Commissioners will direct county staff to submit a request to GDOT to implement the recommended changes to the functional classification system, as noted in Subsection 9.3, Recommended UDC Changes, of the Countywide Roadways Plan.

- Policy 2.2. New or reconstructed roadways will be designed to accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrian facilities, parking, bicycle routes, and public transit if applicable as well as local vehicular circulation needs.

- Policy 2.3. The Board of Commissioners will designate emergency evacuation routes to facilitate emergency operations during a severe public emergency and update the designated routes as needed.

- Policy 2.4. All locally prepared transportation plans shall be coordinated with GDOT's Construction Work Program.

- Policy 2.5. The Board of Commissioners shall adopt adequate access management standards to control the connections and access points of driveways and roads to other roadways.

- Policy 2.6. The Board of Commissioners shall amend the Unified Development Code, as necessary, to provide safe and convenient on-site traffic flow, and considering needed motorized and non-motorized vehicle parking.

- Policy 2.7. Schools should be located on collector roadways, with elementary schools being on minor collectors, and sufficient lighting and crosswalks must be provided to promote walkabilty and to enhance safety.

- Policy 2.8. Roads should be provided with right and left-turn lanes with adequate storage and deceleration tapers at all school entrance drives.

- Policy 2.9. County roadways shall be designed based upon current AASHTO standards except for special circumstances recognized in the UDC, such as scenic roads, internal local roads of planned developments or roads involving —context sensitive areas, and shall be constructed to the highest quality.

- Policy 2.10. Construction standards for roadways need to vary by functional classification, especially those receiving semi-truck traffic.

- Policy 2.11. Posted speed limits along all county roadways need to be consistent with the existing road conditions, such as functional classification, shoulder condition, road grade, adjacent land uses, frequency of driveway accesses, building setbacks, sight distances, geometric features of the roadway, pedestrian activity, and historical crash data.

- Policy 2.12. Access feeder roads need to be continually built parallel to I-85 to concentrate major commercial and industrial uses along that corridor.

- Policy 2.13. All traffic signals along arterials and collectors should have different timing cycle lengths during nighttime versus daytime hours.

- Policy 2.14. Improved roadway lighting should be provided at critical areas, such as horizontal alignment curves, blind areas, intersections, and bridges, as part of the County's annual Road Maintenance Program.

- Policy 2.15. Proper traffic control signage should be installed along county roadways where missing, including stop signs, warning signs, and "No Through Trucks" signs, as part of the County's annual Sign Maintenance Program.

- Policy 2.16. Traffic signals will be installed where warranted.

- Policy 2.17. Road name signage shall be consistent throughout the county especially after annexations, regardless of municipal boundaries, to the greatest extent possible, to facilitate public safety responses and the convenience of the driving public.

- Policy 2.18. No curb cuts on county roads that are located within a municipality shall be issued by county staff until a written request for municipal input regarding the applicable curb cut application has been submitted and a response has been received or a sufficient response time has expired.

- Policy 2.19. The Board of Commissioners or their designated staff shall solicit municipal input on any road project that leads into a municipality within five miles or less of the improvement.

**Objective #3: Utilize the provision of roadways to achieve the related objectives of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.**

- Policy 3.1. Coordinate the Countywide Roadways Plan and the future land use map to ensure that existing and proposed population densities, housing and employment patterns, and land uses are consistent with the transportation roadways proposed to serve these areas.

- Policy 3.2. Identified gateways and transportation corridors shall be planned and designed in order to create a sense of place in the adjacent commercial areas.

- Policy 3.3. Ensure that the Future Land Use Plan utilizes a nodal concept for community and neighborhood-level commercial areas in lieu of a strip commercial development pattern. (note: interpret in context of more specific land use policies in this chapter)

- Policy 3.4. The provision of commercial nodes will be at locations that have the requisite utility services and existing or near-term residential demand for such mixed use areas including retail commercial, personal services, and professional offices.

- Policy 3.5. The planning and design associated with new or reconstructed roadways will utilize context sensitive design principles to guide the final design to enhance community aesthetics and to minimize adverse environmental impacts.

- Policy 3.6. The Unified Development Code shall be amended to ensure that excessive vehicular traffic and especially truck traffic will not harm the peaceful nature of the county's residential neighborhoods.

- Policy 3.7. Potential impacts on air quality, groundwater resources, and residential neighborhoods will be considered in the approval process on all new land development projects and transportation improvements.

- Policy 3.8. Big box businesses shall be located close to I-85 to help maintain the existing rural character of the county, and minimize automobile - truck conflicts.

- Policy 3.9. The Unified Development Code shall be amended to ensure that left-turn and right-turn lanes and traffic signals, if warranted, are installed by the owner/developer at the time of construction of new subdivision and major business entrances.

- Policy 3.10. The potential adverse economic effects upon small cities and towns shall be addressed in the environmental documents associated with the planning and construction of new by-pass routes.

- Policy 3.11. Warehousing and industrial land uses should be concentrated along I-85 in such a manner to minimize their adverse effects on the public accessing I-85.

- Policy 3.12 The Unified Development Code shall be amended to include locational criteria for new commercial areas which must have public road access at the proper functional classification.

- Policy 3.13. All new roadways must have connectivity and continuity at both termini with the existing road network.

- Policy 3.14. The Public Development Director shall be the single point of contact for the municipalities concerning new developments in the county.

- Policy 3.15. Jackson County shall not accept the responsibility of completing any developer commitments associated with an approved development order, regardless of governmental jurisdiction or an offer of an equivalent financial payment by the developer.

- Policy 3.16. The Board of Commissioners or their designated staff shall solicit municipal input on any land use changes, including rezonings, changes in land use, and site development approvals, that are located within five miles or less of a municipality.

- Policy 3.17. All formal planning reports shall be placed on the county's website, once those plans have been adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

**Objective #4: Utilize the construction of new roadways on new location to support desired development patterns while minimizing the adverse social and environmental impacts.**

- Policy 4.1. Where roadway improvements cause adverse environmental impacts, appropriate environmental mitigation shall be provided to sufficiently offset those adverse effects.

- Policy 4.2. The planning and design of new roadways will require the input from adjacent municipalities.

**Objective #5: The Board of Commissioners shall promote connectivity in the local road network, including intercity travel, constructing grid street patterns in community-level commercial nodes, parcel to parcel connectivity in non-residential areas using cross-access easements, and requiring multiple street connections between subdivisions.**

- Policy 5.1. The Board of Commissioners shall fund intercity connectivity improvements recommended in the Countywide Roadways Plan, as financially feasible.

- Policy 5.2. Small area plans shall be prepared and adopted by the Board of Commissioners for emerging community-level commercial nodes.

- Policy 5.3. The Unified Development Code shall be amended from time to time to minimize unnecessary vehicular trips on the county's roadways by implementing such techniques as requiring non-residential uses to provide cross-access easements during the site plan review and approval process to ensure that drivers can directly access abutting non-residential uses without having to use the abutting road or street.

- Policy 5.4. During the subdivision review and approval process, adequate stub streets shall be provided to ensure future connectivity to abutting subdivisions at the time of their platting and recording in order to eliminate unnecessary vehicular trips on adjacent roadways and provide faster response times for emergency vehicles.

**Objective #6: The Board of Commissioners should ensure sufficient funding is available to meet future roadway improvement needs including maintenance.**

- Policy 6.1. The Capital Improvements Program must identify all transportation-related improvements needed for the next 20-year period.

- Policy 6.2. The annual road maintenance needs must be included in the first year funding needs of the Capital Improvements Program, which in turn gets included in the annual budget.

- Policy 6.3. The Board of Commissioners shall maximize the use of available financial resources to fund needed transportation improvements, including federal and state funds, economic development and general revenue bonds, and the existing SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) Program.

- Policy 6.4. Adequate law enforcement shall be used to minimize driver disregard of traffic control signage, such as traffic signals, speed limit signs, and stop signs.

- Policy 6.5. Better road maintenance is needed to address poor stormwater drainage, narrow or lack of shoulders, lack of pavement markings, litter, and other similar needs.

- Policy 6.6. The Board of Commissioners shall coordinate with all municipalities during preparation of the Service Delivery Strategy to identify and reach a consensus on the joint funding of road/street upgrades and the maintenance of county roads within municipal boundaries.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

1. **Regional Cooperation.** 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 (Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation).

2. **Regional Solutions.** 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 (Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions).

3. **Support for Regional Policies.** Coordinate local policies and regulations to support regional policies. Ensure that goals and implementation programs of the county's comprehensive plan are consistent with adopted coordination mechanisms and consistent with applicable regional and state programs.

4. **Intergovernmental Agreements.** Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate.

5. **Information Sharing.** Share resources and information with all government entities.

6. **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Implementation Responsibilities

The Jackson County Department of Public Development is the primary administrative agency responsible for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda. However, other municipal departments have important responsibilities in their respective service areas, and the County Manager must propose and approve funding levels appropriate to carry out the many programs suggested here.

The Jackson County Planning Commission provides overall support for plan implementation and should periodically investigate the progress of plan implementation. Other agencies, including the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority and others also have roles in plan implementation.

### Short-term Work Program

The short-term work program, which follows, covers the period of 2011 through 2015 (a five-year period). In presenting the short-term work program, the county hereby articulates a number of important qualifiers and caveats. The county has included the projects listed in the work program because they were (a) identified by department heads; (b) called for in the previous work program but deferred; and/or (c) suggested by the county's planning consultant based on a variety of professional planning standards and considerations. Generally, the suggestions in the work program are *discretionary*, and few if any of them are based on critical health and safety concerns.

County leaders believe all of these projects and initiatives are worthy, *if* funding is available. However, this is a time of great uncertainty with regard to county revenues for capital projects and new program initiatives. Similarly, some of the work program initiatives may only be feasible if outside funding is obtained, such as a grant. The lingering economic recession significantly limits, and will most likely continue to constrain, the county's spending with regard to funding capital improvements and initiating new projects as suggested in the work program. Therefore, *implementation of the short-term work program is not guaranteed*. Department heads, the general public, and others must keep these points in mind and cannot cite this suggested work program as a financial commitment by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.

Given the county's current revenue limitations, and uncertainty about its future revenue streams, the projects and activities listed in the short-term work program may be: (a) deferred for one or more years; (b) moved to long-range; (c) reduced in scope if possible; and/or (d) deleted from the work program altogether. The county's administration will evaluate capital improvements and program needs each year during the budgeting process and will use the short-term work program as a guide in recommending priorities to the Board of Commissioners. If the county decides in the future not to implement one or more projects called for in the work program during the next five years, it will do so in a way that ensures the public health, safety, and general welfare will not be negatively impacted.

## Table 5.2. Short-Term Work Program
## Jackson County, 2011-2015

| Description | Year(s) To Be Implemented | Estimated Cost ($) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NATURAL RESOURCES** | | | | |
| Seek resolution of or mitigate encroachments in the required buffer around Bear Creek Reservoir | 2011 | unknown | Public Development; County Manager | Technical assistance (mediation) by NEGRC; Upper Oconee River Basin Water Authority |
| Educate agricultural property owners on the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) (annual workshop or information campaign) | 2011-2015 | $2,000 annually | Public Development | General Fund |
| Establish a "go green" internal county program to implement "green" and other conservation initiatives in county government | 2011 | Staff Function | Jackson County Beautiful; Public Development | General Fund |
| Inventory "303d impaired" streams | 2012 | Staff Function | GIS; Public Development | General Fund |
| Monitor environmental conditions at "brownfield" (environmentally contaminated) sites, including Agricycle, and encourage/apply for remediation grants | 2011-2015 | Staff Function | Public Development | Possible federal grant |
| Establish community garden on selected county owned property; initiate pilot program | Long Range | Staff Function | Public Works | County Agricultural Extension Agent |
| Actively participate in regional habitat protection plan once initiated | Long Range | Unknown | Public Development | NEGRC |
| Establish purchase of development rights (PDR) program | Long Range | Staff Function | Public Development; County Manager | Grant for initial seed money |
| Explore feasibility of converting purchase of development rights (PDR) program to a transferable development rights (TDR) program | Long Range | Unknown | Public Development; Consultant | General Fund |
| **HISTORIC RESOURCES** | | | | |
| Complete historic courthouse restoration | 2011-2012 | $2,000,000 | Courthouse Restoration Committee | Public-Private Contributions |
| Hire additional professional in Public Development Department (multi-faceted responsibilities including technical assistance in historic preservation, grant application preparation, and community development) | 2012 | $40,000 plus benefits | Public Development | General Fund |
| Conduct a detailed survey of historic resources in the unincorporated portions of the county, including farm resources | 2011-2012 | $40,000 | Public Development; Consultant | General Fund; Grant from DNR |
| Initiate program for marking important historic sites, trails, and cemeteries throughout county | 2011-2015 | $20,000 annually | GIS; Public Development; Keep Jackson Beautiful | General Fund |
| Add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places | 2012 | $2,500 per nomination | Consultant | General Fund |

| Description | Year(s) To Be Implemented | Estimated Cost ($) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nominate additional eligible farms to the Georgia Centennial Farm Program | 2012 | Unknown | Public Development; Consultant | General Fund |
| Acquire one or two heritage village sites in (target areas West Jackson and Southeastern Jackson County; complete improvements | 2013 | $300,000 | Parks and Recreation | General Fund; SPLOST |
| Prepare and adopt a resolution that protects landmarks and the most worthy historic properties from demolition | Long range | TBD | Public Development; Consultant | General Fund |
| **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** | | | | |
| Maintain an inventory of vacant industrial lands, vacant industrial buildings, and vacant commercial building spaces; market vacant sites and spaces to new users | 2011-2015 | Chamber staff function | Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce | Chamber of Commerce General Fund |
| Continue participation in Georgia Innovation Crescent regional economic development program | 2011-2015 | Chamber staff function | Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce | Chamber of Commerce General Fund |
| Maintain county's status/designation as a "Certified Work Ready Community" | 2011-2015 | Chamber staff function | Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce | Chamber of Commerce General Fund |
| Prepare a comprehensive economic development strategic master plan; including industry needs analysis and municipal components at the option of individual cities | 2012 | $150,000 | Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce | County General Fund; Chamber; possible contributions by interested cities |
| Revise employment projections in this comprehensive plan | 2013 | Staff function or Chamber | Public Development; Chamber | General Fund or Chamber General Fund |
| Establish a central tourism and welcoming center housed in the historic County Courthouse in downtown Jefferson | 2012-2013 | Unknown – existing space | Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce | County and Chamber Partnership |
| Acquire land and construct welcome center at or near intersection of U.S. Hwy. 129 and Interstate 85 (co-locate with other facilities including city/county law enforcement) | 2015 | $250,000 (county specific project share) | County Manager | Capital Improvement Program |
| **HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** | | | | |
| Monitor and annually report on the number of vacant subdivided lots in the county for planning and marketing purposes | 2011-2015 | Staff Function | GIS; Public Development | Staff Function |
| **LAND USE** | | | | |
| Monitor annexations by all municipalities and comment on consistency of annexation proposals with county character maps | 2011-2015 | Staff Function | Public Development | Staff Function |
| Amend the Unified Development Code (UDC) to implement the plan | 2011-2012 | $40,000 | Public Development; Consultant | General Fund |
| Refill planner position in Public Development Department | 2011-2012 | $40,000 | Public Development | General Fund |

| Description | Year(s) To Be Implemented | Estimated Cost ($) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monitor the balance of residential and non-residential development in the county by regularly updating the existing land use map | 2011-2015 | Staff Function | Geographic Information Systems; | Staff Function |
| Revise and resubmit this short-term work program for state and regional review and update the 2020 future land use plan map | 2015 | Staff Function | Public Development | Staff Function |
| Prepare amendments to amended UDC after comprehensive review | Long Range | Staff Function | Public Development | Staff Function |
| **COMMUNITY FACILITIES** | | | | |
| Add tennis courts and skate park to East Jackson Park | 2011 | $90,000 | Recreation Department | SPLOST |
| Add restrooms to West Jackson Middle School | 2011 | $70,000 | Recreation Department | SPLOST |
| Plan for a South Jackson Park | 2011 | $20,000 | Recreation Department | SPLOST |
| Plan for a Agricultural/Exposition Center | 2010 | $15,000 | Recreation Department | SPLOST |
| Periodically report to the board of commissioners on whether level of service standards for community facilities are being maintained | 2011-2015 (annually) | Staff Function | Capital Projects Manager | Staff Function |
| Complete master plan for county facility complex | Ongoing | Unknown | Administration | General Fund |
| Senior Center Expansion | Ongoing | $500,000 | Administration | CDBG |
| Install additional fire hydrants throughout the county for improved fire protection | 2011-2015 | $500,000 annually | JCWSA | County Capital Program |
| Add new EMS facilities (purchase land, construct facilities, and equip) and improve emergency warning siren coverage | 2011-2012 | $750,000 | Emergency Services | General Fund and SPLOST |
| Prepare public safety master plan | Ongoing | Unknown | Various Departments | General Fund |
| Acquire land and develop plans for the Parks Creek Water Supply Reservoir (jointly with Jefferson) | 2010-2015; Construction Long Range | Unknown | Joint Project Jefferson and Jackson County | Water and sewer funds; JCWSA; Jefferson |
| Implement the regional comprehensive solid waste management plan short-term work program | Annual tasks per plan | Per plan | Landfill Manager | Staff Function; General Fund |

| Description | Year(s) To Be Implemented | Estimated Cost ($) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participate in updating of the Northeast Georgia regional comprehensive solid waste management plan | Per Recertification Schedule | TBD | Landfill Manager | General Fund; Northeast GA Regional Commission |
| Reconstruct solid waste transfer station including new recycling center | Underway | $1,100,000 | Landfill Manager | General Fund |
| Construct new animal control facility | 2014 | $500,000 | Public Development | General Fund |
| Prepare update to System-Wide Recreation Master Plan, 2003-2012, including greenway master plan for North Oconee River | 2011 | $60,000 | Parks and Recreation | General Fund |
| Acquire land for new active and passive park (and which may be used for co-location of other needed public facilities) | 2014 | $600,000 | Parks and Recreation | Capital program or future Recreation Bond; SPLOST |
| Greenspaces Acquisition Program – North Oconee River Forest Preserve | Long Range | TBD | Parks and Recreation | PDR fund or future Recreation Bond |
| Pursue additional federal and state funding for open space acquisition and park and greenway improvements | 2011-2015 | TBD | Grants Administrator | General Fund |
| Prepare and annually update the county's capital improvement program | 2011-2015 | TBD | Finance Dept.; Public Development; County Manager | Staff Function |
| Prepare/maintain school enrollment projections for unincorporated Jackson County (Jackson County Public Schools) | 2011-2015 | Staff Function | Public Development; County Board of Education | General Fund |
| Determine short- and long-term needs for health department facilities, purchase land, and construct facilities | 2015 or Long Range | TBD | Board of Health; Board of Commis-sioners | General Fund |
| **TRANSPORTATION** | | | | |
| Complete regional and local road improvements and implement other recommendations per the capital improvement program (Section 8.8) of the Countywide Roadways Plan | 2011-2015 | Per adopted plans | Capital Projects Manager | Federal, State, and Local Funding Sources Per Adopted Plan |
| Prepare five-year update of Countywide Roadways Plan | 2014-2015 | $100,000 | Capital Projects Manager | Road Bond Program; General Fund |
| Implement Jackson County Airport Master Plan | 2011-2015 | Per Plan | Airport Authority | Airport Authority |
| Expand rural public transit program | 2011-2012 | | Public Works | State funds; County General Fund |

| Description | Year(s) To Be Implemented | Estimated Cost ($) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Establish regional bicycle loop route from Nicholson via SR 334 to the Commerce area then southbound via Waterworks Road, to SR 335 and returning eastbound back to Nicholson | Long Range | Unknown | Capital Projects Manager; City of Nicholson; City of Commerce | County capital funds; state funds; federal funds |
| **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION** | | | | |
| Annually hold an intergovernmental coordination summit with municipalities and major service providers including school districts | 2011-2015 | $5,000 annually | County Manager | General Fund |
| Develop and approve intergovernmental agreements with interested cities for the provision of GIS services to municipalities | 2011 | Staff Function | GIS; Administration | Staff Function |
| Monitor and participate in current and ongoing efforts to develop and revise the Northeast Georgia regional comprehensive plan | Ongoing | Staff Function | Public Development | Staff Function |
| Prepare and adopt a cooperative agreement holding impervious surfaces in the Curry Creek watershed to the maximum 25 percent allowable under the environmental planning criteria for water supply watersheds | 2011 | Staff Function | Public Development; City of Jefferson | Staff Function |
| Prepare and adopt intergovernmental agreements with applicable cities for law enforcement | 2011 | Staff Function | Sheriff; County Manager | Staff Function |
| Reconsider, and revise existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate | 2011-2015 | | County Manager | Staff Function |
| Revisit and revise or readopt the city-county dispute resolution process (annexation/land use) | 2011 | | Public Development; County Manager | Staff Function |
| Revisit and readopt the city-county service delivery strategy | 2015 | | County Manager | Staff Function |
| Initiate a cooperative effort between the county and the City of Nicholson to jointly build public facilities within the new, planned downtown of Nicholson | Long Range | Staff Function | County Manager; City of Nicholson | Staff function |
| Develop and adopt cooperative agreements regarding first responder public safety calls with adjacent counties where portions of roads in one county are only accessible via entrance into another county | 2011-2012 | Staff Function | County Manager; public safety personnel | Staff function |
| **OTHER** | | | | |
| Prepare quarterly report monitoring the progress of implementing the comprehensive plan; maintain data base of implementation and post on website | 2011-2015 | Staff Function | Public Development | Staff function |

## Table 5.3. Short-Term Work Program
## Countywide Roadways Plan
## Jackson County, 2010-2014

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 001 | TP | RMP | Road Maintenance Program | 2010 | 2014 | $475 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 002 | TP | SMP | Sign Maintenance Program | 2010 | 2014 | $75 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 003 | TP | TP | Countywide safety projects within school zones | 2010 | 2014 | $100 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 004 | TP | TP | New sidewalk installation and pedestrian upgrades | 2010 | 2014 | $125 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 005 | TP | TP | Interchange Justification Report for SR 60/I-85 Interchange. | 2010 | 2011 | $200 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 006 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0050-0, Woods Bridge Road over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2010 | 2010 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 007 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5022-0, Galilee Church Road, Right-of-Way Acquisition | 2010 | 2011 | $75 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 008 | TP | TP | Park & Ride Lot Feasibility Study adjacent to SR 53/I-85 Interchange | 2010 | 2010 | $15 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 009 | TP | BR | Engineering and Design for Diamond Hill Church Road over North Oconee River – Deck Replacement | 2010 | 2011 | $10 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 010 | TP | BR | Dixon Bridge Road over North Oconee River – Deck Replacement | 2010 | 2011 | $200 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 011 | TP | INT | Engineering and Design of Intersection Improvements on Gum Springs Church Road at SR 124 | 2010 | 2010 | $82 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 012 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5008-0, Sanford Road over Sandy Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2010 | 2010 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 013 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvement on SR 124 at SR 332 – Signalization | 2010 | 2010 | $85 | Jackson County & GDOT | SPLOST & State Maint. |
| 014 | TP | INT | Right-of-way acquisition for Intersection Improvements on Gum Springs Church Road at SR 124 | 2010 | 2010 | $50 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 015 | TP | INT | Utility Relocations for Intersection Improvements on Gum Springs Church Road at SR 124 | 2010 | 2011 | $100 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 016 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for SR 60/Sam Freeman Road South Extension to SR 53 including Bill Watkins Road | 2011 | 2013 | $150 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton & Hoschton | SPLOST |
| 017 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Braselton Industrial Parkway Extension | 2011 | 2013 | $200 | Jackson County and City of Braselton | SPLOST |
| 018 | TP | TRA | Concept Design Report for SR 60/I-85 Interchange. | 2011 | 2011 | $120 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 019 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5013-0, Chandler Bridge Road over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2011 | 2011 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 020 | TP | TRA | Engineering Design for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to SR 53/I-85 Interchange | 2011 | 2011 | $25 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 021 | TP | TP | Engineering & Design for Improvements on State Street from Commerce Bypass to US 441 Business | 2011 | 2011 | $50 | Jackson County & Commerce | SPLOST |
| 022 | TP | BR | Diamond Hill Church Road over North Oconee River – Deck Replacement | 2011 | 2012 | $200 | Jackson County | SPLOST |

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 023 | TP | TRA | Right-of-way acquisition for SR 53 road widening from I-85 to SR 211 Hall & Jackson Counties | 2011 | 2011 | $37,000 | GDOT | General Fund Aid |
| 024 | TP | TRA | Engineering and design of the SR 82 Airport Connector | 2011 | 2011 | $650 | Jackson County, Jefferson & GDOT | Local Bond & State Aid |
| 025 | TP | TRA | Engineering and design of Bana Road, Phases I & II | 2011 | 2011 | $400 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 026 | TP | TRA | Engineering and design of Concord Road Sewer Extension, Phase I | 2011 | 2011 | $75 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 027 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvements on Gum Springs Church Road at SR 124 | 2011 | 2011 | $582 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 028 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Braselton to Arcade Connectivity Improvements | 2012 | 2012 | $85 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Arcade | SPLOST |
| 029 | TP | TRA | Environmental Study and Engineering Design for SR 60/I-85 Interchange. | 2012 | 2014 | $1,080 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 030 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5037-0, Old Pendergrass Road over the Middle Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2012 | 2012 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 031 | TP | TRA | Right-of-Way Acquisition of 2 acres for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to SR 53/I-85 Interchange | 2012 | 2012 | $150 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 032 | TP | TP | Right-of-way acquisition for Improvements on State Street from Commerce Bypass to US 441 Business | 2012 | 2013 | $250 | Jackson County & Commerce | SPLOST |
| 033 | TP | INT | Engineering and Design of Intersection Improvement on Gum Springs Church Road at Gum Springs Elementary School | 2012 | 2012 | $35 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 034 | TP | INT | Engineering and Design for Intersection Improvement on Gum Springs Church Road at Jackson Trail | 2012 | 2012 | $50 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 035 | TP | INT | Right-of-way acquisition for Intersection Improvement on Gum Springs Church Road at Jackson Trail | 2012 | 2012 | $50 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 036 | TP | INT | Engineering and design of Intersection Improvement on Old State Road at Pond Fork Church | 2012 | 2013 | $20 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 037 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvement on Old State Road at Pond Fork Church | 2012 | 2013 | $200 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 038 | TP | TRA | Right-of-way acquisition for the SR 82 Airport Connector | 2012 | 2012 | $250 | Jackson County, Jefferson & GDOT | Local Bond & State Aid |
| 039 | TP | TRA | Right-of-way acquisition for Bana Road, Phases I & II | 2012 | 2012 | $250 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 040 | TP | TRA | Construction of Bana Road, Phases I & II | 2012 | 2014 | $5,101 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 041 | TP | TRA | Concord Road Sewer Extension, Phase I | 2012 | 2012 | $1,225 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 042 | TP | TRA | Braselton to Arcade Connectivity Improvements Engineering and Construction | 2013 | 2013 | $6,052 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Arcade | SPLOST |
| 043 | TP | TRA | I-85 widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from SR 211 in Barrow County to SR 53 in Jackson County | 2013 | 2015 | $15,170 | GDOT | General Federal Aid (2008-2013) |

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 044 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for B. Wilson Road Extension Improvements utilizing existing routes and new location roadways | 2013 | 2015 | $100 | Jackson County & City of Commerce | SPLOST |
| 045 | TP | BR | Construction of Bridge #157-5059-0, Whites Bottom Road over Walnut Creek Bridge Replacement | 2013 | 2013 | $1,500 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 046 | TP | TRA | Construction of Park & Ride Lot Phase I with 100 spaces adjacent to SR 53/I-85 Interchange | 2013 | 2013 | $250 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 047 | TP | TP | Review Unified Development Code to amend regulations to implement Policies 1.7, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.16, 2.17, 2.18, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9, 3.12, 3.15, 4.1, 4.2, 5.3, 5.4, and prepare and adopt an Ordinance for implementing amendments. | 2013 | 2013 | $75 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 048 | TP | TP | Prepare corridor map and its implementation provision in Unified Development Code and its implementing ordinance for adoption by Board of Commissioners. | 2013 | 2013 | $15 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 049 | TP | TP | Amend the existing Service Delivery System Agreements to address Policies 2.19, 3.14, 3.16, 4.3, 6.7, | 2013 | 2013 | $10 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 050 | TP | TRA | Concept Design Report, Engineering and Construction of SR 60/Sam Freeman Road Extension to SR 53 including Bill Watkins Road | 2013 | 2017 | $13,098 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Hoschton | SPLOST |
| 051 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvement on Gum Springs Church Road at Gum Springs Elementary School | 2013 | 2014 | $400 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 052 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvement on Gum Springs Church Road at Jackson Trail | 2013 | 2013 | $650 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 053 | TP | INT | Engineering and design of intersection improvements on SR 82 at County Farm Road | 2013 | 2013 | $100 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 054 | TP | INT | Engineering and design of Intersection Improvements on Thompson Mill Road (Jessie Cronic Road) at New Liberty Church Road | 2013 | 2013 | $60 | Jackson County & Braselton | SPLOST |
| 055 | TP | TRA | Construction of the SR 82 Airport Connector | 2013 | 2013 | $9,501 | Jackson County, Jefferson & GDOT | Local Bond & State Aid |
| 056 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5046-0, Deadwyler Road over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2013 | 2013 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 057 | TP | TRA | Right-of-way acquisition for SR 60/Sam Freeman Road Extension to SR 53 including Bill Watkins Road | 2014 | 2015 | $13,098 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Hoschton | SPLOST |
| 058 | TP | TP | Park & Ride Lot Feasibility Study adjacent to US 129/I-85 Interchange | 2014 | 2014 | $15 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 059 | TP | INT | Engineering and design for intersection improvements on SR 53 at 3 locations: Jefferson Street, Peachtree Road, & Broad Street | 2014 | 2016 | $250 | Jackson County & Hoschton | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 060 | TP | INT | Right-of-way acquisition for intersection improvements on SR 53 at 3 locations: Jefferson Street, Peachtree Road, & Broad Street | 2014 | 2016 | $195 | Jackson County & Hoschton | SPLOST & State Aid |

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 061 | TP | INT | Construction of intersection improvements on SR 53 at 3 locations: Jefferson Street, Peachtree Road, & Broad Street | 2014 | 2016 | $1,000 | Jackson County & Hoschton | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 062 | TP | TP | Construction of Improvements on State Street from Commerce Bypass to US 441 Business | 2014 | 2016 | $600 | Jackson County & Commerce | SPLOST |
| 063 | TP | TRA | Construction of SR 53 road widening from I-85 to SR 211 Hall & Jackson Counties | 2014 | 2014 | $30,000 | GDOT | General Fund Aid |
| 064 | TP | INT | Right-of-way acquisition for intersection improvements on SR 82 at County Farm Road | 2014 | 2014 | $50 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 065 | TP | INT | Right-of-way acquisition for Intersection Improvements on Thompson Mill Road (Jessie Cronic Road) at New Liberty Church Road | 2014 | 2014 | $50 | Jackson County & Braselton | SPLOST |
| 066 | TP | INT | Engineering and design of Intersection Improvement on Hoods Mill at Waterworks Road | 2014 | 2016 | $65 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 067 | TP | INT | Right-of-way acquisition for Intersection Improvement on Hoods Mill at Waterworks Road | 2014 | 2016 | $50 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 068 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvement on Hoods Mill at Waterworks Road | 2014 | 2016 | $850 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 069 | TP | TRA | Engineering and design of Concord Road Extension, Phase II | 2014 | 2014 | $750 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 070 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5068-0, Kissam Road over Curry Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2014 | 2014 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 071 | TP | INT | Construction of intersection improvements on SR 82 at County Farm Road | 2015 | 2015 | $975 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 072 | TP | INT | Construction of Intersection Improvements on Thompson Mill Road (Jessie Cronic Road) at New Liberty Church Road | 2015 | 2015 | $973 | Jackson County & Braselton | SPLOST |
| 073 | TP | TRA | Right-of-way acquisition for Concord Road Extension, Phase II | 2015 | 2015 | $3,000 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 074 | TP | TRA | Braselton Industrial Parkway West Extension Environmental, Traffic/Signal Engineering Services | 2017 | 2019 | $227 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 075 | TP | TRA | Braselton Industrial Parkway West Extension Right-of-Way Purchase & Acquisition | 2017 | 2019 | $1,173 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 076 | TP | TRA | Braselton Industrial Parkway West Extension Construction of 5875 LF 2-lane Urban Template and 260' Multi-Span Bridge | 2017 | 2019 | $5,447 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| | | | **TOTAL** | | | **$568,841.0** | | |

Notes: RMP represents Road Maintenance Program, SMP represents Sign Maintenance Program, TP represents Transportation Planning, TRA represents Transportation Network, BR represents Bridges, and INT represents Intersection Improvements.

## Revisions to Unified Development Code (UDC)

The following list has been developed to guide the future revision of the Unified Development Code. It is not necessarily exhaustive or limiting but does highlight those suggestions made in this Community Agenda for easy reference.

1. All of the transportation-related recommendations to the Unified Development Code as specified in Section 8.6 of the Countywide Roadways Plan.
2. Prepare and implement guidelines or regulations for low impact development (e.g., bio-retention areas).
3. Address appropriate use of porous (pervious or permeable) materials in parking lots.
4. Modify/strengthen provisions with regard to development on steep slopes.
5. Increase agricultural zoning allowances to allow “U-Pick” and other commercial/agri-tourism activities.
6. Develop incentives for gaining building certification in the Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System.
7. Evaluate and provide opportunities for housing for the developmentally disabled.
8. Revise restrictions on manufactured housing per plan policies.
9. Provide for accessory housing units on lots in compatible locations.
10. Include regulations that provide for senior housing options.
11. Establish mixed-income housing incentives within master planned mixed use districts.
12. Establish quality development principles for multi-family housing.
13. Consider replacing or modifying minimum house size requirements with quality development principles while maintaining housing affordability.
14. Consider more flexible abilities to develop more dispersed child care facilities in the county.
15. Develop cross-sections and minimum specifications for all types of bike facilities, including shared-use, bike lanes on roads, bike lanes on shoulders, and off-street bike paths and multi-use trails.
16. Review of existing access management standards;
17. Develop overlay zones for U.S. Highway 441 and SR 98 in the Commerce area to be jointly adopted by Jackson County and the City of Commerce as designated on the special overlays map.
18. Consider alternative street standards for areas of varying character.
19. Establish scenic highway overlay district and appropriate standards for SR 334 as designated on the special overlays map.
20. Assess transportation impact study requirements and modify as appropriate.

## Table 5.4. Long-Term Work Program
## Countywide Roadways Plan
## Jackson County, 2015-2028

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 001 | TP | RMP | Road Maintenance Program | 2015 | 2028 | $7,000 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 002 | TP | SMP | Sign Maintenance Program | 2015 | 2028 | $1,204 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 003 | TP | TP | Countywide safety projects within school zones | 2015 | 2028 | $280 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 004 | TP | TP | New sidewalk installation and pedestrian upgrades | 2015 | 2028 | $350 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 005 | TP | TRA | Right-of-Way Acquisition for SR 60/I-85 Interchange. | 2015 | 2017 | $2,400 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 006 | TP | TRA | Engineering and design of Possum Creek Road Connector Improvement and Bridge Replacement over Holder's Creek Project | 2015 | 2015 | $120 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 007 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0017-0, SR 82 Spur crossing I-85 Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 008 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0018-0, SR 82 Spur over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 009 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0022-0, Plainview Road crossing I-85 Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 010 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0023-0, Ethridge Road over the Middle Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 011 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0030-0, SR 334 over Sandy Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 012 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0051-0, Wayne Poultry Road over Allen Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 013 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0052-0, Wayne Poultry Road over Pond Fork Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2015 | 2015 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 014 | TP | TRA | Engineering Design for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to US 129/I-85 Interchange | 2015 | 2015 | $25 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 015 | TP | TP | Prepare Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan and adopted by Board of Commissioners (Policy 1.6) | 2015 | 2015 | $60 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 016 | TP | TP | Prepare and adopt an Emergency Evacuation Plan (Policy 2.3) | 2015 | 2015 | $35 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 017 | TP | TRA | Construction of Concord Road Extension, Phase II | 2016 | 2016 | $15,411 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 018 | TP | TRA | Construction of Possum Creek Road Connector Improvement and Bridge Replacement over Holder's Creek Project | 2016 | 2016 | $1,500 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 019 | TP | TP | Construction of Airport Sewer Extension | 2016 | 2016 | $500 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 020 | TP | TP | Engineering and design of Hospital Road Connection to US 441 | 2016 | 2016 | $40 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 021 | TP | TRA | Right-of-Way Acquisition of 2 acres for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to US 129/I-85 Interchange | 2016 | 2016 | $150 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 022 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Jefferson East By-pass | 2016 | 2018 | $250 | Jackson County and City of Jefferson | SPLOST |
| 023 | TP | TP | Construction of Hospital Road Connection to US 441 | 2017 | 2017 | $542 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 024 | TP | TRA | Construction of Park & Ride Lot Phase I with 100 spaces adjacent to US 129/I-85 Interchange | 2017 | 2017 | $250 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 025 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Braselton to Pendergrass Connectivity Improvements | 2017 | 2018 | $160 | Jackson County and City of Braselton | SPLOST |
| 026 | TP | TP | Installation of Steve Reynolds Industrial Boulevard Signal | 2018 | 2018 | $80 | Jackson County | Local Bond |

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 027 | TP | TP | Engineering and design of Commerce Retail Boulevard | 2018 | 2018 | $500 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 028 | TP | TRA | Construction of SR 60 Interchange at I-85 | 2018 | 2020 | $16,292 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 029 | TP | TRA | I-85 widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from SR 53 to US 129. | 2018 | 2020 | $52,374 | GDOT | General Federal Aid (2013-2018) |
| 030 | TP | TRA | Braselton Industrial Parkway Extension Engineering and Construction | 2018 | 2022 | $27,682 | Jackson County and City of Braselton | SPLOST |
| 031 | TP | TP | Park & Ride Lot Feasibility Study adjacent to US 98/I-85 Interchange | 2018 | 2018 | $15 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 032 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Braselton/Hoschton to Maysville Connectivity Improvements | 2018 | 2020 | $175 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton, Hoschton, and Maysville | SPLOST |
| 033 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Braselton to Talmo Connectivity Improvements | 2018 | 2020 | $85 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Talmo | SPLOST |
| 034 | TP | TP | Right-of-way acquisition for Commerce Retail Boulevard | 2019 | 2019 | $500 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 035 | TP | TRA | Engineering Design for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to US 98/I-85 Interchange | 2019 | 2019 | $25 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 036 | TP | TP | Prepare Countywide Transportation Plan Update (Policy 1.1) | 2019 | 2020 | $250 | Jackson County | SPLOST |
| 037 | TP | TRA | Jefferson East By-pass, Concept Design Report, Engineering and Construction | 2019 | 2023 | $13,098 | Jackson County and City of Jefferson | SPLOST |
| 038 | TP | TRA | Braselton to Pendergrass Connectivity Improvements Engineering and Construction | 2019 | 2023 | $9,791 | Jackson County and City of Braselton | SPLOST |
| 039 | TP | TP | Construction of Commerce Retail Boulevard | 2020 | 2020 | $9,048 | Jackson County | Local Bond |
| 040 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0008-0, US 129 over Allen Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 041 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0009-0, SR 15 Alternate/SR 82 over Curry Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 042 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0011-0, SR 15 Alternate over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 043 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0015-0, SR 60 over Walnut Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 044 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0028-0, SR 332 over the Walnut Creek overflow Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 045 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0029-0, SR 332 over Walnut Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 046 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-0053-0, New Kings Bridge Road over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 047 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5044-0, Chandler Cemetery Road over the North Oconee River Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 048 | TP | BR | Bridge #157-5066-0, New Cut Road over Walnut Creek Structural Evaluation Study | 2020 | 2020 | $2.5 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 049 | TP | TRA | Right-of-Way Acquisition of 2 acres for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to US 98/I-85 Interchange | 2020 | 2020 | $150 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 050 | TP | TRA | Construction of Roadway Improvements to Old Pendergrass from SR 332 to US 129, and from US 129 to US 129 Business | 2020 | 2028 | $4,175 | Jackson County & Jefferson | SPLOST & State Aid |

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 051 | TP | INT | Construction of Jackson Trail Road Intersection Improvements at SR 53, Wehunt Road, Doster Road, and SR 11 | 2020 | 2026 | $3,450 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 052 | TP | TRA | Construction of Park & Ride Lot Phase I with 100 spaces adjacent to US 98/I-85 Interchange | 2021 | 2021 | $250 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 053 | TP | TRA | Braselton/Hoschton to Maysville Connectivity Improvements Engineering and Construction | 2021 | 2023 | $16,752 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton, Hoschton, and Maysville | SPLOST |
| 054 | TP | TRA | Braselton to Talmo to Gainesville Connectivity Improvements Engineering and Construction | 2021 | 2025 | $8,960 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Talmo | SPLOST |
| 055 | TP | TP | Park & Ride Lot Feasibility Study adjacent to SR 60/I-85 Interchange | 2022 | 2022 | $15 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 056 | TP | TP | Corridor and Environmental Study for Braselton to Nicholson Connectivity Improvements | 2022 | 2026 | $250 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Nicholson | SPLOST |
| 057 | TP | TRA | Braselton to Nicholson Connectivity Improvements Engineering and Construction | 2023 | 2027 | $22,128 | Jackson County and Cities of Braselton and Nicholson | SPLOST |
| 058 | TP | TRA | I-85 widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from US 129 to SR 82. | 2023 | 2025 | $27,451 | GDOT | General Federal Aid (2018-2023) |
| 059 | TP | TRA | I-85 widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from SR 82 to US 98. | 2023 | 2025 | $44,789 | GDOT | General Federal Aid (2018-2023) |
| 060 | TP | TRA | I-85 widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from US 98 to Banks County line. | 2023 | 2025 | $19,866 | GDOT | General Federal Aid (2018-2023) |
| 061 | TP | TRA | Engineering Design for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to SR 60/I-85 Interchange | 2023 | 2023 | $25 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 062 | TP | TP | Engineering and design of Jessie Cronic Road Roadway Improvements from SR 124 to Barrow County line | 2023 | 2023 | $600 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 063 | TP | TRA | I-85 widening from 6 lanes to 8 lanes from SR 211 in Barrow County to SR 53 in Jackson County | 2024 | 2026 | $15,170 | GDOT | General Federal Aid (2024-2030) |
| 064 | TP | TRA | B. Wilson Road Extension Improvements, Concept Design Report, Engineering and Construction | 2024 | 2028 | $186,141 | Jackson County and City of Commerce | SPLOST |
| 065 | TP | TRA | Right-of-Way Acquisition of 2 acres for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to SR 60/I-85 Interchange | 2024 | 2024 | $150 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 066 | TP | TP | Right-of-way acquisition for Jessie Cronic Road Roadway Improvements from SR 124 to Barrow County line | 2024 | 2024 | $250 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 067 | TP | TRA | Construction of Park & Ride Lot Phase I with 100 spaces adjacent to SR 60/I-85 Interchange | 2025 | 2025 | $250 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 068 | TP | TP | Park & Ride Lot Feasibility Study adjacent to SR 82/I-85 Interchange | 2025 | 2025 | $15 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 069 | TP | TRA | Construction of SR 53 By-pass – Braselton, Hoschton from Zion Church Road to Barrow County line | 2025 | 2027 | $43,000 | GDOT | Federal Aid |
| 070 | TP | TP | Construction of Jessie Cronic Road Roadway Improvements from SR 124 to Barrow County line | 2025 | 2025 | $7,500 | Jackson County | SPLOST & State Aid |
| 071 | TP | TRA | Engineering Design for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to SR 82/I-85 Interchange | 2026 | 2026 | $25 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |

| Proj. No. | Plan Element | Work Item | Description | Start Year | End Year | Cost Estimate (x 1,000) | Responsible Party | Possible Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 072 | TP | TRA | Right-of-Way Acquisition of 2 acres for Park & Ride Lot adjacent to SR 82/I-85 Interchange | 2027 | 2027 | $150 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| 073 | TP | TRA | Construction of Park & Ride Lot Phase I with 100 spaces adjacent to SR 82/I-85 Interchange | 2028 | 2028 | $250 | GDOT | General Federal Aid |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | **TOTAL** | | | **$561,994.0** | | |

Notes: RMP represents Road Maintenance Program, SMP represents Sign Maintenance Program, TP represents Transportation Planning, TRA represents Transportation Network, BR represents Bridges, and INT represents Intersection Improvements.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms have been defined to increase reader understanding of this document. With regard to some terms, there is not a consensus in the planning profession on how they can be defined.

**Buildout:** A theoretical condition or imagined future that assumes development occurs on all available vacant lands at densities and intensities according to the character (future development) and/or future land use plan maps, or allowed by current zoning, or both. Buildout is typically quantified by assigning a land use to each vacant parcel to be developed and multiplying the acreage of vacant land by the units per acre (residential) or floor-area ratio to determine additional housing units and square footage of non-residential development.

**Capital Improvement:** An improvement with a useful life of ten years or more, by new construction or other action, which increases the service capacity of a public facility.

**Capital Improvements Element:** A component of a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. which sets out projected needs for system improvements during a planning horizon established in the comprehensive plan, a schedule of capital improvements that will meet the anticipated need for system improvements, and a description of anticipated funding sources for each required improvement. Note: This Community Agenda does not contain a capital improvements element.

**Character Area:** A specific geographic area within the community that: has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor; has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.). Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision.

**Community Agenda:** The portion of the comprehensive plan that provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public. It includes: (1) a community vision for the future physical development of the community, expressed in the form of a map indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns; (2) a list of issues and opportunities identified by the community for further action; and (3) an implementation program that will help the community realize its vision for the future and address the identified issues and opportunities.

**Community Assessment:** The portion of the comprehensive plan that is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community prepared without extensive direct public participation. It includes: (1) a list of potential issues and opportunities the community may which to take action to address, (2) evaluation of community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with Quality Community Objectives; (3) analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development of the community; and (4)

data and information to substantiate these evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities. The product of the Community Assessment must be a concise and informative report (such as an executive summary), to be used to inform decision-making by stakeholders during development of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** The nation's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the state Department of Community Affairs for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development. There is much discretion on how CDBG funds can be used (within some constraints), as long as they benefit low- and moderate-income households. For instance, funds can be targeted to provide infrastructure or be directed at upgrading and expanding the affordable housing stock.

**Community Participation Program:** The portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government's program for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

**Comprehensive Plan:** A 20-year plan by a county or municipality covering such county or municipality and including three components: a Community Assessment, a Community Participation Program, and a Community Agenda. The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the local planning requirements for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of comprehensive plans, established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in accordance with O.C.G.A 50-8-7.1(b) and 50-8-7.2.

**Connectivity:** A term that refers to the existing or future, desired state of connections that enable mobility between and among various uses and activities. Connectivity can refer to the street network, in terms of whether it provides connections (e.g., through streets), or is "disconnected" in terms of dead-end streets with cul-de-sacs.

**Conservation:** The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or degradation.

**Conservation Area:** Any land set aside for conservation of the land in its natural state.

**Conservation Subdivision:** A subdivision where open space is the central organizing element of the subdivision design and that identifies and permanently protects all primary and all or some of the secondary conservation areas within the boundaries of the subdivision.

**Corridor:** An area of land, typically along a linear route, containing land uses and transportation systems influenced by the existence of that route.

**Density:** The quantity of building per unit of lot area; for example, the number of dwellings per lot area (gross square foot or per acre).

**Design Guidelines:** Statements and illustrations that are intended to convey the preferred quality for a place.

**Development Impact Fees:** One-time charges assessed at the time of a building permit to offset the public costs of proportional provision of selected capital facilities. Cities and counties in Georgia are authorized to prepare and adopt development impact fee programs pursuant to O.C.G.A. 36-71-1 et seq., the Development Impact Fee Act, which can be used to fund system improvements (roads, water and sewer, parks and recreation, public safety, and libraries) needed to serve new development.

**Environmental Justice:** Fair treatment for people of all races, cultures, and incomes in the development of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate impact from industrial, municipal, or business operations or the implementation of government programs and policies. Meaningful involvement means that all people have an opportunity to participate in decisions that may affect their environment and/or health, that the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision, that their concerns will be considered in the decision making process, and that the decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

**Fiscal Impact Study:** An effort that attempts to estimate the likely net costs to a community associated with a proposed development project or the ultimate buildout of the community based on alternative development scenarios.

**Floor-Area Ratio (FAR):** The total floor area of the building or buildings on a lot or parcel divided by the gross area of the lot or parcel.

**Future Land Use Plan Map:** A map showing long-term future land uses desired in the community. Such a map is "optional" in the local planning requirements. A future land use plan has been prepared and is made a part of the Community Agenda. The future land use plan map is different from the character area map, in that it provides specific recommendations for future land uses and generally provides detail at the parcel level.

**Goal:** A statement that describes, usually in general terms, a desired future condition.

**Green Roof:** A roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil.

**Greenspace:** Open, undeveloped land, either in public or private ownership. Usually used in connection with property that has the potential of being developed for park or other public usage.

**Impact:** The effect of any direct man-make actions or indirect repercussions of man-made actions on existing physical, social, or economic conditions.

**Infill:** Development that occurs on vacant, skipped-over, bypassed, or underused lots in otherwise built-up sites or areas.

**Jobs/Housing Balance:** An examination of the relationship between jobs and housing, and between where jobs are or will be located and where housing is or will be available. Jobs/housing balance is often expressed in terms of a ratio between jobs and the number of housing units. The higher the jobs/housing ratio, the more jobs the area has relative to housing. A high ratio may indicate to a community that it is not meeting the housing needs (in terms of either affordability or actual physical units) of people working in the community.

**Land Trust:** A private, nonprofit conservation organization formed to protect natural resources, such as productive farm or forest land, natural areas, historic structures, and recreational areas. Land trusts purchase and accept donations of conservation easements. They educate the public about the need to conserve land and some provide land-use and estate planning services to local governments and individual citizens.

**Landscape Ecology:** Landscape ecology analyzes how plants and animals are spatially distributed and move through land mosaics. It is a specialized science highly related to land use planning and has emerged as a useful tool for practicing land use planners.

**Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED):** The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), is a voluntary, consensus-based, national standard for developing high performance, environmentally sustainable buildings and communities. LEED was created to: define “green building” by establishing a common standard of measurement; promote integrated, whole-building design practices; recognize environmental leadership in the building industry; stimulate green competition; raise consumer awareness of green building benefits; and transform the building market. The Rating System addresses six major areas, which include: sustainable sites; water efficiency; energy and atmosphere; materials and resources; indoor environmental quality; and Innovation and design process. LEED certification is granted solely by the U.S. Green Building Council.

**Level of Service:** A measure of the relationship between service capacity and service demand for public facilities in terms of demand to capacity ratios or the comfort and convenience of use or service of public facilities, or both.

With regard to roads:

Level "A" is a condition with low traffic volumes, high speeds and free-flow conditions.

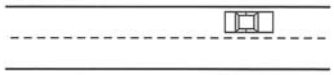
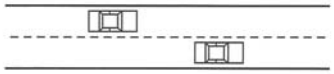
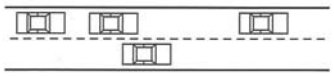
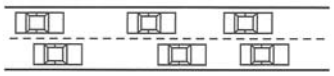
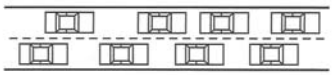
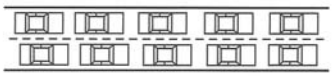
Level "B" is a condition with light traffic volumes, minor speed restrictions and stable flow.

Level "C" is a condition with moderate traffic volumes, where speed and maneuvering are restricted to a limited degree by the amount of traffic.

Level "D" is a condition with heavy traffic operating at tolerable speeds, although temporary slowdowns in flow may occur.

Level "E" is a condition of very heavy flow and relatively low speeds. Under Level "E" the traffic is unstable and short stoppage may occur.

Level "F" is a condition of extremely heavy flow, with frequent stoppage and very slow speeds. It is an unstable traffic condition under which traffic often comes to a complete halt.

| | Level of Service | Description |
|---|---|---|
| A |  | Free Flow: Low volumes and no delays. |
| B |  | Stable Flow: Speeds restricted by travel conditions, minor delays. |
| C |  | Stable Flow: Speed and maneuverability closely controlled due to higher volumes. |
| D |  | Stable Flow: Speeds considerably affected by change in opening conditions. High-density traffic restricts maneuverability; volume near capacity. |
| E |  | Unstable Flow: Low speeds, considerable delay; volume at slightly over capacity. |
| F |  | Forced Flow: Very low speeds; volumes exceed capacity; long delays with stop-and-go traffic. |

**LEVEL OF SERVICE**

*Source: Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation.*

Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards. 2006. John Wiley & Sons. p. 523.

**Local Planning Requirements:** The standards and procedures for local government planning that shall be followed in preparation of local comprehensive plans, for implementation of local comprehensive plans, and for participation in the comprehensive planning process.

**Mixed-Use Development:** A single building containing more than one type of land use; or a single development of more than one building and use, where the different types of land uses are in close proximity, planned as a unified, complementary whole.

**Mixed Use, Horizontal:** Two or more different types of uses are placed next to each other (but not attached), planned as a unit, and connected together with pedestrian and vehicular access. For instance, a subdivision containing single-family dwellings that is adjacent to a neighborhood commercial development and office complex.

**Mixed Use, Vertical:** Where two or more different uses occupy the same building usually on different floors. For instance, retail on the ground floor and office and/or residential uses on the second and/or third floors.

**Mixed-Income Housing:** Housing for people with a broad range of incomes on the same site, development, or immediate neighborhood.

**National Register of Historic Places:** The federal government's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation, documented and evaluated according to uniform standards established by the National Park Service, which administers the program.

**New Urbanism:** A set of principles or school of thought that suggest neighborhoods should be built like those that existed before the advent of the automobile. Characteristics of new urbanism or new urban developments include a street network that forms a connected grid,

houses built close to the street (i.e., little or no setback) with front porches, alleys (where appropriate) and garages located at the rear of the lot, and on-street parking, among others. For more information see the Charter for the New Urbanism.

**Objective:** A statement that describes a specific future condition to be attained within a stated period of time. Typically, objectives are more numerous than goals, and they are typically organized according to the topics in the goals statements.

**Overlay District:** A defined geographic area that encompasses one or more underlying zoning districts and that imposes additional requirements above those required by the underlying zoning district. An overlay district can be coterminous with existing zoning districts or contain only parts of one or more such districts.

**Pedestrian-Friendly:** Physical attributes, characteristics, and designs that are intended to be more accommodating to pedestrian traffic than what is typically achieved by conventional designs.

**Projection:** A prediction of future conditions that will occur if the assumptions inherent in the projection technique prove true.

**Qualified Local Government:** A county or municipality that: adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan in conformity with the local planning requirements; establishes regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan and with the local planning requirements; and does not fail to participate in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' mediation or other means of resolving conflicts in a manner in which, in the judgment of the Department, reflects a good faith effort to resolve any conflict.

**Redevelop:** To demolish existing buildings or to increase the overall floor area existing on a property, or both, irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.

**Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria:** Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.

**Service Area:** A geographic area defined by a municipality, county or intergovernmental agreement in which a defined set of public facilities provides service to development within the area. Service areas shall be designated on the basis of sound planning or engineering principles, or both.

**Service Delivery Strategy:** The intergovernmental arrangement among city governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy Law. A local government's existing Strategy must be updated concurrent with the comprehensive plan update. To ensure consistency between the comprehensive plan and the agreed upon Strategy: (1) the services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the comprehensive plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy and (2) the service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy.

**Stakeholder:** Someone (or any agency or group) with a "stake," or interest, in the issues being addressed.

**State Planning Recommendations:** The supplemental guidance provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the local planning requirements. The plan preparers and the community must review these recommendations where referenced in the planning requirements in order to determine their applicability or helpfulness to the community's plan.

**Short-Term Work Program:** That portion of the Implementation Program that lists the specific actions to be undertaken annually by the local government over the upcoming five years to implement the comprehensive plan.

**Traffic Impact Study:** An analysis and assessment, conducted by a qualified professional, that assesses the effects that a discretionary development proposal's traffic will have on the transportation network in a community or portion thereof. Traffic impact studies vary in their range of detail and complexity depending on the type, size and location of the proposed development.

**Vision:** A written statement that is intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.

**Visioning:** A planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future.

**Volume-to-capacity Ratio:** A measure of the operating capacity of a roadway or intersection, in terms of the number of vehicles passing through, divided by the number of vehicles that theoretically could pass through when the roadway or intersection is operating at its designed capacity. Abbreviated as "v/c." At a v/c ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 1.0, the traffic facility has additional capacity.

**Walkable or Walkability:** The broad range of community design features that support walking.

**Waste Diversion:** Waste diversion is the elimination of waste going to a final disposal facility. Methods to accomplish waste diversion include source reduction, recycling, and composting.

**Wetland Mitigation Bank:** An alternative method to restoring or maintaining wetlands. A technique which allows developers to replace wetlands in one location with wetlands that are bought through credits from another person or agency on another site.

**Workforce Housing:** Housing that is affordable to workforce households.

**Workplace:** A place of employment, base of operation, or predominant location of an employee.

Source: Compiled by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., from various sources, including but not limited to regulations prepared by the same firm, Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Model Land Use Management Code of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *A Planners Dictionary* (Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnick, Planning Advisory Service Report No. 521/522, 2004), and *Planning and Urban Design Standards*, 2006, by American Planning Association and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

# APPENDIX A
# CHARACTER AREA AND FUTURE LAND USE SUPPLEMENT

This appendix provides information originally included in the text of the community agenda but was determined to be non-essential on an everyday basis to decision makers.

## Rationale for a Special Approach to Character Area Planning in Jackson County

To achieve efficiency in terms of land development and service provision on a countywide basis, future growth and development need to be concentrated within and around the county's municipalities and progress logically outward in a more-or-less contiguous and sequential fashion. Indeed, that is generally the policy or vision articulated in 2003 amendments to the county's comprehensive plan. Furthermore, public input received in the planning process in 2009-10 further solidified the desire that Jackson County grow more efficiently. However, while stated county policy has been consistent, the county's future land use plan map has not successfully implemented that policy. In recent years, residential subdivisions have scattered or sprawled even further across most parts of the county.

Jackson County needs to implement a more finely tuned approach, one that phases growth and directs the timing of future development in accordance with the provision of adequate public facilities and services. If followed, the county's character area growth management approach will result in more efficient development patterns and lower costs for private land development. In turn, it will result in lower costs to provide public facilities and services required to serve the additional private land developments.[1]

Two questions immediately come to mind about this unique approach. Why do the county character maps show lands inside municipalities when the county doesn't control land use decisions? Second, why are there three character area maps rather than just the one required by state rules (i.e., showing the desired pattern in 20 years)? Answering these two important questions requires significant explanation.

## Countywide Perspective Including Municipalities

Jackson County includes nine municipalities, each with their own land use regulations and an ability to pursue their own specific land use policies and objectives. Although local municipal land use plans must be respected, the county must also anticipate and integrate municipal land use plans in order to have a coherent, countywide growth strategy. It is nearly impossible for the county to gain a "handle" on what its future will be, and how much development it will have, unless a concerted effort is made to integrate plans of municipalities into an overarching framework. If Jackson County focuses only on land use planning for unincorporated areas, it will miss a large part of the overall picture.

Prior experience has shown that some cities in Jackson County have used their legal authority to annex additional lands in response to property owner requests and in an effort to increase their property tax bases. As cities in Jackson County continue to annex in the future, their land use decisions will become more and more significant in terms of the resulting countywide

[1] A recent study found that conservation subdivisions are less expensive to build than conventional subdivisions. See Mohamed, Rayman. January 2006. "The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions: Price Premiums, Improvement Costs, and Absorption Rates." *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 376-399.

pattern. Changes in city boundaries can also mean changes in public school providers, utilities, and other service delivery changes that require long-range planning to address adequately. Again, while recognizing the autonomy of city land use decisions, county government has a responsibility to provide countywide facilities and services in an efficient manner while controlling the costs to taxpayers. This means the Board of Commissioners is wise, if not obligated, to articulate countywide growth management principles and visions.

Although the character maps show all lands inside cities, the maps carry with them no immediate regulatory significance within the municipal boundaries. Each city has its own land use plan, and municipal plans ultimately govern land use decisions in the municipalities. However, the countywide character maps represent a general classification of current and future development patterns. Having a general picture of future development patterns on a countywide basis is essential for Jackson County to complete sound planning for its future.

**Medium-Range (2020) and Long-Range (2030) Perspectives**

This plan includes a ten-year (2020) as well as a twenty-year (2030) vision (character maps). Under state rules, only a 20-year character (future development) map is required. When local governments establish a long-range (20 year) character map and/or future land use plan map, the tendency of property owners and developers is to treat those maps as immediately applicable in the short-term, whereas it may have been the local government's intent that some of the development shown not be built or constructed until at or near the end of the 20-year planning horizon. For example, a local government may reflect future development permissions for commercial or industrial land in a given area, thinking they will be needed at some point during the next 20 years, but probably near the end of the long range planning period. That future designation might imply, however, the extension of sewer service which is not currently available or planned. Without the proper controls, a 20-year plan gets viewed by the public as an opportunity for development immediately, in year one. Clearly, timing is important in terms of land development, and a 20-year plan can result in a scattering of development without adequate public facilities and services. Jackson County can no longer afford the continuation of that prospect.

A second major reason for providing a 2020 as well as the required long-range (2030) map of future development is that current economic conditions place future development in a drastically different light today than what was expected five years ago. The effects of the severe economic recession, which began in 2007 and ended with a so-called "jobless recovery" in 2009, will be felt for many years to come. The county's prior comprehensive plan anticipated huge increases in population and employment and provided for substantial increases in residential and other types of development. Those job and housing projections are now considered unlikely to occur, and the land surpluses are unlikely to be needed during the time the economy fully recovers.

Economic conditions will improve, the construction industry will come back to life, and Jackson County's economy will grow. However, during the next decade, or at least during the next five years (before the county must revisit its comprehensive plan again), all indications are that the pace of land development will not resume at the same "feverish" or "hyper" level as that experienced in the last decade. Jackson County needs a more modest outlook, one tempered by these anticipated economic conditions, in terms of land use planning. Again, the county cannot afford to provide facilities and services to a larger amount of households and jobs than it will actually experience. Nor is it wise to allow more land to be consumed for residential neighborhoods and future industries and commercial businesses, when they are not needed in terms of market demand. More time must pass to allow the economy and construction industry

to “consume” the land development opportunities now available in the form of vacant or largely undeveloped-but-platted subdivisions and areas designated for future nonresidential uses. This is another major reason for articulating a 2020, as well as a 2030, vision for future development.

Finally, a third reason for having both a 2020 and 2030 character map is that 20 years is a long time to plan for future public facilities. A capital improvement program usually spans a six-year period, and 10 years is obviously closer to that time period than 20 years. It is the intent of Jackson County’s comprehensive plan to identify with greater precision what will happen in terms of development in the next decade, and thus, the facilities it will need to plan and provide. A 20-year planning horizon simply does not serve that purpose. Hence, a 10-year development management strategy is critical and is facilitated with a 2020 future development map.

**Countywide Character Area Change, 2009 to 2020**

The comparison of the acreages inherent in the “existing character” map versus the 2020 and 2030 maps is somewhat problematic in that the road coverage was separated out for the 2020 and 2030 maps but not for the existing character map. This means that the total change in acreage is not captured fully in the “change” columns of Table A-1 below, since there were 10,000 or so acres calculated into the character categories in 2009. Nonetheless, the figures in Table A-1 do reveal trends.

Also, the 2009 existing character area map does not show flood plains as “conservation,” since they are not necessarily protected from development. The 2020 character area map does show flood plains, as well as other conservation lands, which should be protected from development and acquired as permanent open space if possible). Hence, there is a proposed increase of almost 27,000 acres of conservation lands in all of Jackson County during the next decade.

Table A-1 implies a loss of 74,000 acres of agricultural and vacant land in all of Jackson County during the next decade. That implication is somewhat misleading, however, for a number of reasons. First, the agricultural character area includes a lot of vacant land – many of the areas classified as agriculture/vacant are undeveloped and not actively used as agricultural land. Second, many flood plains classified in 2009 as agricultural/vacant are designated as conservation in 2020; hence, some of those lands are proposed to move from a status of private agricultural/vacant to protected open space. Third, the “rural” character area (described below) still can contain agricultural and vacant areas; thus some of the change from agricultural to rural on the maps will not reflect a loss of agricultural/rural character.

Lands in the “rural” character area would basically double in size from 2009 to 2020, comprising almost one-fifth of the land area in all of Jackson County. Although the vast majority of future rural growth will be low density residential (1 unit or less per 1.5 acres), some of it may remain as farms, forests, and vacant lands. It is also possible that such lands are consumed for other-than-residential land uses.

Urban land will increase substantially, from 4.2 percent of the total county land area in 2009 to ten percent in 2020.

**Countywide Character Area Change, 2009 to 2030**

Similar to the preceding section, there is a proposed increase of almost 27,000 acres of conservation lands in all of Jackson County during the two decades, the vast majority of which is floodplains. Table A-1 implies a loss of more than 87,0000 acres of agricultural and vacant

land in all of Jackson County during the next two decades. That implication is somewhat misleading, however, for reasons described in the prior section. Lands in the "rural" character area would almost double in size from 2009 to 2030, comprising more than one-fifth of the land area in all of Jackson County. Suburban growth will constitute an additional 21,864 acres in all of Jackson County from 2009 to 2030. Urban land will increase more than 12,000 acres, from 4.2 percent of the total county land area in 2009 to 10.4 percent in 2030.

**Table A-1**
**Character Area Acreages, 2009, 2020, and 2030**
**Jackson County (Including Municipalities)**

| Character Area | 2009 Acres | % Total Land Area | 2020 Acres | % Total Land Area | 2009-2020 Change in Acres | 2030 Acres | % Total Land Area | 2009-2030 Change in Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conservation | 1,256 | 0.6 | 28,006 | 13.3 | +26,750 | 28,222 | 13.3 | +26,966 |
| Agricultural | 159,896 | 72.8 | 85,689 | 40.6 | -74,207 | 72,413 | 34.3 | -87,483 |
| Rural | 21,719 | 9.9 | 38,112 | 18.1 | +16,393 | 40,717 | 19.3 | +18,998 |
| Suburban | 27,536 | 12.5 | 37,989 | 18.0 | +10,453 | 47,796 | 22.7 | +20,260 |
| Urban | 9,178 | 4.2 | 21,187 | 10.0 | +12,009 | 21,864 | 10.4 | +12,686 |
| Total | 219,585 | 100% | 210,983 | 100.0 | -- | 210,012 | 100.0 | -- |

Note: Rights-of-ways separated out for the 2020 and 2030 maps, but not for the 2009 map, hence the difference between the total acreages.
Source: Jackson County GIS Department (Revised May 3, 2010)

### Analysis of Countywide Residential Growth Capacity, 2009-2030

If one uses a "working assumption" that 80 percent of the future rural lands will be developed residentially at an average density of one house per three acres, then the rural growth capacity in all of Jackson County is approximately 6,332 housing units during the next two decades.

If one uses another "working assumption" that 90 percent of future suburban lands will be developed residentially at an average density of one house per acre, then the suburban growth capacity from 2009 to 2030 in all of Jackson County is approximately 20,260 new homes in addition to the current supply of approximately 6,000 or more vacant, ready-to-build-upon lots. Hence the total capacity for the suburban residential character area is some 26,260 housing units.

The vast majority of the "urban" land increase will be devoted to non-residential land uses. It is difficult to forecast the amount of new residential units resulting from the character area map changes from 2009 to 2030. If one assumes that ten percent of the "urban" growth in all of Jackson County from 2009 to 2030 is residential, at an average density of five units per acre, there is capacity for at least 6,343 additional housing units. Combining the character areas and their implied changes from 2009 to 2030, it is estimated that the 2030 map provides for approximately 38,935 ***new*** housing units in the next two decades.

How does this relate to the anticipated need for housing over the next two decades? Prior analysis by the county's planning consultant revealed that Jackson County *as a whole* would need a ***total*** of 36,900 housing units to accommodate a low population projection of 100,000 people during the planning horizon and a total of 53,500 housing units to accommodate a "high" population projection of 145,000 people during the planning horizon. With an estimated 24,000 housing units currently in all of Jackson County, this translates to a 20-year need about 13,000 additional housing units to accommodate the low population projection (100,000) and about

29,500 new housing units to accommodate the higher population projection of 145,000 people in the year 2030. As drawn, the 2030 character area map provides more than enough capacity for additional housing units to meet the next two decades of growth. With an estimated additional capacity of 37,145 new housing units during the next 20 years, the 2030 character area map provides ample space to accommodate the maximum projected housing unit needs of Jackson County.

**Table A-2**
**Comparison of Housing Unit Needs and Capacity of the 2030 Character Area Map**
**Jackson County (Including Municipalities)**

| Projection Range | Existing Housing Units | Likely Demand: | | Supply: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Projection of Total Housing Units Needed 2030 | Additional Units Needed, 2010-2030 | New Housing Unit Capacity Provided for in 2030 |
| Low Projection | 24,000 | 36,900 | 12,900 | 38,935 |
| High Projection | 24,000 | 53,500 | 29,500 | |

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.

## FUTURE LAND USE

A future land use plan map is “optional” under the local planning requirements. Since it is not required, it is worth explaining why the county has elected to also include future land use plan maps. There are two principal reasons. First, if the local government has adopted zoning regulations (as Jackson County has), it needs a future land use plan map in order to guide decision-making with respect to individual, use-oriented zoning categories. Without it, character area approaches usually do not provide enough specific guidance with regard to land uses to legally support rezoning and special use decisions. Second, a future land use map is more useful than a character area map in terms of facility planning decisions, because one can more easily project housing, population, and employment if the specific future land uses are known.

Like with the character area maps, the future land use plan maps also provide a vision for 2020 as well as 2030. It is worth highlighting the justification for presenting a 2020 as well as a 2030 future land use plan map. Some of the reasons are as follows. First, by looking only at the next ten years, with a 2020 map the county can focus more realistically on what we are pretty sure is going to happen in terms of land use change. Secondly, Jackson County has a surplus of residential development opportunities now which will be largely sufficient to satisfy market needs from 2010 to 2020. Third, if 2030 intentions are shown on a map, it is the general nature of developers to capitalize on those opportunities beginning in year one, even if they were not contemplated until the year 15 or 20. Fourth, the county now faces more severe fiscal constraints, and it therefore needs to be more efficient with land use planning and infrastructure decisions. And finally, a ten-year time period is closer to the time frame used for capital improvement programming, which is 6-years; hence, a 10 year development management outlook makes the job of planning and programming new facilities that much easier and accurate.

RESOLUTION
10-012

# RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the 1989 Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 215, the Georgia Planning Act, requiring all local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Community Agenda for Jackson County's Comprehensive Plan, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Jackson County that the Community Agenda for Jackson County, Georgia dated June 2010, as approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

Adopted this 16th day of August, 2010.

Jackson County

Hunter Bicknell

Hunter Bicknell, Chairman
Jackson County Board of Commissioners

County Clerk, Jackson County