

Community Agenda

Prepared as an Element of the
Joint Comprehensive Plan 2030
For Oconee County and the Cities of
Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals
and Watkinsville, Georgia

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Community Agenda

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Section 1: Introduction

Comprehensive Planning

■ Comprehensive Planning Requirements

In order for a jurisdiction to maintain their Qualified Local Government status (that is, to remain eligible for a wide range of State grants, assistance and permitting programs), the Comprehensive Plan must be updated from time-to-time. This current update is characterized by the State as the “tenth-year update,” which, because of the significant changes that have occurred in Oconee County over the past decade, coupled with the adoption of new planning standards by the State, requires a complete reevaluation, reorganization and rewrite of the Plan elements. The “planning horizon” of this Comprehensive Plan Update covers the 20+ year planning period through 2030.

Planning requirements for the preparation and adoption of Comprehensive Plans are adopted by the State’s Board of Community Affairs pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act, and administered and supplemented by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The most recently applicable planning standards took effect May 1, 2005, and establish the minimum standards that must be met for DCA approval.

■ Components of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan meeting the planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs is comprised of the following three components:

Community Participation Program

The first part of the Comprehensive Plan is the Community Participation Program that was adopted by all parties involved in shaping the Joint Comprehensive Plan. The Community Participation Program forms the underlying foundation of the Comprehensive Plan through the development of a community based vision and the creation of guiding principles. Effective citizen involvement in a comprehensive plan can be achieved through the efforts of a group of dedicated citizens—the Stakeholder Committee--and staff, and information outreach to the public at large. Since the Plan deals with long range issues, it was important for the process to be productive, thought provoking, and interesting to incorporate the interests of a diverse citizenry. The Community Participation Program describes the strategy for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the Plan.

Community Assessment

This part of the Comprehensive Plan is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about Oconee County. The purpose of the Community Assessment report is to present a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the Com-

prehensive Plan is built. In the view of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, preparation of the Community Assessment is largely a staff or professional function of collecting and analyzing data and information about the community and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda (i.e., the “Plan.”). The Assessment is comprised of two volumes: **Volume 1, Issues and Opportunities** is focused on issues and opportunities facing the County and its four Cities now and anticipated in the future; **Volume 2, Technical Analysis** is an “addendum” to the Community Assessment, containing detailed data and analyses that identify the issues and opportunities discussed in Volume 1.

The following are included in the Community Assessment’s two volumes:

- A list of potential issues and opportunities the Comprehensive Plan participants may wish to take action to address;
- Analysis of existing development patterns, including a preliminary map of Character Areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development;
- Evaluation of current community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with DCA’s Quality Community Objectives; and
- Analysis of data and information to check the validity of the above evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities.

The purpose of the assessment documents is to analyze community data, demographics, land use, natural resources and community facilities to identify issues for further investigation as part of the Community Agenda portion of the Comprehensive Plan. The Assessment provides a starting point to guide the community public participation program and provides valuable information for the development of a Vision for the County and each of its cities.

Community Agenda

This, the third part of the Comprehensive Plan, is the most important, for it includes the community’s vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda includes three major components:

- A vision for the future physical development of Oconee County and its cities, expressed in map form indicating unique Character Areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns;
- A list of issues and opportunities identified by the Comprehensive Plan participants for further action; and
- An implementation program for each of the Comprehensive Plan participants to achieve the vision for the future and to address the identified issues and opportunities.

In addition to the three components above, and in concert with preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the County and its cities must review and possibly amend and recertify their previously adopted **Services Delivery Strategy**, and update the State-mandated **Solid Waste Management Plan**.

■ Purpose of the Community Agenda

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to design a roadmap for the future. This road map is developed through a public process involving community leaders, major stakeholders, general public and elected officials, all of whom make key decisions about the future. The overall goal of the Plan is to accommodate growth in a timely, orderly and efficient arrangement of land uses, public facilities, infrastructure and services that meet the needs of the present and future residents and businesses of the County and each of its cities.

The Community Agenda is the most important part of the Plan, for it includes the County's Vision for the future, as well as key issues and opportunities, and the implementation program for achieving this Vision. The Community Agenda is intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community, thereby allowing easy implementation of the guiding principles, policies and strategies outlined within the Plan.

This Agenda is developed in four Sections:

- Introduction
- The Community Vision
- Character Areas
- Implementation

As a Comprehensive Plan, each section is interrelated and dependent upon each other and no one part should be viewed in isolation. For example, policies contained within the Vision section should be applied when reviewing character areas; implementation measures listed under core issues and character areas have been compiled within the short-term work program.

■ Planning Process

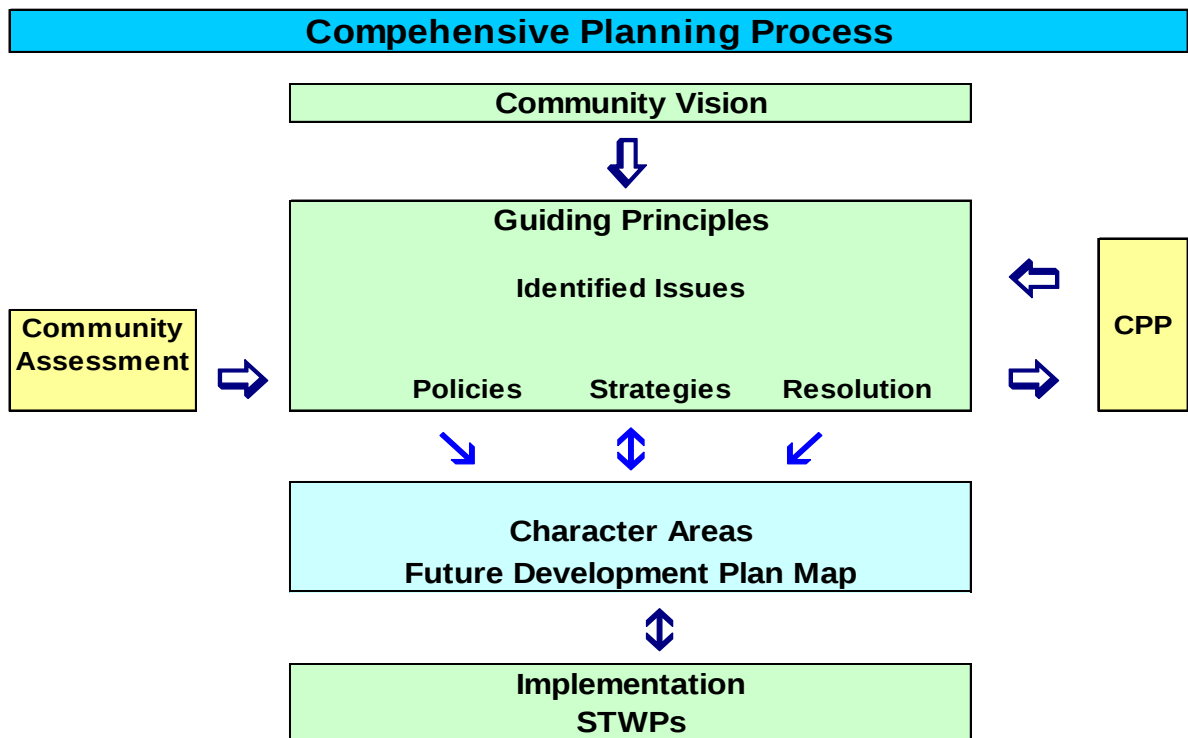
The process followed to achieve the end result of a Future Development Map for the County and each city took over a year, incorporating extensive data gathering and analysis, and community participation. Background reports and data that were utilized during this process included:

- The Community Assessment, Volumes 1 and 2;
- The County's Economic Development Plan;
- Detailed forecast reports for population, employment and housing; and
- A detailed analysis of rezoning cases since the County updated its Future Land Use Map in 2002.

Utilizing typical and non-typical public participation tools during this lengthy process to gain input and feedback yielded a comprehensive plan for Oconee County. The Community Participation Program (CPP) used innovative mixed media, two sets of public citizen issues forums, numerous meetings with the Stakeholder Committee, two DCA required public hearings, a kick-off meeting and several Joint Elected Officials Workshops, citizen surveys and comments sheets, and media and web notification to enhance the public's involvement in the process and to reach as many citizens and businesses as possible. An

outline of this public campaign is available in the Community Participation Plan, posted on the County Website. This Plan was truly a “bottoms up” process.

Below is a flow chart that identifies how we came to the final product. Simply stated, starting with a Vision for each jurisdiction, major issues led to guiding principles and policies, and Character Areas were delineated, which in turn led to implementation measures to achieve the Vision of each jurisdiction. Although the process seems very straightforward, in reality it is anything but that. Truly comprehensive planning is a very circular and interactive process. Throughout the process analysis, data and community input led us along many paths, adjusted original assumptions and ideas. We believe that this fluid process has led to a document that has truly achieved a consensus and Vision that represents the diverse interests and peoples of all of the jurisdictions in Oconee County.



Community Overview

Oconee County, the 135th County formed in Georgia, was created by the legislative act of 1875. It was included in the territory ceded by the Cherokee Indians to the State of Georgia and part of the territory established as Clarke County in 1801, out of Jackson County. The County's early history primarily revolved around the towns and communities. The construction of the Eagle Tavern in 1789 as a block-house for the protection of settlers against Indian raids marked the establishment of what is today the City of Watkinsville. The earliest record of the land on which the City of Watkinsville now stands is found in the records of Clarke County in 1791. In 1806, the City of Watkinsville was incorporated as the County seat of Clarke County. Bogart, on the county's northern border, was founded in 1869 and was originally named for Osceola, a Creek-Seminole Indian. The town was renamed Bogart for a railroad agent in 1892. Bishop, originally known as Greenwood Crossing, was named for local resident W. H. Bishop (one of the cities original council members). Bishop was incorporated in 1890. North High Shoals, on the southwestern border, was named for a rapid in the nearby Apalachee River. It was incorporated in 1933.

Oconee County is located fifty-three miles east of Atlanta and six miles south of the City of Athens. Oconee County is part of the Athens-Clarke Metropolitan Statistical Area, which consists of Clarke, Oglethorpe, Jackson, Madison and Oconee Counties. Oconee County's borders are contiguous with Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Morgan, Greene, Oglethorpe and Walton Counties. The county seat is in Watkinsville, one of four incorporated cities. The other three cities are Bishop, Bogart and North High Shoals.

■ History

The earliest known residents of the County were the Creek Indians. By the late 1700's, both the Creek and Cherokee Indians occupied what is now Oconee County. The Oconee River formed the boundary between the lands of the United States and those controlled by Native Americans. In August 1790, the Creek Chief, Alexander McGillivray, ceded the land west of the Oconee River, allowing the frontier's development by settlers. In lower Oconee County, stone steps and a D.A.R. marker identify the site of the treaty. In spite of land disputes prior to the signing of the treaty, early settlers established several new settlements. In 1789, the Eagle Tavern was built in what is today Watkinsville and served as a block house for the protection of settlers against Native-American raids. A strip of Oconee County was a part of the short-lived Trans-Oconee Republic founded by Elijah Clarke, a hero of the Revolutionary War.

In 1801, the Commissioners of Clarke County decided that lands to the south of Call's Creek should be the new county seat location. The land was deeded over by John Cobb in January 1802, and Clarke County was created by an act of the General Assembly of Georgia, incorporating Watkinsville as the County seat.

Although no battles of the Civil War occurred in Oconee County, one event of note took place in Watkinsville— Stoneman's Raid. In July 1864, General Sherman sent Major General George Stoneman's cavalry to Macon to cut the railroad, which supplied Atlanta. On their way to Macon, two brigades of Stoneman's cavalry entered Watkinsville (GA Marker 384) and took supplies from the town.

In 1871, the Clarke County grand jury recommended that the legislature move the county seat of Clarke County from Watkinsville to Athens. Reasons cited for the move included a lack of housing accommodations for Afro-Americans (following the war) in Watkinsville, and the fact that the majority of litigation activity was generated in Athens. In 1875, in response to the dissatisfaction of the citizens of Watkinsville over the move, the General Assembly of Georgia created Oconee County by legislative act with Watkinsville as County Seat. Among the first County officers were: Sheriff Weldon M. Price, Clerk of Superior Court, Jas. M.A. Johnson, Ordinary James R. Lyle, Tax Receiver David M. White, Tax Collector Robert R. Murray Treasurer Thomas Booth, Coroner James Maulden and Surveyor Wm. E. Elder. The name “Oconee” was taken from the Cherokee name of the river, which forms the County’s eastern boundary. Robert Watkins, an attorney from Augusta, is thought to be the namesake of Watkinsville.

The developmental histories of the individual towns indicate that the impetus behind the county’s early development was waterpower in the mid-19th century and the railroad in the late 19th century.

Bishop

The first settlement on the site of Bishop was in existence between 1800 and 1887, and was known as “Greenwood,” named for the large Oak trees that lined the street. The City of Bishop was incorporated in December 1890 and named after a local landowner and one of the original city councilmen. The city grew with the completion of the Central Georgia Railroad in the late 19th century, influencing its L shape developed around the railroad line. Bishop served as the last stop on the C-line railroad prior to 1895 until a connective spur between Bishop and Athens was completed. By the early 20th century, the city existed primarily as a distribution point for cotton grown in the vicinity. The warehouse buildings still exist today that were used for storing cotton for transfer.

The present City of Bishop retains the majority of its historic resources intact and in good condition, with many in the process of repair and restoration. The Bishop Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1996. There are several one story free-standing commercial buildings, one two-story block commercial building, and one group of one story attached commercial buildings. All are simple 20th century commercial buildings that are masonry with little or no detailing. The City maintains the present City Hall, built as the City jail in 1939; the Bishop Well and Well House (circa 1890); and the recently purchased and restored Chandler/Marable House, used for City Hall expansion and community facilities, as historic structures. The residential area contains a collection of the house types and architectural styles popular during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with a single log cabin. In addition, a new residential subdivision is located on the North side of town.

Bogart

The first settlers came to the area of Bogart, originally known as Osceola, during the land lottery of 1820. The town, located 10 miles northwest of Watkinsville, utilized its proximity to Bear Creek to provide power to grist and saw lumber mill operations. In 1888, a depot was built in town and the Georgia, Carolina and Northern railroads reached the town by 1892. The arrival of the railroad necessitated the change in name to Bogart, as a town already existed in Georgia with the same name of Osceola.

Bogart currently retains most of its historic buildings, both residential and commercial. The overall integrity of these structures is good with physical alterations including win-

dow replacement and the use of more maintenance efficient exterior sidings. The eight primary commercial buildings along Main Street consist of one-story detached masonry structures.

Eastville Community (unincorporated)

The community of Eastville currently exists as a crossroads community that includes several historic residential buildings representing a period of growth between 1870 to 1900. In 1907, the town of Eastville was incorporated, although it no longer functions as a separate jurisdiction. The town center is located at the crossroads of Malcom Bridge Road and Hodges Mill Road. The area now is comprised of a combination of historic buildings intermixed with modern infill structures.

Farmington Community (unincorporated)

The community of Farmington, located 5 miles south of Watkinsville, was named in 1837. The Baptist Church, established in 1795 and originally known as Freeman's Creek Church, is one of the oldest churches in the County. The community also retains the historic depot that helped serve the surrounding farms and plantations, and was the backbone of the community's growth and existence. Farmington currently exists as a small crossroads community consisting of 15 historic buildings. Most of the residential buildings have been well maintained and several are under repair. The area west of "Old Farmington Road" also contains some historic buildings, including the Farmington Depot and two abandoned brick buildings associated with the railroad. The area south of the community's center includes bungalow buildings circa 1930's-1940's. The residential/commercial center area is a potential candidate for National Register listing as a historic district.

North High Shoals

High Shoals is located on the Apalachee River in the corner of Walton, Morgan, and Oconee counties. Creek and Cherokee Indians resided in the area and used the shoals to ford the river. The waterfall drew industry to the location, and in 1846, the High Shoals Manufacturing Company was organized for yarn and cloth production. In addition to the mill, a large mercantile business, ginneries, a gristmill, a lumberyard, a planing mill and a livery stable were operating. In 1928, the majority of the manufacturing company was destroyed by fire and the community's population declined.

North High Shoals is presently a small town, which extends in a northerly direction from the Apalachee River to the Walton County line. The town's historic resources, primarily residential structures, are varied in their architectural styles and types, with several of the earliest buildings dating back to 1850-1880, most of which have been retained with a high level of architectural integrity. The town of North High Shoals is potentially eligible for National Register listing as a historic district.

Salem Community (unincorporated)

The land on which the town of Salem was built was originally purchased from the Cherokee Indians in 1800. In 1818, it was the third town incorporated into what was then Clarke County. Although no longer incorporated, the community historically has been, and remains, dependent on agriculture. Until the construction of the railroad in 1830, the town served as a stagecoach stop. Today, nothing remains of the town except for three historic buildings, including the Brown House, the Salem United Church and a cemetery, which may be eligible for listing on the National Register.

Watkinsville

The earliest record of the land on which Watkinsville now stands is found in the records of Clarke County in 1791. The records show that the Governor of Georgia, Edward Telfair, deeded the site of present day Watkinsville and surrounding lands to Rhoderick Easley and Josiah Woods in 1791. Watkinsville's livelihood in the early nineteenth century came not only from being a courthouse town, where everyone had to come for certain life necessities such as marriages, deaths, taxes, jury duty, filing deed and public services, but it was also a hub for agricultural trade where cotton farmers and planters brought their produce. Roads from other nearby county seats like Greensboro and Madison converged here and proceeded north to Athens and Gainesville. These roads brought even more travelers and commerce to town.

By 1849, Watkinsville hosted the courthouse and the jail, two churches, schools, taverns, stores, three groceries, one billiard room, one carpenter, one tailor, two blacksmiths, two tan yards, two wagon makers, one saddler, two shoe shops, two lawyers, one doctor, and one minister – all with a population of 240 people.

The Eagle Tavern (inn, tavern restaurant) served primarily as a stagecoach stop and gathering place in the early 1800s. By 1827, stages from Milledgeville passed through Watkinsville three times a week on the way to Athens and most likely stopped at the Tavern. Before the railroad was completed, much of the overland wagon trade also used this route, and men traveling by wagon, horseback or on foot could, for the price of a drink, spread their bedrolls on the "Front Room" floor. The two upstairs bedrooms were reserved for stage passengers.

Watkinsville contains over 60 historic properties that were identified in a 1976 survey of historic resources. Many of these properties are included in the South Main Street National Register District. Other properties in Watkinsville may be eligible, either individually or as a district, for National Register listing, particularly those that have become historically significant due to age over the past decade. A Preservation Plan prepared in 1990 identifies a residential district, which might be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register.

Section 2: Community Vision

Vision and Community Character

■ What is a Vision?

The first step in the Comprehensive Planning process is the creation of a community Vision for each jurisdiction. This vision sets the tone for the entire process—the development of guiding principals, policy, and finally the Future Development Map (FDM). Issues identified in the Community Assessment were addressed in terms of this Vision, related Guiding Principles and Policies, and implementation measures were identified to resolve these issues. Lastly, a physical plan, the Future Development Map (FDM) was created utilizing these first two steps. Each Community Vision is based on results from intensive public involvement activities, and reflects the desires and values of the County's diverse population.

A Vision.....

- Identifies aspects of the county and each city, which most clearly represent its sense of community;
- Prioritizes the protection of assets and resources that are most closely associated with the community's character and sense of community; and
- Translates desires and values into issue resolution and a physical map of preferred future land uses and patterns.

Visions were created countywide and for each city:

Our Vision for Oconee County is...

A diverse community where life takes on a balanced pace with rural, suburban and small town lifestyles, where an excellent education system, high tech economic opportunities, agricultural activities and open space are highly valued. In order to maintain this identity we must proactively plan for a sustainable future of natural resource protection, historic preservation, quality services, a balanced tax base and appropriate infrastructure.

Our Vision for the City of Bishop is...

An historic town that values the spirit of its main street village and historic resources as the heart of its heritage; which will preserve its past while embracing a future of innovative historically compatible uses and development, including a walkable and livable downtown and community-oriented low density neighborhoods open to families and individuals of all ages. As proactive stewards of the headwaters of Freeman Creek, natural resources protection and enhancement is a responsibility we take very seriously.

Our Vision for the City of Bogart is...

A charming and colorful small town with big city services; a town that provides a warm, friendly and hospitable environment; a town that will continue to hold onto its historic heritage and land development patterns while serving the needs of its residents with existing and additional services. Bogart will continue to encourage business growth while maintaining and nurturing its unique personality, charm and traditional way of life.

Our Vision for the City of North High Shoals is...

A small hamlet located in a rural area that provides a watershed to the Apalachee River, where the pace is slow and tradition, heritage, natural resources and historic structures are protected.

Our Vision for the City of Watkinsville is...

Watkinsville shall be a distinct and identifiable community with a unique sense of identity that stems from an appreciation of its natural and cultural resources; shall be a mixed use community that provides broad access to quality employment, shopping, housing, and transportation options, has a wide array of community services, and provides an attractive and healthy living environment; and shall manage its growth in a fashion that retains and enhances the characteristics that make the community an attractive place.

Core Issues

A number of core issues relating to growth, housing, natural and historic resources, economic development and land use patterns, were identified during the Comprehensive Plan process. Following is a description of the overall themes and issues facing the County and its cities for future development and implementation strategies.

■ Overall Guiding Principles

- Encourage beneficial growth while minimizing the burden on existing residents.
- Ensure that future land use and development decisions are consistent with long range planning goals and policies and that such decisions promote the Vision of the Community.
- Look at new development proposals comprehensively: Benefit to the County or City overall, the character area and the immediate neighborhood; surrounding land uses; the availability of infrastructure.
- Encourage a variety of housing stock to serve a range of incomes, age groups and lifestyles to provide choices and opportunities.
- Protect the overall single-family character of the community.
- Expand and diversify the economic base of the County and its cities to provide employment opportunities for the residents and enhance the tax base.
- Encourage potential for a variety of economic opportunities from neighborhood services, professional offices, live/work units, small businesses, regional retail, major office complexes, light industrial and manufacturing. 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 retail destinations.
- Enhance the overall quality and attractiveness of Oconee County by increasing cultural amenities, striving to strengthen service provision, improving the education system, providing adequate and timely installation of infrastructure, maintaining the structural integrity of structures and the physical environment, and to provide land use designations for executive housing options and workforce housing.
- Sustainable communities contain civic spaces, to ensure social interactions and personal connections, thus enhancing community identity.
- Permanent open space should surround developments in rural areas in order to retain the feeling of open vistas 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 should be protected and enhanced.
- Create an effective, multi-faceted program to proactively preserve the county's agricultural base in the southern portion of the county and elsewhere as appropriate to deflect development pressures and retain a rural environment.
- Balance development between the natural and built environment.

- 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 each community's Vision. Land uses and transportation are connected in such a way as to encourage linked trips and potential alternative modes.
- Integrate and create mixed use and village environments with employment opportunities to lesson the reliance on the automobile and commuting outside of the county.
- All new development should contribute to an overall sense of community.
- All new public buildings, institutional buildings, and residential and nonresidential private developments, should be characterized by high-quality architectural design, construction, inclusion of public elements and should reflect the Community's unique image and character. These types of improvements help create an identity or sense of place that will ultimately set Oconee County apart from other communities by providing our residents and businesses a reason for investing in Oconee County.
- Ensure that adequate public services and community facilities are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner by a capital improvement program that ensures that new development pays for its proportionate share of the cost of new facilities.
- Closely coordinate new schools, sewer and water expansion and transportation with identified land use patterns and Levels of Service as identified in each Character Area.
- Distribute services and facilities in appropriate locations to provide residents with convenient access.

■ **Choices**

The nation is now experiencing a heightened concern over the social, environmental, and fiscal quality of our communities in response to past development practices. Development over the last several decades aggravated the decline of many urban communities, rural places and older suburbs, congested streets and highways accelerated the loss of natural resources, and limited opportunities for the retention and creation of affordable housing. Often these problems are simply collectively labeled "sprawl." The County is currently at a turning point, comprised of positive features such as large rural and pristine environments, individual cities with historic downtowns with stable in-town neighborhoods, and pockets of commercial activity along major transportation corridors, as well as vacant developable land. Weaknesses include leap frog development, encroachment of nonresidential uses into established neighborhoods, traffic congestion, and loss of natural resources. The community can accept the generic land use patterns of the last few decades, or embrace smart growth concepts for the future. The Oconee County jurisdictions have chosen to create an innovative and sustainable community.

■ **Look at Land Use Planning in a Holistic Manner**

Due to the desirability of the region, Oconee County faces increasing development pressures as both a bedroom community to the Athens-Clarke County metropolitan area and as a potential employment center. Over the last two decades, Oconee County has, and continues to experience a remarkable growth rate. By 2030, the population is anticipated

to double from the 2000 Census. A challenge facing the county is to devise a way to balance the expected impacts of growth pushing from both the Athens-Clarke County and the Atlanta Metropolitan areas, with the desires of long-term residents and changing demographics. Growth management should be looked at in a holistic way, incorporating infrastructure and services.

As the county continues to urbanize along primary circulation corridors, with housing prices anticipated to remain moderate, a slowly increasing representation of the racial and ethnic composition of the County is occurring. However, the county remains, and is anticipated to remain, primarily Caucasian as young professionals, young families and established households seek the various housing and economic opportunities that the county and its cities offer.

The same opportunities and strengths that make the county attractive, such as location and uniqueness, present potential conflicts. It is the generally held desire to protect the established neighborhood living and rural character of various portions of the county and within the cities from incompatibilities and traffic, while at the same time to maintain its diversity in economy, cultures and ages. Planned developments, conservation style open space subdivisions, "village commercial centers," traditional neighborhoods, mixed-use development and other innovative development techniques are encouraged throughout the county through the use of guidelines presented in the Character Area descriptions within this Plan.

Two ways to influence quality growth are through regulation and focused service delivery. The County has recently completed a comprehensive overhaul to its development regulations, and has included regulations on signs, landscaping and design in order to capture quality in the development process. Major goals are the use of existing and planned infrastructure to guide future development and to minimize the conversion of undeveloped land in the rural areas of the county. Future infrastructure availability, such as water and sewer utilities (whether in place or planned for future extension), should be a major guide in where new residential and nonresidential developments are located.

A special concern is the need to develop land use patterns that are sensitive to concerns about the impact of economic development on the overall quality of life, community culture and identity. Issues such as transportation congestion and strategies to encourage the growth of business and other employment centers are two very important factors, followed by concerns to hold onto an existing pace of life.

The development of strong neighborhoods providing a range of housing options that give people the opportunity to choose housing that best suits them, while maintaining and enhancing the value of existing neighborhoods, is primary to the Community Visions. A greater mix of uses and housing choices in new neighborhoods focused around human scale, and mixed-use centers that are accessible by multiple transportation modes, provides an atmosphere of inclusiveness of lifestyle, lifecycle and economic realities. Mixed-use development with quality housing allows compatible land uses, such as shops, offices and housing, to locate closer together and thus decrease travel distances between them. Human-scaled design, compatible with the existing urban context and quality construction contribute to successful compact, mixed-use development and also promotes privacy, safety, visual coherency and compatibility among uses and users. Mixed use helps streets, public spaces and pedestrian oriented retail again become places where people meet, attracting pedestrians back onto the street and helping to revitalize community life. Mixed-use developments should be at an appropriate scale for each location.

A major goal is to promote a mix and balance of residential development options for existing and future residents of the county, while maintaining the low-density character as desired by county and individual city residents. An equally important goal is to maintain and preserve the county's agricultural base and rural atmosphere, principally in the southern portion of the county. In addition the County wants to encourage economic opportunities to promote a well-balanced tax base. Concurrent with this desire to maintain a rural atmosphere, suburban growth patterns are allocated to the northern portion of the county and denser development would be focused within villages and incorporated areas where supporting infrastructure and services exist or are planned, resulting in a more "urban" character in appropriate places.

Guiding Principles and Policies

The following Guiding Principles and Policies lead to Implementation Strategies that, along with the arrangement of land uses into descriptive Character Areas, will enable the County and its cities to achieve an innovative and sustainable community and the realization of each community's Vision.

The individual Guiding Principles, discussed further below, are:

- Expand and diversify the economic base of Oconee County in order to achieve a balanced tax base that offers diverse economic opportunities;
- Accommodate growth while creating a sustainable community that implements the community's vision;
- Protect our rural character and agricultural heritage;
- Preserve our sense of place;
- Create land use patterns that promote connectivity and mobility;
- Provide for services, facilities and housing that will allow aging in place; and
- Design with the environment.

Each Guiding Principle is examined below as to major issues identified in the Community Assessment and refined through public participation, policies to address the issues raised, discussion relating to the policies and the guiding principle, and strategies to implement realization of the policies.

■ **Expand and Diversify the Economic Base of Oconee County in order to achieve a Balanced Tax Base That Offers Diverse Economic Opportunities**

Major Issues

- A high percent of residents commute outside of the County.
- There are not enough "career" and higher wage earning jobs.
- Residents' potential sales tax income is being spent outside of the County's borders.

- Need for a long-range plan to further capitalize on the potential market and the existing reputation of restaurant and studio art tourism.
- A regional labor force quality issue, as evidenced by the large number of services and manufacturing employers that have reported difficulty obtaining employees with even minimal skills.
- Recognition that economic development must be multifaceted and consist of the development, expansion and retention of small business, development of a skilled workforce, and pursuit of key industries with creative and innovative financing.
- The need for a balance between small businesses, professional services, industrial employers, and major office employers.
- The County's tourism potential is not being fully met; restaurants and other resident- and visitor-serving venues are limited.

Policies

Countywide

- Step up efforts, programs and incentives to attract greater economic development opportunities.
- Utilize downtown areas, as well as planned "village centers," as economic "engines" for small business development. Ensure that the proper infrastructure is in place.
- Encourage the expansion of tourism and cultural opportunities throughout the county and within each city.
- Protect and enhance agricultural business.
- Create a balance between residential and nonresidential development in order to balance the tax base and provide quality services, including education.
- Encourage a variety of economic opportunities, in appropriate places, from neighborhood services, professional offices, live/work units, small businesses, regional retail, major office complexes, light industrial and manufacturing. 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 retail destinations.
- Outline areas on the Future Development Map to accommodate the amount and types of economic development opportunities that are desired and projected.

City of Bishop

- Attract and retain local-serving professional and retail businesses; expand tourism and cultural offerings and attract and protect businesses that relate to rural heritage, such as horticulture, nurseries and tourism farming.
- Protect existing agricultural and farming concerns within the City.

City of Bogart

- Attract and support good retail businesses downtown.
- Develop the Orkin Tract into a successful business park.
- Encourage light industry, especially in the medical fields.

- Encourage the development of restaurants, high tech businesses and master planned communities.

City of Watkinsville

- Attract a wide array of employment and business opportunities that enhance the local and regional economies and maintain a positive balance between commercial and residential tax revenues.
- Develop an appropriate balance between available jobs and housing to provide residents with increased local employment options reducing the impact of commuting on the city's transportation network.
- Increase employment activity within a mixed-use environment focusing on appropriate business growth within, and adjacent to, the central business district that will attract both local and non-local populations.
- Promote Watkinsville as a destination for arts, crafts and cultural activities.

Discussion

A strong and diverse economy is important because it creates jobs, increases income and provides a more stable tax base, and thereby provides a better quality of life. Although the county continues to grow economically, it also continues function as a bedroom community for the Athens-Clarke County, and in part the Atlanta Metro area. Because of this proximity to major employment centers in Athens-Clarke County, Gwinnett County, and the general Atlanta metropolitan area, residents of Oconee County have unlimited access to employment within the region.

For decades, economic development has been considered the hallmark of a successful community. Oconee County is relatively early in its growth and development cycle, as evidenced by recent increases in population. Today the population of Oconee County, when compared with the state and nation is younger, is less racially and ethnically diverse, and resides in a less dense but fast growing setting. Recent growth is also changing the County's economic and employment base. While farming and agriculture were once the predominate employment sectors, the trade/transportation/utilities, government, professional/business services and education/health service sectors have grown significantly in recent years. Even so, farming and agriculture remain strong and are an important part of the local economy. In terms of the farmgate value of its agricultural products, Oconee County ranked 24th of 159 counties in Georgia in 2006.

Located within two hours of such major markets as Atlanta, Augusta, Macon and Greenville, South Carolina, Oconee County provides a quality place to live, play, work and conduct business. One of the major advantages of the County is it's proximity to an excellent educational institution at the University of Georgia (UGA), the region's economic engine. Many County residents either are faculty members at UGA or are employed at the University in another capacity. Because of its good schools, quality affordable housing and location, Oconee County has been a prime choice. As the County matures and grows, it has become apparent that a growth focus for the County is to become more sustainable and to target employment opportunities and services within its borders. Oconee County can utilize relationships and UGA's location as a marketing tool when promoting SR 316 as a technical corridor and attracting prospects to the County and its cities.

The County recognizes the need for continued economic development to ensure viable sustained growth within the community. An economic focus will most certainly be important to the future of the county in creating a broad economic base developed with an eye towards diversification and independence from a single source of income.

Several factors will contribute to Oconee County's positive growth outlook. The Oconee County population is becoming more highly educated, providing skilled workers for high tech companies. Major infrastructure improvements have been made or are planned to the water and sewer system and transportation system. Oconee County has a favorable image with a small town atmosphere conveniently located near the major city of Athens and its university. The lower cost of land in comparison to nearby counties in the Atlanta region makes it an attractive location for new businesses and has kept the housing market reasonably priced. The County has begun to attract a range of light industrial, technological and business parks in addition to the retail, service and commercial uses that serve as the foundation of the county's economic base. Oconee County's industrial and employment areas have excellent access to the State highway system. Combined with an increasingly diverse housing stock providing a wealth of well priced market rate housing, an expanding move-up market and new executive housing opportunities, preserved natural resources, and an abundance of land to accommodate employment growth, the county is well poised to undertake a transformation from a commuter community to a well balanced and fiscally sound community.

As residential development pressures grow, Oconee County must balance nonresidential and residential development. Economic development goals include a diversity of employment, from entry level to executive; a diversity of employment types from industry, office and retail; a range of retail and service opportunities from neighborhood to regional retail; business sizes from small entrepreneur to major companies. Cultural and recreational amenities and the tourist opportunities they bring are also important for the county and its cities. A goal is to have a good standard of living for all citizens and to become a sustainable, live/work/play community. Economic development strategies are key in providing neighborhood services and amenities to create economically competitive communities.

Recently the County completed *A Comprehensive Economic Development Plan, 2005*, to develop and focus an emphasis on creating a more balanced community. The primary concepts for this plan are:

- Develop along strong economic principles;
- Capitalize on being a place rich in ideas and talent;
- Attract educated people;
- Physical and cultural amenities are key in attracting knowledgeable workers;
- Regions prosper if organized and individuals have the ability to learn and adapt; and
- Only bold partnerships among business, government and nonprofit sector can bring about change.

Analysis conducted in the Economic Development Plan suggests that at least five target clusters and emerging clusters should be pursued by Oconee County in its economic development efforts:

- Advanced materials and diversified manufacturing

- Food production/processing technologies
- Building and Construction technologies
- Knowledge Intensive Emerging Industries
- Ambulatory Health Care Services

The following are amenities that the County will have to invest in and encourage in order to create a favorable business climate:

- Quality public educational system;
- Quality pre-school and private education;
- Executive housing;
- Recreational amenities;
- Natural areas, greenspace, greenways;
- Cultural and historic amenities;
- Workforce housing;
- A trained and able labor force;
- Hotels with conference facilities;
- Adequate transportation infrastructure.

Over the next 25 years, Oconee County will see dramatic changes in its employment base, not only in the total number but also in the type of jobs that will be available. Employment opportunities in the County are anticipated to almost double between 2000 and the 2030 horizon, with the majority of growth occurring in the unincorporated area. Employment in the services and professional sectors is anticipated to increase. Conversely, the number of jobs in the industrial categories will continue to decrease, particularly in wholesale trade, but also have a lessening influence on local economic opportunities. The continuing increases of the past in the number of construction, retail and public administration jobs are also expected to continue in the future. These three employment groups, while maintaining their importance to the Oconee County economy by adding more jobs, are expected roughly to maintain their current “share” of the total county employment.

The greatest numbers of employment opportunities in the County are small businesses. These establishments are the backbone of the county and will continue to retain their importance in the economy as the county seeks new business ventures. Simultaneously, the county has maintained a strong agricultural sector over the years, primarily in poultry and ornamental horticulture. Overall, 56% of the county is covered by conservation use tax exemptions, primarily for agricultural uses and wildlife habitat.

Implementation Strategies

Countywide

- Implement the recommendations of the Economic Development Plan Strategy. Develop a focused marketing campaign utilizing a target industry approach based on the Economic Development Plan;

- Focus infrastructure improvements in public sewer, water and transportation improvements that will influence the market and direct growth to appropriate locations;
- Undertake a study to expand support for the county's agricultural base with an effective and multi-pronged program combining land use regulation and market-based incentives;
- Examine and implement how new technologies can make farms more competitive, create markets for new products and adopt new production processes;
- Carefully consider approving additional commercial rezoning in the years ahead when obsolete and vacant commercial buildings are nearby and could be redeveloped for the same use;
- Continue to encourage university-affiliated research and technology;
- Promoting air service in the vicinity of Oconee County should be highlighted when attracting potential businesses reliant on such services (i.e., businesses that focus on perishable items—fruit, flowers, vegetables, etc.);
- Continue to strive for diversification within its economic base in order to insulate the County from economic trends and downturns;
- Continue to develop small business, owner occupied and neighborhood based business incubators and assistance to hold onto the community's small town feel;
- Continue to focus appropriate commercial and light industrial development efforts along the SR 316/Loop 10 (Athens Bypass) area;
- Target the SR 53/Mars Hill Road area for continued commercial and resident serving support services, as well as mixed-use planned unit developments and retirement communities;
- Continue to actively market the two vacant tracts with access from SR 316 and US 78 in northwest Oconee County jointly with the State Department of Economic Development and the local governments and educational institutions;
- Promote historic-based tourism. In addition to marketing actual sights and structures, encourage businesses that represent these themes, and other tourist amenities, such as cultural offerings and quality restaurants;
- Continue to improve overall quality of life, including diversified residential, walkable communities, preserving the small town feel, preserving historic buildings and places, and providing amenities such as healthcare, recreation, access, and cultural amenities;
- Continue to coordinate job training and education opportunities;
- Maintain land use designations for the development of move-up and executive housing projects, and encourage such housing types to provide an attractive mix of housing options and support the effort to attract white collar and technology based industries to the county;
- Encourage affordable housing opportunities for the workforce population in new mixed-use communities and in the cities to bring workers closer to their jobs;

- Identify areas with adequate infrastructure to provide rental opportunities as the county diversifies its employment opportunities. Rental opportunities should be adjacent or attached to mixed-use environments to increase walkability;
- Create a small business incubator and retention program featuring financial assistance, training and educational opportunities; and
- The Development Authority should continue to offer incentives for target business to include an expanded menu of incentive tools, such as cash incentive, land banking, infrastructure improvements, fee waivers, training and workforce quality guarantees.

City of Bishop

- Establish a strategy for promoting tourism and business retention which focuses on the rural and farming heritage of the community.

City of Bogart

- Develop the Orkin Tract into a successful business park.

City of Watkinsville

- In concert with the Chamber of Commerce, develop a marketing strategy for promoting tourism in the City; and
- Develop internet and hard copy marketing materials to support the tourism strategy, in particular focusing on arts, crafts and cultural resources.

■ Accommodate Growth While Creating a Sustainable Community That Implements each Community's Vision

The County's rich history and its cultural and natural resources, along with its location in the Athens-Clarke County growth corridor, all contribute to the continued attraction of living in Oconee County. All of this translates into increased growth pressure. The question is how to take active steps to guide this growth to meet the needs of its citizens. The challenge that the County and its cities face is to maintain a balance between the natural and built environment, between residential growth and economic development, and between growth and preservation.

Major Issues

- How are we going to effectively deal with the projected growth of the population?
- How do we ensure that the very things that make Oconee County attractive are not diminished as we experience new growth?
- How can we ensure a balanced tax base that will sustain the community and continue to ensure low taxes?
- What is the best way to utilize our infrastructure facilities and program dollars?
- How will we provide the necessary public safety, educational, recreation and other public services to protect and maintain our Quality of Life in the face of new development?

Policies

Countywide

- Ensure that future land use and development decisions are consistent with the Future Development Map and long range planning goals and policies, and that such decisions promote the Vision of the Community.
- Manage growth through land use plan consistency and infrastructure investment in areas where it will be the most beneficial to the County and its cities as outlined on the Future Development Map (FDM).
- Manage neighborhood environmental factors such as traffic flow, school locations, parks and open space, and other public uses to stabilize and upgrade neighborhoods and dwellings.
- Ensure that natural resources are protected and that greenspace is abundant throughout the County.
- 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.
- Integrate and create mixed-use and village environments with employment opportunities to lessen the reliance on the automobile and commuting outside of the county.
- Ensure that adequate public services and community facilities are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner by a capital improvement program that ensures that new development pays for its proportionate share of the cost of new facilities at the time of development.
- Enhance the overall quality and attractiveness of Oconee County by increasing cultural amenities, striving to strengthen service provision, protecting and enhancing the education system, providing adequate and timely installation of infrastructure, maintaining the structural integrity of structures and the physical environment, and protecting our historical resources.
- Create an intergovernmental mechanism to provide coordination between departments involved in sewer and water expansion, transportation improvements, new school development, public safety, and parks and recreation planning, to share information regarding the pace and location of new residential development and non-residential development trends.

City of Bishop

- Modify existing zoning and subdivision regulations as needed to address future development, public health, safety and welfare.
- Incorporate the new Future Development Map into the zoning amendment procedures when reviewing rezones.

City of Bogart

- Provide city water and sewer for all areas in the City.
- Place utilities underground in the downtown section and in all new developments.
- Provide sidewalks and trails that are safe for the citizens.

- Develop the Gateway with infrastructure so business can locate there.
- Provide full time staffing at the fire station.

City of North High Shoals

- Pave the remaining dirt roads.
- Provide an adequate fire station facility.
- Provide for a new or expanded city park.
- Provide an adequate library facility.
- Manage the development of quality housing using Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
- Adopt new land use policies and ordinances as may be identified by the Mayor and Council or required by State and Federal statutes.

City of Watkinsville

- Develop complete neighborhoods that include the provision of usable parkland and open space, walkable access to community facilities and neighborhood-scale commercial uses, and adequate access to a variety of transportation modes that serve the neighborhood.
- Create an appropriate mix of compatible uses that increase the convenience of residents' day-to-day lives.
- Continue to enhance and expand public facilities and services in order to adequately accommodate future growth.
- Promote development patterns that efficiently utilize land in proximity to existing facilities and services.
- Continue to work with Oconee County in assessing the service delivery strategy and mitigate inefficiencies through strategic planning and cooperative aid agreements.
- Provide an adequate transition between land uses of varying intensities and protect environmentally sensitive areas; vegetative buffers should be retained or planted.
- Modify existing Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as needed to address future development, public health, safety and welfare.
- Maintain and encourage the existing residential/agricultural land use trend through adopted Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
- Incorporate the Future Land Use 2026 Map in the Watkinsville Concept Plan into the zoning amendment procedures when reviewing rezones.
- Promote Watkinsville as a day-trip destination for regional tourism and conventions.

Discussion

The aim of the County and individual cities' Visions are to create a healthy and balanced community. The general vision is that families and residents will have a clean environment and that growth must balance development and environmental protection – accommodating growth while preserving open space and critical habitat, reusing land, and protecting water supplies and air quality. Infrastructure should be planned or in place.

Housing should provide choices. Higher density development, infill development, redevelopment and the adaptive re-use of existing buildings can result in efficient utilization of land resources and more compact urban areas; while at the same time preserving and protecting the rural and suburban character of the county. Efficient use of public and private infrastructure starts with creating neighborhoods that maximize the use of existing infrastructure. The continued redevelopment of downtown and corridor areas maintains and enhances the county and its cities' historic past and small town setting.

The county possesses numerous strengths relative to quality of life, which should be accentuated to further develop the community economically. These include child well-being, a healthy family environment, attractive natural resources, annual community events and scenic attractions, high home ownership rates, relatively affordable housing, accessible health care and a low crime rate. To increase its position as a sustainable community, Oconee County must be perceived as a unified community, where individual cities and the surrounding county are coordinated and focused on collaborative efforts.

Efforts to achieve this image have begun, and the momentum should not be lost. The County is poised to create a positive future with proper planning. The County and its cities pull from its greatest strength, its proactive and concerned residents. Extensive public participation, visioning, and goal setting has been the hallmark of planning in the county.

Plan Consistency

This update of the Comprehensive Plan is the first step in creating sustainable land use patterns. The next step is to assure Plan implementation. To achieve consistency between its various development ordinances, and between ordinances and Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, the County and Watkinsville have already embarked on revised development ordinances.

Although the County currently reviews rezoning proposals to ensure Comprehensive Plan Consistency, this update will add a further dimension to the planning and development process in formalizing plan consistency. Detailed Character Area guidelines, strong policy and issue based planning, and a more concrete Future Development Map (FDM) (formerly the Future Land Use Map) creates a clear picture of the County and cities' desired Vision.

As a first step, planning staff will review all new development or requests for rezoning for overall consistency with Comprehensive Plan policies, and specifically with Character Area intent and the Future Development Map. If the proposal for a Future Development Map Amendment becomes appropriate the Future Development Map would be changed to reflect the new Character Area; each rezoning should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. As part of a zoning analysis or development proposal, this step will help to assure greater quality and consistency to achieve each community's Vision.

In the years ahead, the Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed at least every five years and should be further updated as development occurs, as market conditions shift, and as community desires change. In addition, the timing, location and planning of capital facilities should be reviewed annually in terms of expected land use patterns.

Infrastructure Concurrency

In a well-balanced community, public infrastructure and services must be available or planned to serve expected growth. As part of the zoning and development process, each jurisdiction should look closely at infrastructure availability.

1. Traffic Impact Study

A traffic impact study can be required if the trips generated from a proposed development will impact the adjacent road system. Trip generation that requires a study may be based on the absolute number of trips generated, the percentage of trips compared to adjacent street capacity and/or the existing level of service of the adjacent roads. The following criteria may be included in a traffic impact study.

- (a) Existing and proposed traffic conditions;
- (b) Projections for 10 and 20 years;
- (c) Capacity analysis;
- (d) Level of Service analysis to maintain adequate traffic operations appropriate to each jurisdiction; and
- (e) Cost estimates for any required improvement on public roads.

2. Utilities Capacity Analysis

A utility capacity analysis can be required if a proposed development will severely impact adjacent or system-wide capacity. The following elements should be included in the study:

- (a) Water System Capacity
 - Fire Flow;
 - Peak day demand; and
 - Projections for 10 and 20 years.
- (b) Sewer System Capacity
 - Peak Flow;
 - Projections for 10 and 20 years.
 - Industrial surcharge; and
 - Pretreatment needs.
- (c) Stormwater
 - Rate of offsite flows.

Capital Improvements Plan and Budget

Current and future capital improvements were identified during Character Area development, both in actual facilities and in terms of what the appropriate level of service for a Character Area is. For example, in the more rural areas the County will have a lower level of service, such as no future sewer extension. Developing level of service expectations will provide for an efficient use of the County's and individual cities' infrastructure dollars. As part of the Capital Improvements Plan and Budget process, it is very important to identify future sites or at least general locations for community facilities such as parks and educational facilities as early as possible using the guidelines in the Plan. Early acquisi-

tion of sites minimizes ultimate land costs and permits the best sites for community facilities to be obtained before other development occurs. Capital facilities programming should be in conjunction with outlined land use patterns on the Future Development Map and policies within this Plan. The Capital Improvement Planning and budgeting process should include:

- Detailed project descriptions;
- Location of desirable sites;
- Schematic layouts of buildings and sites;
- Construction cost estimates; and
- Preparation of a schedule, program and budget including the following elements:
 - Design and construction schedule
 - Possible grant funding
 - Staff operation and maintenance costs
 - Five-year capital budget

Infrastructure Financing

In addition to local funds, state and federal grants can be used to help pay for local projects. On the average, all grant programs require some local participation for capital expenses as well as a commitment for local staffing, maintenance and operational expenses. Alternative funding sources should be identified during the update to the five-year capital budget program. Alternative sources that can be utilized include such programs as impact fees, SPLOST, bonding and special improvement districts to provide a complete funding plan. In general, SPLOST receives some revenue from nonresidents passing through the county, while impact fees help fund facilities that are only needed to serve new development, shifting the burden from existing taxpayers.

Land Use Patterns

In preparing a Future Development Map for the County, it is advisable to designate more acreage in each land use category than actual construction is expected to occupy. This provides the market with a choice of available sites and avoids price pressures that a “tight” supply would generate. As the Community Assessment outlined, the County’s demographics are shifting and diversifying in age, ethnicity, and lifestyles. Much of the future growth of the county should be accommodated in planned and mixed-use developments of varying unit types and densities and the addition of neighborhood services and retail. Rezoning requests for new stand-alone commercial sites should be given scrutiny and approved only when clearly needed. While this will encourage development of vacant sites already in place, it will also tend to encourage redevelopment of vacant obsolete buildings that would otherwise become blighting influences on the community. Phasing development through the guidance of Character Areas will ensure that land use compatibility is addressed, existing neighborhoods are protected and that infrastructure dollars will be used as efficiently as possible.

Implementation Strategies

- Create a Future Development Plan Map that establishes appropriate areas to accommodate projected employment and population growth while mitigating negative impacts;
- Create Character Areas that identify the characteristics that are important to the community. Utilize these Character Areas to achieve the Vision through appropriate uses, compatibility and linkages between uses, site planning and aesthetics;
- Review and revise Development Codes as necessary to maximize Comprehensive Plan implementation;
- Pursue the development of additional zoning districts and possible overlay areas that will allow for creativity in design and use within the parameters of progressive development that contribute to the character of Oconee County and its cities;
- Review this Plan yearly during the budget/STWP update in terms of actual population growth trends, rezones, map amendments and actual development;
- Develop a 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan, which includes a schedule and budget for new facilities, maintenance and operation expenses, and a replacement plan for aging infrastructure, based on adopted population and employment forecasts, Character Areas and Levels of Service;
- Review and develop a comprehensive Infrastructure-Financing Plan. Ensure that new development pays its fair share of infrastructure costs;
- Develop a school expansion plan based on adopted forecasts of population. Coordinate new facilities planning with the location and pace of residential building permits. Develop neighborhood based schools where appropriate;
- Look at service delivery strategies and work out any conflicts between the County and the cities;
- Analyze current services and locational aspects of police, fire, libraries and medical services to determine appropriate densities in appropriate locations. These services should be located within neighborhoods and residential developments;
- Foster redevelopment of aging commercial centers and industrial buildings. Some of these centers offer opportunities for mixed-use residential and commercial. Identify underutilized and vacant sites that are prime areas for redevelopment. Investigate incentives to encourage redevelopment;
- Focus growth within existing City boundaries and targeted growth areas within the County until it is necessary to pursue annexation of areas within the city spheres of influence;
- Manage neighborhood environmental factors such as traffic flow, school locations, parks and opens spaces, and other public uses to stabilize and upgrade neighborhoods and dwellings; and
- Encourage development in mixed-use areas to provide for a diversity of economic opportunities in a walkable environment.

■ **Protect Our Rural Character and Agricultural Heritage**

Rural character is one of the key strengths of Oconee County. The western and southern portions of Oconee County are still overwhelmingly rural with most of the land classified as agricultural or undeveloped. Residential development is mainly found in the northern part of the county. This rural character should be preserved through some means. A major goal is the use of existing infrastructure and to minimize the conversion of undeveloped land in the rural areas of the County. Infrastructure availability should be a major guide in where new residential and nonresidential developments are located. The Agricultural Preservation, Country Estates and Rural Places Character Areas were created to limit development to larger lots of 2+ acres to achieve this goal. Development standards within these Character Areas also encourage protection of working farms.

Major Issues

- Sprawl pressures emanating from nearby Athens, pressures for retaining prime farmland and limited use of agricultural conservation easements to preserve the land even if it sold.
- How do we keep the southern portion of the county mostly agricultural to preserve greenspace, active agricultural and sensitive natural resource areas?
- Growth needs to be guided towards areas where infrastructure is provided and planned, and away from the rural areas of the county.

Policies

Countywide

- Preserve rural character by directing development where appropriate and establishing design and development guidelines to implement desired character.
- Commercial development in the south end of the county, when allowed, should be small-scale, local-serving businesses that reflect the rural and agricultural heritage of that area.
- Roadways should be developed to promote the rural character of the community, such as the use of swales and ditches and other rural roadway characteristics in the south end of the County.
- Sewer and water expansion and other infrastructure and services should reflect a rural Level of Service within the appropriate Character Areas.
- Using the Future Development Map as a guide, focus new growth into appropriate Character Areas, thereby lifting development pressure from farming and rural communities.
- Permanent open space should surround developments that are allowed in rural areas in order to retain the feeling of open vistas 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 should be protected and enhanced.

- Preserve and protect prime agricultural and forestlands with incentives, land use regulation and other means of preservation.
- Plan cooperatively with the Board of Education in locating new schools that will avoid generating unwanted growth in rural and agricultural areas.

City of North High Shoals

- Encourage preservation of prime agricultural soils.

Discussion

The County and its cities have identified its rural roots as its overall character, complemented by a series of integrated villages within the cities and northern part of the county where residents can live, work and play, and where recreational land uses are accessible throughout. The community promotes a mix of uses and infrastructure that are highly integrated with land use goals and policies. Oconee County and its cities are continuing to develop and define themselves as population, demographic and land use changes occur. Today, Oconee County continues to evolve away from bedroom community status into a sustainable community that provides quality of life amenities, recreation and culture, retail and service establishments and economic development opportunities. The community is also looking to encourage more sustainable and innovative residential developments in the future.

“Rural communities” and “small town” are defining characteristics within the county and reflected in the use of Character Areas. Existing neighborhood character is identified, protected and enhanced. In general, the cities are preserving and enhancing the heritage nature of their cores, while building “in-town” densities. A recurring theme encircling and outside the cities is a desire to retain all of the quality of life benefits of rural and suburban living, concurrent with fostering supporting nonresidential development in appropriate locations, while preserving a significant piece of the natural and agricultural fabric that attracted the residents of Oconee County to the community in the first place. In an effort to contain growth and mitigate incompatible land uses, the County’s wetlands, recharge areas and prime agricultural soils in the more rural parts of the county must be protected. Farmland preservation strategies should be enacted to maintain quality of life and to provide appropriate greenspace and agricultural space.

Agricultural operations must be successful in order to be preserved; otherwise, the lure of higher land prices for development can overwhelm the profit of toiling on the land. Much of the County’s developable land is currently zoned for agricultural uses. The northern part of the County County’s current adopted Future Land Use Plan Map shows much of this land is intended to be used for future office/professional, retail, residential or industrial uses. The southern portion of the County is assigned Character Area designations which are meant to preserve the rural integrity. Adequate space exists in the southern portion of the county to support very low density residential use while maintaining the quality of life and green space that the residents desire.

Implementation

- Draft a farmland preservation strategy that:
 - Targets areas for retention and establishes priorities for assistance or protection;

- Strives to create a balance between “rural” character and the rights of property owners, with programs such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs), Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs), conservation easements, the use of land trusts and a wider use of conservation subdivisions; and
- Implements a program of advice and assistance with new technologies that can make farms more competitive, create markets for new products and adopt new production processes.
- Create design guidelines to assure compatibility with rural character and minimize visual impact, for example, buffering or setbacks from rural roads to ensure visual compatibility;
- Publicize the tax options for landowners to help preserve their land in agricultural or natural states through the County website and informational packets at the County and city government offices; and
- Preserve a rural lifestyle in the southern part of the county and elsewhere through zoning and implementation of the standards established for the Agricultural Preservation, Country Estates and Rural Places Character Areas.

■ **Preserve Our Sense of Place**

Communities that craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanding choices in housing and transportation, encourage the development of a unique sense of place. Community building seeks to create interesting, unique places that reflect the values and culture of the people who reside there, and create the types of physical environments that support a more cohesive community fabric.

Issues

- How do we preserve our “small town” feel and rural roots?
- What methods can be utilized to address the cosmetic aspect of new construction?
- Currently historic resources in Oconee County outside the cities have very little protection. Only those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places have any type of protection; the protection is minimal and only relates to impacts of federally funded projects. The County has no historic resource protective ordinances; protection measures are now written into zoning change requests.
- A number of the resources identified on the 1976 survey in Bogart have been lost through new development or reuse of the property. Efforts to save these properties were initiated on each of these properties individually. However, efforts to retain these historic properties have been unsuccessful and they have for the most part been lost to commercial development.
- The Mayor and Council of the Bishop City, using legal zoning and subdivision regulations, strive to ensure that incompatible land uses or other activities are precluded from adversely affecting the historic nature of the City. However, these measures may not offer permanent protection of these resources.

- Oconee County is to some extent seen as a bedroom community to the Athens-Clarke County metropolitan area. The community's identity, including the County and its cities, needs to be strengthened.
- Dispersed nonresidential development may take away the importance of the downtown cores in the cities.

Policies

Countywide

- Protect the overall single-family character of the community while providing other housing options for the growing senior and workforce segments of the population in appropriate places.
- All new public buildings, institutional buildings, residential and nonresidential private developments, should be characterized by high-quality architectural design and construction, should include appropriate civic spaces and should reflect the Community's unique image and character. These types of improvements help create an identity or sense of place that will ultimately set Oconee County apart from other communities by providing our residents and businesses a reason for investing in Oconee County.
- To enhance the existing historic environment, new development and redevelopment should be of the highest quality and incorporate design and site elements that address the community's Vision and Character Area intent.
- Sustainable communities contain civic spaces, which ensure social interactions and personal connections. Civic spaces include open space/conservation areas; greenways, parks, greens, squares and plazas; as well as special sites reserved for civic buildings. All of these types of spaces serve as symbols of the community, thus enhancing community identity.
- Ensure the feeling of "openness" and space by keeping residential densities low within the majority of the unincorporated area.
- Community roadways should be designed for lower speeds to encourage urban life and community interaction.
- Focus on the streetscape in high-density and commercial areas, with landscaping along roads and with parking areas located beside and behind the buildings. Where appropriate in urbanized areas, bring the buildings to the sidewalk to create a more traditional shopping environment.
- Protect and enhance the historical assets of the community through regulation, assistance and reuse.
- Continue to utilize Oconee Heritage Park to preserve our heritage and promote tourism within the County.

City of Bishop

- Create a pedestrian friendly downtown and pedestrian accessibility within the City.
- Maintain the primary residential character of the City as high quality single family detached housing.

- Encourage a limited amount of housing diversity utilizing innovative practices, such as residential lofts above small businesses, adaptation of existing historical properties and historically compatible infill development.

City of Bogart

- Encourage and maintain a wide range of well built attractive homes, including some cluster homes.
- Assure adequate recreation facilities for our children.
- Discourage and eventually eliminate billboards.

City of North High Shoals

- Encourage the identification, preservation and utilization of historic structures.
- Promote and encourage a pattern of low-density single-family homes, which are compatible with the historic district.

City of Watkinsville

Watkinsville's Vision is about ensuring that the best of the past is preserved, while creating new communities that are attractive, vital and enduring. Several aspects are important to the creation of a "sense of place" and the development of a new identity:

- Preserve and enhance the unique qualities and characteristics of the City as it grows to ensure that Watkinsville retains its high quality of life.
- Create a thoughtfully structured community that preserves Watkinsville's significant characteristics and establishes a flexible framework for innovative development enhancing the residents' quality of life.
- Incorporate the City's historic resources, to the extent possible, into the new community form. New development should be compatible with the community's existing scale and design and should build on the character and identity that has been established.
- Downtown should serve as a mixed-use community center that provides a wide variety of employment, shopping, cultural and social opportunities.
- The focus of downtown is primarily commercial in nature; however, a mix of compatible residential uses would complement the area's businesses.
- Continue to improve downtown's pedestrian friendly environment with landscaping, signage and street furniture built to human scale.
- Increase the aesthetic appeal of the community through the placement of public art displays taking advantage of Watkinsville's expanding art community.
- Provide a diverse mix of housing choice accommodating the demographic and economic needs of the City's residents within quality, well-designed neighborhoods.
- Small greens and playgrounds should be encouraged within new residential developments.
- Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures for residential or mixed-use development to maintain a mix of housing types and retain the city's historic character.

- Promote clustered residential development that preserves and enhances natural systems and resources.
- Utilize housing and property maintenance codes to protect the community's character and retain and enhance property values.
- Improve the aesthetics along major entry and exit points in the city, including GA highway 15, Old 441 Highway, GA highway 53 and Simonton Bridge Road.
- Enhance the aesthetic qualities of commercial development along gateway corridors and key entry points into the City.

Discussion

"Sense of place" is another term for "community." Land use patterns, historical resources, infrastructure and service investment all contribute to this sense of place and the sustainability of the community because it is the nature and quality of social interactions that is the key to building and sustaining any sense of community. However, most of all, a community derives its sense of place and identity from the people who live, shop and work in the community. A community's emotional, intellectual and spiritual feel and identification with a place actually create that place.

Oconee County and particularly its cities value their historic and cultural resources, and its unique sense of place. Historic resources include landmark buildings, historic structures and sites, commercial and residential districts, historic rural resources, archaeological and cultural sites and the historic environment in which they exist. Historic resources serve as visual reminders of a community's past, providing a link to its cultural heritage and a better understanding of the people and events that shaped the patterns of its development. Preservation of these important resources makes it possible for them to continue to play an integral, vital role in the community. Currently the County has nine properties and two Districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, while each of the cities pursues historic preservation through Historic Districts and/or preservation programs and planning efforts.

Many residents equate the county's sense of place with its rural heritage, and the historic nature of its cities. Scattered throughout the county are individual communities where residents are bound together with close ties. Oconee County is also known for its open space, low-density development and family-friendly orientation. These intangibles, along with the preservation of the physical aspects of the community's heritage must be translated within the character areas and Future Development Map in order to achieve each community's Vision.

Historical Preservation

Oconee County's history includes several periods, including pre-history or Native American history; early frontier from circa 1780-1820; and the County's early development during the 19th Century. It also has many early 20th Century historic resources. Many of the county's resources are associated with historic themes, such as industry (i.e. mills); transportation (i.e. stagecoach routes and railroad lines); and agriculture. The majority of the county's remaining resources reflect the post Civil War period of development (1865-2000) reflected in specific building and architectural types. A Historical Resources Survey conducted in 1976 inventoried the county's existing historical resources dating up to 1920. However, the 1976 Inventory is now outdated, although a Preservation Plan was

prepared in 1990 to examine the historic resources and opportunities related to tourism and other economic benefits.

The real protection of historic resources is accomplished on the local level with its inclusion in historic preservation planning, growth strategies, comprehensive planning and with the adoption of local protective ordinances. Historic preservation planning is most effective when aligned with other aspects of comprehensive planning including community facilities, housing, natural resources and land-use planning. Historic preservation helps to maintain the quality of life within a community while instilling a sense of pride and the familiarity of place.

Preservation of older structures provides environmental diversity and aesthetically pleasing surroundings. Preservation ties closely with housing by keeping available housing useful. Recognition of significant historic structures encourages their continued use and upkeep. Federal and state programs also provide incentives for renovation and rehabilitation of local historic properties, especially for low and moderate-income housing. Preservation of significant historic resources should become an integral part of land use planning. As such, historic resources should be recorded, mapped, and evaluated in existing land use inventories, and their desirability for preservation should be determined. Boundaries of zoning districts should be drawn with sensitivity to preservation opportunities, which would be consulted concurrent with implementation of a local historic resource protective ordinance.

Currently historic, archaeological and rural resources in Oconee County have very little protection. The County has no local historic resource protective ordinances. Only those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places have any type of protection; the protection is minimal and only relates to impacts of federally funded projects. Negative impact is mitigated but mitigation does not preclude demolition if the resources are judged expendable. The Historic Sites Subcommittee, County staff, the Board of Commissioners and the individual cities support and encourage preservation on a larger scale. Other individuals throughout the County have worked independently to nominate properties to the National Register or to restore individual properties.

Although the County, in concert with the City of Watkinsville, had taken steps to nominate three sites and the South Main Street Historic District in Watkinsville prior to 1990, the County has become even more proactive in protecting its historic resources, starting with the 1990 Preservation Plan.

Bishop

The Mayor and Council are dedicated to preserving, rehabilitating and protecting the City's historic resources. Within the designated historic district and city limits, few structures are incompatible with the historic designation. The Mayor and Council of the City, using legal zoning and subdivision regulations, strive to ensure that incompatible land uses or other activities are precluded from adversely affecting the historic nature of the City. However, these measures may not offer permanent protection of these resources.

Bogart

The City of Bogart contains several historic properties, primarily residential, and the level of community support for the preservation and protection of these resources is high. However, a number of the resources identified on the 1976 survey have been lost through new development or reuse of the property. Efforts to save these properties were initiated on each of these properties individually. However, efforts to retain these historic proper-

ties have been unsuccessful and they have for the most part been lost to commercial development. At this time, there are no management measures in effect to protect these resources other than traditional zoning. The City, in conjunction with the citizen's committee, has begun a downtown revitalization effort, which includes active pursuit of a nomination of a residential and commercial historical district to the National Register listing.

North High Shoals

The City of North High Shoals supports the preservation and protection of its historic resources, and formed a local historic society prior to 2000. However, they do not have any management measures in place to protect their historic resources. The City has several activities underway, including the intent to nominate the North High Shoals Historic District to the National Register, and the potential to conduct an updated Historic Resources Survey utilizing a matching grant from the Historic Planning Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources or other potential sources of funding.

Watkinsville

The City of Watkinsville is strongly committed to preservation of its historic resources. The City coordinates with the Historic Sites and Tourism Advisory Committee and makes donations to assist in the nomination of sites and districts within the City limits.

Land Use Patterns

The ordering of the physical space, or land use patterns, encourages the use of public interactive space. Public sidewalks, streets, parks and civic squares are examples of places where equal interactions can occur. Such interactions tend to minimize economic stratification and enable free information exchanges. These interactions are the moments in which the grounds for community occur: social cohesion is established and individuals are viscerally reminded of their membership in a community of variety and diversity. The vision of the community is to create a landscape of land use patterns that residents and visitors alike will be interested in using.

The built environment is the product of an incredibly complex set of decisions by a wide array of individuals and groups who often operate under vastly different constraints. One of the most influential actions the County and its cities can make to enhance and encourage the physical enactment of the community's Vision is to write a good plan and a set of regulations that both encourage and create a distinct sense of place. A short term implementation strategy is to review current development regulations in order to bring all regulations closer to a "form based," or what had typically been called "performance based," zoning. Character Area guidelines are utilized as the basis for actual regulations that will achieve the community's Vision in as flexible a manner as possible. This type of land use pattern development reaches beyond the utopian glaze of communities master-planned from undeveloped "greenfield" to maturity by attempting to recreate an honest semblance of the development environment that existed prior to the adoption of modern zoning laws.

From an urban design standpoint, the key is to avoid dispersed development projects that are unrelated to one another, ignore the natural environment 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 communities will achieve a sustainable development pattern that will carry them through to the year 2030.

Design Standards

The Vision statements of the County and each of the cities are about ensuring that the best of the past is preserved, while creating new communities that are attractive, vital and enduring. Several aspects are important to the creation of a “sense of place” and the development of a memorable identity.

Communities that craft a vision and set standards for development and construction that respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanding choices in housing and transportation, encourage the development of a unique sense of place. Community building seeks to create interesting, unique places that reflect the values and culture of the people who reside there, and create the types of physical environments that support a more cohesive community fabric.

Land is generally more limited in the individual cities than in the unincorporated county. Because of these more limited resources within the cities, they must promote quality new development on remaining vacant parcels of land, annex land from the unincorporated area, or redevelop existing uses. Guided by a Vision of how and where to grow, the County and individual cities are able to identify and utilize opportunities to make new development conform to their standards and Vision. High quality communities will retain their economic vitality and value over time. In so doing, the infrastructure and natural resources used to create these areas will provide residents with a distinctive and beautiful place that they can call “home” for generations to come.

Architectural Compatibility

All new public buildings, institutional buildings, residential and nonresidential private developments should be characterized by high quality architectural design and construction and should reflect a unique community image and character. These types of improvements help create an identity or sense of place and will ultimately set the county and its cities apart from other communities and provide residents and businesses a reason for investing in the community. There are a variety of ways to achieve their Visions for the future. The design of new construction should relate to the surrounding community. New residential development should be distinctly “Oconee County” and not “Any Where USA.” Niche projects that have a small number of units and unique architectural styles have proven popular in other communities, particularly within incorporated areas, and particularly in the for-sale market. Design that capitalizes on the County’s and each city’s historic attributes will sell and reinforce the overall character of the County.

Context-Sensitive Roadway Design

Roadways have taken on a much greater role than just transportation corridors; 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 increase in monetary and spiritual value.

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, their width, by the centerline radius, and the super elevation 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.

Context-sensitive design solutions for roadways incorporate the appropriate capacity and character elements for the specific situation. As project decisions and design choices focus more on the surrounding context and how the roadway “fits” within a community, we 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 roadways:

- Pedestrian access and safety should be provided along all routes, particularly those in more densely populated areas. This includes the need for safe crossings at appropriate locations.
- Roadways should include bicycle access and safety, including both on-road and off road opportunities.
- Street trees and landscaping should line all public rights-of-way.

A second part of the roadway design is the design for the pedestrian. Some potential context-sensitive design elements include:

- Landscaped medians and oversized rights-of way.
- Canopy trees, historic trees, and clear zone policy to preserve them.
- Special guardrails to minimize obstruction.
- Inclusion of sidewalks and bike lanes as part of mitigations and alternatives.
- Construction materials that blend with the environment.
- Gateways, amenity corridors and historic area sensitivity.
- Open space and trails as buffers and preservation of the viewshed.

Roads in Oconee County include a broad range of roadway types. It is critical that the roadways for new developments be appropriate to the character of the surrounding community.

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.
- 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

Local, slow movement thoroughfares are suitable for neighborhoods and lower intensity nonresidential areas. Character may vary somewhat, however, responding to the actual Character Area it is located in. A neighborhood street that is urban or suburban in character will have at least some of the following design elements:

- Continuous landscaped planting along both sides of the street.
- Sidewalks along at least one side of the street.
- Pedestrian scaled lighting.
- Traffic calming measures such as tree lined medians and central-island plantings in cul-de-sacs.

Mixed-Use/Urban Streets

These streets, which are located between urban neighborhoods and within neighborhood and community villages and regional centers, cater to both 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 should be incorporated into the overall design. All road improvements should include a provision for the bicyclist and the pedestrian. A mixed-use/urban street has the following design elements:

- On-street parking.
- Continuous landscaping utilizing landscaped strips, parking bump-outs or medians.
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street (width may vary depending on specific adjacent land uses).
- Where appropriate, pedestrian amenities, such as street furniture and landscaping would be designed and located to permit the unobstructed flow of pedestrians and allow adjacent retail or restaurants to expand outdoors.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures can be used to address the issue of cut-through traffic experienced on residential streets through initial design within neighborhoods or a redesign of the roadway or other streetscape improvements in commercial corridors. Traffic calming measures not only influence safety and the pedestrian comfort level, but they add to a sense of place and intimacy to a community. Traffic calming for quieter neighborhood streets should be incorporated into all projects, such as loop road design, 3- and 4-way stops, roundabouts and raised median islands.

All jurisdictions could benefit from the implementation of common methods to improve pedestrian safety in high-density and commercial areas, including:

- Speed tables or humps (bringing the roadway to pedestrian grade).
- Decorative pavements at corridor gateways, special areas, or at intersection cross walks (pave block, cobblestone, imprinted concrete or asphalt, etc.) to increase driver awareness of pedestrian activity and to produce the desire to “slow-down.”
- Narrowing of lane widths or changing roadway curb lines to slow vehicle passage.
- Traffic circles or roundabouts.
- Traffic signal timing modifications that give more cycle time to pedestrian movements and limit vehicle “progression through the corridor.”
- Restricted “right-on-red” vehicular movements at signalized intersections.
- Restricted left-turn or right-turn movements at some intersections.
- Curb-line modification at intersections (use smaller corner radius to improve pedestrian crossings).

Implementation Strategies

Countywide

- Develop and adopt a countywide Historic Preservation Ordinance or overlay in compliance with the Georgia Historic Preservation act of 1980, including the process of disposition of properties identified in the 1990 and updated survey;
- In conjunction with the cities, seek funding to undertake an updated Historic Resources survey to determine the existence or loss of structures previously listed in the 1976 inventory, as well as identify significant resources from the period of 1920 to 1956;
- Prepare a listing of properties potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register;
- Pursue the nomination of the Farmington Historic District, in conjunction with the Freeman Creek Church, and the old depot, to the National Register listing;
- Review the locations of existing historic resources and continue to incorporate historic preservation measures into rezone requests;
- Increase the role of historic sites protection through trusts, outside donations, and participation in identifying and registering sites with the National Register;
- The County and the Historic Citizen’s Committee should continue to monitor sites for protection. National or State potential historic register properties should be coordinated through the Historic Citizen’s Committee prior to the issuance of building permits to allow for recommendations for potential rehabilitation of the property, integration of the structure into the proposed development plan, acquisition, or movement of the structure to another location, among other options;
- Continue working toward the renovation of the upper story of the Old Elder Mill (the lower floor has already been restored into living quarters) and listing of the structure on the National Register;
- Offer information and assistance to property owners who may be interested in having their potentially eligible property listed on the National Register of Historic Places;

- Utilize current state and federal programs, which provide funding, staff and services in the area of historic preservation. Seek and pursue the availability of additional funding resources and private sector support;
- Develop an Archaeological Resources Map as a means to identify and preserve significant sites;
- Investigate preservation incentives and preservation tools such as easements, transfer of development rights, and overlay zoning;
- Support and expand the existing arts, cultural, entertainment, recreation and tourism offerings;
- The historic core downtowns and Regional Centers need to be developed as lively interactive mixed use environments;
- Develop specific architectural design standards for Character Areas where appropriate;
- Adopt development ordinances to control style and design structures where appropriate, to regulate strip commercial and stand alone big box development, and seek to guide new commercial and non-residential into “village” settings;
- Develop a public art program for civic facilities, public spaces and into roadway design;
- Create gateway features to highlight the entrances to special places and to help alert motorists that they should slow down as they pass through;
- Develop Context Sensitive Design program for transportation projects such as the one recommended by the Georgia Department of Transportation;
- Design and incorporate appropriate new street and sidewalk design concepts into the development regulations for each Character Area within the County and the cities. All street designs should include provisions for alternative modes of transportation;
- Identify and implement traffic calming measures within all new development and appropriate existing neighborhoods that are experiencing cut-through traffic;
- The County and each city should develop a complementary strong identity program: identify design opportunities such as decorative pedestrian crossing/crosswalks; street lighting, street signs with neighborhood names; destination signs pointing to and from points of interests; street furnishings; roadway street landscaping; banners and flags; public art; and gateway features, when planning civic spaces and roadway improvements; and
- Consider developing special buffer requirements along the major thoroughfares of the county, or where established neighborhoods which are not likely to transition to another use may be impacted by nonresidential development. Reverse frontage lots in a subdivision that back up to a major thoroughfare, along with a buffer, is an appropriate technique along high-traffic corridors.

Bishop

- Continue to use zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that incompatible land uses or other activities are precluded from adversely affecting the historic nature of the city;

- Target, promote and encourage historically compatible infill, redevelopment and re-use;
- Continue to allocate resources into the redevelopment and beautification of downtown; and
- Create an interconnected pedestrian pathway system in the city.

Bogart

- Pursue the nomination of the Historic District to the National Register by 2010; and
- Continue to allocate resources into the revitalization and beautification of downtown.

North High Shoals

- Nominate the North High Shoals Historic District to the National Register;
- Allocate resources into the redevelopment and beautification of downtown;
- Conduct an updated Historic Resources Survey utilizing a matching grant from the HPD of DNR or other potential sources of funding; and
- Expand the library.

Watkinsville

- Standardize historic preservation procedures and design guidelines to retain and enhance the scale and character of the city;
- Incorporate locally significant historic landmarks into the design of new development, where applicable;
- Expand the existing community park, and develop two additional community parks to provide recreation opportunities within walking distance of existing and future residents;
- Continue to fund and support the expansion of the arts, cultural and entertainment, recreational and tourism offerings;
- Redevelop Rocket Field from its existing use as a baseball diamond to a community square available for passive recreation and civic uses; and
- Improve the aesthetics along major entry and exit points in the City, including GA Highway 15, Old 441 Highway, GA Highway 53 and Simonton Bridge Road.

■ Create Land Use Patterns that Promote Connectivity and Mobility

Oconee County's road network and planned improvements are not enough to ensure future connectivity and mobility within the community. This problem needs to be addressed on a multi-faceted level, through roadway improvements, the development of alternative transportation facilities, and integrated community planning. The transportation network should accommodate land use patterns, multiple uses, provide adequate capacity, be multi-modal and serve the needs of all residents utilizing alternative modes of transportation along with automobiles. At the level of a comprehensive plan, community planning strategies focus less on the visual appearance of buildings and streets and more on the organization of neighborhoods, commercial areas and open spaces and their

connectivity to the overall transportation network in order to increase overall capacity and mobility within the County.

Major Issues

- America's focus on cars has induced a pattern of sprawling development while creating isolation within specific projects.
- Truck traffic, especially along SR 316, around Watkinsville and through Bishop, has reduced the quality of life.
- Street improvements in older neighborhoods are often characterized by excessively narrow lanes, a lack of curbs and sidewalks and poor provision for off road parking that leads to vehicular congestion.
- Many residents commute to employment outside the county, while many employees of local businesses commute into the county from other locations.
- How do we increase connectivity to promote continued community, social interactions and alternatives to the automobile?

Policies

Countywide

- Promote development in appropriate areas that is pedestrian-oriented, community-centered and minimizes vehicular trips with increased internal connectivity.
- Developments should not be built in isolation; developments should connect with the existing transportation network and adjacent properties.
- All roadways should be designed to be context sensitive (as discussed above) and integrated with adjacent land use.
- Promote clustering of uses and compact site development to provide a wide range of goods and services that are accessible by alternative modes of transportation in appropriate places.
- Distribute services and facilities in appropriate locations to provide residents with convenient access.
- Focus denser levels of growth within the cities and targeted growth areas within the county where there is adequate infrastructure.
- Encourage mixed-use village areas to provide for a diversity of economic opportunities and housing in a walkable environment in appropriate locations.
- Protect the capacity of major thoroughfares by avoiding strip commercial development or limiting the frequency of driveways and requiring internal access between adjacent commercial properties.
- Continue working through MACORTS (the Regional Transportation Planning Organization) to develop a regional solution to transportation congestion, and to lobby for DOT transportation projects.

City of Bishop

- Work to reactivate the 441 Bypass project around Bishop.

- Increase connectivity and pedestrian orientation in the City.

City of Bogart

- Provide sidewalks to main street shops and pedestrian accessibility throughout the city.
- Help get rail to the Athens Area from Atlanta and have a stop in Bogart.

City of Watkinsville

- Develop and maintain a safe, convenient and efficient transportation system that recognizes existing needs, reflects the needs of future development patterns, provides a balance of transportation modes, and respects the integrity of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Improve the road network to accommodate increased traffic volumes. The improved transportation system should be an interconnected, grid pattern street system designed to accommodate multiple forms of transportation.
- Develop a multi-modal master plan that includes greenway trails, bicycle lanes and sidewalks that coordinates new development with the construction of new facilities.
- Develop a multi-use greenway system utilizing stream and river corridors as well as the rail line that traverses Watkinsville.
- Slow traffic through the downtown and provide on and off street parking to increase downtown patronage.
- Encourage a mix of uses that can lead to pedestrian convenience and accessibility in order to reduce the need for automobile traffic.
- Invest in the necessary infrastructure (sidewalks, bicycle lanes, greenways and trails, signalization and signage) to accommodate alternative forms of transportation and increase mobility options.
- Plan an efficient street system using a variety of street types that provide adequate routes for travel by all modes and preserve adequate right-of-way to address future transportation needs.
- Develop public/private partnerships and require shared parking lots within new Central Business District development to increase the amount of public parking space.
- Continue to address transportation safety issues that enhance the safety of all users.

Discussion

The road network and its ability to handle existing traffic volumes is a major issue in the county. There is a concern that the original rural road network is having difficulty keeping up with growth. Another transportation issue is to foster land use patterns that continue to promote human interaction and connections. To tackle transportation issues, the solution is threefold: develop an adequate and safe roadway system; look at alternative modes that create linkages to everyday necessities, and develop land use patterns that are sustainable, such as compact design, mixed use, and multi-use.

In addition, internal and external connectivity and linkages should be an integral part of every new project to provide a safe and extensive alternative transportation mode choice. All new communities built within the county will be built with sidewalks on all public

rights-of-way. Internal pedestrian and bikeway trail systems that connect residents to amenities within the community and to the larger world outside their community are encouraged in large developments. Nonresidential Character Areas are designed to promote “village” and integrated “centers” that will act as mini “town centers” for the residents of the county.

Alternative Transportation

Largely due to its more rural and suburban history and the resulting distances from UGA and Athens, there has been little demand for alternative forms of transportation such as pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation. Where the bicycle facilities have been built very little utilization has been seen. This is partly due to the lack of connectivity between these facilities and the long distances involved. Where bicycle use in the county has occurred, it has largely been recreational in nature rather than a viable alternative transportation mode and occurs most often in the more rural areas (“touring”).

However, as infill development occurs in the northern part of the county and as more mixed-use developments are built, these alternative forms of transportation will become more viable. This is especially true in the higher density areas near Watkinsville, Athens-Clarke County and UGA. This is also the area where subdivisions are near shopping, schools and employment centers and where mixed-use developments are being built.

Included within the Regional Transportation Plan (which covers portions of Madison, Athens-Clarke and Oconee Counties) are a number of roadway projects which include sidewalks and bicycle lanes. These are being funded with a mix of federal TEA funds and State and Local funds. These include the Jennings Mill Parkway Extension Project (from Epps Bridge Parkway over Loop 10 to the Oconee Connector), the Mars Hill/Experiment Station Road widening project (from the Oconee Connector to Watkinsville), and the planned Simonton Bridge Road Widening Project, (from Watkinsville to the Athens-Clarke County line). These Projects, when completed, will form a continuous bicycle and pedestrian corridor from the Athens-Clarke County line at Epps Bridge Parkway, running generally south to Watkinsville then generally east back to Athens-Clarke County at the Simonton Bridge Road Oconee River crossing near Whitehall. It should be noted that when the Oconee Connector Interchange is built at SR 316, (also in the Regional Transportation Plan) pedestrian and bicycle lanes will need to be included in order to complete this route.

Pedestrian/non-vehicular linkages and accessibility between alternative transportation routes and surrounding land uses can be improved. Advocating for equity requires public investment in infrastructure that reduces the need for long commutes and enhances transportation choices for all persons. The new Unified Development Code (UDC) for Oconee County requires sidewalks within all new subdivisions except for the large lot Agricultural/Residential projects in the more rural portions of the County.

The County will continue to promote land use patterns that reduce the need for motorized transportation, increase transportation options, and ensure that infrastructure for non-automotive transportation modes are treated equitably in the planning process. Efficiency is enhanced when there are consistent and adequate street connections that allow people and goods to move with as few impediments as possible. Gated communities, private road systems and the introduction of disconnected cul-de-sac subdivisions promote disconnections. Proper street connectivity, on the other hand, reduces miles traveled, increases non-motorized trips, and supports transit use. At-grade rail crossings also are a concern when roadway freight movement is inhibited by rail usage.

Connections to adjacent properties

Currently there are several areas where connectivity is an issue within the County. The over use of cul-de-sac streets and dead end roads in these areas has led to few choices in terms of routes for motorists. All traffic is funneled out on to the major roads even for short trips from one neighborhood to another. It is important that the main roadway not be considered in isolation, but that there is also an evaluation of the infrastructure and connectivity within the corridor to identify a cohesive secondary transportation system that will facilitate vehicular flow of traffic between uses while stimulating safe pedestrian activity.

Development designs should reflect existing and future land uses of adjoining properties, rather than designing solely within existing property lines. In major subdivisions and planned developments, streets should be extended to the boundary lines of the tract, unless prevented by topography or other physical conditions. At a minimum, there should be one street or pedestrian access point extended to the boundary line of the tract for each 1,000 linear feet of property line adjoining tracts (approximately 1/8 mile), unless otherwise identified within individual Character Areas. New developments should provide an orderly and appropriate visual and physical transition between the developments with different densities. All new commercial developments should be required to provide interconnectivity to the adjacent properties. This requirement will allow greater flexibility within developments, reduce the need for curb cuts, and create less interference with pedestrian systems and with through traffic.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a long-range comprehensive transportation plan for the entire county. As part of this plan, analyze signal timing, and coordinate roadways to increase efficiency and capacity;
- Pursue approval and funding for the U.S. 441 bypass around Bishop;
- Identify potential additional street and network connections within the present system. Look into adopting a street connectivity ordinance;
- Develop a pedestrian and bikeway plan. Survey existing pedestrian and bicycle connections, create a prioritized list of improvements and areas where connectivity is missing. Serve all schools with bike lanes within a one mile radius. Create an annual funding source for repair and maintenance;
- Investigate the possibility of implementing a commuter system, which might entail rail, express bus, or formalized park and ride to reduce commuter traffic;
- Consider conducting a special “Toll Road Community Forum” to review toll road research and decide whether to support paying for new road capacity with user charges;
- Coordinate with the State to examine a wide array of applications, including building “High-Occupancy Toll Lanes” and to institute Intelligent Transportation Systems to manage and operate surface transportation;
- Encourage and support upgrade of SR 316 to a limited access highway with or without tolls;

- Proceed with the prioritized planned improvements in the Regional Transportation Plan;
- Adopt ordinances that require developments to connect to any adjacent pedestrian linkage as part of the development approval. Pedestrian linkages include greenways and existing sidewalks;
- Identify corridors that are operating at below the acceptable level of service. Continue to lobby for state and federal funds for these corridors. In the meantime, identify smaller local projects and potential alternative routes;
- Analyze the potential for use of the abandoned portion of the Georgia Southern Railroad rail south of Bishop for the Rails to Trails program;
- Adopt requirements to establish a limit to the number or frequency of entrances along major thoroughfares. For example, each development should provide inter-parcel vehicle access points between all contiguous commercial, office, or industrial tracts. This requirement could be waived if it can be demonstrated that an inter-parcel connection is not feasible due to traffic safety or topographic concerns; and
- Adopt Parking Design Guidelines that will limit the amount of parking that is visible from public streets. This goal is often achieved by requiring parking to be placed under, between, or behind buildings, and possibly setting parking maximum space requirements in addition to the standard minimum space requirements that are already in effect.

■ **Provide For Services, Facilities and Housing That Will Allow Aging in Place**

Over the next 20 years, a large proportion of the people who already live in the County will begin their retirement. The demand for specialized senior housing, such as lower maintenance homes and more walkable and mixed-use environments will greatly increase as seniors rely less on the automobile.

Major Issues

- How do we accommodate the growing baby boomer population as they move through retirement to old age?
- How can the Housing Market meet the unique housing needs of the county's future increase in the elderly and disabled population in both affordability and proximity to services?
- The county currently does not have any housing assistance programs in place, relying instead on the individual developers to seek state or federal funding assistance, typically state tax credit financing, on their own initiative.
- Over 80 percent of seniors in the county reported some kind of a disability.

Policies

Countywide

- Encourage senior housing in areas that have good access to services, medical and shopping facilities, and that are walkable.
- Support innovative public, private and non-profit efforts in the development of housing for seniors with limited incomes.
- Promote a variety of housing types within larger developments in order to encourage a multi-aged community.
- Encourage senior preferred housing such as cottages, ranch-style small-lot single-family, and attached ranch-style within planned developments.
- Encourage small-lot and attached housing in existing and future activity centers.

City of Bishop

- Encourage the development of ADA single-family homes.

Discussion

Although the senior population is forecast to remain consistent over the planning horizon, at approximately 8.5 percent of the population, numerically the senior population will grow considerably by the year 2030. Existing households tend to be aging in place, remaining in their homes and only seeking appropriate (usually down-sized or assisted) housing as the need arises, in their current communities. Facilities, services and housing should be sufficient to meet this demand. As the County's age characteristics continue to diversify, special planning attention should be aimed towards community facility improvements, live/work/play environments, linkages and housing to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and lifestyles.

Many elderly residents have trouble aging in place; over 80% of seniors reported a disability of some type. Meeting the needs of the senior population may be as simple as design modification, or the provision of other types of housing products, such as nearby group homes and assisted living facilities. Various housing types will be required to meet the lifestyle characteristics of the area. New residential development, which has primarily consisted of single-family detached housing, will need to adapt to these growing market segments. Alternative housing products include lower maintenance housing, assisted living, and aging in place services to retrofit existing housing. A niche that is not being adequately addressed is the "active adult" community, typically patio homes, attached ranch units (such as a fourplex) or small lot/zero-lot line type detached units, where the basic home and landscape maintenance is handled by an association and special community activities and social events are promoted. Senior services and facilities should also be provided such as alternative modes of transportation to convenient shopping and health services.

Implementation Strategies

- Plan for small lot and attached housing in existing and future high-intensity activity centers;

- Target retirement communities in the vicinity of Mars Hill Road/SR 53;
- Provide for areas within village settings to accommodate different types of senior focused housing at a variety of price ranges, so there is an option for alternative modes of transportation;
- Support innovative public, private and non-profit efforts in the development of housing for seniors on retirement incomes, including reduced parking requirements, the construction of new homes built to the Easy Living Standards, and density bonus options in conjunction with reservation of a proportion of units available for purchase or rent within the financial limits of households below 50 percent of the county median income;
- Encourage and take an active role in encouraging a greater medical presence, especially in areas that are “senior” friendly;
- Investigate the use of available Georgia HOME funds for establishment of a Single Family Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program targeted towards seniors; and
- Facilitate the use by non-profit sponsors to make applications for HUD Section 202 allocations for construction of rental housing for seniors and the disabled, and take such actions necessary to expedite processing and approval of such projects.

■ Design with the Environment

The natural resources enjoyed by the residents of Oconee County are presently abundant and varied but finite, while the demands placed on these resources is large, and growing as development pressures increase. The water quality of the Oconee and Apalachee Rivers has been steadily declining. Lands previously available for wildlife management are being developed. The amount of timber farming and general agriculture is declining. As development continues to spread across the county, habitat fragmentation is becoming a significant concern.

Major Issues

- How can we balance growth with the need to retain and protect significant natural resources throughout the county?
- All jurisdictions need to identify and protect areas of high erodibility, wetlands, rivers and streams, and water supplies.
- In the past, jurisdictions often reacted to the issue of conservation of a property when faced with a development request. How do we identify targeted areas for conservation proactively?

Policies

Countywide

- Proactively preserve Oconee County’s rural resources and character.
- Greenspace, open space and protection of sensitive areas should be incorporated in all new developments.

- Enforce Best Management Practices during construction to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with new development.

City of Bishop

- In order to provide for a sustainable future, integrate proactive environmental stewardship within our vision.
- Protect the headwaters of Freeman Creek.
- Protect water supply with wellhead protection zones.
- Maintain surface water quality.

City of North High Shoals

- Protect water supply with wellhead protection zones.
- Maintain surface water quality.
- Avoid development on steep slopes.
- Prevent septic systems in areas of high water tables, shallow bedrock, steep slopes and unsuitable soils.

City of Watkinsville

- Create a linked network of community greenspace through the integration of parks within new development and along environmentally sensitive corridors.
- Reduce levels of impervious surface through the implementation of tree protection and planting programs.

Discussion

The County has adopted regulations under a Scenic Preservation Overlay District, which is intended to maintain and enhance the character of historic, archaeological, natural and scenic areas of interest in the county. Such regulations are designed to provide for the preservation of the designated areas without unreasonably denying the right of private use of land. As well, Conservation Subdivision provisions allow for reduced lot sizes and other provisions to cluster development away from significant natural resources. The County has targeted the use of conservation subdivisions for the permanent preservation of river corridors and their required buffer areas; non-riparian wetlands and floodplains; groundwater recharge areas; prime agricultural lands; and residential greenspace.

In addition, jurisdictions within the county have adopted a number of environmental regulations that contain standards, regulations and development policies that guide the protection of the County's significant environmental resources (in adherence with DNR "Part 5" Minimum Standards). Topics include: River and Stream Protection; Watershed Protection; Aquifer Area Recharge Protection; Wetlands Protection; Natural Resource Conservation Areas; and Conservation and Natural Resources Easements; Flood Damage Prevention; and Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control.

Open Space Resources

Open space is essential for protection of wildlife habitat and water quality, and other critical resources. Open space should accomplish the following;

- Provide for passive recreational opportunities;

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

Greenway Trails

Greenway trails are paved or natural (mulch, gravel, etc.) with a minimum 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 paving are permitted within floodplain and stream buffers.

Civic Spaces

All development should provide appropriate private and public civic space. Parks, plazas, squares, recreational areas, trails or greens are all types of civic spaces. Formal outdoor spaces should serve as a focal point for public interactions. They should not be 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, as per the requirements in each Character Area. Existing trees and vegetation should be preserved wherever possible. Development layouts should establish a focus toward any open and/or natural open space areas.

Parks

A park is 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 park's perimeter should 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 should be predominately large deciduous trees.

Greens

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 should be predominately large, deciduous shade trees. A focal point should be provided within the Green, such as a gazebo or sculpture.

Plazas and Squares

These small areas provide an urban oasis for passive activities as well as civic purposes and impromptu commercial and entertainment activities. They often have a focal point, such as a fountain, waterfalls or public art. Shade trees, lush landscaping, benches and pedestrian amenities are features within a square. Plazas are primarily paved with concrete, stone, brick or unit pavers. Plaza and Squares should be at least ¼ acre in size.

Implementation Strategies

- Review development regulations to encourage conservation subdivisions, planned developments and cluster housing;

- Continue to promote conservation subdivisions as a method for preserving private open space, and pursue relationships with land trusts to preserve this open space;
- Require an open space set aside within every new development;
- Require any new development to connect to any adjacent path system;
- Using the Future Development Map as a guide, focus new growth into appropriate Character Areas, thereby lifting development pressure from farming and rural communities;
- Continue to participate with other jurisdictions in implementing the Oconee River Basin Management Plan;
- Conduct a comprehensive documentation and mapping of wetlands, sensitive habitats of known concern, stream protection buffers, significant forested areas containing concentrations of specimen trees, steep slopes, WMA areas, acquired and planned greenspace and other significant resources. Compile the findings as an overlay to the Future Development Map to be used during the development review process;
- Design a countywide greenspace plan. This plan should include the implementation of a countywide greenbelt system of open spaces, trails, passive recreation and bike trails, and identify adequate funding sources, such as impact fees;
- Continue to work with local conservation groups to promote the greenspace and conservation program to local residents and inform them of how they can participate;
- Future site and development guidelines should include assessments for identified/listed rare and endangered species. Once identified, site plans may be modified to accommodate human uses and natural habitat; and
- Emphasize the conservation subdivision approach to cluster development in areas where sensitive wildlife habitats or valuable natural resources are found.

Section 3: Future Development

Land Development Patterns

The use of the policies, overall design considerations and character areas contained in this Comprehensive Plan will produce land development patterns that actualize each community's Vision. The concept of "Character Areas" are used to identify places and areas that show a common style, development and land use pattern, lifestyle and "feel," intensity of use, design elements or other factors that collectively define the "character" of a place or areas, whether existing or intended in the future.

The Character Area designations indicate the types of land uses that would be compatible with the area, the infrastructure expected to support that type of development, and the zoning districts that would be consistent with the Character Area in appropriate places. The Character Area descriptions serve as a guide in the determination of future development approvals, especially in the case of nonresidential development in primarily residential Character Areas.

The design of these distinct Character Areas is based on a classification of development patterns, their distinct differences and their relationship to one another as Oconee County and its cities continue to grow over the next 20 plus 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 and development codes.
- Provide solutions "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.

■ Future Development Map

A Future Development Map--2030 was developed for each of the cities and the county (except Watkinsville) through the analysis of current and future conditions and land use patterns as illustrated on the Existing Land Use Maps, the Current Zoning Maps, approved major development projects, topographic characteristics, natural resources, the availability of infrastructure, and future land development based on residential and employment forecasts. In addition, all County zoning cases since 2002 were reviewed against the County's Future Land Use Plan Map—2002 in order to weigh public policy decisions since the County's last map update. These analyses provided an essential base of information for Character Area development. This base was used to provide background data for the creation of Vision statements and led to the Guiding Principles and

Policies. Utilizing each community's Vision statement and Guiding Principles, distinct areas were outlined and developed into Character Areas.

The Future Development Map—2030 for Watkinsville was based on the *Future Land Use 2026* map adopted as part of the City's *Concept Plan* in 2007, and refined by the *Official Zoning Map* adopted later that year as part of the City's new *Zoning Ordinance*. The *Concept Plan* provides a more detailed statement of Character Area strategies and standards, and, along with the *Future Land Use 2026* map, is incorporated into the *Zoning Ordinance* by reference. These more detailed documents have been summarized in this Comprehensive Plan, but should be relied upon whenever Watkinsville Character Areas or the Future Development Map for Watkinsville is referenced in this Community Agenda.

The Future Development Maps for the unincorporated portions of Oconee County and for each of the cities follow the Character Area Summary Table, below.

■ Interpretation

This Comprehensive 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 that rests on the guiding principals, goals and policies expressed in the text. The Character Area 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 the 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 each jurisdiction's zoning regulations and through projects and programs outlined in the Short Term Work Program. Each Governing Body administers the Future Development Map within its jurisdiction, with input from the Planning Commission and planning staff. The procedure involves checks for plan policy and map consistency as part of the review for rezoning requests, and issuance of subdivision approvals, development and building permits.

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 other functional plans. In the event a use or development proposal is inconsistent with the Future Development Map or Comprehensive Plan policies, that fact is addressed as one of the Standards for Zoning Review already adopted by the County in its Unified Development Code and each City in their Zoning Ordinance.

Character Area Summary Table

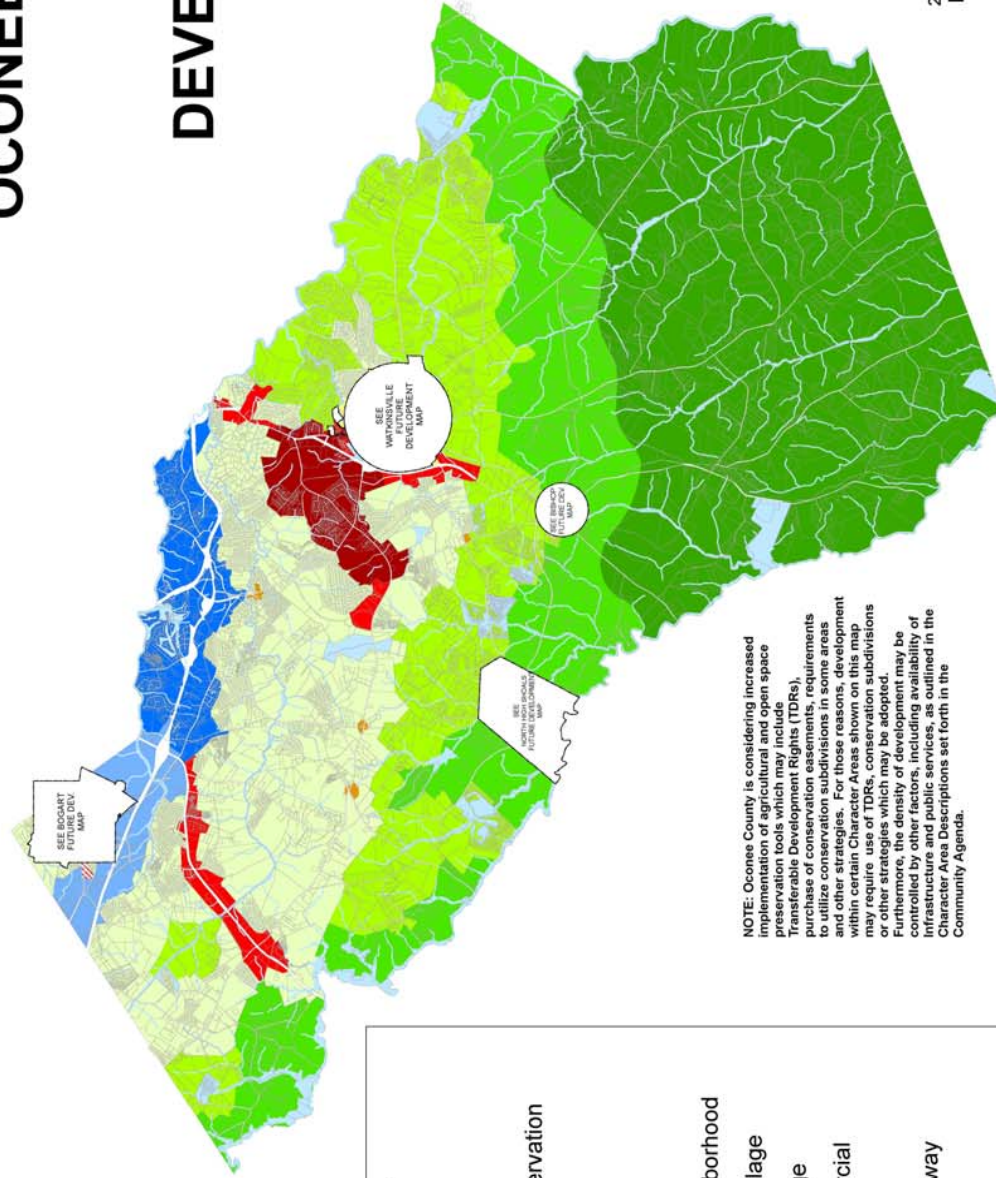
The following Table presents a summary of the Character Areas as shown on the Future Development Map, including infrastructure requirements and the jurisdictions in which each Character Area is found. Character Areas are more specifically described as to their intent, land uses and suggested development strategies in later sections of this chapter. Those descriptions also indicate the zoning districts that are compatible with each Character Area designation. **Specific requirements and review standards of the applicable zoning regulations of each jurisdiction, and conditions of zoning approval for a specific development project, control in all cases.**

Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Compatible Nonresidential Uses	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Location
Agricultural Preservation	Active farmland and related agricultural business. Very low density agricultural-residential subdivisions along State Highways.	Country Crossroads "Cottage" industries Semi-public and institutional uses	Typically, lacks public water and sewer. Very low level of services planned due to low-density nature of the area. Rural roads frequently not suitable for development.	Uninc. County
Rural Places	Outlying rural areas with active farming and scattered single-family housing on large lots (5 acres +). Mini-farm estates and low-density agricultural-residential subdivisions.	Country Crossroads Semi-public and institutional uses	Typically, lacks public water and sewer. Very low level of services planned due to low-density nature of the area. Rural roads frequently not suitable for development.	Bishop North High Shoals Uninc. County
Country Estates	Transitional low intensity land use between the Rural Places and Suburban Living Character Areas. Active, commercial agriculture is not typically preexisting in this area, but residually-compatible agriculture, such as horse farms, small timber tracts and hay production are allowed.	Semi-public and institutional uses	Local-serving rural roads, public water may be available, but not sewer	Bishop North High Shoals Uninc. County
Suburban Living	Areas that are experiencing a high volume of residential growth, primarily single-family houses.	Semi-public and institutional uses	Public water available or planned, public sewerage sometimes available or planned; other public facilities serve area	Bishop Bogart Watkinsville (edges) Uninc. County
Traditional Neighborhoods	Older or more established neighborhoods primarily consisting of single-family detached housing, with single-family attached in appropriate locations.	Child Care Centers Semi-public and institutional uses	Public water available, public sewerage available or planned; other public facilities serve area	Bishop Bogart North High Shoals Watkinsville Uninc. County

Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Compatible Nonresidential Uses	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Location
City Living	An urban area of attached condominiums and apartment homes with nearby parks and playgrounds.	Semi-public and institutional uses	Public water and sewer; other public facilities serve area	Watkinsville
Country Cross-roads	This small commercial activity node is envisioned as a restricted commercial node located at commercial "crossroads" locations within the rural areas.	Commercial retail and service businesses of a local-serving or agriculture-support nature: 5,000 sf maximum building size Semi-public and institutional uses	Public water and sewer typically not available Access from collector or arterial roads at intersections	Uninc. County
Neighborhood Village Center	Small-scaled commercial designated to serve nearby neighborhoods with access and size restrictions. May be part of a planned residential development.	Small commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that are primarily oriented to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods: 8,000 sf maximum building size Semi-public and institutional uses	Public water available and sewer available or planned Access from collector or arterial roads or within a planned mixed-use development	Bishop Uninc. County
Community Village Center	Shopping centers and medium-scaled commercial designated to serve a larger portion of the county.	Larger commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that serve residents of a large portion of the county 125,000 sf maximum building size, with no single use larger than 70,000 sf Semi-public and institutional uses	Public water and sewer available Access from collector or arterial roads or within a planned mixed-use development	Uninc. County
Historic Main Street	A pedestrian-oriented area of historic structures with a "small town feel" of small-scale shops and offices.	Small-scale retail and offices in a walkable environment Adaptive reuse of existing and historic structures Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services common to the city	Bishop Bogart North High Shoals Watkinsville
Downtown	Traditional downtowns—the civic heart of the city—with a mix of public and private offices, shops, restaurants and entertainment uses.	Private offices, retail shopping goods, business supplies Government offices and public facilities Restaurants and entertainment Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services common to the city	Watkinsville
Mixed-Use Office	A live-work environment with a mix of offices, professional services and residential.	Offices and professional services Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services common to the city	Watkinsville
Scenic Corridor	A mixed-use corridor along major thoroughfares exhibiting scenic qualities representative of the city's historic and natural character.	Varies by Corridor	Full urban services common to the city	Watkinsville
Corridor Commercial	An area of larger-scale commercial development that is more auto-oriented in nature, requiring increased visibility and road access.	Auto-oriented retail, service and repair Larger-scale commercial uses that serve the driving public Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services common to the city	Bogart Watkinsville Uninc. County

Character Area	Description of Character and Primary Land Uses	Compatible Nonresidential Uses	Community Facilities & Infrastructure	Location
Civic Center	A diverse area of major educational and other public and semi-public civic uses, local shopping and services, business offices and residential neighborhoods.	Consumer-based commercial establishments that offer goods and services to the residents of central Oconee Employment-based business offices Civic, institutional and semi-public uses, such as religious organizations, educational and sports/recreation facilities, museums, libraries, senior centers, YMCAs, civic and convention centers	Full urban services	Uninc. County
Technology Gateway	The County's premier employment center focusing on major office, high tech research and light industrial developments, with business and employee supporting commercial and residential components.	High tech, bio-medical and research facilities Light industrial and light manufacturing that will not have an adverse impact on the environmental quality of the area Regional, headquarter and professional offices Office complexes and campuses; Business parks and small office complexes such as "office condominiums" Mixed use projects with a vertical integration, such as ground floor retail with office or lofts above Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services	Bogart Uninc. County
Regional Center	Regionally oriented large scale commercial, office, retail, entertainment and recreational, multi-family and single-family residential development.	Regional medical and professional offices Small office complexes such as "office condominiums," financial institutions and other service providers Hotels and meeting facilities Shopping centers with major retail anchors Department stores, large marketers and individual "big box" retail stores Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services	Uninc. County
Workplace Center	Major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, and commercial and business parks.	Light industrial, warehousing and light manufacturing. Heavy industrial is restricted to locations where adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated Heavy commercial uses, such as auto repair and service Employment uses such as business parks, distribution/services Wholesaling companies, business parks	Full urban services	Bishop Bogart Watkinsville
Public Institutional	Civic functions such as schools, library, churches and governmental offices.	Other areas owned or operated by city or county government	Full urban services	Watkinsville

OCONEE COUNTY, GEORGIA FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP 2030



Character Areas

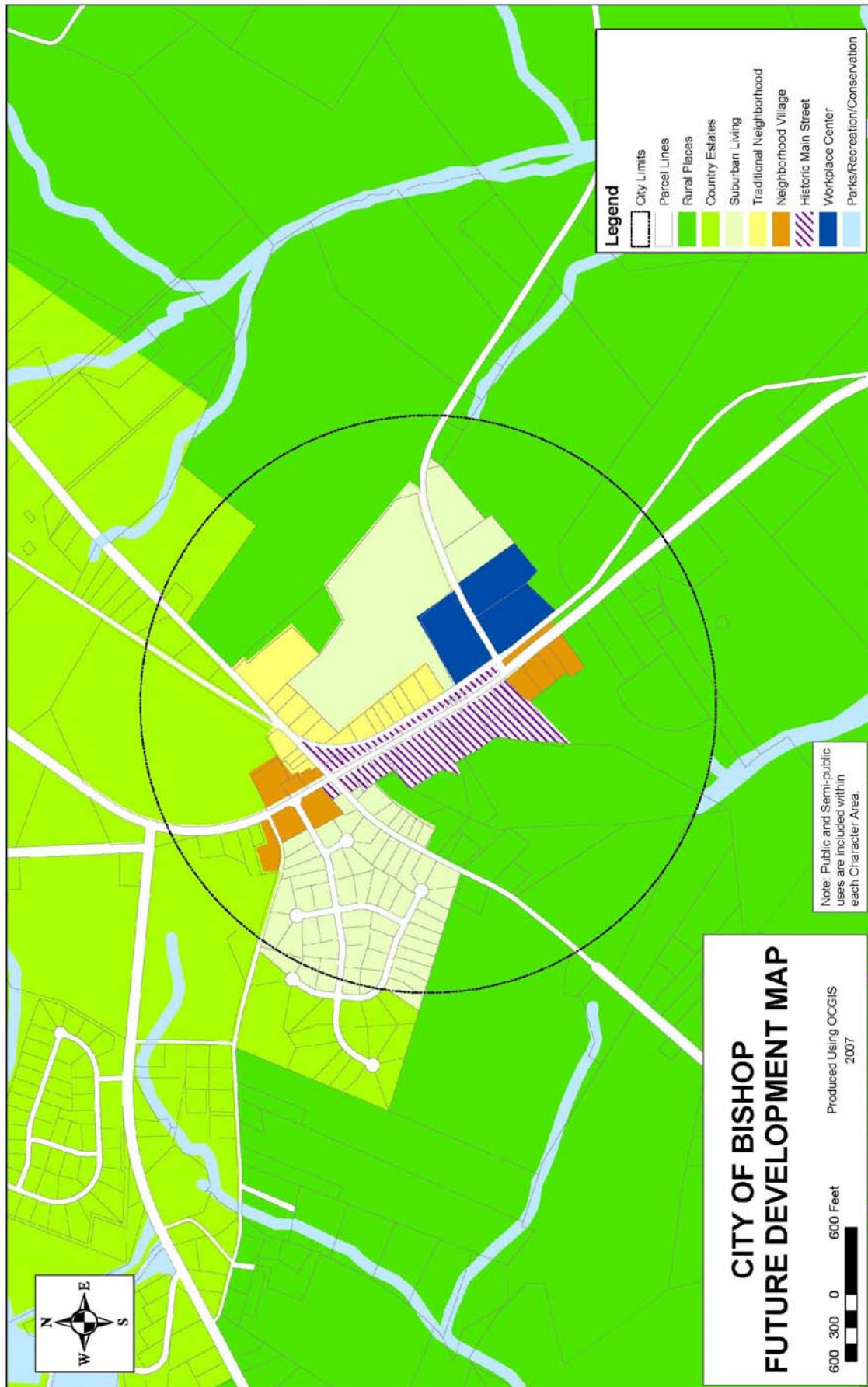
	City Limits
	Character Areas
	Agricultural Preservation
	Rural Places
	Country Estates
	Suburban Living
	Traditional Neighborhood
	Neighborhood Village
	Community Village
	Corridor Commercial
	Civic Center
	Technology Gateway
	Regional Center
	Parks/Recreation/Conservation

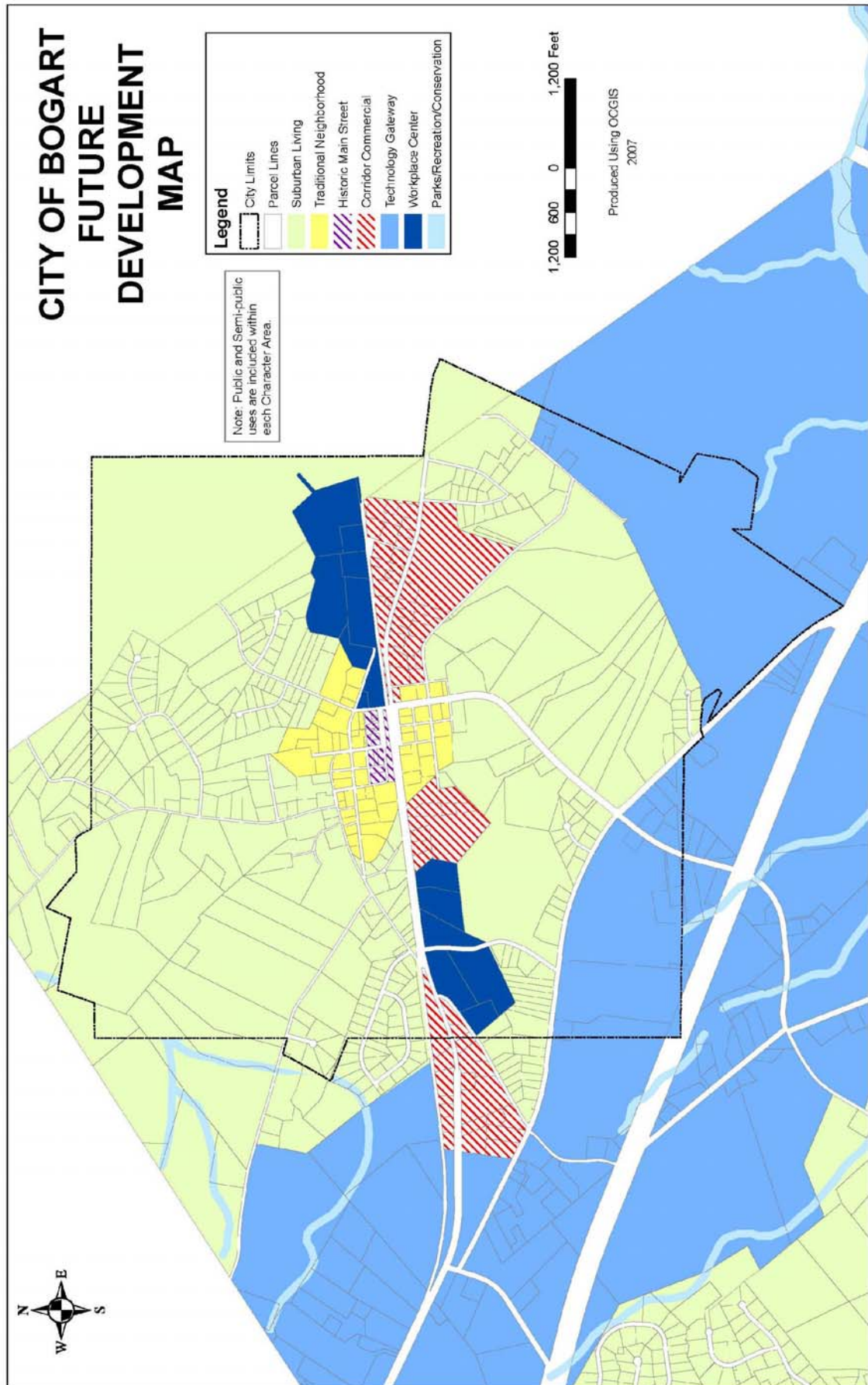
NOTE: Oconee County is considering increased implementation of agricultural and open space preservation tools which may include Transferable Development Rights (TDRs), purchase of conservation easements, requirements to utilize conservation subdivisions in some areas and other strategies. For those reasons, development within certain Character Areas shown on this map may require use of TDRs, conservation subdivisions or other strategies which may be adopted. Furthermore, the density of development may be increased by one or more uses, including a variety of infrastructure and public services outlined in the Character Area Descriptions set forth in the Community Agenda.

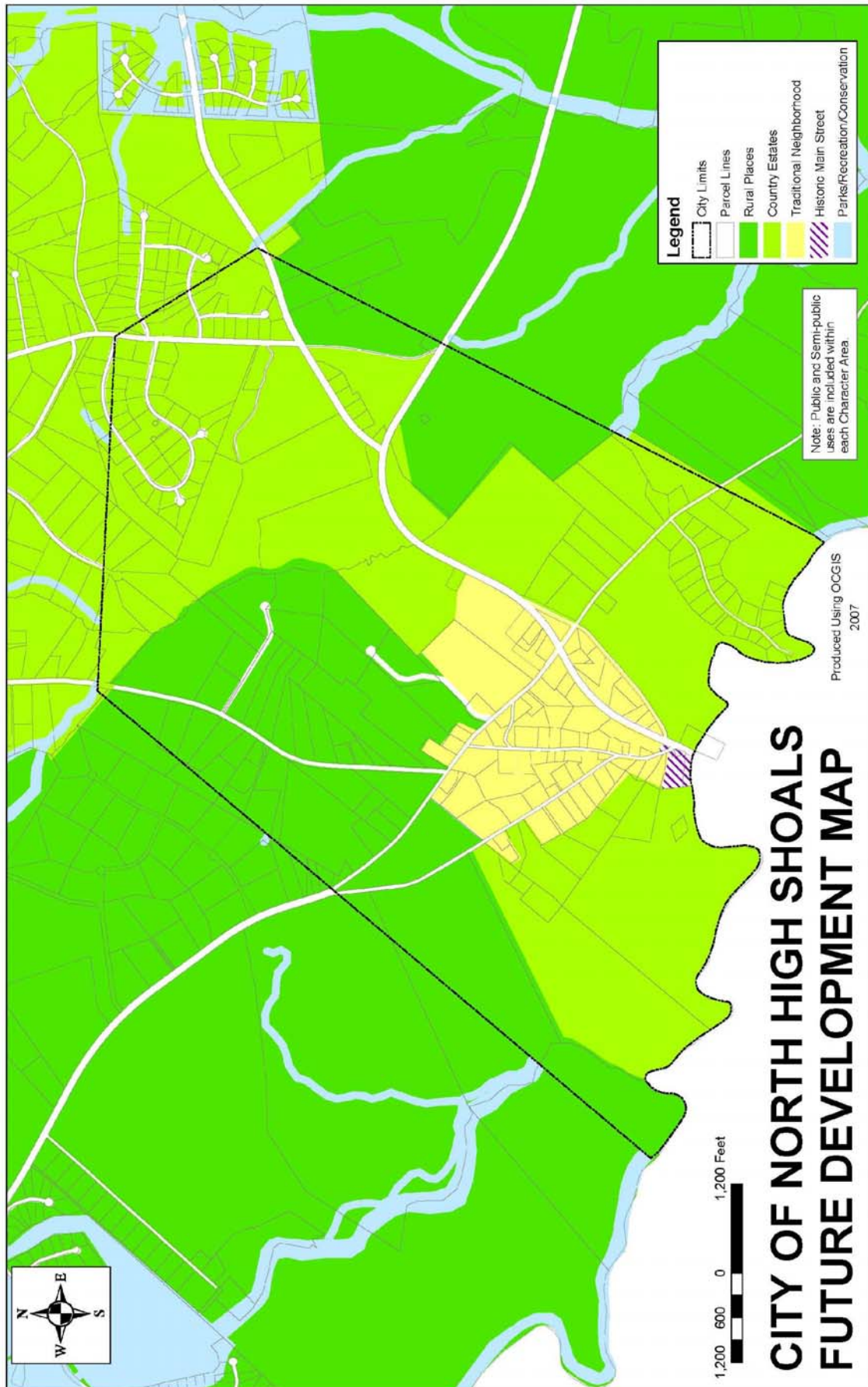
NOTE: Public and Semi-public uses are included within each Character Area

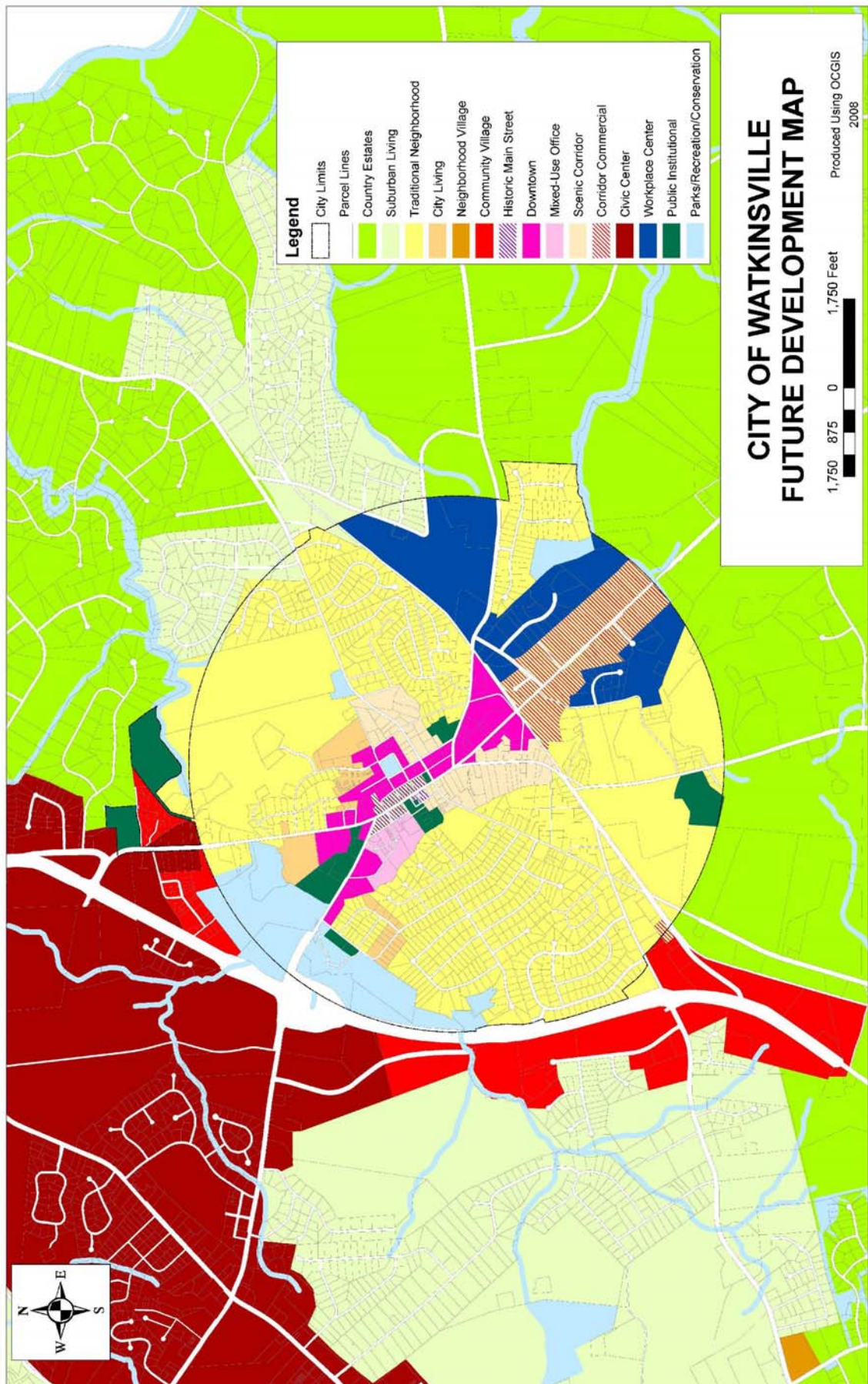
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Character Area Descriptions

All of the land within the Cities of Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals and Watkinsville, and within the unincorporated area of Oconee County, is located within one or another of the Character Areas described in this section. Some of the Character Areas are located in only one or several jurisdictions, as noted under each.

Within each Character Area are listed the primary land uses that predominantly characterize the area, whether now existing or encouraged over the next twenty years. Also are listed secondary land uses that are compatible and could be considered for zoning at appropriate locations within the Character Area, as well as the level of infrastructure—public water, sewer and roads—expected to support the area. As a general rule, uses such as churches, public schools and governmental facilities are allowed as secondary uses in all Character Areas.

Finally, policies to maintain or encourage the character of each area are listed as strategies and development guidelines for consideration during the rezoning process. Importantly, every proposed change in use must stand on its own to be rezoned; every jurisdiction has standards for their zoning decision-making process that are site specific and consider the impacts of the specific rezoning. A determination of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is one of the standards but is not sufficient for a zoning approval.

The standards adopted by Oconee County in the Unified Development Code provide an example of the items that are considered in the rezoning process; each city has similar standards, all adopted pursuant to State law requirements. The County standards are:

In consideration of a rezoning, the Board of Commissioners shall consider factors relevant in balancing the interest in promoting the public health, safety, or general welfare against the right of the individual to the unrestricted use of property and shall specifically consider the following objective criteria. Emphasis may be placed on those criteria most applicable to the specific use proposed:

1. Existing uses and zoning of nearby property.
2. The extent to which property values are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions of the current zoning.
3. The extent to which the destruction of property values of the individual property owner promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public with consideration to:
 - a. Population density and effect on community facilities such as streets, schools, water and sewer;
 - b. Environmental impact;
 - c. Effect on adjoining property values.
4. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner.
5. The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned, considered in the context of land development in the area in the vicinity of the property.
6. Consistency of the proposed use with the stated purpose of the zoning district that is being requested

7. Conformity with or divergence from established land use patterns.
8. Conformity with or divergence from the Future Land Use Map or the goals and objectives of the Oconee County Comprehensive Plan.
9. The availability of adequate sites for the proposed use in districts that permit such use.
10. The suitability of the site for the proposed use relative to the requirements set forth in this Development Code such as off-street parking, setbacks, buffer zones, and open space.

Thus, although many primary and secondary land uses may be listed for a particular Character Area, the determination of the actual location where a specific land use would be “appropriate” is guided by the jurisdiction’s adopted standards and “approved” through the rezoning process.

■ Agricultural Preservation

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area is composed chiefly of open land and active agricultural production of food crops, fiber crops, animal feed, poultry, livestock and commercial timber production. Individual farms tend to be large and homes sparsely distributed on large, existing tracts. Uses in the area may result in odors, dust, noise or other effects that may not be compatible with residential development.

Much of Oconee County’s identity is tied to its rural and small town heritage. This Character Area includes lands in row crops, hay fields or in pasture, woodlands and areas under forestry management, commercial wholesale nurseries and sparsely settled homes on individual tracts, in addition to areas of sensitive natural resources.

Agricultural Preservation Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Active agricultural crop and animal production, horse farms, timbering ▪ Homesteads on large individual lots ▪ Manufactured homes on large individual lots ▪ Large-lot (5 acres and larger) subdivisions and low-density conservation subdivisions along State highways	▪ Country Crossroads at major inter-sections ▪ Compatible “cottage” industries ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses, such as churches	▪ Public water typically not available or planned ▪ Public sewer is not available or planned ▪ Rural roadways

Development Strategies

- Preserve the Character Area for active agricultural activities.¹

¹ Creation of a cohesive and integrated process for agricultural preservation is a cornerstone recommendation of this Plan—see the Guiding Principles and Policies section of this Community Agenda for details.

- Allow subdivision development only along State highways where the level of service is good, and limited to a density of 5 acres or more per dwelling unit; encourage such development to be conservation subdivisions.
- Foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies and opportunities to both live and work in a rural setting.
- Allow home-based or farm-based “cottage” industries as home business accessory uses in support of or related to agricultural activities in the area.
- Allow small “country crossroads” commercial uses at major intersections (see the Country Crossroads Character Area, below).



Development Guidelines

This Character Area is intended primarily to remain in open or forested land, developed only for agricultural purposes along with farm houses, barns, silos and other related structures. The majority of the Character Area is zoned A-1, which does not allow “subdivisions” in the traditional sense (those involving new streets and public utilities), but allows “lot splits” fronting along existing paved roads as follows: the creation of a single 1-acre lot, or the creation of up to five 5-acre lots, or the creation of any number of 25-acre tracts.² Subdivisions involving new streets within this Character Area, allowed only along State highways, are limited to densities of five acres or more per dwelling unit (DU). The zoning and density designation in the unincorporated area is determined by the following criteria:

Subdivisions in the Agricultural Preservation Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County		
	1 DU per 1, 5 or 25 Acres (See text)	1 DU per 5 Acres
County Zoning District	A-1 (Agricultural)	AR-5 (Agricultural Residential Five Acre)
Subdivision Type	Subdivisions Not Allowed—Restricted to specific lot splits only	Conventional or Conservation
Water Availability	No	No
Sewer Availability	No	No
Minimum Roadway Type	Paved public road	State Highway only

Note that, in all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

² Once a property has been divided as a lot split, no further divisions are allowed except as a “major subdivision,” which would require rezoning.

■ Rural Places

Location: Bishop, North High Shoals, Unincorporated Oconee County.

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, holders of such land are discouraged from making permanent fixed investments in the land that might increase productivity in traditional agricultural uses but add no market value for potential future suburban uses. The inevitable result of this process is to crowd out many traditional rural land uses. In addition, scattered suburban development tends to raise the cost of providing local public services. The Rural Places Character Area is characterized by a balance between the natural environment and human uses with very low-density residential, farms, forests, outdoor recreation and other open space activities. Commercial uses should be small in scale that will provide convenience services to the rural neighborhood. Home-based and farm-based businesses are allowed in the rural area provided they are compatible with existing nearby residential uses.



The intent of this 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 with active animal agriculture, and dust and chemical drift from agricultural operations.

Rural Places Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- Active agricultural crop and animal production, horse farms, timbering - Mini-farm estates on lots of more than 5 acres - Homesteads on individual lots - Large-lot residential subdivisions in appropriate locations - Low-density conservation subdivisions in appropriate locations	- Country Crossroads at major intersections - Semi-public and institutional uses	- Public water may not be available - Public sewer is not available or planned - Rural roadways

Development Strategies

- Provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities.
- Avoid the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, residential developments.

- Accommodate the development of mini-farm estates that blend into the overall fabric of the area, on tracts 5 acres and greater in size.
- The uses and building scale of new development should maintain the character of the rural environment and surrounding area.
- All residential development will be limited to single-family homesteads on individual (non-subdivision) lots except for large-lot subdivisions and low-density conservation subdivisions in appropriate locations.
- Allow small “country crossroads” commercial uses at major intersections (see the Country Crossroads Character Area, below).

Development Guidelines

Subdivision densities within this Character Area, when allowed, range from a minimum of 2 acres (in Bishop) per dwelling unit, to five acres or more (in North High Shoals and the unincorporated area). Appropriate zoning districts are:

- In Bishop, A-1 (Agricultural) and AR-2 (Agricultural Residential Two Acre).
- In North High Shoals, A-1 (Agricultural).
- In the unincorporated area, the appropriate zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Subdivisions in the Rural Places Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County			
	1 DU per 5 Acres	1 DU per 4 Acres	1 DU per 3 Acres
County Zoning District	AR-5 (Agricultural Residential Five Acre)	AR-4 (Agricultural Residential Four Acre)	AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre)
Subdivision Type	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional or Conservation
Water Availability	No	No	No
Sewer Availability	No	No	No
Minimum Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property. Important factors in considering a rezoning include the condition and level of service provided by road access to the property (higher level of service may support higher density), the location of the property relative to other Character Areas (Country Estates or Agricultural Preservation), and the existing uses and zoning of other properties in the area.

■ Country Estates

Location: Bishop, North High Shoals, Unincorporated Oconee County.

Areas within this Character Area are lands that are undeveloped but rarely or no longer 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 reminiscent of a rural environment. This Character Area provides a transition between the more rural areas of the county and traditional suburban residential development, and provides an “edge” between the urban and rural fringe.



Country Estates Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Horse farms and residually compatible agricultural activities ▪ Homesteads on individual lots ▪ Mini-farm estates on lots of more than 3 acres ▪ Large-lot conventional subdivisions ▪ Low-density conservation subdivisions	▪ Semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Public water may be available or planned ▪ Sewer is typically not available ▪ Rural roadways

Development Strategies

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area with a residential density of 1 to 2 acres per dwelling unit.
- Accommodate limited farming activities in the area; including 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.
- 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.
- 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.



Development Guidelines

Subdivision densities within this Character Area, when allowed, range from a minimum of one to two acres per dwelling unit. Appropriate zoning districts are:

- In Bishop, AR-1 (Agricultural Residential One Acre) and AR-2 (Agricultural Residential Two Acre).
- In North High Shoals, A-2 (Agricultural Residential), R-1 (Single-Family Residential), and PUD (Planned Unit Development).
- In the unincorporated area, the appropriate zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Subdivisions in the Country Estates Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County			
	1 DU per 2 Acres	1 DU per 1 Acre +	1 DU per ± 1 Acre
County Zoning District	AR-2 (Agricultural Residential Two Acre)	AR-1 (Agricultural Residential One Acre)	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
Subdivision Type	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional or Conservation	Conventional only
Water Availability	No	Varies	Yes
Sewer Availability	No	No	No
Minimum Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Suburban Living

Location: Bishop, Bogart, Watkinsville (edges), Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area includes established suburban neighborhoods in conventional subdivisions and master planned developments. This Character Area consists principally of single-family detached houses with some higher density housing included in a planned development or near an established nonresidential area. Houses tend to be on $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre to 1-acre or larger lots on public water or sewer. This area is characterized by low pedestrian orientation, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominately residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. 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 future development projects that are suitable with existing residential development in



size, scale and overall density. New development requests should be reviewed in terms of impact on the surrounding area; conventional neighborhood developments and properly located planned developments are both encouraged.

Suburban Living Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- Single-family residential subdivisions - Conservation Subdivisions - Master Planned Developments (MPDs)	Semi-public and institutional uses	- Public water is available or planned - Public sewer is available or planned in some areas - Well developed network of local, collector and arterial roads - Parks and recreation facilities serve the area; schools are nearby

Development Strategies

- Protect existing neighborhoods from negative impacts.
- Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock.
- Promote new residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space, while assuring suitability with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Encourage appropriate reuse, redevelopment or refurbishment of areas where activity and attractiveness have declined.
- Promote innovative and mixed-use development in appropriate locations, such as MPDs in the unincorporated area.
- Promote walkability within each community through path systems or sidewalks, particularly connecting to such focal points as schools, parks, community centers or commercial activity centers within walking distance of residences.
- Limit higher intensity attached residential development to areas where existing critical infrastructure (i.e. roads, schools, water/sewer, etc.) is available, as a transition between established nonresidential centers and single-family neighborhoods.
- Encourage natural resource protection by allowing conservation subdivisions in the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district in the unincorporated area.

Development Guidelines

Residential subdivision densities within this Character Area range from a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ to over one acre per dwelling unit (DU), depending on the availability of public water or sewer. Appropriate zoning categories applicable to this Character Area are:

- In Bishop, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), AR-1 (Agricultural Residential One Acre), and R-2 (Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.
- In Bogart, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), and R-2 (Medium Density Single-Family and Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.

- Within Watkinsville, Suburban Living areas should be zoned DR (Detached Residential).
- In the unincorporated area, the appropriate zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Residential Development in the Suburban Living Character Area			
County Zoning District	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)	R-2 (Two-Family Residential)	R-3 (Multi-Family Residential)
Minimum Lot Size (Conventional Development) on public water or sewer	30,000 sf per Single-Family Detached Dwelling Unit	15,000 sf per Dwelling Unit (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)	8,000 sf per Multi-Family Dwelling Unit
Common Development Type	Conventional or Conservation Subdivision, or MPD	Conventional Subdivision or MPD	Multi-Family Development or MPD
Water Availability	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Sewer Availability	No	Yes*	Yes
Minimum Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial
*Larger lot sizes are required if public water or sewer are not available.			

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Traditional Neighborhoods

Location: Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, Watkinsville, Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area is intended primarily for a variety of detached single-family housing units. This area is also appropriate for supportive land uses servicing the neighborhood population including, but not limited too, parks, playgrounds, fire stations and child-care centers as part of the effort to create complete planned neighborhoods.



Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Single-family detached residences ▪ Single-family attached and accessory housing units in appropriate locations	▪ Child care center ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ City streets ▪ Parks and recreation facilities serve the area

Development Strategies

- This Character Area is intended to accommodate lower development intensities at a maximum residential density of 2.2 dwelling units per developable acre with access to public water and sewer. In areas inaccessible to public sewer, net residential densities shall be determined by soil conditions and their ability to accommodate on-site septic systems.
- Attached single-family homes and accessory housing units may be suitable as a means of meeting the mixed housing types criterion provided the overall residential density does not exceed 2.2 dwelling units per developable acre (on public water and sewer), and that the units are compatible with surrounding development in terms of building scale, access, parking, and structural design.
- Home occupations shall be allowed provided that it is a non-retail commercial enterprise and the work area is invisible from the frontage.
- Neighborhoods should be designed to contribute to a safe, accessible transportation network through the provision of an interconnected street network that accommodates all users with adequate facilities.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development including plantings along street corridors.



Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning categories applicable to the Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area are:

- In Bishop, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), and R-2 (Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.
- In Bogart R-1, (Single-Family Residential), and R-2 (Medium Density Single-Family and Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.
- In North High Shoals, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), R-2 (Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations, and PUD (Planned Unit Development).
- Within Watkinsville, appropriate zoning in this Character Area is DR (Detached Residential).
- In the unincorporated area, R-1 (Single-Family Residential), and R-2 (Two-Family Residential) in appropriate locations.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ City Living

Location: Watkinsville.

This Character Area is intended primarily for attached housing units, typically rowhouses, townhouses or similar type development, and apartment homes (but not duplexes). This area may also be appropriate for small lot single-family detached units (provided the development is compatible with surrounding land uses), parks, open space, or playgrounds.



City Living Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- Attached housing units such as row-houses and townhouses - Apartment homes	- Small-lot single-family detached as part of an overall development - Semi-public and institutional uses	- Public water is available - Sewer is available or planned - City streets - Parks and recreation facilities serve the area

Development Strategies

- This Character Area is intended to accommodate higher intensity residential land uses and requires access to public water and sewer to accommodate higher residential densities.
- Developments may provide a mix of owner and renter occupied housing opportunities.
- Detached dwelling units may be allowed as part of an overall development plan providing a mix of housing units that meets the minimum density requirements.
- Higher density residential development should be distributed in the vicinity of Downtown increasing public access to the centrally located commercial, civic, entertainment, and employment activities.
- The Character Area should accommodate a maximum residential density of six dwelling units per developable acre.
- Inclusion is encouraged of community amenities meeting the city's vision, goals, and objectives including, but not limited too, parks, playground areas, greenspace (area suitable for passive recreation), land set aside for civic buildings, or mixed housing types.
- Developments must contribute to pedestrian and bicycle transportation increasing access to the city's Downtown, recreation areas, and providing connectivity to the community's bicycle and pedestrian network.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.

- Developments should be built to the scale and character of the community with standards regarding the size and design of all structures.
- Adequate buffers should be provided screening the development from incompatible adjacent land uses where appropriate.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning in the City Living Character Area in Watkinsville is AR (Attached Residential). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Country Crossroads

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

Country Crossroads are very small commercial areas that have developed (or will be created) to serve local needs at historic crossroads in the rural and agricultural areas 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 offer limited local convenience goods and services to the adjacent single-family and farming environment.



Typical Country Crossroads uses include convenience retailers, local groceries, family-run restaurants, “feed and seed” stores, hardware stores and gas stations.

Country Crossroads Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
Commercial retail and service businesses of a local-serving or agriculture-support nature	- Day care center - Semi-public and institutional uses	- Public water may not be available - Sewer is not available or planned - Access from collector or arterial roads at intersections

Development Strategies

- Existing Country Crossroads businesses are expected to remain, and possibly even expand, but further new development of a Country Crossroads node as such should be limited to key major intersections.
- Country Crossroads should be compatible with nearby residential and agricultural properties and developed to serve the immediate service area and pass-by traffic.
- Country Crossroads are limited to buildings of 8,000 square feet and under, unless otherwise approved by the local jurisdiction.
- Country Crossroads should be designed to reflect the rural attributes of the community.

- Country Crossroads may be located or rezoned within the Agricultural Preservation or Rural Places Character Areas without amending the Future Development Map. If the location merits expansion, it may be changed to a Neighborhood Village Center by amending the Future Development Map.

Development Guidelines

Country Crossroads should be zoned NSS (Neighborhood Shopping and Services) or B-1 (General Business) but only with conditions limiting the zoning to be consistent with the Country Crossroads Character Area,³ and depending on the proposed local serving or agricultural-based use and potential impact on the surrounding area such as noise, traffic and lights. In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Neighborhood Village Center

Location: Bishop, Unincorporated Oconee County.

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses 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 very important.

Examples of uses within a Neighborhood Village Center include small scale corner markets, prescription shops, bakeries, cafes and small retail shops; personal services such as laundromats, dry cleaners and barber/beauty shops; professional services such as lawyers, accountants, insurance agents, physicians and dentists; and small scaled semi-public/institutional community services.

Neighborhood Village Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Small commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that are primarily oriented to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods	▪ Semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer may be available or planned ▪ Access from a collector or arterial roadway, or planned within a mixed-use development

³ NSS and B-1 are existing County zoning districts. A new zoning district tailored to the unique nature of Country Crossroads is proposed—see the Implementation Strategies of this Community Agenda.

Development Strategies

- Each Neighborhood Village Center should include a mix of retail, services and offices that are primarily oriented to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods with their day-to-day needs. A retail development anchored by a coffee shop would be an example of an appropriate use. Residential development may be located adjacent to these villages.
- Neighborhood Village Centers are intended to contain buildings of no greater than 8,000 square feet in total, with individual stores in a multi-tenant building no greater than 3,000 square feet total.
- Buildings should be clustered, one and two stories in height, and should respect the predominant scale of development in the surrounding area by designing with elements of similar scale and providing a gradual transition to any taller or higher-density buildings 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 low-level pedestrian lights, consistent signage and landscaping contribute to the quaint character of Neighborhood Village Centers and create a sense of place.
- The use of coordinated and identified elements such as awnings, varying shingle styles or other natural materials, archways and landscaping are required.
- Adaptive re-use of existing structures and buildings is encouraged to serve as a focal point.
- There should be adequate buffering of adjacent residential uses from light and sound; buffering between uses within a Neighborhood Village Center development is not required.

Development Guidelines

Neighborhood Village Centers should be zoned:

- In Bishop, B-1 (General Business) with size limitations.
- NSS (Neighborhood Shopping and Services) in the unincorporated county, or as part of a Master Planned Development.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Community Village Center

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

Typically located at the convergence of important transportation corridors, Community Village Centers are envisioned as places where a compatible mixture of higher-intensity commercial 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 community 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 higher density 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 an important 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, full service restaurants and medical/dental clinics, gas stations, a 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.



Community Village Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Larger commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that serve residents of a large portion of the county	▪ Loft housing ▪ Higher-density residential duplexes, townhouses and apartments (depending on the jurisdiction) ▪ Smaller lot residential subdivisions ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Access from a collector or arterial roadway, or within a mixed-use development

Development Strategies

- Each commercial development in a 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, or a stand-alone drug store or supermarket, are examples of appropriate uses.
- Community Village Center developments may contain multi-tenant buildings of no greater than 125,000 square feet in total, with no individual or stand-alone business greater than 70,000 square feet unless specifically approved by the governing body. “Big box” retail uses are not compatible with this Character Area.
- Primarily retail-oriented developments should form nodes around major intersections. Intervening properties between commercial nodes should be devoted to other

uses such as institutional uses, higher density residential developments and reverse frontage/residential subdivisions;

- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Outdoor restaurant seating is encouraged.
- The pedestrian-friendly environment should be enhanced by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, community centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.
- 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.
- There should be adequate buffering of adjacent residential uses from light and sound; buffering between uses within a Community Village Center development is not required.

Development Guidelines

Community Village Centers should be zoned primarily B-1 (General Business), B-1-MPD, B-2 (Highway Business) or B-2-MPD (with appropriate use and intensity limitations), with OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), R-2 (Two-Family Residential) or R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) in appropriate locations, depending on their location and potential impact on the surrounding area.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the County and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Historic Main Street

Location: Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, Watkinsville.

This Character Area is intended primarily for small-scale retail and office development that is pedestrian oriented in nature, and compatible with the historic character of the city. The Character Area comprises “original” downtown areas in the county’s four cities and each includes a number of historic structures that contribute to the city’s cultural resources. The Historic Main Street Character Area is located along Main Street in Watkinsville, US 441 in Bishop, Atlanta Highway in Bogart, and at the Apalachee River crossing in North High Shoals. Protection of these Character Areas furthers each city’s desire to retain the “small-town feel” that is characteristic of each city and rooted in its history.



Historic Main Street Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Small-scale retail and offices in a walkable environment ▪ Adaptive reuse of existing and historic structures	▪ Moderate-scaled commercial development ▪ Public, semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Full urban services common to the city

Development Strategies

- The main component of this Character Area is to retain, and adaptively reuse the existing structures for small-scale retail and office uses retaining the historic character of the city.
- Retail and office development should be limited to pedestrian-oriented uses that do not generate excessive vehicle trips or require an abundance of parking.
- Residential uses should be limited to the upper floor of buildings with the retail and office downstairs.
- Moderate-scaled commercial development may be appropriate provided storefront facades are oriented towards the street and integrated with adjacent structures. Buildings should not exceed two stories.
- Exterior design, lighting and signage should be low key, pedestrian-oriented and compatible with the character of the community.
- The district should provide connectivity to the community's bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- Trees and vegetation should be included in all streetscape improvements.
- On-street parking should be maintained not only for additional parking spots it provides, but also for its use as a buffer between the vehicular lanes and the sidewalk.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for Historic Main Street Character Areas include the application of historic protection overlay districts.

- The underlying zoning districts applicable in Bishop and Bogart are B-1 (General Business) and OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional).
- In North High Shoals, the applicable underlying zoning districts are B-1 (General Business) and O-I-P (Office-Institutional-Professional).
- Appropriate zoning in Watkinsville is HM (Historic Main Street).

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Downtown

Location: Watkinsville.

The Downtown Character Area serves as the civic and commercial heart of Watkinsville. This Character Area is a mixed-use district that is intended to meet a wide variety of the population's needs within a village-style atmosphere. Downtowns provide a range of land use activities including commercial retail sales and service businesses that provide for local needs, private office uses, government offices and public facilities, small-scale lodging, restaurants and entertainment. Residential uses can also be incorporated into the district in a variety of forms depending on each city's preferences.



Downtown Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- Private offices, , retail shopping goods, business supplies - Government offices and public facilities - Small-scale lodging, restaurants and entertainment	- Lofts over retail or office uses - Attached residences - Live-work residences - Semi-public and institutional uses	Full urban services common to the city

Development Strategies

- The street network should be designed on a pedestrian scale that provides interconnectivity to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Automobile access and circulation should be designed in a logical grid of streets that provides adequate access but restricts through traffic.
- Development should be designed in accordance with the scale and character of the city regulating the size, height and exterior design of new or redeveloped structures. "Big box" retail uses are not compatible with this Character Area.
- Uses may be mixed either vertically (by constructing offices or residences above retail space), or horizontally (by connecting different uses adjacent to each other) in accordance with a desired mix and intensity defined by the city.
- Residential development should be prohibited from the ground floor of commercial buildings within the Character Area. Attached residential development may be included as a stand-alone use along the edges of the district acting as a transition to lower intensity land uses. Homes with a designated retail or office space open to the public (a live-work residence) may be appropriate for the area in an attached or detached configuration, depending on the city.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.

- The Character Area should encourage efficient site utilization including, but not limited to, multi-storied buildings and shared parking lots.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for the Downtown Character Area in Watkinsville is the DT (Downtown) district. In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Mixed-Use Office

Location: Watkinsville.

The Mixed-Use Office Character Area is intended to allow for a mix of offices, professional services, small scale lodging, and residential uses designed at a pedestrian scale. Primary uses include office and professional activities that generate higher employment densities than retail sales and services while encouraging a creative mix of compatible residential uses. Residential uses should be limited to higher density attached units clustered along the edge of the district and should serve as a buffer between the more intense nonresidential uses and the stream buffer.

Mixed-Use Office Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Offices and professional services	▪ Residential development of higher-density attached units along edges of the area ▪ Semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Full urban services common to the city ▪ Sidewalks and bicycle lanes

Development Strategies

- Residential development should be limited, as defined by the city, to ensure that the majority of land within the district is reserved for employment uses.
- In Watkinsville, the Character Area should be developed as a transition from the Downtown to the Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area.
- The Character Area should have a network of pedestrian facilities linking to the Downtown district facilitating the patronage of downtown businesses and to adjacent residential neighborhoods facilitating pedestrian access to employment.
- The Character Area should encourage efficient site utilization including, but not limited to, multi-storied buildings and shared parking lots.
- Character Area design characteristics should include adequate landscaping and buffering from incompatible adjacent residential land uses.
- Natural areas should be incorporated into the Character Area design as a means of providing functional open space and connectivity between adjacent uses.

- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for Watkinsville's Mixed-Use Office Character Area is MUO (Mixed-Use Office). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Scenic Corridor

Location: Watkinsville.

There are two Scenic Corridor Character Areas, each posing a unique set of circumstances for Watkinsville, as they are located along major thoroughfares providing access



to the downtown area exhibiting scenic qualities representative of the city's historic and natural character. The focus of the South Main Street corridor (photo to left) is the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the existing historic structures as a part of all new or redevelopment projects and the preservation and restoration of the natural resources along the identified roadway. The focus of the Simonton Bridge Road corridor is the preservation of existing historic structures and natural resources.

The Simonton Bridge Road corridor area is compatible for detached residential only. The South Main Street corridor (photo below) area is compatible for a mix of land uses including attached or detached residential, small-scale, neighborhood compatible retail sales and services, small-scale lodging and cafes, and office or professional land uses provided the uses do not generate traffic volume that require improvements to South Main Street to meet an increased level of service.

Scenic Corridor Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
In the Simonton Bridge Road area: ▪ Detached residences In the South Main Street area: ▪ Attached or detached residential ▪ Small-scale, neighborhood compatible retail sales and services ▪ Small-scale lodging and cafes ▪ Office or professional land uses	▪ Semi-public and institutional uses	▪ Full urban services common to the city

Development Strategies

- Within the South Main Street corridor, retail sales and services should be limited in the area and situated to provide small-scale, convenience-type commercial uses to surrounding neighborhoods. Retail sales cannot be stand-alone uses, must be incorporated in a residential unit, and must be an accessory component of the principal use of the property.
- The commitment to retain, and/or restore the existing structure as the focal point of the property within a Scenic Corridor Character Area is paramount. Both corridors favor the preservation of on-site historic structures, and in the South Main Street corridor, the adaptive reuse of onsite historic structures.
- The South Main Street corridor should be developed as a transition from Downtown to the Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area.
- Natural areas should be incorporated into all Character Area designs as a means of providing functional open space and connectivity between adjacent uses.
- South Main Street design characteristics should include adequate landscaping and buffering between residential and employment land uses on-site, as needed, and between adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- The South Main Street corridor should encourage efficient site utilization through shared parking lots for residential and employment land uses.
- Any new construction should adhere to design standards, as defined by the city, integrating the new development into the neighborhood in terms of the size, scale and design of the historic structures.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.
- Development within the identified corridors should be designed to preserve the aesthetic qualities of the driving experience by limiting the size and placement of signs and light fixtures.
- Enhance the corridor experience through the inclusion of alternative transportation facilities (sidewalks and bicycle lanes).



Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning districts for Watkinsville's Scenic Corridor Character Areas include SM (South Main Street Scenic Corridor) or SB (Simonton Bridge Road Scenic Corridor) as appropriate. In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Corridor Commercial

Location: Bogart, Watkinsville, Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Corridor Commercial Character Area is intended primarily for larger-scale commercial development that is more auto-oriented in nature, requiring increased visibility and road access. The designation targets retail, service, light industry or office development that is incompatible with a Downtown environment and require additional space to accommodate their activity.

Corridor Commercial Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Auto-oriented retail, service and repair ▪ Larger-scale commercial uses that serve the driving public ▪ Corporate and professional offices	▪ Semi-public and institutional uses ▪ Nursing home, retirement community, personal care home ▪ Day care center	▪ Full urban services common to the city

Development Strategies

- The Character Area is intended to accommodate land intensive commercial uses requiring major road access.
- Developments should conform to the scale and character of the community.
- Buffers and landscaping are important aspects of development to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses. Buffers should also be utilized to screen incompatible adjacent land uses as appropriate and to enhance the aesthetic character of the area.
- Exterior lighting and signage should be regulated to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties and roadways.
- Developments should include shared driveways and inter-parcel access, where possible, minimizing the number of curb cuts along major thoroughfares.
- This Character Area is not directly connected to residential neighborhoods but should be reasonably accessible to residents by foot or bicycle.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning districts for the Commercial Corridor Character Area are:

- B-2 (Highway Business) in Bogart and the unincorporated county.
- In Watkinsville, CC (Commercial Corridor).

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Civic Center

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Civic Center Character Area is, quite literally, the center of civic activities in unincorporated Oconee County. The Character Area includes a relatively high-intensity mix of businesses and retail shopping, office and employment opportunities, sports and recreational complexes, the full range of public schools, a college campus and other public and



semi-public uses (such as the Oconee Civic Center, religious institutions and cemeteries, and libraries and potentially museums) that create a multi-dimensional environment. A residential component is in place that adds people to the area and creates a 24-hour Character Area. A limited number of higher density townhomes, live-work units, lofts, senior housing and residential over retail would be appropriate as the area grows. Typical of nonresidential development are: a

shopping center anchored with a large grocery or drug store, small office complexes such as “office condominiums,” financial institutions, full service restaurants and medical/dental clinics, gas stations, lofts above ground level office or retail, and public and institutional uses such as schools, parks, libraries, churches and community/civic centers. This Character Area is a vibrant place where people can live, work, recreate and shop.

Civic Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- Consumer-based commercial establishments that offer goods and services to the residents of central Oconee - Employment-based business offices - Civic, institutional and semi-public uses, such as religious organizations, educational and sports/recreation facilities, museums, libraries, senior centers, YMCAs, civic and convention centers - Single-family detached subdivisions and planned developments	- Medium density multi-family housing as a component of a master planned development - Senior housing	- Public water is available - Sewer is available or planned - Transportation network to adequately support traffic demands

Development Strategies

- Residential development should be guided by the Suburban Living Character Area, including:
 - Protect existing neighborhoods from negative impacts.
 - Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock.

- Promote new residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space, while assuring suitability with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Promote innovative and mixed-use development, such as MPDs, in appropriate locations.
- Promote walkability within each community through path systems or sidewalks, particularly connecting to such focal points as schools, parks, community centers or commercial activity centers within walking distance of residences.
- Limit higher intensity duplex and multi-family development to areas where a transition between established nonresidential centers and single-family neighborhoods is needed.
- Housing designed for senior residents should be encouraged in master planned developments where appropriate retail and professional services can be close at hand.
- Commercial retail and service development should be guided by the Community Village Character Area, including:
 - Commercial retail and service development areas that can accommodate a mix of retail sales, professional and personal services, and offices that serve a wider market area than a neighborhood village, but not regional in nature. A shopping plaza anchored by a major grocery store, or a stand-alone drug store or medical/dental clinic, are examples of appropriate uses. Outdoor restaurant seating is encouraged.
 - Commercial retail and service development areas may contain multi-tenant buildings of no greater than 125,000 square feet in total, with no individual or stand-alone business greater than 70,000 square feet unless specifically approved by the governing body. “Big box” retail uses are not compatible with this Character Area.
 - 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.
- There should be adequate buffering between commercial and adjacent residential uses from light and sound; buffering between uses within a planned mixed-use development, such as an MPD, is not required.

Development Guidelines

Single-family detached residential subdivision densities within this Character Area range from a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ to over one acre per dwelling unit (DU), depending on the availability of public water or sewer.

- In the unincorporated area, higher density duplex and multi-family development may be allowed as a transition between high-intensity uses (such as commercial centers

or public/civic facilities) and single-family neighborhoods. The appropriate residential zoning and density designation is determined by the following criteria:

Residential Development in the Civic Center Character Area Unincorporated Oconee County			
County Zoning District	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)	R-2 (Two-Family Residential)	R-3 (Multi-Family Residential)
Minimum Lot Size (Conventional Development) on public water or sewer	30,000 sf per Single-Family Detached Dwelling Unit	15,000 sf per Dwelling Unit (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)	8,000 sf per Multi-Family Dwelling Unit
Common Development Type	Conventional or Conservation Subdivision, or MPD	Conventional Subdivision or MPD	Multi-Family Development or MPD
Water Availability	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Sewer Availability	No	Yes*	Yes
Roadway Type	Local	Collector	Arterial
*Larger lot sizes are required if public water or sewer are not available.			

- Appropriate zoning categories applicable to this Character Area for nonresidential uses in the unincorporated area are OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), B-1 (General Business), B-1-MPD, B-2 (Highway Business) and B-2-MPD (with appropriate use and intensity limitations), depending on their location and potential impact on the surrounding area.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Technology Gateway

Location: Bogart, Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Technology Gateway Character Area extends along the western portion of SR 316. This corridor, which includes the “Orkin” tract, is primed to experience major office, research and development, and light industrial development, to become the County’s premier employment center. As a large employment center of regional and statewide importance, the Technology Gateway Character Area incorporates many aspects of commerce such as professional office buildings, corporate and regional offices, high-tech and research facilities, small office and business park complexes, and light industrial uses such as warehousing and wholesale. Retail and residential are appropriate secondary uses that complement these employment centers. High intensity residential integrated into a mixed-use development is appropriate to create a live, work and play environment. Such 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. Retail uses are expected to be primarily local-serving for the businesses and em-

ployees in the Character Area. Redevelopment of low-density residential uses to employment-based uses can be anticipated as the area develops.

Technology Gateway Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- High tech, bio-medical and research facilities - Light industrial and light manufacturing that will not have an adverse impact on the environmental quality of the area - Regional, headquarter and professional offices - Office complexes and campuses; - Business parks and small office complexes such as "office condominiums" - Mixed use projects with a vertical integration, such as ground floor retail with office or living units above	- Commercial retail and services that support the business and employment base in the area - Multi-family residential development within a mixed-use master planned environment - Semi-public and institutional uses	- Public water is available - Sewer is available or planned - Transportation routes adequately scaled to employee and business traffic

Development Strategies

- Continue to focus economic development promotional activities within the Character Area.
- Encourage development in mixed-use urban centers or compact activity centers that include supporting commercial and higher density components.
- Require master planning of individual sites to address access management, landscaping and streetscape elements.
- Plan and design transportation improvements that support development of the area.
- Require buffers to protect nearby lower-density residential areas that would be impacted by development of the Character Area. Buffering between uses within a planned mixed-use development, such as an MPD, is not required.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning districts for the Technology Gateway Character Area are:

- In Bogart, P-O-R (Professional-Office-Research).
- In the unincorporated area, appropriate zoning would be primarily TB (Technology Business), OBP (Office-Business Park) and OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), and secondarily (in appropriate locations) R-2-MPD, R-3-MPD, B-1 (General Business) and B-1-MPD.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Regional Center

Location: Unincorporated Oconee County.

The Regional Center Character Area embraces the eastern portion of SR 316, leading into Athens-Clarke County. The area is characterized by regional-serving retail and commercial services, office complexes for medical and corporate offices, hotels, restaurants and entertainment facilities, higher-density residential planned developments and single-family detached subdivisions. While the area is currently a “multi”-use area of distinct and separate uses, planned mixed-use developments are encouraged.

Regional Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
- Regional medical and professional offices - Small office complexes such as “office condominiums,” financial institutions and other service providers - Hotels and meeting facilities - Shopping centers with major retail anchors - Department stores, large marketers and individual “big box” retail stores - High density residential development within a mixed-use master planned environment - Single-family subdivisions and planned developments	- Senior housing - Recreational uses such as theaters, roller skating rings, arcades - Entertainment, restaurants and cultural arts - Semi-public and institutional uses	- Public water is available - Sewer is available or planned - Transportation network to adequately support traffic demands

Development Strategies

- Provide a wide variety of mixed uses, size and intensity of uses (from low to high), and types of uses in order to create and maintain the regional-serving role of the Character Area.
- Require buffers to protect lower-density residential areas within and near the Character Area that would be impacted by higher-density and commercial development of the Character Area. Buffering between uses within a planned mixed-use development, such as an MPD, is not required.
- Transitions in intensity of development should be established approaching the boundaries whenever possible, moving in gradations from high-intensity regional office parks and retail shopping centers down to low-intensity single-family neighborhoods. Where a gradual transition is impractical, major buffering between the development and adjacent uses or other solutions should be established through zoning and site plan restrictions.
- Plan for a community trail and sidewalk network that is as friendly to alternative modes of transportation as to the automobile.
- Require master planning of individual sites to address access management, landscaping and streetscape elements.

- Plan and design transportation improvements that correlate traffic capacity with development of the area.
- 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, hedge or landscape strip. Display platforms should be incorporated into overall design.
- Encourage civic and cultural uses, recreational and entertainment businesses that will promote human interaction.

Development Guidelines

In the unincorporated area, appropriate zoning for primarily residential development (in appropriate locations) would be the R-1 (Single-Family Residential), R-1-MPD, R-2 (Two-Family Residential), R-2-MPD, R-3 (Multi-Family Residential) and R-3-MPD districts; and for primarily nonresidential development (in appropriate locations), OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional), B-1 (General Business), B-1-MPD, B-2 (Highway Business) and B-2-MPD.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Workplace Center

Location: Bishop, Bogart, Watkinsville, Unincorporated Oconee County.

This Character Area is intended primarily for larger-scale heavy commercial, industrial, wholesale, and office uses that may be land intensive, generate high employee or truck traffic, or create noise, odor, or other impacts associated with manufacturing and production uses.



Workplace Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
▪ Light industrial, warehousing and light manufacturing. Heavy industrial is restricted to locations where adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated ▪ Heavy commercial uses, such as auto repair and service ▪ Employment uses such as business parks, distribution/services ▪ Wholesaling companies, business parks	▪ None	▪ Public water is available ▪ Sewer is available or planned ▪ Access available from arterial or major collector roads

Development Strategies

- Residential uses are not appropriate within this Character Area.
- Adequate buffers and landscaping should be required between a Workplace Center Character Area and adjacent residential or commercial land uses.
- 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.
- Intensive uses producing negative impacts related to noise, odor, truck traffic, or other adverse conditions should be carefully sited to ensure compatibility with other employment uses within the Character Area.
- Access directly to major transportation corridors should be limited.
- Internal transportation networks should adequately accommodate traffic needs and provide interconnectivity and shared parking where applicable.

Development Guidelines

Zoning districts appropriate for the Workplace Center Character Area are:

- In Bishop, OBP (Office-Business Park) and I (Industrial).
- In Bogart, I-M (Industrial).
- In Watkinsville, EC (Employment Center).
- In the unincorporated area, appropriate zoning districts include I (Industrial), OBP (Office-Business Park) and B-2 (Highway Business) in appropriate locations.

In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Public Institutional

Location: Watkinsville.

This Character Area represents the various civic functions scattered throughout the City of Watkinsville. The Future Development Map illustrates the existing and proposed locations of civic functions, including the following; county and city government offices, library, school, law enforcement, emergency services, churches, and other areas owned or operated by city or county government.

The Future Development Map has identified an area for expansion for large-scale county or municipal government uses adjacent to existing developments. Smaller scale government administration offices generating higher point of service demand should remain clustered downtown strengthening its location as a vibrant hub of the community.

Certain civic uses may be suitable within predominantly residential areas provided they do not generate significant traffic and are built to scale with the surrounding area. These uses may include, but are not limited to, fire stations, elementary schools, and childcare centers.

Public Institutional Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
Civic functions such as county and city government offices, library, school, law enforcement, emergency services and churches.	Other areas owned or operated by city or county government	- Full urban services common to the city - Sidewalks and bicycle lanes

Development Strategies

- Institutional development should be built to the scale and design of surrounding land uses.
- District design characteristics should include adequate landscaping and buffering from adjacent land uses.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.
- Pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities should be included as part of developments intended as major destination points.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for Watkinsville's Public Institutional Character Area is PI (Public Institutional). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the City and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

■ Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Although not a Character Area itself outside of Watkinsville, lands shown as Parks/Recreation/Conservation on the Future Development Maps for Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals and the unincorporated area of the county are included within the various Character Areas within those jurisdictions. These lands include stream buffers and corridors, parks, conservation areas and other natural environmental resources that are protected from land development activities.

Within Watkinsville, parks, recreation and conservation areas are treated as a unique Character Area, which is described as follows.

Parks, recreation and conservation areas are dedicated to passive or active recreation uses or for the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands. Parks and recreation areas may be defined as community parks, neighborhood parks, community squares or greenspace.

Community parks are typically larger facilities intended to attract users from a wider radius and provide a variety of recreational activities. Additional need for community parks has been identified in two locations within Watkinsville to increase access to major recreation space community-wide. These parks should be developed in a similar fashion as

Harris Shoals Park, providing an array of recreational activities. Typical facilities located in community parks include, but are not limited to, children's playground, public restrooms, public art, group picnic areas, amphitheaters and competitive sports facilities. Additionally, because the community park is intended to attract users from a wider radius, on-site parking may be necessary.

Neighborhood parks are typically smaller facilities, of 1-to- 3 acres, located within residential developments and intended to serve a more localized population providing basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents of all ages. Parks are generally located near the center of neighborhoods and are typically open spaces intended to provide unstructured recreation but may also include playground equipment. There are no specific sites identified within Watkinsville but these parks should be included, and centrally situated, within new residential developments.

Community squares are intended to be the central park of the community and to accommodate a variety of community functions. Rocket Field has been designated as Watkinsville's community square based on its location and potential for providing unstructured recreation opportunities and hosting community events (farmer's market, community festivals, and other public activities).

The conservation areas are focused around the community's stream corridors, which serve to protect the region's water quality, natural habitats, and provide valuable tree cover and open space. Stream corridors are defined by either the delineated 100- year flood hazard boundary or a 100-foot stream corridor transition area, whichever is greater (exemptions may be considered based on topographic limitations of the property in question). Development within this area should be limited to minimize the adverse impacts of development on water quality and to preserve adequate space to accommodate multi-use trails and community infrastructure networks (such as public sewerage or stormwater treatment facilities).

Development Strategies

- All parks and recreation areas should be linked to a pedestrian and/or bicycle facility network increasing their accessibility.
- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all parks and recreation areas.
- Conservation areas should, to the extent feasible, accommodate multi-use trails along the river corridor providing interconnectivity throughout the city and increasing the recreational use of designated greenspace.
- Natural vegetative buffers should be maintained between the river corridor and multi-use trail.

Development Guidelines

Appropriate zoning for Watkinsville's Parks/Recreation/Conservation Character Area is PRC (Parks, Recreation, Conservation). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the jurisdiction and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

Quality Community Objectives

The following table notes those Character Areas that will contribute, as part of their primary focus, toward realization of the Quality Community Objectives established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Quality Community Objectives	Agricultural Preservation	Rural Places	Country Estates	Suburban Living	Traditional Neighborhoods	City Living	Country Crossroads	Neighborhood Village Center	Community Village Center	Historic Main Street	Downtown	Mixed-Use Office	Scenic Corridor	Corridor Commercial	Civic Center	Technology Gateway	Regional Center	Workplace Center	Public Institutional
Development Patterns																			
Traditional Neighborhoods Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓		✓		
Infill Development Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sense of Place Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.								✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓

Quality Community Objectives	Agricultural Preservation	Rural Places	Country Estates	Suburban Living	Traditional Neighborhoods	City Living	Country Crossroads	Neighborhood Village Center	Community Village Center	Historic Main Street	Downtown	Mixed-Use Office	Scenic Corridor	Corridor Commercial	Civic Center	Technology Gateway	Regional Center	Workplace Center	Public Institutional
Transportation Alternatives Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓
Regional Identity Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resource Conservation																			
Heritage Preservation The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Open Space Preservation New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.	✓	✓	✓	✓											✓		✓		

Quality Community Objectives	Agricultural Preservation	Rural Places	Country Estates	Suburban Living	Traditional Neighborhoods	City Living	Country Crossroads	Neighborhood Village Center	Community Village Center	Historic Main Street	Downtown	Mixed-Use Office	Scenic Corridor	Corridor Commercial	Civic Center	Technology Gateway	Regional Center	Workplace Center	Public Institutional
Environmental Protection Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social and Economic Development																			
Growth Preparedness Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appropriate Businesses The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Employment Options A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Quality Community Objectives	Agricultural Preservation	Rural Places	Country Estates	Suburban Living	Traditional Neighborhoods	City Living	Country Crossroads	Neighborhood Village Center	Community Village Center	Historic Main Street	Downtown	Mixed-Use Office	Scenic Corridor	Corridor Commercial	Civic Center	Technology Gateway	Regional Center	Workplace Center	Public Institutional
Housing Choices A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Educational Opportunities Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Governmental Relations																			
Regional Solutions Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Regional Cooperation Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Section 4: Implementation

Rezoning and Development Process

Each community should use the policies and Character Area standards outlined within this Plan while reviewing specific proposals for rezoning, development and major renovation proposals. Architects, property owners and developers should also use the guidelines as a reference as they prepare plans for projects. As general guidelines, Character Area standards cannot predict the unique potential and/or constraints for each project. Thus, these guidelines are intended to establish a general direction and a base level of development quality and compatibility with surrounding areas. In individual cases, a jurisdiction may adopt a more detailed statement of its Character Areas, such as the Concept Plan adopted by Watkinsville.

Growth management is a two-step strategy: 1. The Comprehensive Plan and 2. Establish the regulatory measures (such as adopted design guidelines by area, and zoning districts or overlays) required to protect and enhance that character.

■ Comprehensive Plan

New development and rezonings should be compared against the Comprehensive Plan policies and Character Areas for consistency and intent.

- Guiding principles, policies and development strategies are developed from the Vision; all new development should relate and coordinate with policy;
- Review general design considerations for consistency;
- Character Area guidelines are intended to establish a general direction and a base level of development quality and suitability with surrounding areas;
- Character Areas suggest qualitative controls until small area and corridor studies are completed for specific areas or more detailed statements of Character Area standards are adopted; and
- Character Areas **are not regulations**, and therefore allow some flexibility during project review, as long as consistency with the Character Area is maintained.

The Development Process

**Identify Character Area on Future Development Map (FDM).*

** Determine the compatible zoning districts and infrastructure requirements for the Character Area.*

**Review overall community design considerations.*

**Review the applicable Character Area intent, and guidelines.*

**Determine whether the zoning or development proposal is consistent with plan policies and the FDM.*

As the project proceeds through the rezoning or development process it will be judged on how that specific proposal works on that specific site, utilizing the review standards already adopted by the jurisdiction in their Zoning Ordinance or Unified Development Code.

■ Development Regulations

Development Regulations (Step 2) should reflect the Character Area guidelines (whether in this Plan, contained in small area or corridor studies, or in more detailed statements such as the Watkinsville Concept Plan) and thus create a relationship between the Plan and the implementing Codes. Typically, a natural outcome of a Character Area based Plan is a set of design regulations that speak to specific development characteristics such as site planning, massing, scale and density. This can be achieved in several ways: require detailed concept plans during the zoning and development review process to conform to the character area guidelines, a rewrite of the Codes to reflect a more performance based approach, and the use of zoning overlay districts that supplement the current zoning provisions and safeguard the designated area from development patterns that perpetuate sprawl. By implementing this type of control measure, a community can work towards achieving its Vision.

Several jurisdictions are in the process of transforming zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and other land use regulatory controls into more comprehensive and user-friendly formats. The zoning regulations of a jurisdiction are a valuable and necessary tool for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and for the creation of quality developments within the County.

Managing the plan

■ Detailed Planning Studies

Detailed plans, such as a Downtown Master Plan, a Greenspace Plan, Capital Facilities Program, transportation corridor or streetscape plans, small area studies and design regulations may be adopted as implementing measures of the Comprehensive Plan, as Watkinsville has already done through adoption of its Concept Plan. A natural outcome of Character Area based planning is to develop specific character based regulations using the “form based” approach created following the principles of “new urbanism,” such as those developed by Watkinsville.

■ Plan Review and Update

To be a useful and influential tool in guiding growth and development in the future and in ultimately realizing each jurisdiction’s Community Vision for the future, the Comprehensive Plan must be kept current. Over time, changes will occur that may not have been anticipated and over which local governments may have little or no control—changing lifestyles, national or regional economic shifts, the impact of telecommuting or internet access on working and shopping patterns, etc. Annually monitoring these shifts against progress in plan implementation may lead to the need for amendments to the Plan. At a minimum, a substantial Update will have to be undertaken five years from adoption, and a complete rewrite will be required after ten years, as per State requirements.

Annual Plan Review

The annual review should be accomplished in coordination with the annual budgeting process of each jurisdiction. At a minimum, the annual review should consider:

- The pace of growth, in terms of housing units built and land absorbed by nonresidential development.
- Land development approvals over the past year as a score card of the Comprehensive Plan's Vision.
- Zoning approvals over the past year in relation to the Future Development Map.
- Future Development Plan Map changes.
- Planned Short Term Work Program activities compared to actual accomplishments.

Short Term Work Program (STWP)

The STWP should be updated annually, reflecting the results of the Annual Plan Review, but must at a minimum be updated every five years. On an annual basis, the STWP will be extended one year into the future in order to maintain a full five years of future activity, and any changes appropriate to the other years will be included. Updated STWPs are to be forwarded to the Northeast Georgia RDC for their files.

Minor Plan Amendments

As a result of the annual plan review, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan may be appropriate. If the needed changes are strictly local and not considered to have an effect on another local government, the changes may be adopted as a minor amendment to the Plan at any time during the year by action of the City Council or Board of Commissioners in their respective jurisdictions. At the end of each year (along with any annual update to the STWP), a summary of all minor amendments is to be sent to the NEGRDC with a statement that the individual and cumulative effects of the minor amendments do not significantly alter the basic tenets of the approved Plan.

Major Plan Amendments

If, as a result of the annual plan review process or for any other reason, conditions or policies on which the Plan is based have changed significantly so as to alter the basic tenets of the Plan, the appropriate City or the County may initiate a Major Plan Amendment. The public will be involved in preparation of the Plan amendment to the extent warranted by the degree of change that has occurred. Following State procedural guidelines, a public hearing will be held to inform the public of the community's intent to amend the Plan and to seek public participation, and the draft amendment will be forwarded to the NEGRDC for review. The amendment will be submitted by the NEGRDC to surrounding potentially affected local governments for review and comment in accordance with State requirements, prior to adoption.

Plan Accomplishments—2003-2007

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	

Economic Development					
Retain a consultant to conduct a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan	2004	X			Plan complete in 2005.
Continue support for Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation including planning of cultural arts facility at Heritage Park.		X			Next round of funding may be in next SPLOST.
Continue to support agribusiness through support of county's extension service and other agribusiness organizations.		X			Farmland Preservation Program participation in annual budget.
Proceed with development of Gateway Industrial Park.			X		Developer not yet identified. Already addressed.
Continue to market commercial/business nodes of SR53/Mars Hill Rd.; SR 316 to the Oconee Connector; the US 78 and SR 53 corridors		X			
Bishop - Continue to encourage and promote local businesses that appeal to the existing tourist traffic.		X			??
Bishop - Continue to encourage and promote existing businesses compatible with historic character.		X			Combined with existing item
Bogart - Participate in joint training and partnership with other local municipalities, RDC and Oconee County BOC.		X			
Bogart - Improve and enhance annual/seasonal lighting and displays.		X			Combine with landscape improvements
Bogart - The beautification of the downtown area through landscaping of public property with trees and planting beds.		X			Combined with improvements and preservation item
Bogart - Encourage and promote business to participate in annual events/festivals.		X			Combine with existing tourism item
Bogart - Continue improvements and preservation of downtown historical businesses.		X			Combine with landscape and lighting item
Bogart - Develop a comprehensive information and marketing package for Bogart.	2007				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	

Bogart - Establish a reliable communication system with the citizens.	2007				
Bogart - Continue cooperative effort to market Gateway Business Park.		X			Combined with existing item
Bogart - Encourage the marketability of the IBM/Orkin commercial tract on Hwy. 78 and GA 316.		X			Combined with existing item
Watkinsville - Participate in the Oconee Industrial Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce for promotion of commercial development		X			

Natural and Historic Resources

Update Article 9 of the UDC to contain standards, regulations and development policies, which guide the protection of the County's significant environmental resources in adherence with DNR Article V Minimum Standards.	2006				County implements guidelines and has adopted streambed protection measures for the Oconee River. Wetlands Protection ordinance, Watershed Protection and the Aquifer Recharge Area Protection Ordinance, as well as Natural Resource and Conservation Areas and Easements also adopted.
Adoption of the minimum DNR standards where specific ordinances have not been adopted will ensure the protection of these important features within the County.	Standards adopted in 2006	X			In addition, Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance has been updated and Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance has been updated in 2006
Aim to preserve 450 acres of open space annually		X	X		Target has not been met but County has almost 2,200 acres in preserved open space. The promotion of conservation subdivisions and conservation easements is an important factor. Revised wording in STWP
Study potential for industry monitoring program for classified materials by EMA or other agency. Additional inspector may be needed in future.	2005				
Study requiring dumpsters or roll off containers on construction sites. Continue to monitor and consider code revision if it becomes necessary.	2005				Code revised to require roll off containers on construction sites.
Continue maintenance and operation of Eagle Tavern Visitor's Center.		X			
Promote historic sites through the "Cultural Affairs & Recreation Committee".		X			
Monitor historic sites for protection.		X			Old Central Schoolhouse relocated and restored. Include in ordinance item
Renovation of the upper story of the Old Elder Mill (the lower floor has already been restored into living quarters) and listing of the structure on the National Register.		X			The Historic Resources Committee undertook this renovation in 2006 and it is nearing completion in 2007/2008. The mill was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
Accept donations and public participation to identify and recognize historic properties		X			Old Schoolhouse and Plumb Creek Cabin.
Continue Conservation Use Exemption Program.		X			Combined with tax assessment item
Continue to review tax assessments on a case by case basis.		X			Combined with Exemption program
Conduct periodic countywide re-evaluation of tax digest.		X			
Continue financing the maintenance, depreciation and expansion costs of water and sewer system with user fees.		X			Already in
Encourage and participate in regional efforts to protect Bear Creek, Oconee River, Apalachee River and other significant watersheds in the county and region.		X			RDC/DRI process and Upper Oconee Basin Authority activities and EPD coordination.
Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water.		X			
Watkinsville - Adopt protection regulations for steep slopes.				X	Utilize County regs which meet DNR Part V requirements
Watkinsville - Promote the utilization and preservation of historic structures by adopting a policy to help owners retain use of structures.	2007				
Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors		X			Anticipate 2007 to 2008 completion.
Bishop - Maintain present city hall as historic structure (built as city jail in 1939).		X			Combine with gazebo item
Bishop - Maintain scenic area of pedestrian garden and gazebo.		X			Combine with jail and city hall
Bishop - Continue with a proactive plan of historic preservation; i.e., restoration of Chandler/Marable House, promote the Bishop history book that documents historic sites, erect new city limit signs that promote the historic district.		X			
Bishop - Maintain Bishop Well and Well House (circa 1890).		X			Combine with jail and gazebo item
Bishop - Encourage use of state and federal tax-incentive programs.		X			
Bishop - Update zoning regulations and ordinances to protect historic resources.	X				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	

Bishop - Continue preservation and restoration of recently purchased Chandler/Marable House for city hall expansion and community facilities.		X			Already addressed – not carried forward
Bogart - Identify and protect headwaters of Little Bear Creek as a perennial stream through a process of local ordinances.		X			
Bogart – Pursue nomination of Bogart Historic District			X		Committee working toward nomination – targeted in 2008-12 STWP Already addressed
North High Shoals - Pursue adoption of ordinance to protect Apalachee River corridor and watershed.	2007				
North High Shoals - Investigate feasibility of updating historic sites survey through matching grant.	2003				
North High Shoals - Nominate North High Shoals Historic District to National Register of Historic Places.	2003				
Watkinsville - Continue enforcement of wellhead protection ordinance.	X				Incorporated into normal City operations.
Watkinsville - Provide support to County and Citizens' Committees for historic preservation.		X			Already addressed

Community Facilities

Water - Proceed with planning for the Apalachee Regional Water Reservoir and Treatment facility and service delivery lines		X			Planning for Apalachee Regional Reservoir has been replaced by participation in the Walton County Regional Project.
Water - Proceed with EPD withdrawal permit on Apalachee River. (Bracewell Agreement)	2003				Have permit for 2.25 MGD
Water - Complete waterline extension, Rocky Branch & Malcolm Bridge Roads.	2003				
Water - Water line extension Hodges Mill Road from Hwy. 53 to Mars Mill Road.	2004				
Water - Water line extension at Hwy. 53 from Hwy. 78 to the Barrow County Line.	2005				Targeted for 2003, completed in 2005
Water - Water line extension Elder Road from Hwy. 53 to Herman C. Michael Recreation Center.	2003				
Water – Dials Mill Rd. water line extension	2006				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
Water – SR 186. water line extension	2006				
Water - Complete 24" water transmission line from Bear Creek to Old Hwy. 29	2007				
Water - Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water		X			
Water/Wastewater - Continue to finance maintenance, depreciation, and expansion costs for provision of water/sewer system with user fees		X			
Bogart - The extension of water lines to service new landscaping.	2005				
North High Shoals - Install water line & hydrants on Plantation Rd. & Jefferson Rd.	2003				Completed by County
North High Shoals - Develop plans, schedule & budget for citywide water system.	2006				Water mains installed on Cole Springs Rd.
Sewer - Complete Bogart sanitary sewer line from Mars Hill Road to Gateway Business Park.	2002				
Sewer - Addition of a wastewater collection system, including a force main and a pump station at McNutt Creek	2002				
Sewer - Construct gravity sewer line system from Barber Creek to Daniels Bridge Road with lift station and force main to Mars Hill Road.	2002				
Sewer - Construct force main from Jimmy Daniel Rd. at McNutt Creek to LAS Site.	2002				
Sewer - Extend Malcom Bridge gravity sewer line	2006				
Sewer - Installed a force main and gravity system on Highway 53 for the new County park	2007				Underway -- will complete in 2007.
Sewer - Extend sewer force main to Benson's Bakery from Gateway Industrial Park.	2002				
Sewer - Complete upgrade of Calls Creek WWTP.	2007				Additional membranes will be added in 2007 which will increase capacity to 1 MGD
Bogart - Determine whether to proceed with development of city sewerage system.			X		Already addressed in existing item

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
Waste Management - Continue to require recycling services by private solid waste collectors through solid waste ordinance enforcement.		X			Also applicable to Natural Resources Combined with recycling by private citizens
Waste Management - Continue participation in regional solid waste management and disposal planning.		X			Also applicable to Natural Resources
Waste Management - Continue to promote recycling by private citizens.		X			Also applicable to Natural Resources Combined with recycling by private solid waste services
Bogart - Promote recycling through private hauler and city franchise.		X			
Stormwater Division - develop a Stormwater Management Ordinance.	2004				
Stormwater Division - The Division is in the process of conducting a survey of the drainage systems in the northern portion of the County, covering 22.5 square miles generally north of (and including) Watkinsville and Bogart, in the vicinity of the Athens-Clarke County line.	2007				
Stormwater Division - Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors.		X			Anticipated completion date 2007 to 2008. (Duplicate item—see under Natural and Historic Resources.) In
EMT- The division, including EMS and 911 functions will move into new 5,800 sq.ft. facility on Experiment Station Rd.	2007				
Sheriff- Construct new detention center	2007				
Watkinsville - Develop plans and build new police department offices.	2003				
Parks and Rec - Support changes in state law which would make impact fees more practical for medium sized local governments.	2007				
Parks and Rec - Schedule acquisition of new parcels for recreation facilities.	2003				Negotiations are complete for the Oconee Community Complex.
Parks and Rec - Acquisition of land, construction, equipping and installation costs for the new 196-acre Oconee Community Complex.	2007				Improvements are underway, will complete in 2007.
Parks and Rec - Continue the development of Heritage Park (300 acre recreational, cultural, agricultural facility).	2007				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
Parks and Rec - Acquire property and begin development of new recreation facility.		X			Will continue as county grows.
Parks and Rec - Continue to expand recreation planning horizon (20 year period).		X			
Continue to expand Senior Citizen Center programs and health programs as needed.		X			
Bogart - Continue cooperative development of recreation facilities through county.		X			
Bishop - Use of abandoned rail lines as bicycle and hiking trails				X	Rail lines not abandoned.
North High Shoals - Continue city plans to convert old fire station to a city recreation facility and park.	2007				Complete
North High Shoals - Continue development of city park.	2007				Complete
Watkinsville - Improve Harris Shoals Park landscape and facilities.	2007				
Watkinsville - Implement downtown streetscape	2007				Also applicable to Economic Development.
Watkinsville - Secure, locate and build street department shop.	2005				
Watkinsville - Investigate feasibility of City Hall remodeling.	2004				
School System – Construct North Oconee High School	2004				
School System - purchase 12 modular classrooms (six doublewide trailers), budget for 28 additional teachers and identified other classroom space.	2006-2007	X			To meet current and future capacity needs.
School System – Facilities improvements including: Music Suite addition and roof replacement at Oconee Middle School; fire alarms at Colham Ferry and Oconee elementary; purchase and install technology at all schools	2003-2007				
School System – Purchase land for new elementary school				X	In process. Will be complete by end of 2007/2008. Combined with existing item
Circulation/Infrastructure					

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
Continue active participation in MA-CORTS (Athens/Clarke-Oconee Regional Transportation Study).		X			Already in
Proceed with all transportation projects currently in the TIP (4 year) & the long range plan (20 year).		X			
Complete Old Farmington Road culvert.	2003				
Complete Phase II Jennings Mill Parkway, Lowes to Oconee Connector with interchange at Loop 10.		X			ROW acquisition will be completed in 2007. Will let contract in 2008 with 2-year construction schedule.
Plan commercial development on US 441 & other major transportation corridors in such a manner as to preserve the capacity of these through roads by requiring interconnection between new developments.		X			Revised wording
Continue implementing local transportation projects outside of the TIP and TP through consultants, county staff & county contract.	2007				
Complete 4 lane project (widening of Mars Hill/Experiment Station Road).		X			Should let contract in 2010. – Already in with other wording
Continue to improve and upgrade streets (resurfacing).		X			
Intersection & improvements to Rocky Branch, Snows Mill Roads and Hwy. 53 (re: new public school campus).	2006				
Continue infrastructure development on US 441 North, connector between US 441 and SR 15, Mars Hill/US 78 corridor, and US 78 from McNutt Creek to SR 53.		X			
Continue to improve and signalize intersections. Investigate other methods to improve intersection safety.		X			
Continue to implement bridge maintenance and improvement program		X			
Bishop - Continue planning dialogue with GA DOT and local county BOC for future Bishop By-pass on Hwy 441.		X			Already in
Bogart - Continue to improve and upgrade streets.		X			
Bogart - Establish sidewalks, bike trails, pedestrian crossings, etc. to make accessible facilities to residents.		X			

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
North High Shoals - Continue to improve & upgrade city streets.		X			
North High Shoals - Develop a plan & budget for installing street lights in areas not currently covered.	2005				
Watkinsville - Perform traffic study of area surrounding Christian Lake Subdivision and dangerous intersections.	2007				
Housing					
Expand inspection staff as needed to keep pace with growth and thoroughly inspect all new structures.	2007				
Continue present policies which promote affordable housing including PUD zoning, conservation subdivisions and manufactured housing regulations.		X			
Land Use					
Codify development regulations including sign regulations.	2006				
Conduct seminar(s) for developers & consultants.	2007				
Continue staff training (continuing education)		X			
Expand staff as needed (Planning & Engineering)		X			
Implement new zoning districts for low density residential developments. (Consider AR4 & AR3 Districts)	2002				
Bishop - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee Co. Planning Commission and Planning staff.		X			
Bogart - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee County Planning Commission and staff to identify any needed changes to regulations.		X			Combined with below
Bogart - Continue cooperative agreement with county BOC and Planning staff for development procedures.		X			Combine all cities together
Bogart - Enforce all existing zoning ordinances to bring city into compliance.		X			
Bogart - Review inventory of records and update plat compilations, land maps, R-O-W, easements.	2007				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	Ongoing	Pending	Dropped	
Bogart - Initiate a Yard of the Month program	2007				
Bogart - Review of all ordinances, codes, regulations and then reconcile any differences with the Charter.	2007				
Bogart - Initiate a Clean-Up Bogart weekend to become an annual event.	2007				
North High Shoals - Continue cooperative agreement with county BOC and Planning staff for development procedures.		X			Combined with all cities
North High Shoals - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee Co. Planning Commission and Planning staff to identify any needed changes to Zoning Regulations (also applies to Housing).		X			Combined with above
North High Shoals - Develop Firearms Discharge Ordinance to protect residential character of town.	2003				
North High Shoals - Develop & adopt Sidewalk Ordinance for residential subdivisions.	2005				
Watkinsville - Continue cooperative agreement with county BOC and Planning staff for development procedures.		X			Combined with all cities
Watkinsville - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee Co. Planning Commission and Planning staff to identify any needed changes to regulations.		X			Combined with above

Short Term Work Programs—2008-2012

On the following pages, Short Term Work Programs are shown separately for Oconee County and each of the cities in the county.

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Economic Development							
Continue to actively market the potential for development of the undeveloped "Industrial and Technology Business" zoned sites in northwestern Oconee County (includes Gateway Industrial Park).	X	X	X	X	X	\$30,000 County operations	Economic Development Department
Outline areas and property on the Future Development Map to accommodate the amount and types of economic development opportunities that are desired and projected.	X					\$25,000 County operations	Economic Development Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Step up efforts, programs and incentives to attract greater economic development opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	\$30,000 County operations	Economic Development Department
Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support and attract new businesses and industries.	X	X	X	X	X	County operations	Economic Development Department, Public Works Department, Utilities Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Promote Entrepreneur Friendly Program to enhance small businesses in Oconee County.	X	X				\$10,000 County operations	Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Department
Promote Work Ready Community Initiative within Oconee County.	X	X				\$35,000 Grants, County operations	Economic Development Department
Enhance Economic Development and Tourism websites.	X	X				\$12,000 County operations	Economic Development & Tourism Departments
Continue support for Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation including planning of cultural arts facility at Heritage Park.	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,000 County operations	Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce

⁴ Estimated cost if known; source of funds, if applicable. All continuing operations are funded through the General Fund.

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Continue to support agribusiness through support of county's extension service and other agribusiness organizations.	X	X	X	X	X	County operations	Economic Development Department
Continue to market commercial/business nodes of SR53/Mars Hill Rd.; SR 316 to the Oconee Connector; the US 78 and SR 53 corridors	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000 County operations	Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce
Natural and Historic Resources							
Conduct a study of tools, programs, approaches, administration and funding sources that would meaningfully and effectively provide protection for designated agricultural and rural areas of the County. The study may include TDRs, farmland protection funding, additional development guidelines and other strategies	X					\$25,000 General Fund	Strategic & Long Range Planning Department Economic Development Planning Department County Attorney
Consider revisions to the UDC that require that green-space, open space and protected sensitive natural areas be incorporated within all new developments.	X					\$25,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Create a comprehensive program for Farmland Preservation, greenway and rural area conservation which predetermines and identifies specific conservation areas and greenways so that retained areas will ultimately form an interconnected network of protected lands.		X				County operations	Strategic & Long Range Planning Department Planning Department All Cities
Continue to utilize tax incentives, Conservation Use Exemption Program, land use regulation and other means to preserve and protect prime agricultural farmlands and forest lands.	X	X	X	X	X	County operations	Tax Commissioner, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Continue to review tax assessments on a case by case basis and conduct periodic countywide re-evaluation of tax digest.	X	X	X	X	X	\$150,000 County operations	Tax Commissioner, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Encourage and participate in regional efforts to protect Bear Creek, Oconee River, Apalachee River and other significant watersheds in the county and region.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department Engineering Department
Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water.	X	X	X	X	X	\$100,000 County operations	Engineering Department
Enforce Best Management Practices during construction to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with new development.	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000 County operations	Planning Department, Code Enforcement Department All Cities
Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors	X					County operations	Planning Department, Engineering Department

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Establish an annual objective and target acquisition of open space/conservation area acreage.	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Prepare a Historic Preservation Ordinance or Overlay, including property disposition, to monitor, protect and enhance the historical assets of the community, through regulation, assistance and reuse.	X	X				\$25,000 County operations	Tourism Committee, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
In conjunction with the Cities, seek funding for the conduct of an updated Historic Resources Survey.	X	X				\$30,000 County operations	Tourism Committee, County, All Cities
Pursue the nomination of the Farmington Historic District, in conjunction with the old depot and the Freeman Creek Church to the National Register listing.			X			\$10,000 County operations	Tourism Committee, Planning Department
Continue to utilize Oconee Heritage Park to preserve our heritage and promote tourism within the county.	X	X	X	X	X	\$30,000 County operations	Parks and Recreation Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Review the locations of existing historic resources and rezone appropriate properties to the Scenic Preservation District designation.	X					\$10,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Continue maintenance and operation of Eagle Tavern Visitor's Center.	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000 Gen Fund	Tourism Department
Promote historic sites through Tourism Committee.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000 County operations	All Cities County
Accept donations and public participation to continue renovation of the Old Schoolhouse and Plumb Creek Cabin historic properties	X	X	X			\$300,000 County operations	Tourism Committee
Community Facilities							
Study consolidation of county governmental functions and services into a centrally located and accessible facility or campus.				X	X	\$10,000 County operations	Oconee County
Flood Control							
Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors.	X	X	X	X	X	\$75,000 County operations, FEMA	Planning and Public Works Departments

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Parks and Recreation							
Improvements to Oconee Community Complex (complete Phase I improvements and begin Phase II – swimming pool, nature center, playgrounds, dog park); Oconee Heritage Park (museum, amphitheatre, school relocation, historic structures, trails, detention pond); Herman C. Michael Park (playground equipment); Bogart Community recreation Center.	X	X	X	X		\$18,300,000 General Fund; SPLOST	Parks and Recreation Department
Acquire property and begin development of new recreation facility in Elder Mill Covered Bridge area.	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000,000 General Fund; SPLOST	Parks and Recreation Department
Continue to expand recreation planning horizon (20 year period).	X	X	X	X	X	\$20,000 County operations	Parks and Recreation Department
Senior Services							
Senior Services – Complete new Senior Center facility in the Oconee Community complex on Highway 53.	X					\$1,700,000 General Fund; SPLOST	Senior Services
Senior Services - Continue to expand Senior Citizen Center programs and health programs as needed.	X	X	X	X	X	\$35,000 County operations	Senior Services
School System							
Purchase additional trailers and contract additional teachers.	X	X	X	X	X	Cost unknown School taxes	Oconee County School System
Purchase land for future schools.	X	X	X	X	X	Cost unknown School taxes	Oconee County School System
Construct a new elementary school in North High Shoals.					X	Cost unknown School taxes	Oconee County School System
Build and equip classroom additions and renovations at existing facilities, to include: Classroom additions for Oconee County Middle School, Rocky Branch Elementary School and Malcomb Bridge Middle School; athletic facilities; road improvements on the campuses; technology infrastructure; administrative suite for Oconee County Middle School; general renovations system-wide.	X	X	X	X	X	Cost unknown School taxes	Oconee County School System
Water and Sewer							
Water and Sewer – Develop Master Plan for Water and Wastewater Facilities.	X					\$25,000 Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department, Finance Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Wastewater - Upgrade the Rocky Branch LAS to a 1 MGD Membrane Filtration Plant.	X					\$10,000,000 Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Wastewater – Expand the Rocky Branch W.R.F. as needed.	X	X	X	X	X	Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Wastewater – Install screens to Upgrade Calls Creek Wastewater Reclamation Facility to 1.5 MGD.			X	X		\$2,400,000 Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Water/Wastewater - Continue to finance maintenance, depreciation, and expansion costs for provision of water/sewer system with user fees	X	X	X	X	X	County operations	Utility Department
Water - Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water	X	X	X	X	X	County operations	Utility Department
Water - Construction of a new 1 MG storage tank.	X					\$1,400,000 Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Water - Extension of a 24 inch water line along Mars Hill Road from Old SR 29 to the water storage tank.	X					\$275,000 Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Water - Extension of a waterline from Elder Road – Herman C. Michael to the Steeple Chase subdivision.					X	\$475,000 Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Water - Line size upgrades, fire hydrant installations.	X	X	X	X	X	\$160,000/yr Water & Sewer Fund; SPLOST	Utility Department
Waste Management							
Continue to promote recycling by private citizens and require recycling services by private solid waste collectors through solid waste ordinance enforcement.	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000 County operations	Public Works
Continue participation in regional solid waste management and disposal planning.	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000 County operations	Public Works
Public Safety							
Fire Department – Acquire land for new station in the vicinity of Barnett Shoals, construct station, and acquire associated equipment.	X	X	X			\$950,000 General Fund, SPLOST	Fire Department
Fire Department – Acquire land for new station in Eastville area.				X	X	\$75,000 General Fund, SPLOST	Fire Department
EMS – Transition EMT personnel from volunteer to compensated positions.				X		County operations	EMS

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Circulation/Traffic Facilities							
Construction of the Daniels Bridge extension, with flyover to Jennings Mill Parkway.	X	X	X	X	X	\$8,000,000 General Fund, SPLOST	Roads Division
Continue to improve and upgrade streets (resurfacing).	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500,000 General Fund, SPLOST, DOT	Roads Division
Widening of Daniels Bridge Road from Hog Mountain Road to Mars Hill Road.	X	X	X	X	X	\$15,000,000 General Fund, SPLOST	Roads Division
Widening of Hog Mountain Road between US 441 and SR 15.	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,000,000 General Fund, SPLOST	Roads Division
Several new or improved interchanges along SR 316.	X	X	X	X	X	General Fund, SPLOST, DOT & FHA	Roads Division
Widening or reconstructing of SR 316 to a limited access facility (with or without a toll).	X	X	X	X	X	General Fund, SPLOST, DOT & FHA	Roads Division
Continue infrastructure development on US 441 North, connector between US 441 and SR 15, Mars Hill/US 78 corridor, and US 78 from McNutt Creek to SR 53.	X	X	X	X	X	General Fund, SPLOST, do- nations	Roads Division
Continue to improve and signalize intersections. Investi- gate other methods to improve intersection safety.	X	X	X	X	X	County opera- tions	Roads Division
Continue to implement bridge maintenance and im- provement program	X	X	X	X	X	\$200,000 County opera- tions	Roads Division
Require interconnection between new developments on Highway 441 and other major corridors.	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	Roads Division, Planning Department
Jennings Mill Parkway Extension Project (from Lowe- s/Epps Bridge Parkway over loop 10 to the Oconee Con- nector).	X	X	X			\$22,000,000 Federal TEA, State, Local	Roads Division
Mars Hill/Experiment Station Road widening project (from the Oconee Connector to Watkinsville).			X	X	X	\$28,000,000 Federal TEA, State, Local	Roads Division
Simonton Bridge Road Widening Project, (from Watkins- ville to the Athens/Clarke County line).					X	\$15,000,000 Federal TEA, State, Local	Roads Division
Require sidewalks in all new subdivisions.	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	Roads Division, Planning Department

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Consider alternative modes of transportation to link existing and developing areas of the county.	X	X	X	X	X	\$30,000 County operations	Roads Division, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Continue planning for the Athens to Atlanta Passenger Rail Program. A station of this commuter line is designated in the City of Bogart.		X	X	X		\$30,000 County operations, DOT	Roads Division, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department City of Bogart, DOT
Proceed with all transportation projects currently in the TIP (4 year) & the long range plan (20 year).	X	X	X	X	X	per MACORTS County operations	Roads Division, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Continue working through MACORTS to develop a regional solution to transportation congestion, and to lobby for DOT transportation projects.	X	X	X	X	X	per MACORTS County operations	Roads Division, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Housing							
Develop incentive programs and provide assistance to developers and non-profit organizations to promote mixed housing types within developments to accommodate seniors within a multi-aged community.	X	X				\$20,000 County operations	Finance Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Develop standards and guidelines to implement the potential for mixed-use, small lot and attached housing in appropriate Character Areas.	X	X				County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Manage the development of quality housing using Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Continue present policies which promote affordable housing including PUD zoning, conservation subdivisions and manufactured housing regulations.	X	X	X	X	X	\$25,000 County operations	Planning Department
Land Use							
Encourage growth through land use plan consistency and infrastructure investment in areas where it will be the most beneficial to the County and its cities as outlined on the Future Development Map (FDM).	X	X	X	X	X	\$75,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Establish a capital improvement program that ensures that new development pays for its proportionate share of the cost of new facilities at the time of development.	X	X	X			\$90,000 County operations	Finance Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department

Oconee County							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁴	Responsible Party
Create an intergovernmental mechanism to provide coordination between departments involved in sewer and water expansion, transportation improvements, new school development, public safety, and parks and recreation planning, to share information regarding the pace and location of new residential development and non-residential development trends.	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Establish design and development guidelines to implement desired Character Areas and preserve rural character, particularly in the south end of the County, by directing development where appropriate.	X	X				\$40,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Plan cooperatively with the Board of Education in locating new schools to avoid generating unwanted growth in rural and agricultural areas.	X	X	X	X	X	\$40,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department Board of Education
Continue staff training (continuing education) and expand staff as needed	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000 County operations	Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department, Engineering Department
Continue cooperative agreement with County BOC and Planning staff for development procedures, and cooperative development review through Oconee County Planning Commission and staff to identify any needed changes to regulations.	X	X	X	X	X	\$50,000 City and County operations	City of Bogart City of Bishop City of Watkinsville City of North High Shoals Oconee County BOC Planning Department

Bishop							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁵	Responsible Party
Economic Development							
Encourage and promote local businesses that appeal to the existing tourist traffic and expand tourism and cultural offerings	X	X	X	X	X	County operations, City operations	Economic Development & Tourism Department, Chamber of Commerce
Attract and retain local-serving professional and retail businesses; promote businesses that are compatible with historic character; and attract and protect businesses that relate to rural heritage, such as horticulture, nurseries and tourism farming.	X	X	X	X	X	City operations	City of Bishop
Natural and Historic Resources							
Establish wellhead protection zones to protect water supply.	X					City operations	City of Bishop
Maintain present city hall as historic structure (built as city jail in 1939), the scenic area of pedestrian garden and gazebo, and the Bishop Well and Well House (circa 1890).	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000 City operations	City of Bishop
Continue with a proactive plan of historic preservation: i.e., restoration of Chandler/Marable House; promote the Bishop history book that documents historic sites; erect new city limit signs that promote the historic district.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 City operations	City of Bishop
Encourage use of state and federal tax-incentive programs.	X	X	X	X	X	City operations	City of Bishop
Circulation							
Reactivate the 441 Bypass project around Bishop.	X	X	X	X	X	City and County operations, DOT	DOT

⁵ Estimated cost if known; source of funds, if applicable. All continuing operations are funded through the General Fund.

Bogart							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding⁶	Responsible Party
Economic Development							
Develop and encourage the marketability of the Gateway Industrial Park and the IBM/Orkin Commercial Tract.	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Prioritize the installation of infrastructure at the Gateway Industrial Park to attract businesses.	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Enhance tourism efforts in Bogart, and encourage and promote business to participate in annual events/festivals.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 City and County opera- tions	Tourism Department
Enhance downtown with landscape and annual/seasonal lighting improvements and continue preservation of downtown historical businesses.	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Participate in joint training and partnership with other local municipalities, RDC and Oconee County BOC.	X	X	X	X	X	\$3,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Natural and Historic Resources							
Identify and protect headwaters of Little Bear Creek as a perennial stream through a process of local ordinances.	X	X	X	X	X	\$2,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Nominate the Bogart Residential and Commercial Historic District to the National Register.			X			\$2,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Community Facilities							
Continue cooperative development of recreation facilities through county.	X	X	X	X	X	\$10,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Expand City water and sewer system to provide water and sewer service to all areas of the City.	X	X	X	X	X	\$20,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Provide full time staffing at the Fire Station.	X	X	X	X	X	\$8,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Circulation/Traffic							
Continue to improve and upgrade streets.	X	X	X	X	X	\$36,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Establish sidewalks, bike trails, pedestrian crossings, etc. to make accessible facilities to residents.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 City operations	City of Bogart

⁶ Estimated cost if known; source of funds, if applicable. All continuing operations are funded through the General Fund.

Bogart							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding⁶	Responsible Party

Land Use							
Place utilities underground in the downtown section and in all new developments.	X	X	X	X	X	\$15,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Revise development requirements to require sidewalks for all new development and roadways.	X					\$10,000 City operations	City of Bogart
Enforce all existing zoning ordinances to bring city into compliance.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 City operations	City of Bogart

North High Shoals							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁷	Responsible Party
Economic Development							
Pave remaining dirt roadways.	X	X	X	X	X	\$97,000 City operations, SPLOST	City of North High Shoals
Natural and Historic Resources							
Adopt County standards and regulations, or develop restrictions specific to North High Shoals to prevent septic systems in areas of high water tables, shallow bed-rock, steep slopes and unsuitable soils.	X	X				\$1,000 City operations	City of North High Shoals
Community Facilities							
Identify funding resources and plan for the following community facilities: a branch library; a new park or expansion of the existing park.		X	X			\$2,500 City operations	City of North High Shoals
Circulation and Traffic Facilities							
Continue to improve & upgrade city streets.	X	X	X	X	X	\$4,800 City operations	City of North High Shoals
Land Use							
Adopt new land use policies and ordinances as may be identified by the Mayor and Council or required by State and Federal statutes.	X	X	X	X	X	\$1,500 City operations	City of North High Shoals

⁷ Estimated cost if known; source of funds, if applicable. All continuing operations are funded through the General Fund.

Watkinsville							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁸	Responsible Party
Economic Development							
Participate in the Oconee Industrial Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce for promotion of commercial development	X	X	X	X	X	City operations	City of Watkinsville
Increase the aesthetic appeal of the community through the placement of public art displays taking advantage of Watkinsville's expanding art community and promote Watkinsville as a day trip destination for arts, crafts and cultural activities.	X	X	X	X	X	Private donations	City of Watkinsville
Natural and Historic Resources							
Incorporate locally significant historic landmarks into the design of new development, where applicable.	X	X	X	X	X	City operations	City of Watkinsville
Reduce levels of impervious surface through the implementation of tree protection and planting programs.	X	X	X	X	X	\$30,000 City operations	City of Watkinsville
Community Facilities							
Redevelop Rocket Field from its existing use as a baseball diamond to a community square available for passive recreation and civic uses.	X			X	X	\$55,000 City General Fund, SPLOST	City of Watkinsville
Expand the existing community park, and develop one additional community park to provide recreation opportunities within walking distance of existing and future residents.				X	X	\$40,000 City General Fund, SPLOST	City of Watkinsville
Circulation/Traffic Facilities							
Develop a multi-modal master plan that includes greenway trails, bicycle lanes and sidewalks that coordinates new development with the construction of new facilities.		X	X	X		City operations	City of Watkinsville
Develop a multi-use greenway system utilizing stream corridors.		X	X	X	X	City General Fund, SPLOST	City of Watkinsville
Develop public/private partnerships and require shared parking lots within new Central Business District development to increase the amount of public parking space.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 City operations	City of Watkinsville
Land Use							

⁸ Estimated cost if known; source of funds, if applicable. All continuing operations are funded through the General Fund.

Watkinsville							
Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding ⁸	Responsible Party
Continue to work with Oconee County in assessing the service delivery strategy and mitigate inefficiencies through strategic planning and cooperative aid agreements.	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	City of Watkinsville
Modify existing Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as needed to address future development, public health, safety and welfare.	X	X	X	X	X	\$5,000 City operations	City of Watkinsville
Consider the Future Land Use Map in the zoning amendment procedures when reviewing rezones.	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	City of Watkinsville