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Guiding Principles

The intent of the Character Areas descriptions is to identify the most desirable pattern of land use in Cherokee County. The locations of these Character Areas are shown on the Future Development Map. The Future Development Map is a representation of the community's goals and policies and indicates areas of the County that are appropriate for the various types of land use defined in this section. The Future Development Map reflects, to a great extent, existing development patterns and trends, as well as current zoning approvals. The Character Area designations indicate the primary types of land uses (Residential and Non-Residential) and the infrastructure necessary for that type of development. The Character Area descriptions serve as a guide in the determination of the Future Development Plan Amendments, especially in the case of non-residential development in primarily residential character areas.

Guiding concepts for future land use in Cherokee include:

- A variety of housing stock serves a range of incomes and age groups and includes rural homesteads, country estates, single-family houses, townhouses, stacked units, backyard apartments, apartments above shops and residential uses adjacent to work places.
- A variety of business types is accommodated from retail and professional offices to live work units and small business. The office stock serves a range from home occupations to conventional office buildings. The retail stock includes a range from the corner store to regional shopping.
- Sustainable communities contain civic spaces, which include open space/conservation areas; greenways, parks, greens, square and plazas as well as special sites reserved for civic buildings. Both of these types of spaces serve as symbols of the community, thus enhancing community identity.
- Permanent open space should surround developments in rural areas in order to retain the feeling of open space and the County's pastoral heritage. Specific conservation areas and greenways should be predetermined and identified so that ultimately new development will interconnect to form a network of protected lands. Scenic corridors and vistas shall be protected and enhanced.
- Where appropriate, promote a compact development pattern that is pedestrian-oriented, community centered and minimizes vehicular trips by encouraging other modes of transportation, such as walking or bicycling. This pattern assures the availability of infrastructure concurrent with development that achieves the desires of the community's vision. Land uses and transportation are connected in such a way as to encourage linked trips and potential alternative modes.
- Ensure that future land use and development decisions are consistent with long range planning goals and policies and such decisions promote social and economic well-being for the whole community.
- Encourage and promote clean, high tech industrial and employment opportunities that strengthen the economic base of the community and minimize air and water pollution.

Development Process

There is a variety of ways to achieve the County and the cities of Woodstock, Waleska and Ball Ground's vision for the future. From a community design standpoint, the key is to avoid dispersed development projects that are unrelated to one another and exist in isolation at random locations. Instead, by focusing appropriate development within distinct character areas, corridors and centers and arranging these areas within a comprehensive circulation system that incorporates multiple modes of transportation, the County will achieve a sustainable development pattern that will carry them through to the year 2030.

As a first step in creating an appropriate development atmosphere, the County has developed "Community Character Areas" integral to the Comprehensive Plan. The community design of these distinct character areas is based on a classification of development patterns, their distinct differences and their relationship to one another as the County continues to grow over the next 20-years. Character Areas will:

- Encourage a "holistic" approach to long-range planning by integrating the community's vision and desires with actual land use patterns.
- Directly link the Comprehensive Plan to regulations and implementation strategies, such as Impact Fees;
- Encourage thinking "outside the box" by integrating new and exciting concepts in land use planning and urban design;
- Allow the maximum amount of flexibility in land use planning

Quality of New Development

All new public buildings, institutional buildings, residential and non-residential private developments should be characterized by high-quality architectural design and construction and should reflect Cherokee County's unique community image and character. These types of improvements help us create an identity or sense of place will ultimately set Cherokee County apart from other communities and provide our residents and businesses a reason for investing in Cherokee County.

■ Future Development Map

The Future Development Map was developed taking into consideration the land use patterns illustrated on the County's Existing Land Use Plan Map, the Current Zoning Map, approved PUDs and other developments, topographic characteristics, natural resource sensitivity, the availability of infrastructure, and needs demonstrated by residential and employment forecasts. The Cherokee Future Development Map will:

- ✓ Apply to the County, the City of Waleska, the City of Ball Ground, and the City of Woodstock's overall vision and guiding principals to land use patterns.
- ✓ The map visualizes build-out projections within the Land Demand Analysis for residential, retail, commercial, office and industrial needs to the year 2030.
- ✓ The map is developed in conjunction with infrastructure planning and availability, land use compatibility and existing zoning.
- ✓ Acknowledges projected growth and provides for capacity for this growth in **appropriate** areas of the county and cities.
- ✓ Provides for strong "edges" to stop residential and retail "creep."

*A Visual
Aid to the
Future*

- ✓ Acknowledgement and accommodation for corridors currently or proposed to go through residential/commercial transition.
- ✓ Creation of specific corridors and areas that is ripe for redevelopment activities and further study.
- ✓ Strong emphasis on integrated design, mixing of uses and connectivity.
- ✓ The use of character areas instead of standard land use categories.

■ Character Areas

Why Use Character Areas?

- ✓ Provides a direct link between the County’s Vision, Guiding Principles Goals and the Future Development Map;
- ✓ Provides additional protection, enhancement and clarification for zoning and land development.
- ✓ Provides additional guidance to developers regarding the qualitative issues the County and Cities will consider during the rezoning process; and
- ✓ Provides the first step towards urban design guidelines and the County and Cities’ objective for quality growth.

*Direct Link
between the
Plan, Map
and Zoning*

Benefits of Character Areas

- ✓ Provides for strong land use compatibility and transitional standards;
- ✓ Looks at an overall area and internal and external connectedness. Emphasis on the mixing and integration of appropriate and complimentary uses;
- ✓ Identifies intensity levels, compatibility considerations and infrastructure considerations;
- ✓ Spells out the overall “feel” of an area into quantitative terms, thereby giving decision makers additional guidance during the rezoning and development process; and
- ✓ Coordinates economic development, natural resource and capital facility policies within land use planning.

*What kind of
development are
we trying to
achieve?*

Interpretation

The plan is developed with the concept that the Future Development Map and the text are to be used as an integrated whole, with the map being a graphic representation of the text.

Interpretation of the Future Development Map is a process, which rests on the goals and policies expressed in the text. The land use designations on the map, both in terms of overall definition and intensity of land use types, require that policies and intent statements regulating the development and location of each land use type be evaluated and applied in the process of plan implementation.

Plan implementation is carried out through the application of regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance and through projects and programs outlined in the STWP. The Board of Commissioners and City Councils administers the Map with input from the Planning Commissions and planning staffs. The procedure, once the

plan is adopted, will involve checks for plan and ordinance consistency as part of the review for issuance of subdivision approvals and development and building permits.

If a specific land use or development project is proposed for an area but is not consistent with the designated use or Character on the Future Development Map, it cannot be approved. The initial contact for plan interpretation begins with the Staff. It is at this point that the proposal is evaluated for its conformity and compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and functional plans. In the event a use or development proposal is inconsistent with the Future Development Map or Comprehensive Plan policies, an applicant may file for a Map Amendment in accordance with the amendment procedures contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

How it Works

- ✓ Parts of a character area: Intent statement, strategy and Compatible non-residential development;
- ✓ Character Area guidelines are intended to establish a general direction and a base level of development quality and compatibility with surrounding areas;
- ✓ Character Area areas provide an area wide view of how a specific use on a specific property will interact with a larger area;
- ✓ Because they are not part of the Zoning Ordinance--will allow flexibility during project review;
- ✓ Will allow additional qualitative controls while small area and Corridor studies are completed.
- ✓ Remember, just because a potential type of non-residential development is “allowed” this is not specific like a zoning district. A use must still fit the intent of the character area and any associated criteria.

Zoning Decision Process with Character Areas

**Identify character area on Future Development Map*

**Character Summary Table—Compatible zoning districts and infrastructure*

**Review general community design guidelines*

**Review character area intent, and guidelines*

**Determination if the zoning proposal a) is in agreement with the Future Development Map and; b) Is in compliance with the Character Area intent and criteria.*

**If the proposed use meets A & B, then the project proceeds into the rezoning process and will be judged on how that specific proposal works on that specific site, utilizing zoning regulations and the character area intent statement.*

**If the proposal does not meet A& B a Map Amendment must be applied for and approved during the once a year process before a zoning application can even be submitted.*

Character Area Summary Table

The following Table presents the “Character Areas,” as shown on the Future Land Use Plan map, Infrastructure Requirements and indicates those zoning districts that are most commonly compatible with the use designation. Specific requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, master plan site plan approval and other conditions control in all cases.

Character Area Summary Table				
Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Compatible Development Nodes	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Suggested Zoning Districts
Natural Preserve	Undeveloped natural lands with significant natural features.	None	Very low level of community facilities	AG
Equestrian Lifestyle	Rural landscape dotted with horse farms and accessory uses. The primary land uses within this character area are equestrian related.	Country Crossroads; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Local serving roads, potentially with public water, but not sewer	AG (2 acres minimum lot size)
Country Estates	Transitional low intensity land use between the equestrian and rural character areas and more traditional suburban. Active, commercial agricultural is not typical in this area	Country Crossroads; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Local serving roads, potentially with public water, but not sewer	AG (2 acres minimum lot size)
Rural Places	Outlying rural areas with active farming and scattered single-family housing on large lots. Preservation of sensitive natural resources.	Country Crossroads; Neighborhood Village Centers	Typically lacks public water and sewer is not planned. Very low level of services planned due to low density nature of the area.	AG (2 acres minimum lot size)
Suburban Growth Areas	Areas located outside identified centers that are experiencing a high volume of residential growth, primarily single-family houses.	Corner Market; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; local public facilities	R-80, R-60, R-40, R-30, R-20
Suburban Living	Older established neighborhoods with potential infill and redevelopment opportunities.	Corner Market; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; local public facilities	R-40, R-30, R-20, R-15, RD-3, RZL
Traditional Neighborhood	Areas located outside identified centers that are experiencing a high volume of residential growth, primarily single-family houses. This residential character area requires “traditional” elements, encourages a strong mix of residential and small commercial uses, and connectivity.	Corner Market; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Urban Facilities	Woodstock
Neighborhood Living	Urbanized and growth oriented areas, outside identified activity centers with higher densities. Conventional subdivisions & community type commercial nodes. Various types of residential dwellings, mixed-use developments and transitional corridors.	Corner Market; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Public water & Sewer; regional public facilities.	RD-3, RZL, RA, RTH, TND
Urban Living	Higher density mix of uses.	Corner Market; Neighborhood Village Centers; Community Village Centers	Full urban services	RD-3, RZL, RA, RTH, TND
Urban Core	Traditional downtowns with a mix of uses		Full urban services	Ball Ground, Waleska & Woodstock

Bells Ferry LCI	Area targeted for new development and redevelopment integrating residential, commercial and greenspace per the LCI Plan.	NA	Full urban services	TND
Workplace Center	Major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, and commercial and office. High intensity residential is an accessory use to create a live work and play environment.	NA	Full urban services	OI, NC, GC, LI,, TND
Regional Activity Center	Regionally oriented large scale commercial, office, retail, entertainment and recreational, usually with a residential component development	NA	Full urban services	RM-10, RM-16, OI, NC, GC, HC
Waste Management	Operating sanitary landfill facilities within Cherokee County.	NA		LI, HI
Development Nodes and Corridors				
Scenic Corridor	Scenic corridors have low intensity development parallel to a viewshed.	NA	Very low level of community facilities	AG
Country Crossroads	This commercial activity node is an envisioned as a restricted commercial node located at existing commercial "crossroads" locations within the rural areas. 5,000 sf Maximum.	NA	Limited Levels of Service, Based on existing commercial development	AG, OI, NC
Transitional Corridor	This corridor is designed to allow for transition from residential uses to compatible non-residential uses along major arterials or along roadways where major transportation improvements are planned. This corridor is restrictive in order to allow a smooth transition to surrounding residential. Size, parking and appearance standards apply to this district.	NA	Linear transitional areas along major transportation corridors.	AG, OI, NC
Neighborhood Village Center	Small-scaled commercial designated to serve a single neighborhood with access and size restrictions. May be part of a residential development. 50,000sf Maximum.	NA	Public water & sewer may be available. Good transportation access.	OI, NC, GC
Community Village Center	Medium scaled commercial designated to serve several neighborhoods 125,000sf Maximum.	NA	Public water & sewer may be available. Good transportation access.	OI, NC, GC
Development Corridor	Areas that extend along a major thoroughfare that have or are experiencing major development of retail, office or industrial land use and associated housing. These areas function as town centers.	NA	Full urban services	OI, NC, GC, TND
Highway Business Corridor	Auto-oriented uses along major thoroughfares	NA	Full urban services. Located on arterials.	GC, HC

Overall Design Considerations

■ Civic Spaces

All development should provide appropriate civic spaces. Parks, plazas, squares, recreational areas or greens are all types of civic spaces. Formal outdoor spaces will be provided and should serve as a focal point for public interactions, and not just unbuildable or left over space after buildings have been sited. Larger developments should include more spaces than smaller developments and should break them up into several smaller spaces. Existing trees and vegetation should be preserved wherever possible so that new developments will not look bare from the beginning. Development layouts should work closely with the existing site to preserve natural elements and to focus the project towards civic spaces to create a sense of place and time.

Open Space and Conservation Areas

Open space is essential for protection of wildlife, habitat and water quality, as well as preserving the value and character of historic rural landscapes. Examples of open space and conservation within rural areas include critical natural resource areas, pastures, meadows, farmsteads, forests, tree strands, and rock outcroppings. Open space should include accomplish the following:

- Provide for active and passive recreational opportunities;
- Provide for direct health and safety benefits, such as flood control, protection for water supply and groundwater recharge areas, and cleansing of air;
- Provide for the protection for important critical areas and natural systems and wildlife habitats;
- The utilization of natural features and open space to define the character of an area;

Greenway Trails

A paved or natural trail (mulch, gravel, etc.) with a minimum width of twelve feet and greenspace on either side for use by pedestrians, horses and non-motorized vehicles. These trails provide a variety of recreation opportunities and should be connected to provide a network that is easily accessible. Boardwalks, bridges and pervious concrete are permitted within floodplain and stream buffers.

Park

A large open area available for recreation and gathering. Its landscape comprises paved paths and trails, open lawn, trees, and open shelters, all naturalistically disposed and requiring limited maintenance. At least fifty percent of a parks perimeter shall be accessible by streets, paths or other pedestrian ways. A park should have no more than twenty percent of its area covered with impervious surfaces. Tree plantings within parks shall be predominately large deciduous trees.

Green

A medium sized civic open space available for unstructured recreation, its landscape predominantly consisting of grassy areas and trees, naturalistically disposed, and requiring only limited maintenance. Tree plantings within greens shall be predominately large, deciduous shade trees. A focal point should be provided within the Green.

Square

These small areas provide urban oases for passive activities. Shade trees, lush landscaping and pedestrian amenities are features within a square, as well as a focal point, such as a fountain, waterfalls, or public art.

Plaza

A public space at the intersection of important streets set aside for civic purposes and prompt-to commercial and entrainment activities. Tree plantings and landscaping are arranged in islands or containers. Shade, evergreen and ornamental trees are encouraged. Plazas are constructed primarily of a permanent paving material such as concrete, stone, brick or unit pavers.

■ **Roadway Characteristics**

Roadways should be considered much more than just a quick way to get from point A to point B. Roads have taken on a much greater role than just transportation corridors, but rather they can greatly affect the overall image of a community, the economic vitality, the recreational potential, the safety and security and our personal outlook on our community. If roadways through a community look bad and function poorly, it affects everything around it. At the same time, if our roadways are attractive and function well, our communities tend to be uplifted in value and spirit.

Roadways are endowed with two attributes: capacity and character. Capacity is the number of vehicles that can move safely through a segment of the roadway within a given time period. It is physically manifested by the number of lanes, the lane width, by the centerline radius, and the superelevation of the pavement. Character is the suitability of a thoroughfare as a setting for pedestrian activities and as a location for a variety of building types. The character of a roadway is shaped by the combination of the surrounding context, traffic speed and design elements beyond the capacity dimensions such as the type of drainage, the presence of sidewalks / paths or traffic calming devices,

Developing successful context-sensitive roadway designs leads to roadways that are designed with sensitivity to social and environmental concerns and a clear definition of a transportation problem. Context-sensitive design solutions include both the technical analysis of mobility issues and the implementation of a community's vision. As project decisions and design choices focus more on the surrounding context and how the roadway "fits" within a community, the community can better explore new shared-use opportunities for recreation and public transportation, as well as the basic safety factor of kids safely walking to school or people safely crossing busy streets.

In general, the following apply to each roadway designation:

- Pedestrian access and safety should be provided along all appropriate routes, particularly those in more densely populated areas. This includes the need for safe crossings at suitable locations.
- Roadways should include bicycle access and safety, including both on-road and off road opportunities. A large portion of Cherokee County has a rural/equestrian character. Trails appropriate to horses should be included into overall community designs where appropriate.
- The location of street trees may be altered to reflect specific site and building placement.
- Plantings in the rights-of-way are subject to jurisdictional approval.
- In the case of all roads, right-of-way provisions are intended as dimensional requirements to accommodate sidewalk, planter and other roadway design elements.

Rural Roadways

Some of the design techniques that may be used to maximize the fit between rural roads and rural landscapes are:

- Aligning roads to compliment the natural topography and avoid critical environmental areas;
- Avoiding bisection of open fields and agricultural lands;
- Placing guardrails so they do not block views and vistas;
- Using landscape features and locally available materials to blend roadways and bridges into the natural setting;
- Finding or creating ways to enhance vegetative buffers adjacent to wetlands or natural habitat areas;
- Using alternative strategies for slope retention and more natural appearing treatments;
- Grading easements or additional rights-of-way to allow blending of roadway side slopes with the adjacent landscape; and
- Designing bridges to consider the effects of visual intrusion on the state's waterways; visual and public access to waterways; and appropriate pedestrian and bicycle crossings.

Neighborhood Streets

This includes local, slow movement thoroughfares that are suitable for neighborhoods. Streets provide frontage for commercial villages and low to medium density residential development. Character may vary somewhat, however, responding to the actual character area it is located in. A neighborhood street is suburban in character with the following design elements:

- Parallel parking on at least one side of the street;
- Continuous landscaped planting along both sides of the street;
- Sidewalks along one or both sides;
- Pedestrian scaled lighting.

Mixed-Use / Urban Streets

These streets connect character areas and neighborhoods and serve both purposes of intensive pedestrian activity and vehicle movement. These urban streets provide frontage for higher-density, mixed-use buildings such as residential, shops and offices. Where possible a landscaped median or parking bump outs should be incorporated into the overall design. All road improvements shall include provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians. A mixed-use / urban street has the following design elements:

- On street parking;
- Continuous Landscaping utilizing landscaped strip, parking bump outs or median.
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street. Width may vary depending on what adjacent land uses.

■ Residential Development

The Comprehensive Plan anticipates that overall, Cherokee County and its Cities will continue to be primarily a single-family low-density residential community, and that its neighborhoods be enhanced as important community assets. The cities of Waleska, Ball Ground and Woodstock will continue to develop with more urban land uses and densities. To address diversity and special housing needs within the county, areas have been designated to accommodate and incorporate medium density and mixed housing types where appropriate. New residential development should reflect the overall quality and character of the Cherokee County community vision, and compatibility as an integral part of the surrounding neighborhoods and character areas. All new residential areas should be developed as communities, meaning they should be sustainable and interconnected internally and externally, with adjacent uses and the community at large.

Considerations in evaluating new residential development should include:

- Compatibility with adjacent and nearby uses;
- The availability of public services and facilities;
- The character of the natural landscape;
- The continuity of local roads, walkways, pathways and opens spaces;
- Protection from traffic and other undesirable impacts; and
- Connectivity within communities and to the greater community.

Design Guidelines

The following additional enhancements that would further the development of communities should be added whenever possible:

- A variety of housing types and civic gathering places should be included in large developments, such as shops, church's, schools, community squares and parks.
- A community should strive to create an interesting streetscape with modest distances between opposing house fronts, the creation of courts with mini-parks and a short length of streets.
- The creation of sustainable communities and neighborhoods that promote a high quality of human interaction;
- All developments should be planned with inter-connetiveness both internally and externally, including such elements as footpaths, bikeways and open spaces linking blocks otherwise separated by natural features.

The designation of land for residential uses recognizes the need to provide land for support services to the individuals living in the area. Uses such as schools, parks and churches are compatible with the residential designations. However, in introducing such additional related uses into these residential environments, it is intended that they be designed, located and maintained with full and complete regard for the surrounding residential environment. In addition, to ensure that quality is an integral component in residential development, infrastructure should be adequate to support residents' needs.

■ Non-Residential Development

The Comprehensive Plan promotes high quality commercial and business development within Cherokee County and its Cities during the next 20 years in order to enhance the tax base, create new jobs, and provide convenient shopping opportunities for local residents. Commercial and other non-residential uses have been separated into several character areas according to intensity, locational requirements and land use compatibility.

The following will be important during the review of mixed-use and non-residential development:

- The quality of physical development, design and siting;
- An enhanced pedestrian experience by providing a pleasant walking and shopping experience for business patrons.
- The inclusion of the natural environment such as —existing vegetation, topographic features, minimally undisturbed natural areas, and drainage;
- The visual nature of the development—view sheds, view corridors and primary views from on-site and off-site and focal points;
- The patterns, character and scale of existing and planned development in the immediate area;
- Potential connections and other relationships with adjoining development—i.e., pedestrian access points, shared driveways, off street vehicular connections, open space systems and landscape buffers and service corridors;
- Encourage flexible and individual creativity in design rather than uniformity.
- All new development should strive to create sustainable and complete communities through careful mixing of compatible and complimentary uses.

Commercial nodes and corridors often lack a sense of organizational structure, and this confusion reflects poorly on the community. Retail and service establishments should be designed to resemble town squares of varying intensities. “Main Streets” and “Villages” are envisioned as a collection of retail shops, specialty shops and private offices along tree-lined sidewalks that promote and a sense of identify. The “Main Street” concepts incorporating internal circulation patterns for both automobiles and people surrounding public spaces such as small pocket parks, squares, and plazas should be encouraged. Villages should become centers for community interaction where you would “usually run into someone you know, or the friends of someone you know while hanging around there.” Commercial strip development is discouraged in all areas of the county.

Regional commercial centers should be developed as self-sustainable town centers that provide a variety of services to its residents and employees. A residential component should always be included to foster human interaction and a vibrant streetscape. A sense of entry or arrival should be created at primary entryways into the development. Building placement, landscaping, gates, entry monuments, specialty lighting and other design elements can be used to create this design effect. These are large-scaled employment hubs that should be designed to create pleasant work and play environments with an integrated design and circulation plan, and be located in areas that provide sufficient transportation systems to limit negative impacts.

Design Guidelines

The guidelines presented in this section are intended to enhance the value of public and private properties by promoting a quality development that promotes the county vision. Site design of commercial development is one of the most critical aspects of a successful project. Development proposals should be reviewed with respect to their response to physical characteristics of the site and to the contextual influences of the surround-

ing area. Both the physical site characteristics and contextual influences should be considered early and throughout design development:

- All developments should provide safe and pleasant vehicle and pedestrian circulation patterns. In the more urban areas of county and within the cities, sidewalks are required along all rights of way to encourage interconnectivity between land uses.
- All building frontages and sides of buildings oriented to the street or other public areas should incorporate a combination of arcades, pedestrian level display windows, storefronts, and entrances.
- Linear “strip” development must incorporate variation in building height, building mass, roof pitch, and changes in wall planes in order to mitigate the linear effect of a development. Particular attention should be made to building design when the building is adjacent to residential property or within any public view.
- Shared driveways, internal vehicular circulation system linking properties and linkages of interior pedestrian systems to adjoining sites are encouraged.
- Trees can define the character of a roadway corridor and unify the diverse elements that make up the corridor’s visual experience. Trees and natural vegetation should be used extensively throughout the development.
- Buildings placed along sidewalks shall have windows and doors facing the street, and should incorporate other architectural features to break up the building façades.
- While off-street parking is essential for all but the smallest commercial projects, landscaping and screening techniques shall be used to effectively hide such areas and soften the visual effects associated with large parking lots.
- Commercial developments are encouraged to seek opportunities and incorporate features intended to reduce the dependence on the automobile (i.e. enhanced accessibility to transit and pedestrian connectivity) and shared parking.

Non-Residential Nodes within Character Areas

Sustainable communities offer a mix of uses to offer its residents the conveniences of daily living and a chance to interact with other residents. These communities are also inclusive and accommodating to all residents, including those that are not able to drive an automobile, such as children and the elderly. An underlying guiding principle within Cherokee County and the cities of Woodstock, Waleska and Ball ground is to encourage appropriate non-residential development within its residential communities. Below is a description of non-residential nodes that can be incorporated within residential character areas. Each character area describes how these nodes fit into the overall character of a community to less any negative impacts.

■ **Country Crossroads**

Country Crossroads are very small commercial areas that currently exist or will be created at historic crossroads in the county that have developed to serve local needs. These areas are located in the rural area of the county. Due to the rural nature and low-intensity single-family orientation of the surrounding area, Country Crossroads are envisioned to be localized service providers that provide limited local convenience goods and services to the adjacent single-family rural environment. If the location merits expansion, it may be changed to a Neighborhood Village Center by amending the Future Development Map.

Typical Country Crossroads' uses include convenience retailers, local groceries, family-run restaurants, Feed and Seed Stores, Hardware Stores and Gas Stations.

Development Strategies

- Country Crossroads should be compatible with surrounding residential properties and developed to serve a very limited immediate service area and pass-by traffic.
- Country Crossroads are limited to 5,000 square feet and under.
- Country Crossroads should be designed to reflect the rural attributes of the community.
- Country Crossroads have a service radius of ½ to 1 mile.

■ **Corner Market**

This character area is similar to Country Crossroads, but is within residential neighborhoods. A Corner Market is a very small commercial area that serves its immediate neighborhood with everyday needs, such as a corner deli, coffee shop or dry cleaners. A Corner Market can be a stand-alone shop or a series of small-connected shops. Corner Markets are usually part of a master plan for a new neighborhood or larger infill neighborhood. Within existing neighborhoods, infill Corner Markets would have to be determined in a case-by-case basis. These compatible commercial areas are located internal to the neighborhood, and are not expected to draw from outside the neighborhood.

Development Strategies

- There shall be no signage or advertisement for these small commercial areas, except for allowable attached signage.
- There shall be adequate buffering from adjacent residential uses from light and sound.

- Corner Markets are limited to a total of 5,000 square feet, with storefronts primarily less than 1,000 square feet each.
- Pedestrian access shall be easy, comfortable and connected to the neighborhood system.
- Because this is a locally serving use, parking should be limited and not intrusive to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Corner Markets have a service radius of a 5 to 10 minute walk or a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius.

■ **Neighborhood Village Center**

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses, such as a bank, grocery store, drug store, cleaner and gas station, are arranged in a village-like setting that might include a neighborhood park, pedestrian circulation and public spaces. Thus, a Neighborhood Village Center is envisioned as a compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores and services to address the demands of nearby residents. From a community design perspective, sidewalks or pedestrian paths are important circulation features in Neighborhood Village Centers. Given a Neighborhood Village Center's small scale and emphasis on local-serving stores, the scale and size of individual businesses and the village center as a whole are most important. Adaptive re-use of existing structures and buildings is encouraged to serve as a focal point.

Examples of uses within a Neighborhood Village Center include: small scale corner markets, drug stores, bakeries, cafes, tack shops, feed and seed stores and small retail shops; person services such as laundromats, dry cleaners, barber/beauty shops and video rental; professional services such as lawyers, accountants, insurance, physicians and dentist; and small scaled semi-public/institutional community services.

Development Strategies

- Each Neighborhood Village Center should include a mix of retail, services and offices that are primarily oriented to serve neighborhood residents' day-to-day needs. A retail development anchored by a national chain drug store would be an example of an appropriate use. Residential development may be located adjacent to these villages.
- Neighborhood Village Centers are designed to serve 5,000 people and a service radius of up to 1 mile;
- There should be a minimum separation between neighborhood centers of 1/2 to 2 miles.
- Neighborhood Village Centers shall contain no greater than 50,000 square feet in total;
- Buildings should be clustered one and two stories and should respect the predominate scale of development in the surrounding area by designing with elements of similar scale and providing a gradual transition to any larger scaled masses proposed.
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses and the surrounding neighborhood;
- Site design elements such as pedestrian lights, consistent signage, and landscaping contribute to the quaint character of Neighborhood Village Centers and create a sense of place in what may have once been little more than a crossroads.
- All principal buildings shall have a front door opening directly onto a roadway, square or plaza.
- The use of coordinated and identified elements such as awnings, varying shingle styles or other natural materials, archways and façade landscaping are encouraged;

- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the side or rear; and
- To enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc. is essential.

■ **Community Village Center**

Typically located at the convergence of transportation corridors, Commercial Village Centers are envisioned, as places where a compatible mixture of higher intensity uses are located, such as larger scaled shopping centers, professional offices and services. Mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, service and recreational uses integrated and linked together by a comprehensive circulation system are encouraged in these areas. Community Village Centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a market area consisting of many neighborhoods. Whereas someone might live near a neighborhood village center but work outside the area, the commercial village concept may include a variety of housing options, small businesses, offices, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas and open spaces that create a small communities where it is possible to live, work and play. Land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Natural and historic resources within Community Village Centers should be enhanced and preserved as a means of defining a distinct identity or sense of place. Improved connections to natural assets, both pedestrian and vehicular, particularly from existing and developing residential communities will tie the village together. A Community Village Center should create a focal point for its surrounding neighborhoods. Entertainment and cultural arts could be a major focus of investment in the village.

Types of uses typical of a Community Village Center include a large grocery or drug store, small office complexes such as “office condominiums,” financial institutions with drive thru facilities, full service restaurants and medical/dental clinics, a small residential component such as lofts or residences above ground level office or retail; community gathering spaces and institutional uses, such as libraries, churches and community centers.

Development Strategies

- Each Community Village Center should include a mix of retail, office, services and employment to serve a wider market area than a neighborhood village, but not regional in nature. A shopping plaza anchored by a major grocery store would be an example of an appropriate use;
- Residential development should reinforce the community village center by locating housing options adjacent to the center in appropriate character areas. Limited residential development may be included as an integral part of the development.
- Community Village Centers are designed to serve up to 20,000 people and a service radius of up to 10 miles;
- Community Village Centers should be separated from other centers by 1 to 6 miles;
- Community Village Centers shall typically contain no greater than 100,000 square feet in total;
- Design for each Community Village Center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear, if this is not possible, then all parking should be masked by a wall and/or hedge; Outdoor seating is encouraged.

- All principal buildings shall have a front door opening directly onto a roadway, square or plaza.
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.
- Small civic uses and gathering places should be part of the overall design of a Community Village Center.
- The design of a building that occupies a pad or portion of a building within a planned project or shopping center should share similar design characteristics and design vocabulary. Precise replication is not desirable, instead a development should utilize similar colors, materials and textures as well as repeating patterns; rhythms and proportions found within the architecture of other buildings in the center can be utilized to achieve unity;
- It is encouraged that buildings be two level connected spaces and a mix of overall uses and shop size;
- Taller buildings or portions of a building should be located internally to a site with buildings stepping down in height as they reach the edges of the site that are adjoined by smaller scaled development. The residential portion of the development should be totally integrated into the design in materials and circulations matters. In a typical Community Village Center a mixed use projects that feature vertical integration (such as ground floor retail with living units above), with an emphasis on greater street presence are encouraged.

Character Areas

■ Natural Preserve

Undeveloped, natural lands with significant natural features, including views, steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas, conservation areas and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development of any kind are included in this character area. This character area also includes greenways and passive open space.

<i>Primary Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Secondary Land Uses</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active farming, timbering and conservation uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Passive Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenways, trails and path systems

Development Strategies

- Maintain natural, rural character by not allowing any new development and promoting use of conservation easements;
- Widen roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary and carefully design the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact; and
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation designations.

■ Scenic Corridor

Scenic Corridors are developed or undeveloped land paralleling a transportation corridor that has significant natural, historic or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views. All development along scenic corridors should provide for a 200-foot buffer to preserve the view shed and to allow for a future planned road widening.

<i>Primary Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Secondary Land Uses</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation and open space easements or lands ▪ Active farming, timbering and conservation uses ▪ Large homesteads on individual lots ▪ Conservation subdivisions; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Crossroads ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Semi-public and Institutional uses ▪ Outdoor Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sewer is not available or planned; ▪ Rural Roadways ▪ Greenways and Conservation areas ▪ Low level of other public services such as fire, police, libraries

Development Strategies

- Development within the scenic corridor should be organized into villages and clusters in order to keep the scenic viewshed in tact and utilizing extensive landscaping and buffers; Intervening areas along scenic corridors between established or planned nodes should be developed or planned with residential subdivisions having reverse frontage lots that back up to the thoroughfare and vegetative buffers in order to preserve the view shed,

- Setbacks for new residential development should be deep—at least 200 feet along roadways to preserve the rural character of all areas. The 200-foot setback should be vegetative or provide a view shed to a natural rural feature.
- Pedestrian linkages within neighborhoods should connect to any public trail or greenway system.
- Establish maximum setbacks for commercial development and prohibit parking between the buildings and the road. Linear open space and vegetation should be presented along all road frontages;
- Semi-public and institutional uses should be no greater than 50,000 square feet;
- Outdoor recreation should utilize open space and should not be intrusive to the residential and natural nature of the character area. Outdoor recreation that has substantial traffic, lighting or noise impacts is prohibited in this character area.

■ Rural Places

The spread of urban uses into open space found in rural areas has made much of that open space potentially developable for housing and ancillary uses. Even if not all the space is needed for housing, the possibility of selling it for development has increased the perceived market value of the land above its value in traditional and customary rural land uses. When this happens, owners of such land are discouraged from making permanent fixed investments in the land that might increase productivity in traditional rural uses but add no market value for potential future urban uses. The inevitable result of this process is to crowd out many traditional rural land uses, particularly those aimed at producing a standardized commodity that must be cost competitive in global markets. In addition, scattered urban development tends to raise the cost of providing local public services. Rural Places are characterized by a balance between the natural environment and human uses with low density residential, farms, forests, mining areas, outdoor recreation and other open space activities. Commercial uses will be small in scale that will provide convenience services to the rural neighborhood. Industrial uses will generally be those that are related to and dependent on natural resources such as agriculture, timber or minerals. Home-based businesses are allowed throughout the rural area provided they do not adversely affect the surrounding residential uses.

Much of Cherokee County's identity is tied to its rural and small town heritage. Although large-scale farms are not a major use within the county, many homesteads and "estate farms" still exist. Areas within this character area are lands in a cultivated or pasturage state or sparsely settled, including woodlands and areas under forestry management. In addition, areas of sensitive natural resources that require protection but are not Natural Preserves are found in this character area. The intent of the Rural Places Character Area is to provide a residential-agricultural community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape with much of its identity based on its agrarian past while accommodating limited residential growth. Large-scale suburban development is not compatible within this character area due to conflicts such as agricultural noises and odors from intensive animal agriculture, and dust and chemical drift from agricultural operations.

The intent of this character area is:

- Open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- Fosters traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- Provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density developments;
- Reduced need for public infrastructure and services;

- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area; and
- The uses and building scale of new development should maintain the character of the rural environment and surrounding area developments.
- Residential developments should use design elements or features such as meadows, woodlots, existing vegetation, mature landscaping, and historic farm sites in order to main rural characteristics.

<i>Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active farming, timbering and conservation uses ▪ Large homesteads on individual lots ▪ Large lot single family home subdivisions ▪ Conservation subdivisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Crossroads ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Semi-public and Institutional uses ▪ Outdoor Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sewer is not available or planned ▪ Rural Roadways ▪ Greenways, Conservation areas and Parks

Development Strategies

- Achieve a net density of .5 units per acre
- Developments under 5 units must be on 2 acre lots; residential development over 5 units is restricted to conservation subdivisions at a net density of 1 unit per 2 acres;
- Active agricultural uses and residential development live side by side within this character area. To prevent incompatible uses, and as such appropriate transitions between existing and newer developments must be provided;
- Non-residential uses should be developed at a low intensity so that the natural landscape dominates the view of the buildings, and parking.
- Gravel parking lots and pedestrian paths are more appropriate than paved parking lots and sidewalks.
- Provide a lower level of service to these areas, in terms of transportation and sewer improvements, in order to maintain and protect the rural character and low intensity development.
- There should be an emphasis on creating a sense of visual focus while protecting and enhancing the historic qualities of the community
- Signs should be complementary to the historic and rural character and scale of the character area in the use of graphic symbols, lighting and natural materials.
- Residences within a conservation subdivision shall be screened from public view.
- Retailing and wholesaling of agricultural products raised on nearby farms is allowed.
- Convenience Grocery Stores with gasoline sales or any other business with gasoline sales should meet the following location standards: only one such business within a country village center and no more than two such businesses within ¼-mile proximity to any 4-way intersection (measured from edge of right of way).
- Outdoor Recreation that utilizes open space and is not intrusive to the residential nature of surrounding residences.

Implementation Measures

- Develop a county-wide open space and greenway plan;

- Develop a critical environmental areas overlay map;
- Investigate methods and funding to protect farmsteads and forested areas;

■ Equestrian Lifestyle

Horse Country in Cherokee County is a unique place where climate, soils and vegetation combine to produce near perfect conditions for breeding and raising horses. Protecting and enhancing the rural feel of Cherokee County is central to its long-term vision. Equestrian activities provide important links between the suburban and rural communities, and provide support for agricultural production of barley, oat and hay within the community. Loss of open land has been identified as the greatest threat to the future of the equestrian lifestyle. Semi-rural equestrian related activities are the principal character of this area. Use of very low density residential and rural residential expressly supports equestrian focus and rural character.

The intent of this character area is to:

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area;
- Encourage horse farms and appropriate accessory uses such as barns, corrals, grazing areas stables and similar structures and equestrian related commercial usage, such as equestrian centers, boarding stables, riding academies and tack shops;
- Livestock within this area should be primarily equestrian related, other types of livestock, such as cattle, are allowed;
- Encourage conservation easements and trail easements throughout the area;
- Discourage production-oriented agricultural activities such as major cash-crop cultivation and animal production (including cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry broilers or eggs);
- Roadways within this character area should not be widened and should be treated as “hedgrows lanes” in order to protect the natural environment;

<i>Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horse farms ▪ Active farming, timbering and conservation uses ▪ Large homesteads on individual lots ▪ Conservation subdivisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Crossroads ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Community Village Centers ▪ Equestrian related stand alone commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sewer is not available or planned; ▪ Rural Roadways ▪ Horse trail system ▪ Conservation and open space easements or lands ▪ Greenways and Conservation areas; ▪ Low level of other public services such as fire, police, libraries

Development Strategies

- Develop public/private partnerships to preserve and enhance County-wide trail system to be enjoyed by the public;
- Encourage equestrian access to open space areas wherever possible;
- All residential development should be setback 200 feet from a roadway to provide a continuous open space view shed;

- Restrict new development to large-lot “estate” development of 2 acres of more or conservation subdivisions with a net density of 1 unit per 2 acres; and
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area.
- Residences within a conservation subdivision shall be screened from public view.
- Equestrian related commercial uses, such as equestrian centers, boarding stables, riding academies should be in scale with the surrounding character of the area;

Implementation

- Develop a character area wide horse trail master plan;
- Investigate legal methods and funding options to create a public horse trail system;
- Create design guidelines to assure compatibility with rural character and minimize visual impact, for example, buffering from rural roads to ensure visual compatibility.
- Establish traffic control along trail system; provide equestrian crossing signals or other design treatments.

■ Country Estates

Areas within this character area are lands that are undeveloped but rarely in agricultural production, or have been developed as “estate farms” or large-lot subdivisions. The intent of the Country Estates Character Area is to provide a low-intensity residential community, and to meet the market demand for “executive housing.” Meeting the demand for executive housing is critical to the County’s economic development market. This character area provides a transition between the equestrian and more rural areas of the county and traditional residential development, and provides an “edge” between the urban and rural fringe.

The intent of this character area is to:

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area;
- Encourage upscale executive housing to meet the market demand;
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of estates and “gentlemen’s farms” that blend into the overall fabric of the area.

<i>Residential Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large lot subdivisions; ▪ Conservation subdivisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Crossroads ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sewer is not available or planned; ▪ Rural Roadways ▪ Greenways, Conservation areas and Parks

Development Strategies

- Production-oriented agricultural activities such as major cash-crop cultivation and animal production (including cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry broilers or eggs) is prohibited in this character area due to the overall residential character;
- Restrict new development to large-lot “estate” development of 2 acres or greater or conservation subdivisions that contain an overall density of .5 units per acre;

- Create design guidelines to assure compatibility with rural character and minimize visual impact, for example, open space utilizing rural elements such as pastures, forest stands that ensure that scenic and rural vistas are preserved.

■ Suburban Growth Area

As Cherokee County continues to experience growth in both residential and commercial development, more and more areas will experience growth pressure for standard types of new suburban residential subdivision development. This character area covers areas with limited existing development but where this pressure is the greatest due to adjacency and current or proposed community infrastructure (such as sewer and water, transportation). Without intervention, these areas are likely to evolve with low pedestrian orientation, little or no alternative transportation options, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential development with scattered civic buildings and varied non-connecting street patterns. The intent of this character area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment, and to areas that have a more “suburban” pattern, while at the same time encourage the incorporation of innovative design concepts to encourage more sustainable communities. In order to create more sustainable neighborhoods, commercial opportunities are necessary to serve residential growth and potentially to decrease the reliance on the automobile for all types of trips. This character area will generally consist of detached single-family homes. Houses would be situated on smaller lots with shorter setbacks to the front and side yards. Building frontages would allow for porches, fences and smaller lawns. Streetscaping consists of the regular, aligned planting of single tree species, with parallel parking, bordered by curbs equipped with underground storm drains and bordered by sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Key principles of this character area include:

- This character area is primarily residential in nature with most buildings detached;
- Promote walkability within each community;
- Promote diversity of uses such as housing types, commercial and civic uses;
- Promote residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space;
- Assure compatibility of infill development with surrounding neighborhoods;
- Encourage retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development principles where appropriate;
- New residential development on smaller lots shall be located where existing critical infrastructure (i.e. roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) is available.

<i>Residential Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single Family detached housing ▪ Conservation Subdivisions ▪ Master planned communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corner Market ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Community Village Center ▪ Residentially related institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water and sewer is available or planned for the near future ▪ Neighborhood Streets ▪ Civic spaces are greenways, parks, greens ▪ Pedestrian orientation is provided throughout the development.

Development Strategies

- Streets should be designed not only to promote mobility for the automobile, but for pedestrians and bicyclists. Small blocks, overall connectivity between streets and pedestrian amenities, street calming design that incorporates medians, parkways and landscaping and narrow lanes should be incorporated in a hierarchical pattern.
- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, libraries, health centers or well-designed commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences;
- Provide connections to adjacent land uses and future developments.
- Provide for areas of innovative development, such as golf, conservation subdivisions, master-planned and traditional communities in appropriate locations.
- To increase the appearance of history and time, it is encouraged that residential architecture is varied.
- It is highly encouraged that garage doors do not front directly onto the public street. If this is not possible, garage door openings facing a frontage should not exceed 40 percent of the width of the house facade, and should use single-car garage door openings.
- Front or side porches of fifty square feet or more are encouraged on all dwelling units.
- Corner markets and Neighborhood Village Centers are encouraged throughout developments to allow all residents to reach these locations within a 5 to 10 minute walk or a distance of ½ mile;

■ Suburban Living

This character area includes older established suburban neighborhoods and areas adjacent to established neighborhoods. This character area consists principally of single-family, detached houses with permitted accessory buildings. Houses tend to be on larger lots with setbacks on all sides. This area is characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, large lots, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominately residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. Public services and facilities are offered at a higher level of service to accommodate a denser population. Water and sewer are either existing or planned within this character area. Vacant tracts are often scattered throughout the area between existing neighborhoods. The intent of this character area is to provide for infill and transitional uses that are compatible with existing residential development in size, scale and lot density. Infill requests should be reviewed in terms of compatibility and impact to the surrounding area, although traditional neighborhood developments are highly encouraged. Small commercial adjacent to neighborhoods is also encouraged to reduce mile lengths and trips.

The intent of this character area is:

- Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock;
- Promote infill residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space;
- Assure compatibility of infill development with surrounding neighborhoods;
- Encourage retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development principles, such as connectivity and public gathering places;
- Appropriate reuse, redevelopment or refurbishment is encouraged for areas where activity and attractiveness have declined.

- Provide for areas of innovative development, such as golf, master planned and traditional communities in appropriate locations; and
- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences;
- Higher intensity development shall be located where existing critical infrastructure (i.e. roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) is available.

<i>Residential Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single family residential ▪ TNDs with integrated commercial ▪ Infill Conservation Subdivisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corner Market ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Community Village Centers ▪ Residential related semi-public and Institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water and sewer are available ▪ Neighborhood or Mixed-Use / Urban Streets ▪ Greenways and Conservation areas ▪ Parks and Greens

Development Strategies

- Utilize traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walkability within and between existing neighborhoods;
- All new infill neighborhoods over 10 units shall contain a civic space such as a park or a village green;
- Infill development should compliment existing uses, and provide missing elements that make a particular area a “sustainable community.” For example, in a village that is entirely residential, Corner Market type commercial would be missing.
- Neighborhood Village Centers are restricted to areas with adequate transportation access, and are encourage primarily within suitable infill development sites;
- To the extent practical, development should help provide missing design elements and facilities such as internal sidewalks, plazas and focal points, pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjoining neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood Village Centers and semi-public and institutional uses shall have adequate public infrastructure at the time of final plat;
- Corner Markets and Neighborhood Village Centers are encouraged within residential communities in order to reduce automobile trips and provide daily necessities;
- Public and semi-public uses should be incorporated into new neighborhoods or adjacent to existing neighborhoods. The size, scale and impact should be considered in order to provide compatibility;
- Outdoor recreation shall not adversely affect residential development in terms of light and noise.

Implementation

- Look at the possibility of applying higher allowable density within developments that opt to follow village and hamlet design standards.

■ Traditional Neighborhoods (Woodstock Only)

Older established suburban neighborhoods and areas adjacent to established neighborhoods are characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, large lots, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominately residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. Public services and facilities are offered at a higher cost per capita cost. This type of development consumes a disproportionate amount of land, is not environmentally sensitive and encourages sprawl. Water and sewer are either existing or planned within this character area. Vacant tracts are often scattered throughout the area between existing neighborhoods. This type of development is no longer desired due to rapidly growing traffic congestion, negative impacts to natural resources and a growing distaste for cookie cutter type suburban developments that do not offer choices, lack connectivity and do not support alternative modes of transportation.

As Woodstock continues to experience growth in both residential and commercial development, more and more areas will experience growth pressure for typical types of new suburban residential subdivision development. There is a growing desire for a quality urban lifestyle that includes a more walkable lifestyle that beckons back to older traditional communities and neighborhoods. There is increasing interest in the lifestyle of a real neighborhood that incorporated multiple transportation choices and public areas that encouraged spontaneous interactions with neighbors.

This character area covers areas both areas with limited existing development but where this pressure is the greatest due to adjacency and current or proposed community infrastructure (such as sewer and water, transportation), and existing residential neighborhoods. The intent of this character area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment, while at the same time encouraging the incorporation of innovative design concepts to promote sustainable communities. Principles of a real neighborhood incorporate the following features:

- A stand alone traditional neighborhood theoretically encompasses 100 acres to accommodate a five-minute walk from the edge of the neighborhood to the center.
- A variety of type and size residential units.
- A continuous street network has a hierarchy, from high-capacity boulevards to narrow rear lanes or alleys. Neighborhood streets should have relatively narrow roadways, small curb radii, and sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motor vehicles.
- All streets are fronted by a private or public use; “collector” roads should be avoided. Parking lots and garage doors should not face the street. Lots narrower than 50 feet should have parking accessed from the rear by a lane, alley or automobile court.
- The Neighborhood Center is organized around a civic place, such as a plaza or green, and could include higher-density residential as well as, potentially, a mix of accessory and neighborhood related non-residential uses. On street parking is provided in and near the Neighborhood Center, and throughout the neighborhood.
- If the site is large enough to accommodate more than one neighborhood, a Neighborhood Village Center with a mix of civic, commercial, retail and residential uses-could be located on, or with direct access to, an arterial with sufficient traffic volume to support retail uses.

In order to create more sustainable neighborhoods, limited commercial opportunities are necessary to serve residential growth and to decrease the reliance on the automobile. Commercial nodes within this character area are primarily accessory oriented non-residential primarily to serve the immediate neighbors. Neighborhood Village Centers, although they require a map amendment may be appropriate depending on the size of the development and the surrounding infrastructure. The commercial areas should be compatible with existing land uses through size and appearance. Special care should be taken to eliminate any negative impacts,

such as lighting, parking and traffic. Water and Sewer are either existing or planned within this character area.

<i>Residential Land Uses</i>	<i>Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small lot single family housing, townhouses Single Family detached housing, patio homes ▪ Conservation Subdivisions ▪ Retirement Communities ▪ Senior Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corner Market ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Community Village Center ▪ Residentially related institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public water and sewer is available ▪ Neighborhood or Mixed-Use / Urban Streets ▪ Civic spaces are greenways, parks, greens ▪ Pedestrian orientation is provided throughout the development.

Development strategies:

- Promote infill residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space;
- Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development principles focusing on interconnectivity through multiple modes of transportation;
- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences;
- Design road specifications for new development while adding traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walkability within and between existing neighborhoods; and
- Provide for areas of innovative development, master planned and traditional communities in appropriate locations.
- Parking for residential uses is preferred to be located to the rear of the structure, access off an alley. If parking is accessed from the front street, the parking garage must be located at least 20 feet back from the right-of-way.
- If parking garages for single-family detached dwellings are accessed off an alley, the garage may have an accessory apartment (granny flat) or an office above it. The flats or office floor area will not be counted toward the maximum density restriction on the property.
- Residential buildings must be no more 500 feet in walking distance from a public square or park, measured from the front door. The Public Square or park must be at least 1/4 acre in size. The Public Square or park must be located to the front of the buildings that surround it.
- Single-family residences must have covered porches at least 8 feet deep, along at least a portion of the front of the building or along the side coning to the front.
- Every principal building must front on a street. Maximum setback from the street right-of-way line is 20 feet. Balconies covered front porches and overhangs may encroach up to 10 feet into the setback.
- Front yard fencing, if provided, must be wood picket, wood-looking vinyl, wrought iron, stone or timber in a traditional design at least 2 feet high but not more than 4 feet high. Fence materials and designs must be consistent within each development, but may differ from other developments.

■ Neighborhood Living

Neighborhood Living Character Areas are predominately residential in character, but may include low intensity neighborhood-scaled shopping facilities in stand-alone buildings (such as a corner market), commercial space in a live/work dwelling where the proprietor resides or small retail professional uses built as part of a residential development. These neighborhoods have relatively well-maintained housing on smaller lots, smaller front setbacks for both attached and detached houses, a distinct community identity through architectural style; lot and street design and have higher rates of homeownership. Residential buildings have defined semi-public, landscaped edges with the ground floor raised above the grade of the sidewalk. Appropriate residential types can include single-family dwellings, condominiums, apartments, townhouse and vertical duplexes. A mixing of housing types is appropriate. The intent of this character area is to create new moderate density to provide a choice of various housing types to accommodate a cross section of incomes, life styles, and life cycles. Neighborhood Village Centers are common in these neighborhoods to provide for close and convenient services. Parking should be secondary to the façade of a building and to pedestrian access. Infill or redevelopment of parcels within this character area will provide greater lifestyle housing choices, but should be respectful to existing neighborhoods.

Primary principles of this character area include:

- Encourage locating residential development where full urban services, public facilities, and potential routes of public transportation are available;
- The provision of community services and commercial uses to create a “complete community;”
- Accommodate a variety of housing types to suit a variety of lifestyles, price points and lifecycles;
- Permit in certain sections of the county or cities, multi-family housing developments that blend into the overall fabric of the area;
- Internal and external connections and walkability are key to this character area in order to reduce automobile trips and to encourage a close-knit community.

<i>Residential Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residential: smaller lot single-family dwellings; townhouses, patio homes, duplexes, apartments ▪ Live Work Units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corner Market ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Community Village Centers ▪ Public and Institutional Uses ▪ Mixed Use Buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Urban facilities and Services ▪ Neighborhood or Mixed-Use / Urban Streets ▪ Internal Pedestrian Ways ▪ Parks, plazas, squares and greens

Development Strategies

- Mixed Use is strongly encouraged.
- Buildings may contain both a horizontal and low-rise vertical mix of uses. Development may consist of a single uses placed side-by-side or different uses on different floors of the same structure.
- Develop residential areas that utilize innovative urban design principles to encourage community, pedestrian linkages and mixed-use environments.
- Multi-family development should be limited to fewer than 100 units and preferably be part of a mixed-use project.
- Mixed Use Villages must contain a civic space and conform to the square footage requirements of a Neighborhood or Community Village.

- Institutional uses such as elementary schools, churches, libraries and community centers are encouraged;
- Foundation planting shall be provided along all multifamily building frontages. Planting shall be of sufficient quantity and spacing to provide complete coverage of the entire length of the building.
- Parking should be located to the sides or rear of multi-use buildings, non-residential buildings or multifamily buildings. All parking must be screened from the public pedestrian view.
- On street parking should be part of an overall street design such as bump outs, pavers and other aesthetic streetscape treatments.
- Street trees are required.
- Development should include prominent public features such as art, fountains, and gazebos. These features should also serve as navigation points
- Neighborhood size that allows residents to walk from edge to center, or to a neighborhood village center, in 5 to 10 minutes.
- Encourage the conversion of sites to more intensive residential use when appropriate;
- Landscaping and a green edge are necessary, such as street trees planted in wide parkways (the areas between the curb and sidewalk), in addition to an appropriate sidewalk width.
- All developments should connect to adjacent public rights-of-ways and other neighborhoods. Substantial internal connections should exist within a development and to adjacent land uses. A grid system of interconnected streets is encouraged. Cul-de-sacs or other unconnected roadways are highly discouraged.

■ Urban Living

Urban Living Character Areas consist of a higher density mix of uses, mixed-use building types that accommodate local-serving retail and professional offices, small lot single-family neighborhoods, townhouses, condominiums and apartment buildings. The Urban Living Character Areas present an “in-town city neighborhood” environment, and commonly surround Urban Cores and downtowns, providing a transition between the core and lower intensity residential character areas, primarily within the urban growth boundaries. These mixed-use districts provide housing and retail options that offer business –owners and residents – including seniors, youth and the working poor – the opportunity to meet some of their daily needs by walking or bicycling. This mixed-use area is characterized by multi-story construction that uses the ground floor retail, service or office space, while upper floors are usually residential. These urban neighborhoods are walkable communities with easy access to restaurants, retail shopping and personal service establishments, professional offices, and recreational facilities, and typically supply the necessary population and client base for urban core areas. Mixed-use development with retail or offices is located in the center of pedestrian sheds (including sidewalks, commercial districts, plazas), with architectural emphasis on the corners. Well-maintained sidewalks, adjacent parallel parking, well-maintained commercial facades, public art, street trees and landscaping are highly valued characteristics of the commercial pedestrian realm, which should be promoted and incorporated into the neighborhood. It is also critical that parks and plazas have pedestrian amenities, including pedestrian furniture, water features where appropriate, pedestrian scaled lighting and semi public edge incorporated into the design. Parking must be accessed by rear alley, through buildings or to the side and be screened from the pedestrian view.

The intent of the Urban Living Character Area is:

- To accommodate a variety of housing types to suit the variety of lifestyles and lifecycle of Cherokee County and its cities;
- To allow for conversion of sites to more intensive residential use when appropriate;
- Transition areas are very important between different intensity land uses, such as higher density residential and traditional subdivisions;
- Internal and external connections and walkability are key to character area in order to reduce automobile trips and to encourage a close knit community; and
- The provision of community services and commercial uses create a “complete community” and allow a variety of life styles and life cycles within the community.

<i>Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Compatible Non-Residential Land Use</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher Density Housing Products ▪ Live Work Units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corner Markets ▪ Neighborhood Village Centers ▪ Community Village Centers ▪ Institutional Uses ▪ Mixed Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full urban facilities and Services ▪ Mixed-Use / Urban Streets ▪ Internal Pedestrian Pathways ▪ Parks, squares, plazas and greens

Development Strategies

- Retail, professional services, and other small-scaled commercial should be located at street level.
- Street trees are required along all residential streets.
- Commercial buildings within mixed-use centers shall utilize compact design wherever possible. Buildings with large footprints should include façade treatments that give the appearance of small shop fronts.
- Require a street edge treatment, which may include fencing, low walls or low hedging to define the semi-public edge in residential areas.
- Pedestrian scaled lighting should be incorporated into all residential and non-residential areas.
- Incorporate plazas and small parks into future redevelopment plans as predominate features in neighborhood centers.
- Civic spaces such as parks, greens, plazas and squares shall be located a maximum distance of 1,000 feet from each residential unit.
- If parking structures are adjacent to the street, the first floor frontages of parking structures should be dedicated to commercial use, excluding parking and upper stories at frontage are articulated to disguise the appearance of the garage.
- Parking lots should be located mid-block or behind buildings and accessed from an alley or internal driveway. Parking areas should be connected where possible, and driveway curb cuts should be reduced and combined where possible.
- Building facades shall face a civic space or a roadway, with the exception of an alley.
- Vistas of 600 feet or longer may not be terminated by parking lots.
- All public streets should connect to each other, including connection to public stub streets to facilitate connections to adjacent future development.

- Substantial internal connections should exist with a development. Street designs should not contain any cul-de-sacs or other unconnected roadways, unless a determination is made by the appropriate jurisdiction that provision of connect streets is infeasible or inappropriate.
- Bicycle parking facilities must be provided for in developments over 50,000 square feet or 50 dwelling units.
- On street parking should be designed as an integral part of the streetscape.

Implementation

- Institute design standards that require rear lanes in new development and retrofit existing development with rear lanes where possible for service orientation.
- Develop a consolidated parking plan for Downtown Woodstock.

■ **Bells Ferry LCI**

The Bells Ferry area is a gateway into Cherokee County from Cobb County. It connects the southwestern portions of the county with Towne Lake and Woodstock, areas of significant private investment and attractive physical development. The Bells Ferry LCI plan identified a series of issues to be addressed in the Corridor; the need for redevelopment of some of the existing commercial space, the lack of alternative routes causing traffic congestion at the primary intersection and the potential development on currently vacant parcels in the study area. The vision of the Bells Ferry community is to redevelop greyfield commercial properties and under-utilized areas into a “community of choice” that can offer diverse choices and activities for the whole community.

- To provide diverse choices in shopping, housing, entertainment and recreation that not only serves this community but as a destination choice for the region;
- To increase job opportunities for residents and improve the jobs to housing balance;
- To provide the residents with transportation alternatives and modes for traveling within the area; and
- To support the diversity of people of all incomes, ages, social and cultural backgrounds.

The integration of land uses and emphasis on patterns of more compact development can facilitate the feasibility of transit in the future for this area. The following are the primary development areas within the corridor:

Mixed Use Nodes

The intersection of Bells Ferry/SR 92 (primary node), the warehouse/industrial node along Bells Ferry at Bascomb Carmel/Bells Ferry, and the Kellogg Creek/Bells Ferry intersection node are designated as “mixed use” and encourage the following uses:

- Park/Open Space;
- Commercial/Retail;
- Civic;
- Office;
- Single-family Residential;
- Townhomes; and
- Multi-family Residential.

Residential Neighborhoods – High Density: Bells Ferry Parkway Enclave

Between the Mixed Use Nodes, the LCI Plan calls for existing and new residential neighborhoods to be knit together with a grid of streets to provide more options for local trips. The new residential development would include a wide variety of housing types (i.e. single family, townhouses and multi-family) with the higher intensity located along Bells Ferry.

Parks and Open Space

A high concentration of park space is located within the heart of the Bells Ferry Parkway Enclave. The park space here will accommodate both active and passive recreation opportunities along with the proposed Cherokee County Aquatic Center and will serve as a unique asset within the character area. Also included within this zone are existing ponds, which are to be leveraged as public amenities and gathering spaces.

<i>Primary Land Uses</i>	<i>Compatible Secondary Land Uses</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher Density Housing Products ▪ Urban Residential - smaller lots and units with common civic spaces ▪ Live Work Units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corner Markets ▪ Institutional Uses ▪ Mixed Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full urban facilities and Services ▪ Neighborhood or Mixed-Use / Urban Streets ▪ Internal Pedestrian Pathways ▪ Parks, squares, plazas and greens

Development Strategies

- Create a strong urban structure that reflects sound urban design principles of creating the public realm; hierarchy of streets, open spaces, creating vistas and public and civic spaces, pedestrian friendly environment and high quality architecture. Include a diverse mix of housing types, such as condominiums, apartments, live/work units, town homes, cluster housing and single family.
- Provide transportation alternatives for residents; good street grids, transit, bike and pedestrian pathways that not only serve as alternative ways but also encourage walking and biking. Internal and external connections and walkability are key to character area in order to reduce automobile trips and to encourage a close-knit community; All projects must connect to multi-use trail and paths.
- Preserve natural areas, features and make connections to Lake Allatoona and Noonday Creek.
- Provide enhanced arterial access and inter-parcel connectivity that enhances vehicular circulation. Create a hierarchy of streets and appropriate traffic calming that promotes appropriate vehicle speeds and safety.
- Encourage appropriate densities that can support the retail, entertainment and commercial activity that creates a successful community.
- Open spaces, pocket parks and civic/public spaces that enhance quality of life should be provided within all land uses and developments. Open space and parks should be usable, designed and maintained spaces not left over open spaces or buffers, creeks or flood plains.

Implementation

- Create a greenway system that links different areas of the community;
- Create a focal point for the community that creates a “sense of place;”

- Prepare and launch a Public/Private Partnership initiated by the County aimed at facilitating LCI compatible private development projects within the Bells Ferry Corridor utilizing redevelopment powers, bond financing and other economic development incentives available to the County. Explore establishing a Tax Allocation District (TAD) as a funding source for infrastructure improvements.
- Initiate funding efforts to attract Federal and State transportation funds, as well as Atlanta Regional Commission LCI Implementation Grant funds.
- Adopt regulatory enhancements and develop public facilities and greenspace to facilitate the *Bells Ferry LCI Plan*, including

■ Transitional Corridor

Areas suitable for designation as Transitional Corridors are those major roadways originally developed for single-family homes that have or will become impacted by adjacent multilane thoroughfare improvements and commercial encroachment, and that may no longer be suitable primarily for residential use. In the past, individual properties have been rezoned and converted in a way that has often been disruptive from a community design sense: parking lots have replaced front lawns; houses have been remodeled haphazardly, resulting in structures with incoherent design elements; signage has often been out of proportion to the structure and use advertised.

In order to propose an orderly, safe and aesthetic transition, properties within designated transitional corridors can be considered for nonresidential use at intensity compatible with surrounding residential areas and that maintain the essential residential “look and feel” of the area. Designation of this corridor is meant to encourage public and private investment that will promote vitality, activity and safety in the area, by controlling aesthetics, careful site planning and limiting nonresidential uses to those that will not overly impact existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to the site.

Predominate Land Uses

- Existing residential dwelling units;
- Commercial services within converted residential dwelling units;
- Limited mix of selected retail uses that are considered “low-impact;”
- Infill commercial and residential development that is compatible in look, density and mass to surrounding development; and
- Public and semi-public facilities.

Development Strategies

- A new use should be compatible with the adjoining neighborhood and not attract a high volume of traffic or visitors, have late night or early morning hours of operation, produce outdoor sound or other distractions, or serve a market area that extends beyond the adjacent neighborhoods and passers-by. Generally, professional and business office uses, personal services and local-serving retail sales establishments, small-scale religious and other non-profit institutions, and other low-intensity neighborhood services are compatible with houses.
- The conversion’s remodeling should be architecturally compatible with the neighborhood and must upgrade or at least be consistent with the basic architecture of the structure. Architectural integrity and compatibility considerations include siting of the building, massing, proportion, scale, materials, colors, details, façade treatment, lighting and signage.

- New building design should take into consideration the unique qualities and the dominant character of the surrounding area.
- New occupancies in converted houses should be limited to one business enterprise (with one business entrance) for structures under 2,000 square feet of gross leaseable area.
- Signs should be consistent with the form and materials of the building. Illuminated signs would not be permitted when adjacent to existing residential uses.
- Mechanical equipment must be screened from public view and sited so as not to cause noise impacts on adjacent properties, and trash and garbage enclosures must be restricted to rear yard areas.
- Landscaping must be installed in areas not designated for parking and circulation. Parking areas must have landscaping and be screened from public view.

Implementation

- Adopt design and use requirements to guide new construction and adaptive reuse and conversion of existing structures that will assure compatibility with remaining residences on the road and with surrounding neighborhoods.

■ Transit Oriented Development

The plan anticipates the development of the commuter rail system and the location of a commuter rail station along the existing railroad track in downtown Woodstock. Buildings should be designed vertically at higher densities to create a compact and dense character area that allows the community to live, work, play and shop. A transit orientation can enable a community to use market forces to increase densities near a transportation core, where most services are located and enable the development of efficient subcenters that minimize sprawl, utilizing the principles of station-oriented design., which calls for a live, work, play, and shop community to be developed around the station a high densities. The area's mixture of existing infrastructure, nearby land uses, accessibility, topography, location along an active railroad, and other factors make it an ideal location for a mixed-use character area based on transit-oriented development. The transit-oriented development is an approach to combat traffic congestion and protect the environment. Benefits of transit-oriented development include:

- Better places to live, work and play;
- Greater mobility with ease of moving around;
- Reduced traffic congestion and driving;
- Reduced car accidents and injuries;
- Reduced household spending on transportation, resulting in more affordable housing;
- Healthier lifestyle with more walking and less stress;
- Higher more stable property values;
- Increased foot traffic and customers for area businesses;
- Greatly reduced pollution and environmental destruction;
- Less expensive than building roads and sprawl; and
- Enhanced ability to maintain economic competitiveness.

Development Strategies

- Create a walkable design with the pedestrian as the highest priority.
- A transportation center as a prominent feature of the town center. Ringing this centerpiece should be mixed-use centers of office with shopping on the first floor and parking behind the office buildings.
- A regional node containing a mixture of uses in close proximity including office, residential, retail and civic uses.
- Require high density, high quality development within a 10-minute walk circle surrounding the train station.
- Collectors support transit systems including trolleys, streetcars, light rail and buses.
- Designed to include the easy use of bicycles, scooters, and rollerblades as a daily support transportation system.

■ Lifestyle Town Center (formally Regional Activity Center)

A Lifestyle Town Center is an open air Main Street-like development that focuses on certain retail sectors and blends mixed uses typical of an old time small town. These centers are pedestrian friendly where residents, employees and visitors can gather in public spaces and feel part of the community. Lifestyle Town Centers include a relatively high intensity mix of business and retail, office and employment opportunities, higher-education facilities, sports, recreational complexes, hotels, theatres, civic and semi public uses such as libraries, health clinics, museums and religious institutions that create a multi-dimensional destination. A residential component is especially important as it adds density to the center and creates a 24-hour character area. Higher density condominium and rental residential complexes, townhomes, brownstones, live-work units, lofts, senior housing, residential over retail and affordable workforce housing are appropriate to support these uses. This character area is a vibrant place where people can live, work, play and shop.

As a town center, pedestrian orientation and connectivity are a key focus. The overall environment should be attractive and enjoyable for walking. Sidewalks, paths, green spaces and open spaces are as important as the buildings. These shopping villages provide a pleasant “Main Street” type façade and allow for ease of internal movement. Design factors fostering community commercial include: addressing the size of commercial development in terms of square footage by breaking up facades of large buildings into more pedestrian-scaled units; design parameters for parking and internal circulation/access; architectural treatments; building setbacks, siting and orientation; buffer requirements to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential; and other factors which promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, even within higher intensity commercial and residential

The intent this character is to:

- Focus development in villages with the feel of a typical “Main Street;”
- Provide a high intensity of mixed uses in order to create a critical mass;
- Redesign existing strip development into pedestrian scale, interconnected nodes.
- Plan for a community street, trail and sidewalk network that is as friendly to alternative modes of transportation as to the automobile.
- Require master planning to address access management.
- Plan and design transportation improvements that fit with community character.
- Include civic and cultural uses to promote human interaction.

Primary Land Uses

- Regional office, institutional and retail opportunities;
- Department Stores and Big Box Retail;
- Small office complexes such as “office condominiums,” financial institutions and other service providers;
- High density Residential development within a mixed use master planned environment;
- Civic and semi-public uses, such as religious organizations, educational facilities; museums; libraries; health clinics; senior centers, YMCAs, Community Centers;
- Recreational Uses such as theaters, roller skating rings, arcades; and
- Entertainment and cultural arts.

Development Strategies

- Buildings should be oriented in close proximity to each other to facilitate walking instead of driving— all parcels should be interconnected wherever topography allows, along streets, squares and plazas.
- Buildings should be designed in a manner, which provides architectural depth to the building and includes covered areas for relief from the weather. Buildings should feature an arcade/structural canopy along the front façade of the building.
- Arcades should be provided between buildings and leading from parking areas. Arcades are covered walkways connected to, or separate from, the principal building. The arcade should be a minimum of five feet in width.
- The design of a building that occupies a pad or portion of a building within a planned project or shopping center should share similar design characteristics and design vocabulary. Precise replication is not desirable. Instead, utilization of similar colors, materials and textures as well as repeating patterns, rhythms and proportions found within the architecture of other buildings in the center can be utilized to achieve unity.
- A unified design plan is required for multiple building developments. This plan should include exterior facade colors and materials, signage and landscaping. This unified design plan should be reviewed for its compatibility with the surrounding site context, particularly if there are strong or dominant architectural styles.
- Taller buildings or portions of a building should be located internally to a site with buildings stepping down in height as they reach the edges of the site that are adjoined by smaller scaled development or as they connect to existing residential uses.
- All entrances should be obvious and welcoming. Main entrances should be oriented to the street, with secondary access from an internal plaza and pedestrian ways. The front façade of the building should be of pedestrian scale and appearance.
- Drive through windows, menu boards, equipment and associated stacking lanes should be located to minimize impacts on adjacent residential areas and should be adequately screened from public view and view of adjacent sites.
- Civic gathering places should be distributed throughout the development. Amenities such as benches, landscaping, public art, and fountains should be included within the development.

- Parking deck facades should partially conceal automobile visibility from any public right-of-way or private drive or street that are open to the general public, while allowing for police surveillance from the street, and shall have the appearance of a horizontal storied building.
- Decks should be “wrapped” by retail or residential uses. Owners and developers of adjoining properties should be encouraged to provide shared parking.
- Lifestyle Centers are designed to serve populations of 80,000 to 200,000 people and have a 20-mile service radius.
- Lifestyle Centers should be separated from Community Village Centers by 2 to 6 miles and from other Regional Village Centers by 6 to 10 miles.
- A Lifestyle Centers should include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types within it or on adjacent properties, including townhouses, apartments, lofts and condominiums, and including affordable and workforce housing;
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety, provide conveniently located, preferably sheltered, bicycle parking at retail and office destinations and in multi-family dwellings.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional or historic character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Buildings should be located on both sides of the street with sidewalks, street trees, traditional lighting, sitting areas, and kiosks. Sidewalk entrances shall be considered in the front. Parking shall be located in the rear.
- Large commercial structures shall be designed so that their facades are subdivided into smaller units of scale (in units of no more than 60 feet horizontally) so that they give the appearance of a number of smaller attached buildings.
- Shop windows, entrances, colonnades, columns, pilasters and other details shall be designed to break down dimensions to human scale.
- Shared access should be required where possible. Investigate the possibility of closing and consolidating excess driveways.
- Streets are to be lined with commercial uses to for a continuous building wall (line) with breaks for public space and entrances to parking areas located beneath or behind the buildings.
- Streets should follow urban patterns, such as small blocks within a grid system. The development should connect within the overall character area and to the surrounding existing street pattern. Projects are not meant to stand-alone, isolated, rather it should integrate with the communities around it.
- There should be a variety of streets and sections throughout the development having a slightly different character to contribute to the sense of the project having been built up over time.
- It is encouraged that to avoid a design that was obviously the product of a single designer, several design firms contribute to different buildings.

■ Urban Core

The rising cost of housing, traffic congestion and the need to ensure the long-term economic ability of urban cores has helped to contribute to increased multi-use developments. Woodstock is currently experiencing a revitalization of its urban core. Always, but particularly now during this period of growth, new public spaces, private projects, and infrastructure improvements should have a significant and visible component of civic

spaces, art, and a mixture of uses. As each city grows, it is increasingly important to create a compact central core that will contribute to the existing energy and activity, amplifying and connecting the existing centers of activity. With guidance, density can create variety and vitality in a city core, which will enhance safety by reducing unpopulated, unused areas. Primary objectives within the urban core are to redevelop and revitalize existing historic buildings and to promote infill development that is a natural extension of the city's fabric.

The Urban Core Character Area generally consists of the highest density development and the widest range of mixed uses, combined with central civic areas such as a City Hall, a school or a library. Downtown neighborhoods and residential opportunities contribute to the overall vitality of the Urban Core. Some buildings are attached and often taller, situated on a wide range of lot sizes. There is a very short mandatory front setback with wide sidewalks. The majority of the required parking is to be located to the rear, or provided on the street. All uses not considered noxious are permitted within the buildings. They are an important part of the mix that creates an active community life in the central city. Creating a variety of uses is critical to having a successful 24-hour downtown. A diversity of development downtown can better support residential development and decrease the need for commuting, thus creating an urban core where people are able to live, shop and work in a walkable area. Complex multifaceted urban spaces bring people together in different ways, creating the kind of interaction and synergy. Urban cores thrive on the need for people to come together in so many ways, which cannot be strictly planned.

Downtown Woodstock

The historic "Olde Towne" in the heart of the City of Woodstock is an example of an "urban core," and includes the city's municipal facilities, streets aping with brick paved sidewalks and decorative lighting, the city park, historic buildings dating back to 1879 and a strong residential community. Vacant land and underutilized parcels within Lode Towne provide opportunities for new pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development or redevelopment. Nearby creeks and recreational facilities, provide alternative transportation and recreation options. In addition, the Georgia Northeastern Railroad parallels Main Street, defining the downtown area, and provides future entertainment, community, and transportation opportunities.

In 2005, the City developed Downtown District regulations to promote the urban core. Main goals and development strategies are summarized here.

- Increase transportation accessibility and mobility options and improve traffic flow in and around the downtown area;
- Expand and strengthen the downtown by building on its current successes and small-town atmosphere;
- Increase the viability of live, work, and entertainment choices within the downtown area;
- Preserve, protect and enhance the urban core's historic and future role as the civic and economic center of Woodstock;
- Provide safe and accessible parks and plazas;
- Improve the aesthetics of the public street and the built environment; and
- Promote pedestrian safety by ensuring sidewalk oriented buildings and attractive street-facing facades that foster pedestrian activity and liveliness.

Woodstock Development Strategies

- Signage treatments should include small hanging signs mounted on building fronts and signage mounted on building fronts is required within the design standards. Signs should enhance the pedestrian experience.

- Require the efficient utilization of parking facilities by encouraging shared, underground and deck parking and alternative modes of transportation.
- Enhance Woodstock's historic quality by ensuring that new and renovated buildings are compatible with the character of buildings built between 1860 and 1929.
- Allow accessory dwelling units in designated areas in order to provide an alternative housing product.
- Require architectural and storefront treatments that provide a sidewalk level street façade.
- All developments shall be required to dedicate open space of at least 20%.
- Civic spaces such as squares and plazas shall be located no more than a maximum of 800 feet from any dwelling unit.
- No parking shall be permitted between a building and the street.
- Street trees are required on all streets. Streetscape improvements are required on all streets.
- Sidewalk level uses shall have a primary pedestrian entrance, which faces, is visible from, and is directly adjacent to the sidewalk or public open space plaza/courtyard.
- The first two stories of building facades shall be brick, stone, concrete siding such as "Hardiplank" or natural wood, with the exception of pedestrian entrances and windows.
- Blank windowless walls are prohibited.
- Parking structures shall conceal automobiles from visibility and shall look like a horizontal storied building on all levels, or be heavily landscaped.
- All parking, except for allowable on-street parking shall be screened from view.
- Civic Spaces.
- Street Design.

Downtown Waleska

Waleska, home of Reinhardt College, is a small town in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Northwest corner of Cherokee County. Established in 1889, almost everyone in Waleska has some relationship with the college. Some are employees; some are students; some are alumni, and others are neighbors. The campus occupies close to half of the area within the city limits.

While the Waleska community has grown tremendously with the growth of the college, the town itself has retained its small town charm. The people of Waleska gather through out the year to celebrate holidays, such as Fourth of July or Christmas. Passing through Waleska, you may see people taking walks and running on the city sidewalks, college's beautifully landscaped campus and Boston Nature Trail. City residents also enjoy the opportunity to attend the many events on the Reinhardt campus, such as Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performances at the Falany Performing Arts Center. While the citizens of Waleska enjoy the conveniences of today and look forward to the future, history is respected and preserved in Waleska. The Funk Heritage Center and adjacent Early American Village draws thousands of visitors each year to see artifacts and exhibits on the history and art of the Southeastern Indians and European settlers.

Waleska Development Strategies

- Street trees are required on all streets. Streetscape improvements, such as sidewalks, are required on all streets.
- Signage would be compatible with the small town character of Waleska.

- Parking is encouraged on the side and in the rear of buildings along Hwy 140 and 108 to strengthen the “Main Street” feel and improve the walkability of the community.
- Enhance Waleska’s historic quality by ensuring that new and renovated buildings are compatible with the character of buildings built between 1860 and 1940.
- Civic spaces such as parks, squares and plazas shall be located throughout developments with no more than a maximum of 800 feet from any dwelling unit.
- Sidewalk level uses shall have a primary pedestrian entrance, which faces, is visible from, and is directly adjacent to the sidewalk or public open space plaza/courtyard.
- Neighborhood Streets

Downtown Ball Ground

Founded in 1883, Ball Ground is a historic town in NE Cherokee County that was a center of marble production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This area has strong ties to Native American history as well. Two and one-half miles to the east of the town, near the confluence of Long-Swamp Creek and the Etowah River, is the traditional site of 'Taliwa', the most decisive battle of the war between Cherokee and Creek Indians in the 1700's. Cherokee history tells that the conflict over territory was determined by a stick-ball game here.

Before the railroad came through in 1882, the community was almost purely agricultural, consisting of two country stores and a few dwellings. After the railroad, the town grew as a result of the marble-working industry. Today, Ball Ground is growing as businesses and homeowners are moving into the North Georgia Mountains along the I-575 corridor. It boasts a number of new subdivisions and light industry. The Main Street of Ball Ground also holds significant redevelopment potential.

Ball Ground Development Strategies

- Signage should include small hanging signs, wall mounted signs and freestanding signs based on Ball Ground standards. Signs should enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Parking is encouraged in the side and rear of downtown buildings. On-street parking shall be allowed where designated by the Downtown Master Plan. All parking, except for allowable on-street parking shall be screened from view.
- Enhance Ball Ground’s historic quality by ensuring that new and renovated buildings are compatible with the character of existing buildings built between 1860 and 1940.
- Require architectural and storefront treatments that provide a sidewalk level street façade in the downtown area.
- Civic spaces such as parks, squares and plazas shall be located throughout developments with no more than a maximum of 800 feet from any dwelling unit.
- Street trees are required on all streets. Streetscape improvements are required on all streets.
- Sidewalk level uses shall have a primary pedestrian entrance, which faces, is visible from, and is directly adjacent to the sidewalk or public open space plaza/courtyard.
- Blank windowless walls are prohibited.
- Neighborhood and Mixed-Use / Urban Streets.

■ Development Corridor

Development Corridor Character Areas extend along major thoroughfares that have or are experiencing major development of retail, office or industrial land uses and multi-family housing, including mixed-use developments, and include redevelopment of aging mixed-use areas. The overall goal of this character area is to provide, through transportation, land use and streetscape projects and other physical enhancements to make this corridor environment a distinctive “place” not merely a roadway.

These land use components will coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. The purpose of this character area is the creation of an inviting commercial and mixed-use area. “How does my particular building work on the street, and what elements can I add to create an inviting and pleasant environment.” From an urban design standpoint, the most critical element in creating a visually appealing mixed-use corridor is the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping. Transition areas are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses.

Buildings will be designed to conform to architectural standards and oriented in close proximity to each other to facilitate walking instead of driving. For a retrofit to be successful, the public right-of-way, the adjacent land uses and the interface between the two should be addressed comprehensively. Urban design features such as lighting, coordinated signage; street furniture and landscaping are used as visual cues that create a recognizable character for the area. Design factors fostering community commercial, including limitation of size of commercial development in terms of square footage; design parameters for parking and internal circulation/access, recommended façade treatments, building setbacks, siting and orientation; and other factors which promote pedestrian-friendly movements, are important considerations. Anticipated land uses will provide commercial and services support to the community as a whole on a larger scale than a neighborhood village center, yet the square footage size restriction and required design parameters will retain a village commercial feel as opposed to creating a regional draw.

The Development Corridor regulations promote specialized planned commercial development standards and requirements limiting the types of uses permitted by regulating the square footage allowed; establishing pedestrian oriented setbacks and parking lot layouts; specifying site layout and building orientation; recommending design features such as façade treatments, landscaping and streetscape elements; and instituting buffer requirements to protect the residential uses behind the corridor.

Development Strategies

- Focus development in villages, urban centers or compact activity centers;
- Provide for mixed uses and higher densities than surrounding areas;
- Redesign existing strip development into pedestrian scale, interconnected nodes;
- Plan for a community street network that is as friendly to alternative modes of transportation to the automobile;
- Require master planning to address access management; and
- Plan and design transportation improvements that fit with community character.

■ Highway Business Corridor

The Highway Business Corridor Character Area is a specially designated corridor to encompass an existing working commercial and light industrial “auto-oriented” area along a major thoroughfare. These areas may

be going through transition to uses attractive to the traveling public, or continued development as transportation improvements are made. Mixed-use developments incorporating commercial and office uses fronting major commercial corridors and light industrial uses along major thoroughfares are encouraged; the introduction of design and landscaping standards may be needed.

This Character Area relies on major transportation access, particularly from interstates or major arterials. Similarly, the provision of adequate public services in the form of water, sewer and power are critical to the functionality of these areas. This corridor is intended to create a pleasant, hazard-and-nuisance-free environment and does not create either appreciable nuisance or hazard to other property, individuals or the public in general. The purpose of this corridor is the creation of an inviting commercial and mixed-use area.

The intent of the Highway Business Corridor designation is to provide a variety of tracts for heavy commercial uses, light industrial and employment uses such as business parks, distribution/services, light industrial, auto repair and service, high technology and research, wholesaling companies and similar businesses that have no significant impacts on the environment.

Development Strategies

- Create a visually appealing highway business corridor through the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping;
- Buffers are critical between incompatible uses; and
- Apply guidelines that address outdoor signage, sound and lighting to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of heavy commercial and light industrial uses.

■ Workplace Center

Considered major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, commercial, office and some high-intensity residential uses, these character areas are located relative to major transportation connections. Internal housing would provide a customer base for offices, cafés, restaurants, and retail uses located in the corridor, and enhance the safety of the area by maintaining a continuous population base in a location that is typically unpopulated in the evening hours. Residential uses are considered an accessory use to non-residential uses and as such should be fully integrated into a center, and monitored closely so that large residential developments do not become a primary land use, therefore substantially reducing the non-residential character of the area.

Development Strategies

- Enforce appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping;
- Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial and industrial uses;
- Vast amounts of parking and truck loading/unloading areas should be screened from view;
- Where possible, the parking areas should be distributed to two or more sides of the business to “visually scale down” the size of the parking lot;
- Inter-parcel access between sites should be used whenever possible; and
- Grouping or “clustering” of shops with co-mingled parking, landscaping and pedestrian areas are encouraged.

- Accessory, temporary, outdoor storage of retail goods should be shielded from public view. In the case of auto dealerships and storage/repair businesses, vehicles stored on site should be screened from view from the public right of way by a low wall or hedge. Display platforms should be incorporated into overall design.

■ **Waste Management**

This Character Area encompasses the Pine Bluff Sanitary Landfill as designated in the Cherokee County Solid Waste Plan. This facility is shown because of its projected 50 year life span and the impact of this land use on the on the surrounding area plus infrastructure.

Preliminary Implementation

- Incorporate public art into civic and public spaces and into roadway designs.
- Create gateway features to highlight the entrance to special places and to help alert motorists and pedestrians that they should slow down as they pass through.
- Develop a Context-Sensitive Design Process utilizing the Georgia Department of Transportations “*Context-Sensitive Design Online Manual ver. 1.0*”, April 2006.
- Identify design opportunities such as pedestrian crossings/crosswalks, street lighting, signage, street furnishings, roadway street landscaping, banners and flags, public art and gateway features.
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