

Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

This comprehensive plan serves as a decision-making tool for local government officials and community leaders. Its intent is to guide land use, development, community improvement, investment, and overall quality of life in the short and long term. Based on input from the public and a steering committee, the plan identifies key needs and opportunities, sets goals and recommends policies to achieve them. The plan also provides vision for the community and a rationale for consistent application of regulatory tools such as zoning, and subdivision regulations.

Using the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Should be used for the following:

- **A basis for regulatory actions** - The plan serves as a foundation and guide for the provisions of the Unified Development Code which includes zoning and subdivision regulations.
- **Tool for decision making** – The plan is a resource and guide for additional recommended investments in capital projects, and other local initiatives such as parks and open spaces.
- **A source for more detailed plans** – Few plans can address every need in sufficient detail, the plan recommends more detailed plans and studies where they are needed to address a specific issue.
- **A standard of review** – The comprehensive plan is the standard for review for development proposals and applications for state and federal funding and support.
- **An information source** – The plan is a valuable source of information for local boards, commissions, organizations, citizens and businesses. It can also be used as a tool for promoting the community and highlighting opportunities for investment.
- **A long-term guide** – The plan is also a long-term guide by which to measure and evaluate public and private proposals that will have lasting effects on the physical, social, and economic environment of the community as a whole.

Organization of the Plan

The Comprehensive plan is organized into 8 chapters:

1. **Introduction** – Introduces the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, and the overall organization of the document.
2. **Community Profile** – Provides important background information including an analysis of relevant demographic and other data used to develop the list of needs and opportunities. A summary of the public outreach process is also included.
3. **Needs & Opportunities** – Lists prioritized needs the community is committed to addressing and opportunities on which to capitalize to work towards achieving the vision articulated in the next chapter. This list was informed by the analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter as well as the results of an analysis of the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats conducted by the steering committee.
4. **Vision, Goals, and Policies** – Establishes a vision that guides the Comprehensive Plan, sets goals, and recommends general policies that will move the community towards achieving that vision.
5. **Land Use** – Illustrates and describes the character, type, and location of future land uses within each jurisdiction.
6. **Transportation** – Provides recommendations for roads, trails, sidewalks, and identifies opportunities to increase connectivity throughout the County.
7. **Parks & Greenspace** – Provides recommendations intended to enhance the park system and recreation opportunities.
8. **Community Work Program** – Presents specific actions, as well as potential funding sources to pursue as the recommendations are implemented. Also presents a report of accomplishments from the most recent 5-year program of work.

Community Profile

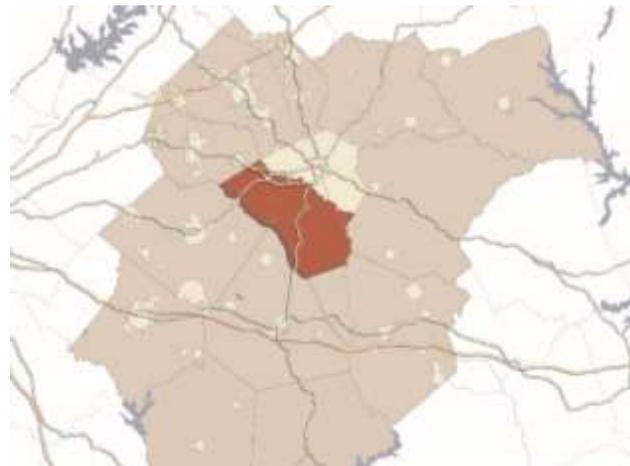
Regional Setting

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.



Oconee Past and Present

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 blockhouse 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 city's 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.



Demographic Overview

To begin to understand and assess the current conditions within Oconee County and its municipalities, an analysis of demographic data was prepared at the beginning of the planning process.

This section presents trends from that analysis, assesses their implications, and makes projections for growth in the future. The comparison of data from Oconee County to the 12 County region and the State of Georgia provides a context to understand Oconee County's current position and opportunities for growth in the future.

The data and figures used in the analysis and presented in this section are the most recent and accurate available at the time the plan was written.

- Data from 2000 and 2010 comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial Census.
- 2011-2015 American Community Survey data represents a 5 year estimated average based on U.S. Census Bureau surveys conducted over the same time period.
- Estimates and projections for 2017-2022 were developed by ESRI's Business Analyst tools.

Population

Oconee County's population has grown, a trend which is expected to continue. The County's total population is currently estimated at roughly 37,000. Between 2017 and 2022 the official estimate of the Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget projects a total population increase of 9.2%. When compared with growth rates over the same period for all Counties in Georgia, Oconee County ranks as the 16th fastest growing county in the State. A look at population projections for the County and its municipalities from two separate sources are presented below. Both offer similar forecasts for continued growth.

Jurisdiction	2010 Census	2017 Estimate	2022 Estimate
Unincorporated County	28,066	31,536	34,559
Bishop	224	335	386
Bogart	1,034	1,122	1,212
North High Shoals	652	663	761
Watkinsville	2,832	2,839	2,938
Total	32,808	36,495	39,856

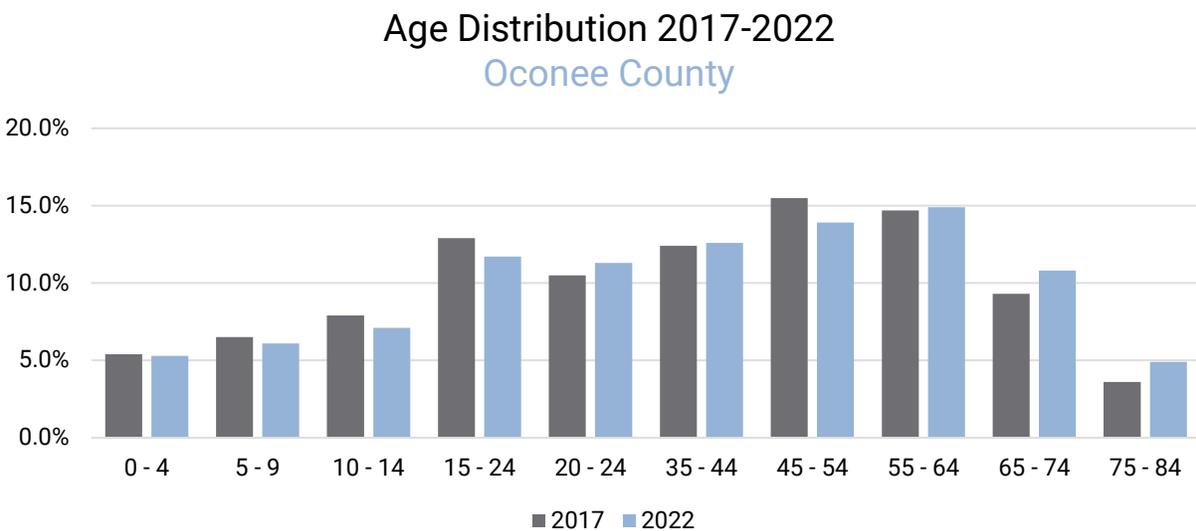
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1, GA Governor's Office of Planning & Budget forecast for 2017 and 2022

Jurisdiction	2010 Census	2017 Estimate	2022 Estimate
Unincorporated County	28,066	31,476	34,489
Bishop	224	339	391
Bogart	1,034	1,136	1,228
North High Shoals	652	671	771
Watkinsville	2,832	2,873	2,977
Total	32,808	36,936	39,856

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. ESRI forecasts for 2017 and 2022

Age

When compared with the Region, the County's population is aging. The median age in Oconee County is 40.8, more than 5 years older than the Region at 35.4. The cohort aged 45-54 currently makes up the largest percentage of the population at 15.5% of the total. By 2022 the cohort aged 55-64 will be the County's largest with 14.9% of the total. The portion of the population projected to grow the most by 2022 fall within 2 groups. The 20-24, and 35-44 cohort is projected to grow by 0.8% and 0.2% respectively. The largest growth is projected in the 65-74, and 75-84 cohorts which are projected to add make up an additional 1.5% and 1.3% of the total population. The projected population distribution by age for the County is presented in the table below.

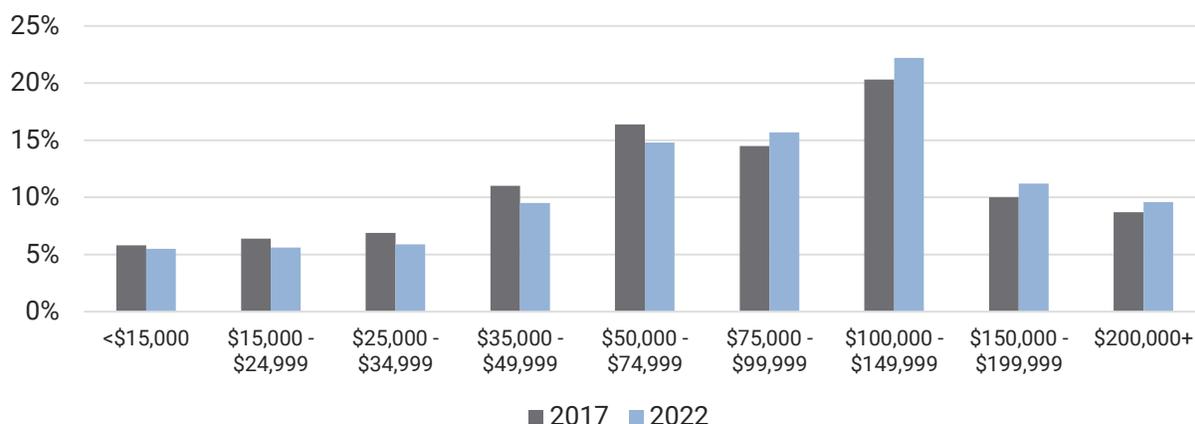


The conclusion to be drawn from the projected age distribution projections is that new residents to the county will likely be either of retirement age (65+), or at an age where they are likely to have school aged children (20-44).

Income

Household incomes in Oconee County are significantly higher than other Counties within the Region, and are projected to continue to increase. The median household income in Oconee County currently ranks as the 3rd highest in the State of Georgia and is 34% higher than the regional average, 31% higher than the State, and 25% more than the U.S. Incomes are projected to grow above the median, with an additional 2% of households earning between \$100,000 and \$149,000 by 2022. Projected change in the distribution of household income is presented below.

Household Income Distribution 2017-2022
Oconee County



Housing

Single-Family houses dominate Oconee County's housing stock. Of the approximately 13,100 housing units in the county 92.9% are classified as one family dwellings according to data from the tax assessor's office. When compared to regional data, the median value of a home in Oconee County is 45.8% higher. Data and projected change in housing occupancy status, and tenure (renter vs. owner occupied) are presented below.

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure						
	2010		2017		2022	
Total Housing Units	12,383		13,908		15,192	
Occupied	11,622	93.9%	13,094	94.1%	14,321	94.3%
Owner	9,418	76.1%	10,326	74.2%	11,277	74.2%
Renter	2,204	17.8%	2,768	19.9%	3,044	20%
Vacant	761	6.1%	814	5.9%	871	5.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. ESRI forecasts for 2017 and 2022

Commuting Patterns

A large percentage of Oconee County's population commutes to a job in another county.

According to 2015 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau 78.6% of workers living in Oconee County do not also work in Oconee County. Of those employed in Oconee County 72.3% report living outside the County. This represents a net outflow of 29.5% of workers. A breakdown of where Oconee County workers are commuting is presented below.

Where Oconee County Workers are Employed	
1. Clarke County, GA	41.5%
2. Gwinnett County, GA	4.3%
3. Fulton County, GA	4.2%
4. Barrow County, GA	3.5%
5. Walton County, GA	2.4%
6. Hall County, GA	2.3%
7. DeKalb County, GA	1.9%
8. Cobb County, GA	1.8%
9. Jackson County, GA	1.6%
All Other Locations	15.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *On the Map Application*, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>

Implications

While the data does not present the complete picture, it establishes the background necessary to set realistic goals and make viable policy recommendations, and can confirm perceptions about the County.

The projected growth in the population of people 65 and over, as well those likely with school aged children seems to confirm the feedback in the first online survey. When asked to identify Oconee County's greatest asset, schools and overall quality of life were the first and second choices. These are two factors are likely driving at least a portion of the projected growth.

Coupled with the data that shows the typical household earns a substantially higher income, are more likely to own than rent their home, and work outside the county leads to the conclusion that people with the opportunity to choose where to live and educate their children are choosing Oconee County.

Community Outreach

Community input is the driving-force behind a successful Comprehensive Plan, and the planning process was designed to proactively engage residents, and key stakeholders. Over the course of the nearly 18 month planning process the Comprehensive Plan's development was guided by a steering committee made up of citizens and community leaders. The steering committee also divided into subcommittees to focus on the specific areas of Land Use, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace.

	Name	Representing
	Charles R. Baugh	Citizen
	Lee Becker	Media-Citizen
	Bob Bishop	Developer-Citizen
	Mayor Toby P. Bradberry	North High Shoals
	Brian Broderick	Watkinsville
	Dr. Philip Brown	Board of Education
	Laura Carmichael	Bogart
	Maria Caudell	Oconee Co. P & Z
	Kent Chapman	Citizen
	Lisa Douglas	Citizen
	Thomas L. Evans	Citizen
	Tammy Gilland	Citizen
	Mayor Terri Glenn	Bogart
	Chuck Horton	Oconee Co. B.O.C
	Charles Hunt	Oconee Co. P & Z
	Mayor Charles Ivie	Watkinsville
	Laura Iyer	Citizen
	David Jackson	Citizen
	Sherry Laboon	Citizen
	John Larkin	Bogart
	Tommy Malcom	Citizen
	Dorann Mansberger	Citizen
	Daniel R. Marks	Citizen
	Becky Moore	Citizen
	Russ Page	Citizen
	Ed Perkins	Citizen
	Andy Pippin	Citizen
	Tom Porter	Citizen
	Mindy Porterfield	Bishop
	Michael Ransom	Citizen
	Ryan Rickard	Citizen
	Patricia Sebring	Citizen
	David Wenner	Citizen
	Marcus Wiedower	Citizen

Input from citizens was also a key component of the plans development. The planning process offered opportunities for residents to share their thoughts, aspirations, and ideas about the community and what the plan should address. Specifically, the following methods were used:

Public Hearings – The first public hearing was held at the beginning of the planning process. Its focus was to inform the public about how they could provide their input over the course of the project, and an overview of the components of the plan document. The second public hearing will be held at the conclusion of the process to present the Comprehensive Plan’s findings and recommendations for final comment before the plan is transmitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review.

Public Fora - Two public fora were held during the process. One midway through to gauge the community’s perceptions about the direction the plan update was taking, and a second to present a final draft of the plan’s recommended vision, needs, opportunities, policies, and recommendations. These were held in an open-house format where residents could engage with staff about areas of particular interest or concern.

Online Questionnaires – Two online questionnaires were deployed during the plan’s development. The first asked respondents to identify what they saw as key needs that should be addressed by the plan and asked for their ideas for solutions. The second presented a refined list of needs & opportunities and asked respondents their opinion on how the plan should assign them a priority.

Needs & Opportunities

Overview

By considering internal (strengths, and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factors the steering committee developed an initial list of needs to be addressed and opportunities to be leveraged.

The list of needs and opportunities not only describes *what* the plan should address, it provides an idea about *where* a community currently stands in relationship to its stated vision and goals. Input from the community guided every element developed during the Update of the Comprehensive Plan, but particularly in identifying and prioritizing the list of needs and opportunities.

The initial list was reviewed and refined by the three technical subcommittees, who developed recommendations to address them. The second online survey was used to help determine which needs and opportunities were viewed as critical by asking respondents prioritize them.

Population

- The population is expected to grow by 9.2% by 2022 which is the 16th fastest in the State. The growing population will increase the demand for housing, supporting retail and service, and require more community services and infrastructure.
- Overall the population is aging similar to national demographic trends, and may support a greater range of housing options, and an increase in the amount of senior services.
- The percentage of 24-35 year olds is also projected to grow during the same period. The excellence of the school system drives this demand, however the influx of this cohort will have an impact on school capacity.

Economic Development

- Approximately 66% of the County workforce commutes to a job outside the county.
- Focus on recruiting firms that can build on existing identified employment clusters:
 - Advanced materials & diversified manufacturing
 - Food production/processing technologies
 - Building and Construction technologies
 - Knowledge Intensive Emerging Industries
 - Ambulatory Health Care Services

Land Use

QUALITY

- Encourage or require that new development contributes and strengthens the character and vision for our community
- Transportation improvements should be balanced with aesthetic concerns as the pressure to develop auto-oriented uses in undeveloped or under developed areas increases
- Promote land use patterns that create connectivity and encourage mobility

LOCATION

- Preserve and enhance the rural character in the County's southern portion
- Preserve the sense of place by guiding and managing growth
- Growth will follow water & sewer so development can be guided into desired areas

PARKS, RECREATION, GREENSPACE

PARKS

- More park space at all scales is needed
- Neighborhood pocket parks
- Large scale Multi-sport complex
- Identify location, land for expansion to maximize population served
- Connect new and existing parks and greenspace to the community with trails, sidewalks and other off-street facilities

RECREATION

- Multi-Use trail network to connect greenspace, parks, and other trail networks, and the Oconee, and Apalachee Rivers
- Upgrades to existing recreation facilities and fields are needed to keep up with demand
- As the population grows so may the demand for large scale investments like an Aquatic Center/Indoor Pool
- Additional park capacity is needed to support existing demand and projected population growth and may increase the need for staffing and maintenance

FINANCE & SERVICE

- Increased staff for operations, programming, and maintenance may be needed
- Building maintenance costs may also increase over time as buildings age

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

ROAD NETWORK

- Operational truck traffic through the county is adding to congestion issues, especially in incorporated areas
- Improvements and upgrades are needed to increase safety on major thoroughfares (Hwy 15, ex.)

BIKE, PEDESTRIAN, AND OTHER NETWORKS

- The sidewalk network is missing connections
- Explore possible location of Park & Ride or other facility to accommodate commuters to Atlanta
- Safety improvements on rural and urban roads to accommodate cyclists are needed
- A large scale multi-use trail or network of trails connecting destinations can provide enhanced recreation opportunities and strengthen sense of place

WATER, SEWER, TELECOM

- The rural areas of the county lack broadband internet service
- The growth in population will continue increase the demand for sewer capacity and increase the timeline to replace existing aging systems.

FINANCE

- Make safety improvements and maintenance of existing system a priority
- Consider Public/Private Partnerships to fund transportation projects

Goals, Objectives, & Policies

The Goals and Objectives are drawn from the Needs and Opportunity section and establish a framework for planning recommendations, policies, and future projects and actions.

- **Goals** describe end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range and, although they may never be fully attained, they represent **an end to be sought**.
- **Objectives** describe more specific actions that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall goals. They may include policies, strategies, actions or projects, and provide specific guidelines for planning action.

Land Use

Goal: Promote growth that builds lasting value in our community enhancing or complementing the existing character of the area.

Objectives

- Support incremental growth by prioritizing infill within areas already developed or within an identified node that maintains consistency with the built environment
- Discourage incomplete development to lessen facilities, services, and infrastructure impact
- Support architectural, landscape, and building standards that increase value to the community and maintain Oconee County, and its municipalities' character

Residential Uses

Goal: Enhance and maintain existing residential neighborhoods while increasing the overall range of housing options.

Objectives

- Protect and enhance existing neighborhoods through code enforcement, beautification, and application of architectural standards for new development
- Connect neighborhoods to supporting commercial uses, schools, civic facilities, and recreational amenities

Economic Development

Goal: Promote economic activity to generate work opportunities by recruiting, supporting, and retaining a range of employers from local and small-businesses to major employers that will strengthen the tax base and improve quality of life.

Objectives

- Improve aesthetics of commercial development through improved design standards
- Create distinct nodes or districts that are easily identifiable in designated nodes
- Utilize public art as an effective economic development tool
- Examine existing codes and practices to ensure a consistent, fair, and friendly regulatory environment.

Transportation

Goal: Build and improve a multi-layered transportation network that facilitates safe access for all forms of transportation.

Objectives

- Where appropriate, increase capacity of road network in a strategic way that can help guide growth
- Increase bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity
- Prioritize pedestrian infrastructure improvements at key locations like schools, parks, civic facilities, and recreational destinations

Infrastructure

Goal: Ensure that the water, sewer and internet infrastructure needs of current and future population remains served by safe, efficient, and cost effective systems.

Objectives

- Encourage service providers to offer service to rural residents when installing or upgrading fiber or other broadband technology that utilizes public right of way

Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace

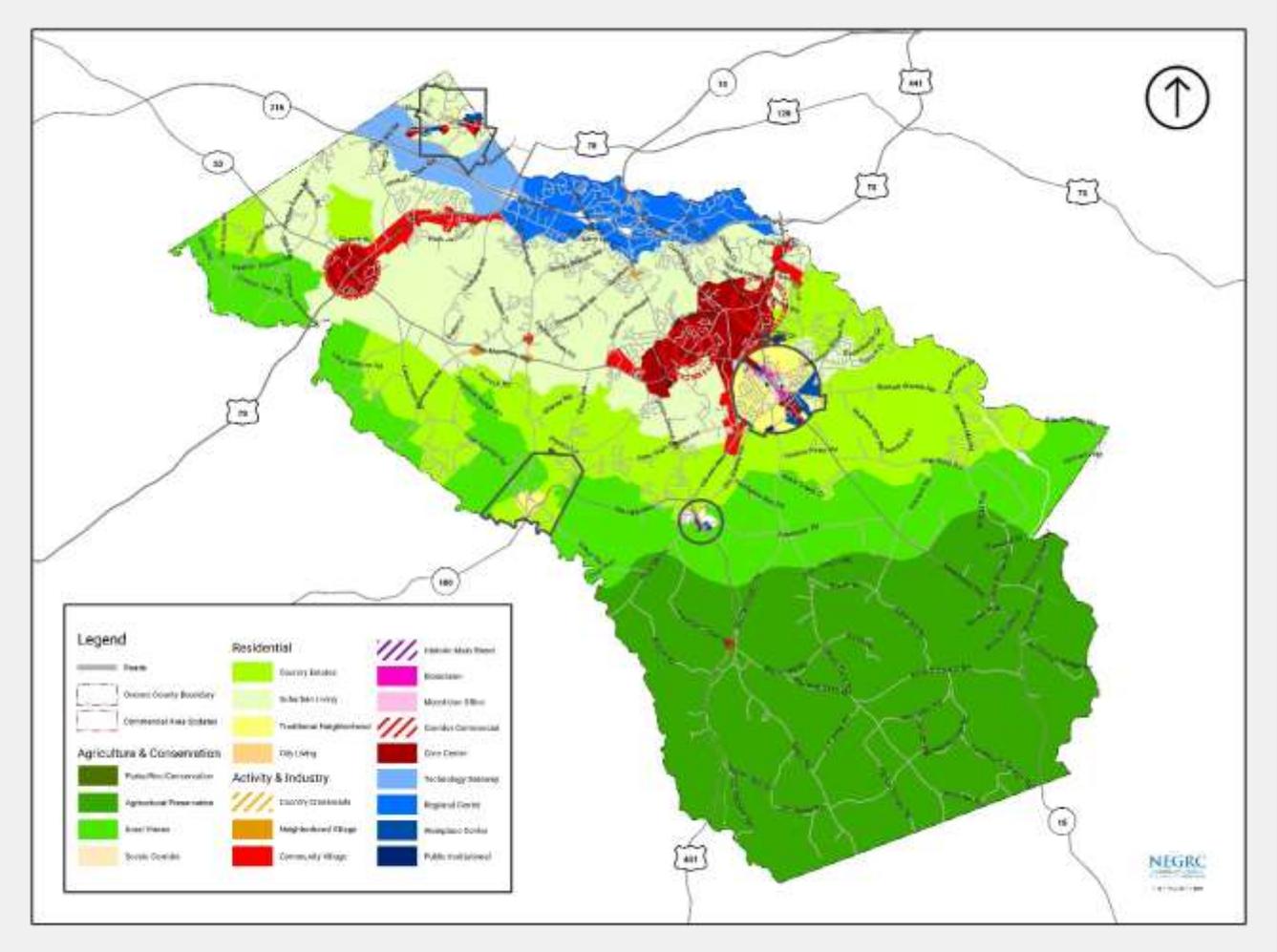
Goal: Support a network of parks, recreational facilities, and natural areas that meet the needs of area residents, and enhance the quality of life.

Objectives

- Prioritize and buildout existing parks and recreational facilities
- Ensure funding capacity for maintenance, operation, and improvement of existing system
- Provide non-motorized connections between local and regional scale parks
- Complete build out of previous Parks Master Plan and ensure regular updates

LAND USE

The Land Use section of this Comprehensive Plan is intended to establish a framework for the type, intensity, and general character of development in Oconee County and its municipalities. The following Character Area Categories provide a vision and future development strategies for each area of Oconee; the Character Area Map identifies the location of each Character Area. Land use and development policies, regulations, and approvals should align with the guidelines identified herein.



Character Area Categories

Agriculture & Conservation

Parks/Recreation/Conservation
Agricultural Preservation
Rural Places

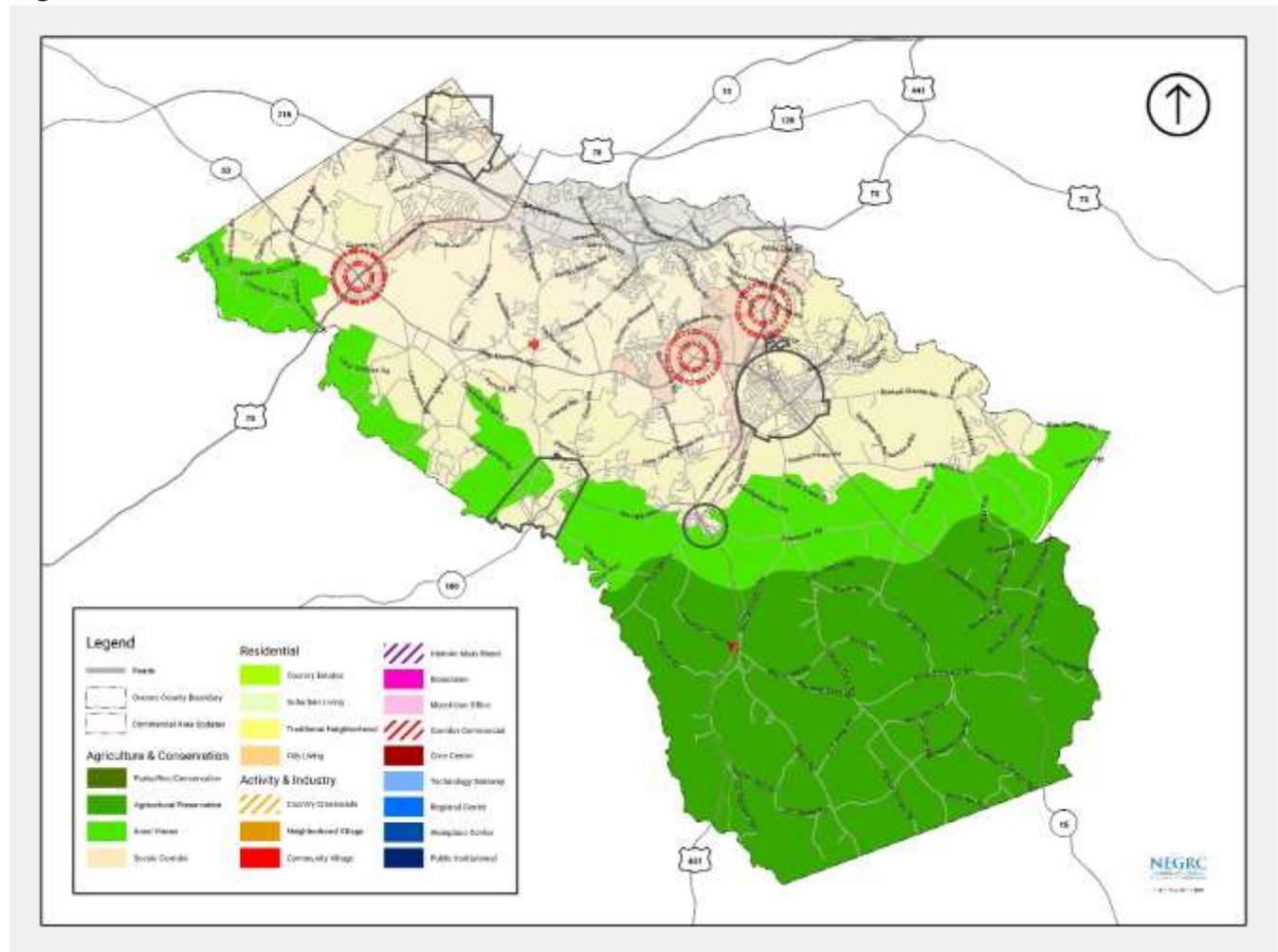
Residential

Country Estates
Suburban Neighborhood
Traditional Neighborhood
City Living

Activity & Industry

Country Crossroads
Neighborhood Village Center
Community Village Center
Historic Main Street
Downtown
Mixed-Use Office
Gateway Corridor
Corridor Commercial
Civic Center
Technology Gateway
Regional Center
Workplace Center
Public Institutional

Agriculture & Conservation



PARKS/RECREATION/CONSERVATION

DESCRIPTION:

Although not a Character Area itself outside of Watkinsville, land shown as Parks/Recreation/Conservation on the Character Area Map 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.

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 part 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 (e.g., farmers markets, 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 greatest extent feasible, accommodate multi-use trails along the river corridor providing interconnectivity throughout Watkinsville and neighboring areas 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, and 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.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

DESCRIPTION:

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. This Character Area includes: lands in row crops, hay fields, or in pasture; woodlands and areas under forestry management; commercial wholesale nurseries; sparsely settled homes on individual tracts; and areas of sensitive natural resources.

Agricultural Preservation Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Crossroads at major intersections Compatible "cottage" industries Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
- Allow subdivision development only along State highways where the level of service is good; limit to a density of 5 acres or more per dwelling unit (DU); and 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 agriculturally compatible "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, under Activity and Industry).
- Amend the UDC to allow compatible commercial uses within agricultural zoning districts.

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, 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

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.

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.

along State highways, are limited to densities of five acres or more per 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 Acres)
Subdivision Type	Not Allowed – Restricted to specific lot splits <i>only</i>	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.

RURAL PLACES

DESCRIPTION:

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. The Rural Places Character Area balances natural environment and human uses with very low-density residential, farms, forests, outdoor recreation, and other open space activities. Commercial uses are small in scale and provide convenience services to the rural neighborhood. 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. Home-based and farm-based businesses are allowed in the rural area provided they are compatible with existing nearby residential uses.

Rural Places Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Country Crossroads at major intersections• Semi-public and institutional uses• Cottage industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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, under Activity and Industry).
- Amend the UDC to allow compatible commercial uses within agricultural zoning districts.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES:

Subdivision densities within this Character Area, when allowed, range from a minimum of 2 acres (in Bishop) per dwelling unit (DU), 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 Acres)	AR-4 (Agricultural Residential Four Acres)	AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acres)
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.

GATEWAY CORRIDOR

DESCRIPTION:

Two iconic entryways into the City of Watkinsville that highlight the history and natural beauty of the area. The focus of the South Main Street corridor is the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of the existing historic structures and the preservation and restoration of natural areas 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 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 volumes that necessitate improvements to South Main Street to maintain an adequate level of service.

Gateway Corridor Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<p>In the Simonton Bridge Road area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full urban services common to the city

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

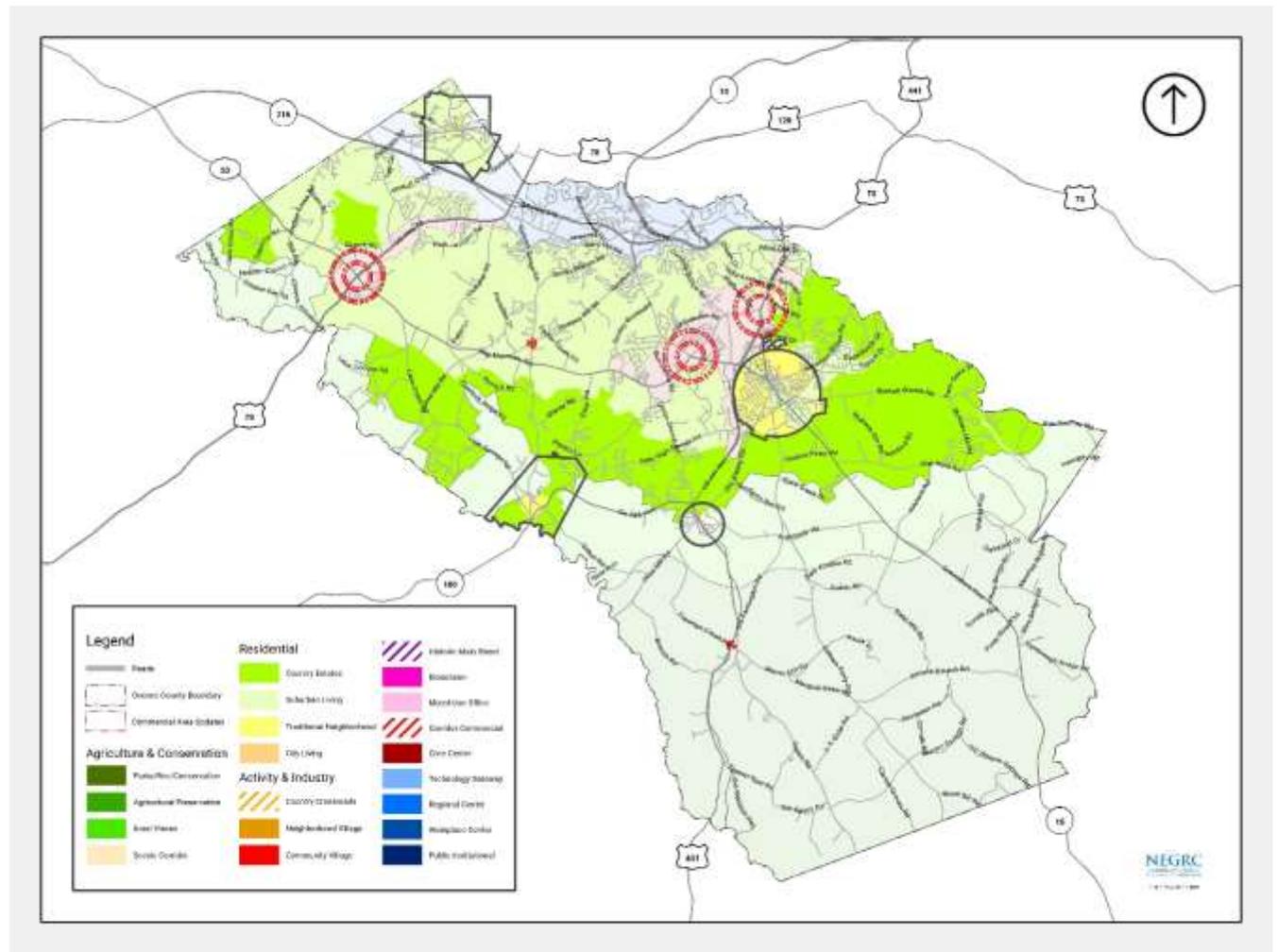
- Within the South Main Street corridor, retail sales and services should be limited in the area and situated to provide small-scale, convenience-type commercial uses to surrounding neighborhoods. Retail sales cannot be stand-alone uses, must be incorporated in a residential unit, and must be an accessory 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 the Downtown to the Traditional Neighborhoods Character Areas around Watkinsville.
- 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 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, and integrate new development in terms of the size, scale, and design of nearby historic buildings.

- The planting and preservation of trees and vegetative cover should be emphasized within all new development.
- Development should be designed to preserve the aesthetic qualities of the corridors 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 Gateway 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.

Residential



COUNTRY ESTATES

DESCRIPTION:

A low-intensity residential community reminiscent of a rural environment. 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. 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horse farms and residentially 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (DU).
- 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 NEIGHBORHOOD (PREV: "SUBURBAN LIVING")

DESCRIPTION:

Pedestrian-friendly residential neighborhoods with primarily large, single-family lots and connective, common greenspaces. Denser residential development is logically located in areas adjacent to nonresidential uses. Attractive streetscapes and landscaped common areas are located throughout.

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. Water and sewer are either existing or planned within this Character Area.

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. Undisturbed greenspaces, small parks, and other natural areas are 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; no multi-family housing should be located in this character area.

Suburban Neighborhood (prev. "Suburban Living") Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family residential subdivisions • Conservation Subdivisions • Master Planned Developments (MPDs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 aesthetics 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 ¼ 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 Neighborhood (prev. "Suburban Living") 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)
Minimum Lot Size (Conventional Development) on public water or sewer	30,000 sf per Single-Family Detached DU	15,000 sf per DU (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)	15,000 sf per DU (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)
Common Development Type	Conventional or Conservation Subdivision, or MPD	Conventional Subdivision or MPD	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 NEIGHBORHOOD

(Unincorporated Oconee County, Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, Watkinsville)

DESCRIPTION:

Traditional Neighborhoods are primarily residential neighborhoods with a mix of detached single-family homes at an overall higher density than the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. Development is pedestrian-oriented with varying setbacks along roadways, attractive streetscapes, and integrated parks and recreational facilities.

This Character Area is intended 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 to: parks, playgrounds, fire stations, and child care centers as part of the effort to create complete planned neighborhoods.

Traditional Neighborhood Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family detached residences• Single-family attached and accessory housing units in appropriate locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child care center• Semi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 (DU) 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 DU 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 nonretail 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 vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian travel 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

DESCRIPTION:

Higher density, small-lot residences clustered within and around downtown Watkinsville with reduced setbacks, attractive streetscaping, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly amenities, and greenspaces, where appropriate. Architecture and scale of development compliments that of downtown Watkinsville.

This Character Area is intended primarily for attached housing units, typically row houses, townhouses, or similar type development, and multi-family structures (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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attached housing units such as row houses and townhouses• Multi-family housing• Live/Work Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small-lot single-family detached as part of an overall development• Semi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public water is available• Sewer is available or planned• City streets• Parks and recreation facilities serve the area

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

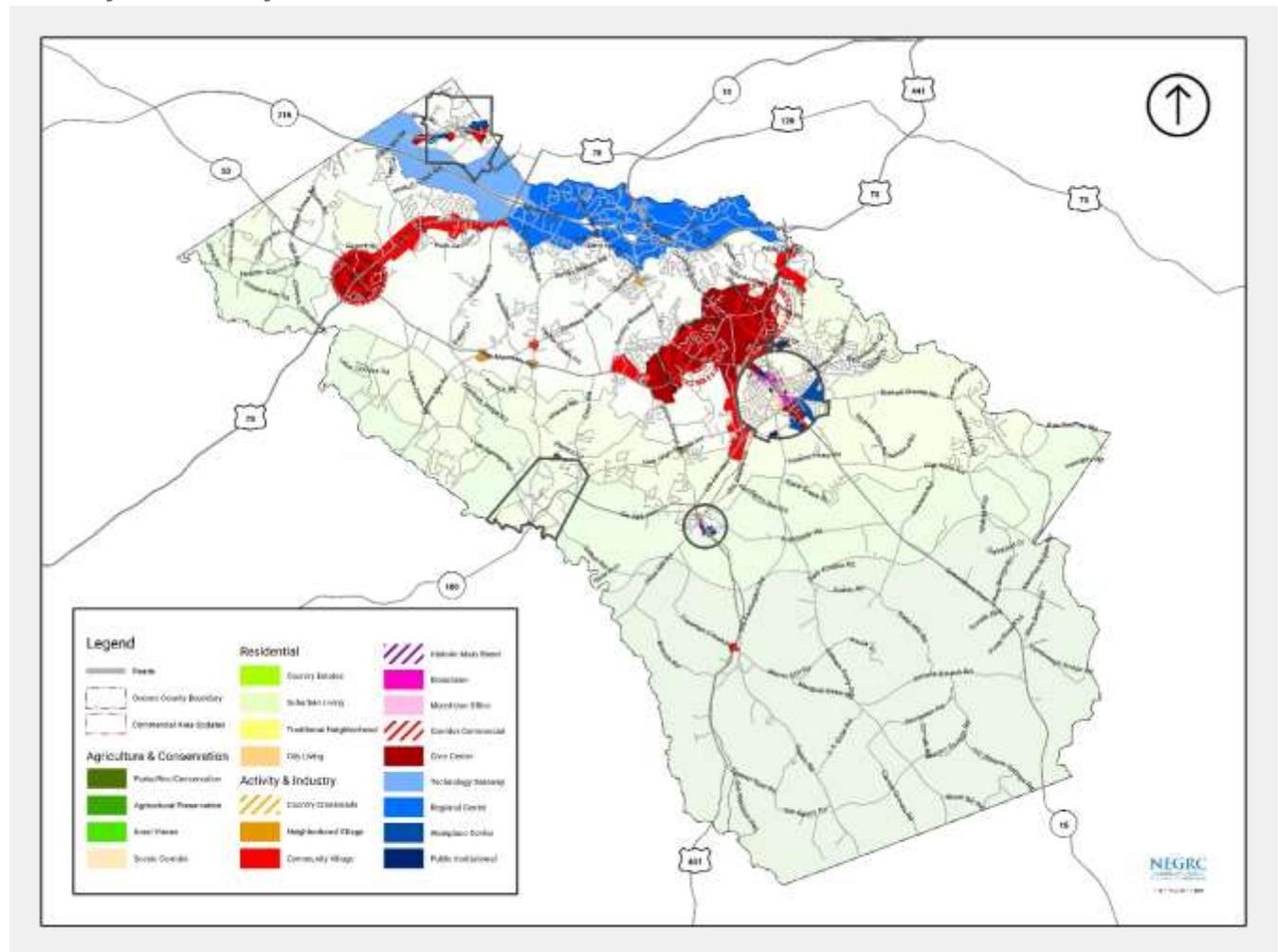
This Character Area is intended to accommodate higher intensity residential land uses and requires access to public water and sewer to accommodate higher residential densities.

- 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 (DU) per developable acre.
- Inclusion is encouraged of community amenities meeting the city's vision, goals, and objectives including, but not limited to: 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 recreation areas, downtown Watkinsville, and 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.

Activity & Industry



COUNTRY CROSSROADS

DESCRIPTION:

Small commercial areas that offer limited local convenience goods and services to the adjacent single-family and farming communities at historic crossroads in the rural and agricultural areas of the county. 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial retail and service businesses of a local-serving or agriculture-support nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day care center Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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 Character Area Map. If the location merits expansion, it may be changed to a Neighborhood Village Center by amending the Character Area 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 Area³ and, depending on the proposed local population to be served, to mitigate 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

DESCRIPTION:

A compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores, services, and offices that address the demands of nearby residents. Development is arranged in a village-like setting with pocket parks, plazas, and/or other public spaces encouraging pedestrian circulation and social interaction.

Neighborhood Village Centers offer a mix of small-scale commercial uses connected by sidewalks, pedestrian paths, and, where appropriate, bicycle infrastructure. 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 semipublic/institutional community services.

Neighborhood Village Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that are primarily oriented to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 suites in a multi-tenant building no greater than 3,000 square feet each.
- Buildings should be clustered, one and two stories in height, and should respect the predominant scale and character of development in the surrounding area through complimentary architectural elements, materials, building massing and articulation, setbacks, and other design elements and by providing a gradual transition to any taller or higher density buildings (existing or proposed).
- Design for each center should be pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between shared parking areas, different uses, and the surrounding neighborhood(s). Site design elements such as on street parking, shared off-street parking, widened sidewalks, sidewalk seating, 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 characterizing elements such as awnings, varying shingle styles or other natural materials, archways, porticos, decorative cornices, parapets, 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.
- The UDC should be amended to develop appropriate architecture, design, and landscape criteria.

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

DESCRIPTION:

Mixed-use developments that integrate and link together a compatible assortment of higher-intensity commercial (such as larger-scaled shopping centers, professional offices, and services), residential, and recreational uses through a comprehensive circulation system. Land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive, and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Improved pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connections to jobs, activities, services, and greenspaces, particularly from existing and developing higher density residential communities, tie these village areas together. Entertainment and cultural arts are an important focus of investment.

Typically located at the convergence of important transportation corridors, Community Village Centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including convenience goods for village center residents and shopping goods for surrounding neighborhoods. A community village concept should create a small community where it is possible to live, work, and play through a variety of housing options, small businesses, offices, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas, and open spaces. 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. A Community Village Center creates a focal point for its surrounding neighborhoods.

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, medical/dental clinics, gas stations, community gathering spaces, institutional uses (such as libraries or community centers), and a residential component (such as lofts or residences above ground-level office or retail).

Community Village Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger commercial center with retail and professional and personal services that serve residents of a large portion of the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loft housing• Higher-density residential duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family development (depending on the jurisdiction)• Smaller lot residential subdivisions• Semi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 and shared parking areas.
- Bike-friendly design, including bike lanes, bike racks, and repair stations, should be applied, where appropriate, particularly when a residential component is present in or adjacent to the development.
- 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.
- Buildings 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, textures, repeating patterns, massing, articulation, and/or architectural and stylistic features to achieve unity.
- Large parking areas should be located behind buildings and not along right-of-ways, where possible. Shared parking is encouraged.
- There should be adequate buffering of adjacent residential uses from light, sound, dumpster enclosures, and HVAC systems; buffering between uses within a Community Village Center development is not required.
- The UDC should be amended to develop appropriate architecture, design, and landscape criteria.

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

DESCRIPTION:

Primarily small-scale retail and office development that is pedestrian-oriented in nature and compatible with the historic character of the town or city it is located within. The Character Area comprises “original” downtown areas in the county’s four municipalities; each includes a number of historic structures that contribute to the local 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 this Character Area furthers each municipality’s desire to retain its characteristic “small-town feel.”

Historic Main Street Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small-scale retail and offices in a walkable environment• Adaptive reuse of existing and historic structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate-scaled commercial development• Public, semi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full urban services common to the city

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

- The main purpose 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 each municipality.
- 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 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

DESCRIPTION:

The Downtown Character Area serves as the civic and commercial heart of Watkinsville. This Character Area is a mixed-use district that meets a wide variety of the population's needs within a village-style atmosphere by offering 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 Character Area via single-family detached, single-family attached, residential lofts, and other higher density housing options, depending on the preferences of the local jurisdiction.

Downtown Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private offices, , retail shopping goods, business supplies• Government offices and public facilities• Small-scale lodging, restaurants, and entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lofts over retail or office uses• Attached residences• Live-work residences• Semi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 local jurisdiction.
- 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 municipality.
- 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 (WATKINSVILLE)

DESCRIPTION:

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Offices and professional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Residential development of higher-density attached units along edges of the areaSemi-public and institutional uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Full urban services common to the citySidewalks and bicycle lanes

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

- Residential development should be limited, as defined by the local jurisdiction, to ensure that the majority of land within the Character Area is reserved for employment uses.
- In Watkinsville, the Character Area should be developed as a transition between the Downtown and the Traditional Neighborhoods Character Areas.
- The Character Area should have a network of pedestrian facilities linking to the Downtown, 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.

CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

DESCRIPTION:

Large-scale, auto-oriented, primarily commercial development that is located along major roadways for visibility and access and significantly buffered from adjacent residential, agricultural, and other neighboring lower-intensity commercial developments. 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Auto-oriented retail, service and repair• Larger-scale commercial uses that serve the driving public• Corporate and professional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-public and institutional uses• Nursing home, retirement community, personal care home• Day care center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

DESCRIPTION:

The Civic Center Character Area is the center of civic activities in unincorporated Oconee County. The Character Area includes a relatively high-intensity mix of businesses, retail shopping, offices, sports and recreational complexes, public schools, a college campus, and other public and semi-public uses (such as the Oconee Civic Center, libraries, and museums) that create a multi-dimensional environment. An established residential component 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 is appropriate as the area grows. This Character Area is a vibrant place where people can live, work, recreate and shop.

Typical nonresidential uses include: 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, community/civic centers.

Civic Center Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium density multi-family housing as a component of a master planned development • Residential uses that allow aging in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
 - Buildings within a planned project or shopping center should share similar design characteristics and design elements. Precise replication is not desirable; instead, a development should utilize similar colors, materials, textures, repeating patterns, massing, articulation, and/or architectural and stylistic features to achieve unity.
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses and shared parking areas.
- Bike-friendly design, including bike lanes, bike racks, and repair stations, should be applied, where appropriate, particularly when a residential component is present in or adjacent to the development.
- Civic uses and gathering places should be part of the overall design.
- Large parking areas should be located behind buildings and not along right-of-ways, where possible. Shared parking is encouraged.
- There should be adequate buffering between commercial and adjacent residential uses from light, sound, dumpster enclosures, and HVAC systems; 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 DU	15,000 sf per DU (i.e., 30,000 sf per Duplex)	8,000 sf per Multi-Family DU
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

Description:

The Technology Gateway Character Area extends along the western portion of SR 316. 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 encourages a live, work, and play environment. 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 employees in the Character Area. Redevelopment of low-density residential uses to employment-based uses are anticipated as the area develops.

Technology Gateway Character Area		
Primary Land Uses	Compatible Secondary Land Uses	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial retail and services that support the business and employment base in the area • Vertically integrated multi-family residential development within a mixed-use master planned environment • Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 vehicular and alternative 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.
- Segregated “multi-use” development without vertical integration is not supported.

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

DESCRIPTION:

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 vertically integrated mixed-use master planned environment Single-family subdivisions and planned developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior housing Recreational uses such as theaters, roller skating rinks, arcades Entertainment, restaurants, and cultural arts Semi-public and institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 and recreational and entertainment businesses that will promote human interaction.
- The UDC should be amended to develop appropriate architecture, design, and landscaping criteria.

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; for primarily nonresidential development (in appropriate locations), appropriate zoning includes: 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

DESCRIPTION:

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None	<ul style="list-style-type: 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

DESCRIPTION:

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

The Character Area 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Civic functions such as county and city government offices, library, school, law enforcement, and emergency services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Other areas owned or operated by city or county government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Full urban services common to the citySidewalks 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:

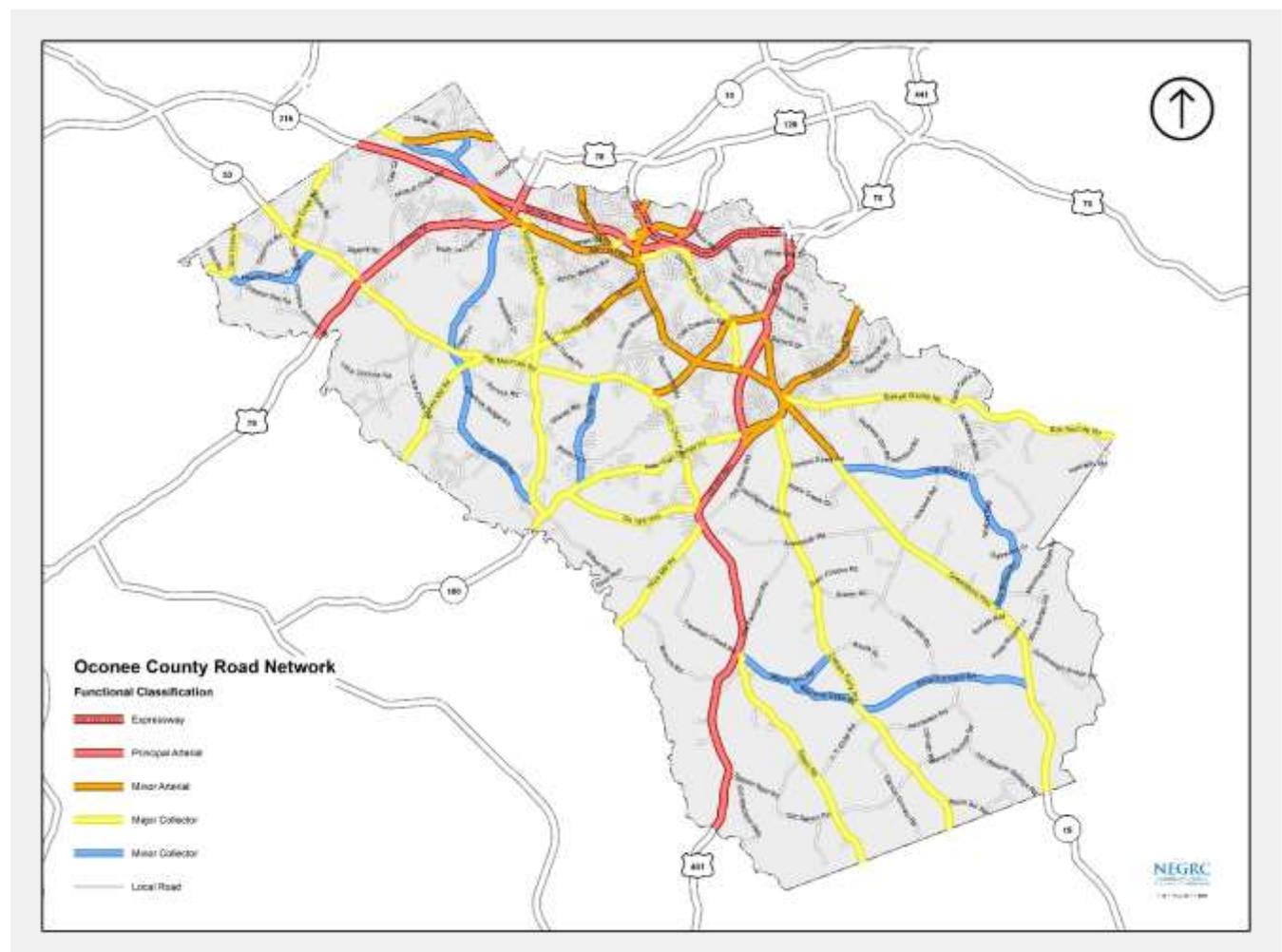
Appropriate zoning for Watkinsville's Public Institutional Character Area is PI (Public Institutional). In all cases, the zoning requirements of the City and applicable conditions of zoning approval control the use and development of any specific property.

Transportation, Mobility & Infrastructure

Transportation Network

Roadway Network

The roadway network in Oconee County and its municipalities consist of principal arterials, minor arterials, major and minor collectors, and local roads. This classification system aligns with the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) and the Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) established Functional Classification Guidelines. These classifications provide guidance as to the function of each roadway and serve to balance the competing needs of mobility and access. The jurisdiction of local streets fall under the County, or the individual municipalities, which are in charge of oversight of their respective roadways. The GDOT maintains jurisdiction of U.S. Highways, and State Highways throughout the planning area.



Madison, Athens-Clarke, Oconee, Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS)

MACORTS serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the urbanized area of the region, and since a portion of unincorporated Oconee County as well as the Cities of Bogart, and Watkinsville are located within the MPO boundary the State of Georgia requires a transportation element be developed as part of the comprehensive plan. MPOs are federally-mandated organizations that provide regional context to transportation planning in urbanized areas.

This section, the MACORTS Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and most recent version of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) should be used together when considering local transportation decisions within the established MPO boundaries.

MACORTS is responsible for cooperatively developing a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that details a balanced four-year program of projects (Tier 1) and a second two-year program of projects (Tier 2) to be undertaken in the MPO's boundaries. Included in the TIP is a prioritized listing of area projects grouped by project type, along with estimated costs and sources of funding for each project. The role of the TIP is to implement the short-range (four-year) elements of the Long-Range (twenty-year) Transportation Plan. Designed to be responsive to changing conditions the TIP may be amended as needed through a process approved by the MPO and the FHWA.

OUTSIDE THE MPO

Transportation planning for the portion of the Oconee County that lies outside the MPO boundaries follows a similar process. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are identified through GDOT's ongoing planning processes and are vital to the state's transportation program. Projects in the STIP emphasize the maintenance, safety, and improvement of existing transportation facilities and public transportation systems. Additionally in the non-MPO areas which the STIP covers, projects are identified in direct cooperation with rural (non-MPO) local governments through formal, annual face-to-face meetings with GDOT as well as regular/ongoing informal contact with GDOT throughout the rest of the year. It is also developed with input from stakeholders and the general public.

Key Roadway Improvements

Key Roadway Improvements MPO & STIP

Tier 1 – Short Range 2018-2023

- 1.** Road Projects
- 2.** Bridge Projects

Tier 2 – Long Range 2022-2023

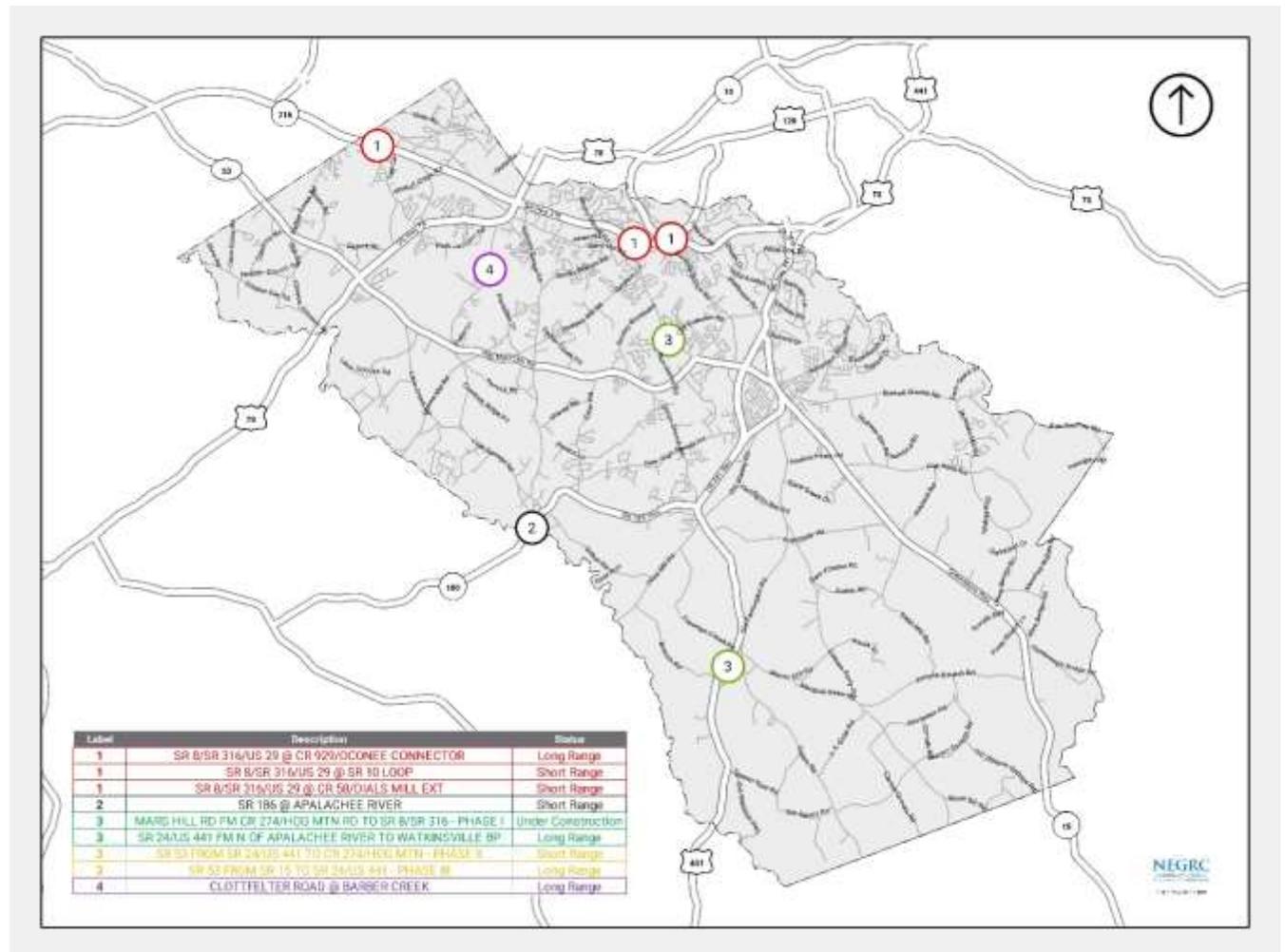
- 3.** Road Widening
- 4.** Bridge Projects

Key Roadway Improvements Local:

- 1.** Road resurfacing
- 2.** Road Maintenance Minimization
- 3.** Intersection Improvements
- 4.** Major Transportation Improvements

TIER 1 PROJECTS

Tier 1 Projects are projects that GDOT has programmed for the short-term of 2018-2023.



TIER 2 PROJECTS

The FY 2022 - 2023 Second Tier of Projects lists transportation projects that the GDOT has programmed for the period from FY 2022 - 2023. Also, projects that are priority projects from a local standpoint but not currently programmed by the GDOT are listed in the FY 2022 - 2023 Second Tier of Projects. Potential transportation projects for which federal-aid or state funding is sought but which are currently not programmed by the GDOT cannot be included in the FY 2018 - 2021 TIP - but can be included in the FY 2022 - 2023 Second Tier of Projects.

Key Roadway Improvements MPO & STIP

Tier 1 – Short Range 2018-2023

1. Road Projects
2. Bridge Projects

Tier 2 – Long Range 2022-2023

1. Road Projects
2. Bridge Projects

Active Transportation

1. Pedestrian Infrastructure
2. Trails
3. Bicycle Infrastructure

Key Roadway Improvements Local:

1. Road resurfacing
2. Road Maintenance Minimization
3. Intersection Improvements
4. Major Transportation Improvements

Wastewater

1. Proposed Force Main Upgrades
2. Proposed Gravity Upgrades
3. Long Range Extensions
4. Eliminate P.S.
5. P.S. Upgrade
6. W.R.F. Upgrade

Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace

The Value of Parks, Recreation, and Greenspaces

The County's parks system provides a valuable service for the entire community. According to the Trust for Public Land, the actual economic impact that parks and greenspaces have on a community can be measured by considering the following things:

Property Values

Homes and other uses that are within a 15 minute or 0.25 mile walk have been shown to have higher property values, which will translate into increased tax revenue.

Tourism Value

Oconee Veteran's Park attracts users from outside Oconee County both for its park facilities and its recreational programming. Visitors for each reason may also spend their money at the retail establishments on the way to or from home, which will increase sales tax revenue.

Direct Use

Direct use value is the difference between what a user is willing to pay at a comparable private facility for a use the park offers for a reduced cost. Things like team sports, bicycling and walking trails, or even picnic facilities are all examples of activities and facilities that visitors would likely pay more for if they weren't offered at a public park or through a public program.

User Fees

User fees are the most easily quantifiable stream of income. The fiscal year ending on 6/30/2016 reported \$1.1 million in revenue collected in fees and charges.

Health Value

Access to parks and recreation facilities has been shown to contribute to an overall community increase in physical activity. The more active a community the lower their overall medical costs from conditions associated with heart disease and diabetes, are likely to be.

Community Connections

In addition to places that provide opportunities for recreation, parks and greenspaces provide a community with the opportunity to connect. Parks can help to define the character and quality of life in a community. By providing a venue for gatherings, events, and connections with others in the community, park spaces can help a community feel more cohesive.



Source: Dan Rurden

Stormwater & Floodplain Management

Because of the large amount of impervious surface parks and greenspaces can help manage both stormwater, and in some cases, floodplains.



Source: Natural Lands Trust



Source: Intrinsic Architecture

Oconee County Parks & Recreation

Oconee County has over 600 acres of park land to enjoy. Park amenities include ball fields, tennis courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds, walking paths, trails, Community Center, disc golf course, meeting rooms, outdoor volleyball court and more.

The Parks and Recreation Department provides both maintenance to existing parks and facilities as well as programming and activities. According to the department's mission statement, the Parks and Recreation Department, through a coordinated effort, seeks to enrich the quality of life of the citizens we serve, by providing safe and accessible recreational facilities and a diversified program of recreational activities for all citizens. The current facilities and the amenities they offer are as follows

Bogart Sports Complex

33 acres

- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Walking Track
- Picnic Pavilion

Herman C. Michael Park

37 acres

- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Basketball Court
- Fishing
- Pavilion, Picnic Tables & Shelters
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Soccer Field
- Tennis Court
- Walking Track
- Disc Golf Course

Heritage Park

364 acres

- Bike Trail
- Hiking Trails
- Outdoor Arena & Barn

Oconee Veteran's Park

197 acres

- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Basketball Court
- Bike Trail
- Hiking Trails
- Locker Room
- Meeting Rooms
- Pavilion, Picnic Tables & Shelters
- Restrooms
- Soccer Field
- Tennis Court
- Walking Track
- Dog Park

In support of advancing that mission the following needs and opportunities have been identified by the Parks and Recreation subcommittee to be addressed by this plan.

Needs & Opportunities

Parks

- More park space at all scales is needed
- Neighborhood pocket parks
- Large scale Multi-sport complex
- Identify location, land for expansion to maximize population served
- Connect new and existing parks and greenspace to the community with trails, sidewalks and other off-street facilities

Recreation

- Multi-Use trail network to connect greenspace, parks, and other trail networks, and the Oconee and Apalachee Rivers
- Upgrades to existing recreation facilities and fields are needed to keep up with demand
- As the population grows so may the demand for large scale investments like an Aquatic Center/Indoor Pool
- Additional capacity in physical space and variety in programming offered will be needed to support existing demand and projected population growth

Finance & Service

- Increased funding to pay for expansions and upgrades in staff, operations, programming, and maintenance, may need to be found.

The general needs and opportunities statements contained above should serve as at least a guide for a much more robust parks, and greenspace master planning effort.



Source: Randall Arendt

Community Work Program

This section describes the next steps that should be undertaken to begin the process of implementation. These include

- Use of the Comprehensive Plan as a day-to-day decision support tool.
- Review and update the Unified Development Code to align with the vision, goals, and policies presented in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Updating the Comprehensive Plan at regular intervals.
- Enhancement of public communication regarding decision making.
- A short-term program of work for the next 5 years.
- A report of accomplishments for the previous 5 year short-term work program.
- Exploration of possible funding sources and techniques for implementation.

Use of the Plan on a day-to-day basis

The Comprehensive Plan should become the official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement for all jurisdictions. It should be used by staff, appointed commissioners and board members, as well as elected officials to review and assess all proposals for improvements and development in the years ahead.

Review Unified Development Code

Zoning is an essential regulatory tool for implementing planning policy, and it works hand-in-hand with the Character Areas described in the Land Use chapter. Each one describes the quality, intensity, and appropriate location for new development in the future. The recommended development strategies and guidelines the Plan describes should be used to review the existing zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, property maintenance, and other related codes to ensure consistency with the Plan's desired outcomes. Specific recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan that development regulations can address include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting sustainable development and growth in targeted areas.
- Ensuring the scale, design and configuration of development is appropriate for the character area in which it is located.
- Updating landscaping, planing, parking, and screening requirements to promote quality, attract development and redevelopment within existing commercial areas.
- Encourage the development of a wider range of housing options within targeted areas.
- Ensuring future non-residential development is connected to surrounding neighborhoods by either greenspace or improvements that make it accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as automobiles.
- Facilitating the development of parks, trails, and open spaces to enhance the existing quality of life, and meet the recreation needs of the community.

Update the Plan on a regular basis

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. If conditions or community attitudes change, the plan can and should be amended to remain relevant and useful as a policy guide. Ideally each jurisdiction should conduct an annual review of the status of projects listed in their short-term work program to determine the progress towards implementation. Projects can be added or removed because they are no longer relevant by adopting an amended version. The Land Use element should also be reviewed regularly as conditions change. As development continues in the northern and western portions of the County, the pressure to develop in areas designated to remain rural in character will increase.

Enhance Public Communication

The process of updating the plan has been an opportunity to engage in a discussion about the function and relevance of planning, and the ways in which citizens can participate to help define the future. The opportunity exists to continue building interest as the plan is implemented by developing additional techniques for sharing information about planning and development decisions. For example webpage features or a monthly newsletter devoted to upcoming actions before the Planning Commission or Board of Commissioners related to planning and development.

Report of Accomplishments

Oconee County

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	STATUS	CARRYING OVER?
1. Work with Innovation Crescent Regional Partnership and Joint Development Authorities to promote economic development in northeast Georgia	Economic Development		
2. Continue work with Georgia Dept. of Economic Development to promote the County as a Camera Ready Community	Economic Development		
3. Provide small business workshops for local businesses	Economic Development		
4. Continue to actively market the potential for development of the undeveloped "Industrial and Technology Business" zoned sites in northwestern Oconee County (including Gateway Industrial Park)	Economic Development		
5. Outline areas and properties on the Future Development Map to accommodate the amount and types of economic development opportunities that are desired and projected	Economic Development		
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of economic development programs and incentives, making changes where necessary to improve the county's competitiveness	Economic Development		
7. Continue working with the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation on planning and creating the Heritage Park Cultural Arts center	Economic Development		
8. Work with agribusiness community and the County Extension Service to promote agritourism and other agricultural-related economic development activities	Economic Development		
9. Continue to market commercial/business nodes of SR 53/Mars Hill Road; SR 316 to Oconee Connector; the US 78 and SR 53 corridors	Economic Development		
10. Conduct a study of tools, programs, approaches, administration, and funding sources that would meaningfully and effectively promote protection for designated agricultural and rural areas of the county.	Natural and Historic Resources		

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	STATUS	CARRYING OVER?
The study may include TDRs, farmland protection funding, agricultural funding, and other strategies.			
11. 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.	Natural and Historic Resources		
12. Continue to review tax assessments on a case-by-case basis and conduct periodic countywide re-evaluations of tax digest	Natural and Historic Resources		
13. Encourage and participate in regional efforts to protect Bear Creek, Oconee River, Apalachee River, and other significant watersheds in the County and region	Natural and Historic Resources		
14. Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water	Natural and Historic Resources		
15. Enforce Best Management Practices during construction to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with new development	Natural and Historic Resources		
16. Establish an annual objective and target acquisition of open space/conservation area acreage	Natural and Historic Resources		
17. Continue to utilize Oconee Heritage Park to preserve our heritage and promote tourism within the County	Natural and Historic Resources		
18. Continue maintenance and operation of Eagle Tavern and Visitor's Center	Natural and Historic Resources		
19. Promote historic sites through Tourism Committee. Sites include: Eagle Tavern, Elder Mill Bridge, the William Daniell House, the 1902 Oconee High School building housing OCAF	Natural and Historic Resources		
20. Complete Oconee Veterans Park Phase I (adult softball complex, trail completion, large picnic shelter, playground, and restroom facilities). Initiate OVP Phase II- complete tennis complex	Parks and Recreation		

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	STATUS	CARRYING OVER?
21. Complete Heritage Park Phase II- infrastructure, establish historic village, additional barns, warm-up arena, restroom facilities, amphitheater, and museum/admin. building	Parks and Recreation		
22. Master plan update	Parks and Recreation		
23. Expand Senior Citizen Center programs and health programs focused on the areas of importance for baby boomers (mind, body, and soul). Activities include nutrition, nutritional education, exercise, yoga and tai chi.	Senior Services		
24. Plan cooperatively with the Board of Commissioners in locating new schools to avoid generating unwanted growth in rural and agricultural areas	School System		
25. Continue to promote recycling by private citizens and require recycling services by private solid waste collectors through solid waste ordinance enforcement	Waste Management		
26. Continue participation with the NEGRC in the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Plan for waste management and disposal	Waste Management		
27. Continue to update and implement the Water and Sewer Improvement Plan as needs evolve (see full plan on Utility Dept. website).	Water and Sewer		
28. Wastewater- upgrade the Rocky Branch LAS to a 1 MGD membrane filtration plant	Water and Sewer		
29. Wastewater- expand the Rocky Branch WRF as needed	Water and Sewer		
30. Wastewater- install screens to upgrade Calls Creek Wastewater Reclamation Facility to 1.5 MGD, as demand dictates	Water and Sewer		
31. Water- investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water	Water and Sewer		
32. Water/Wastewater- continue to finance maintenance, depreciation, and expansion costs for provision of water/sewer system with user fees	Water and Sewer		

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	STATUS	CARRYING OVER?
33. Water- construction of a new 1 MG storage tank	Water and Sewer		
34. Water- extension of a waterline from Elder Road-Herman C. Michael to the Steeple Chase subdivision	Water and Sewer		
35. Water- line upgrades, fire hydrant installations along Hodges Mill Road	Water and Sewer		
36. Fire Department- acquire land for new station in the vicinity of Barber Creek, construct station, and acquire associated equipment	Public Safety		
37. Continue to update and implement the Traffic Improvement Maintenance Plan and the MACORTS Plan as needs evolve (see Public Works Dept. and MACORTS websites for full plan text).	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
38. Construction of the Daniels Bridge extension with flyover to Jennings Mill Parkway	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
39. Continue to improve and upgrade streets in accordance with the county's 2 year Transportation and Improvement Plan which includes road resurfacing	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
40. Widening of Daniels Bridge Road from Hog Mountain Road to Mars Hill Road	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
41. Widening of Hog Mountain Road between US 441 and SR 15	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
42. Work with GDOT on new interchanges along SR 316 between Mars Hill Road and Dials Mill Road intersections, and interchange improvements SR 316 and Oconee Connector	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
43. Widening or reconstructing of SR 316 to a limited access facility (with or without a toll).	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
44. 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	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	STATUS	CARRYING OVER?
45. Continue to improve and signalize intersections. Investigate other methods to improve intersection safety	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
46. Continue to implement bridge maintenance and improvement program	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
47. Require interconnection between new developments on Hwy 441 and other major corridors.	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
48. Mars Hill/Experiment Station Road widening project (from the Oconee Connector to Watkinsville).	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
49. Simonton Bridge Road Widening Project (from Watkinsville to Athens/Clarke County line).	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
50. Require sidewalks in all new subdivisions.	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
51. Consider alternative modes of transportation to link existing and developing areas of the County.	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
52. Proceed with all transportation projects currently in the TIP (4 year) and the long-range plan (20 years).	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
53. Continue working through MACORTS to develop a regional solution to transportation congestion, and to lobby for DOT transportation projects.	Circulation and Traffic Facilities		
54. Manage the development of quality housing using Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.	Housing		
55. Continue present policies which promote affordable housing including conservation subdivisions and manufactured housing regulations.	Housing		
56. 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.	Housing		

DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	STATUS	CARRYING OVER?
57. 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).	Land Use		
58. 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 trends.	Land Use		
59. Plan cooperatively with the Board of Education in locating new schools to avoid generating unwanted growth in rural and agricultural areas.	Land Use		
60. Continue staff training (continuing education) and expand staff as needed.	Land Use		
61. 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.	Land Use		

