

# Future Land Use Is NOT Zoning

## What Is Future Land Use And Why Is It So Important?

Future Land Use is an aspirational guide that looks at Athens-Clarke County from a 30,000 foot view. It brings a broad understanding of how the community envisions each parcel over a 20-year period. It uses past plans, current land uses, and other related policies while also representing current community values and hopes for the future.

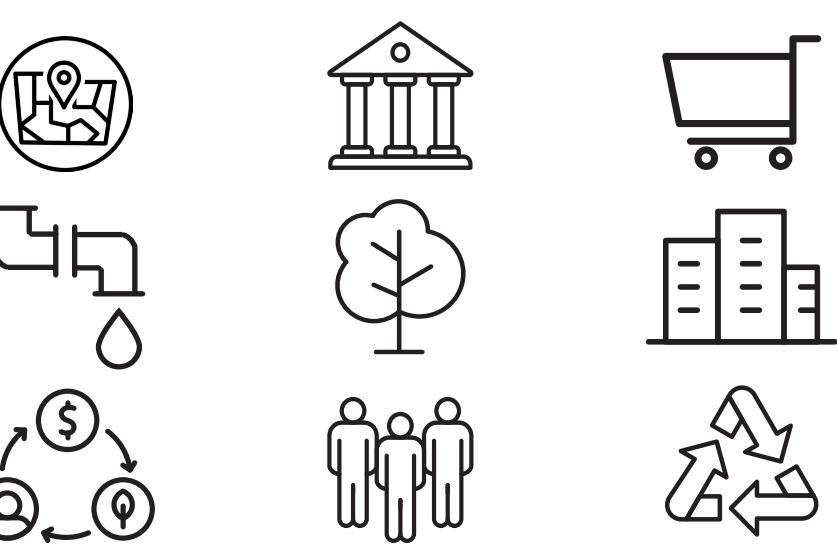
### What Is It?

- 20-year vision on how land should be used
- Balances conservation goals with development and redevelopment needs
- Parcel-specific arrangement of land use types
- Required element of adopted comprehensive plan

### Why Is It Important?

- Provides basis for local zoning laws & development regulations
- Guides infrastructure
- Guides communities facilities
- Supports economic development
- Informs other community development policies & programs

### What's Affected?



2023

### Existing Future Land Use Categories

- Downtown
- Employment
- General Business
- Government
- Main Street Business
- Mixed Density Residential
- Rural
- Single Family Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood

### Potential Future Land Use Categories

- Downtown
- Education
- Employment Center
- General Business
- Government
- Major Corridor
- Minor Corridor
- Mixed Density Residential
- Neighborhood Center
- Neighborhood Residential
- Parks & Open Space
- Rural
- Rural Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Town Center
- Urban Center

### Big Ideas For The Next 20 Years

- Growth pressure will remain constant
- 30,000+ new residents by 2045
- Housing variety and availability must increase
- Need to replace expensive and aging infrastructure
- Nodes and corridors the focus, but all areas of ACC must accept some level of growth

### Another Way To Think Of Future Land Use

Future Land Use  
= Italian Restaurant



Zoning  
= Spaghetti with meatballs



2025

## How We Got Here

### Guiding Principles

Derived from input and ACCGov Depts

- 1) Redevelop corridors and nodes that are ripe for transformation
- 2) Minimize sewer expansion; Grow capacity within existing network
- 3) Reduce Travel Distances:
  - a) Localize Trips by adding commercial, institutional and amenity uses
  - b) Locate people nearer destinations (Residents near Jobs & activity centers)
  - c) Add street connections to distribute traffic efficiently across the network
- 4) Plan for incremental growth in all neighborhoods that are served by sewer
- 5) Support Environmentally and Fiscally sustainable growth

### Public Input and Mayor & Commission Accepted The Growth Concept Map

### Nodes and Corridors Developed

The first three guiding principles derived from the Fall 2023 input established the need to redevelopment corridors and nodes, minimize sewer expansion, and reduce travel distances. One way to address all three needs is to create centers and corridors that take on high levels of density, while also providing the commercial and institutional needs for daily life. Being able to easily reach key destinations, whether it be by walking, public transportation, or by vehicle, allows for residents and non-residents alike to better utilize their time.

Not all nodes and corridors are created the same, **context matters**. Some focus on accommodating both residents from the county and people from far away, while others focus on people in the immediate vicinity. Strategically placed throughout the county, these nodes and corridors achieve the guiding principles and functions expressed by residents.

### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee built off of the Growth Concept Map and decided on sixteen new Future Land Use categories. Their proposed Future Land Use Map and categories will ultimately be brought back after the current round of public comment has been completed.

# The Future Land Use Map Of Yesteryear



Downtown

Retail, office and entertainment uses are encouraged, as is high-density multifamily housing. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. As parking is handled on a district level, off-street parking for individual commercial development is not intended. Parking structures with commercial uses on the street-level frontage are encouraged rather than surface parking lots. This area should have strict design requirements to protect historic integrity and to ensure that new buildings develop in a form and architectural style compatible with existing downtown character.



General Business

These are commercial areas that serve a variety of needs for the residents of the region. It is intended for small- and large-scale retailing and service uses that are auto-oriented, such as Atlanta Highway, Lexington Road and US 29 North. Pedestrian-oriented design is particularly appropriate when these streets contain neighborhood shopping areas or are adjacent to multifamily housing or residential neighborhoods. Pedestrian circulation in these centers is a primary concern, therefore, connectivity within and to surrounding areas should be encouraged. Internal pedestrian walkways should be provided from the public right-of-way to the principal customer entrance of all principal buildings on the site. Walkways should connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as, but not limited to, transit stops, street crossings, building entry points, and plaza space. Walkways shall feature adjoining landscaped areas that contribute to the establishment or enhancement of community and public spaces. The street level facade of these areas should have a scale and architectural elements that relate to pedestrians. Buildings should be oriented to the street corridors which should be lined with street-trees. Small and medium scale retail stores should frame the streets with large-scale retailers located behind with focus given to pedestrian circulation rather than automobiles. Parking lots should not be located at the street front and shared parking should be encouraged.



Main Street Business

These are areas of industry, office, research parks, and flex-space mixed uses. Large-scale employment areas, which include large industrial areas, manufacturing, office parks, and research centers, is incompatible with housing. Smaller-scale employment areas are appropriate to be in close proximity to a neighborhood area. Design standards regulating building placement, landscaping, and buffering should apply. Small amounts of retail may be compatible in some areas. Retail, office and entertainment uses are encouraged, as is high-density multifamily housing. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. As parking is handled on a district level, off-street parking for individual commercial development is not intended. Parking structures with commercial uses on the street-level frontage are encouraged rather than surface parking lots. This area should have strict design requirements to protect historic integrity and to ensure that new buildings develop in a form and architectural style compatible with existing downtown character.



Government

These areas are in use or proposed for use by federal, state, or local government agencies, including the University of Georgia and Clarke County Board of Education. Many of these locations are intended to serve the community, and should encourage walkability, landscaping and neighborhood-oriented transportation alternatives.



Mixed-Density Residential

These are residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended. Limited nonresidential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated into these areas (e.g. churches, schools, daycare facilities, small businesses and offices). Buildings should be oriented towards the street and include streetscape enhancements. Their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation.



Traditional Neighborhood

These are medium density neighborhoods with traditional qualities including well-connected street systems, sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of housing types. Homes are often built close to the street with front porches. Garages are set back farther than the homes and porches. Traditional Neighborhood areas support single-family residences, duplexes which resemble large homes, and townhouses. Strict design standards should be implemented to ensure appropriateness of design and to protect neighborhood character. Limited commercial and other non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale are encouraged, but only in areas close to principal and minor arterial routes that have good access to transit.



Single Family Residential

These are residential areas with single-family detached housing. Limited non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated in these areas (e.g. churches, schools, personal care homes and daycare facilities).



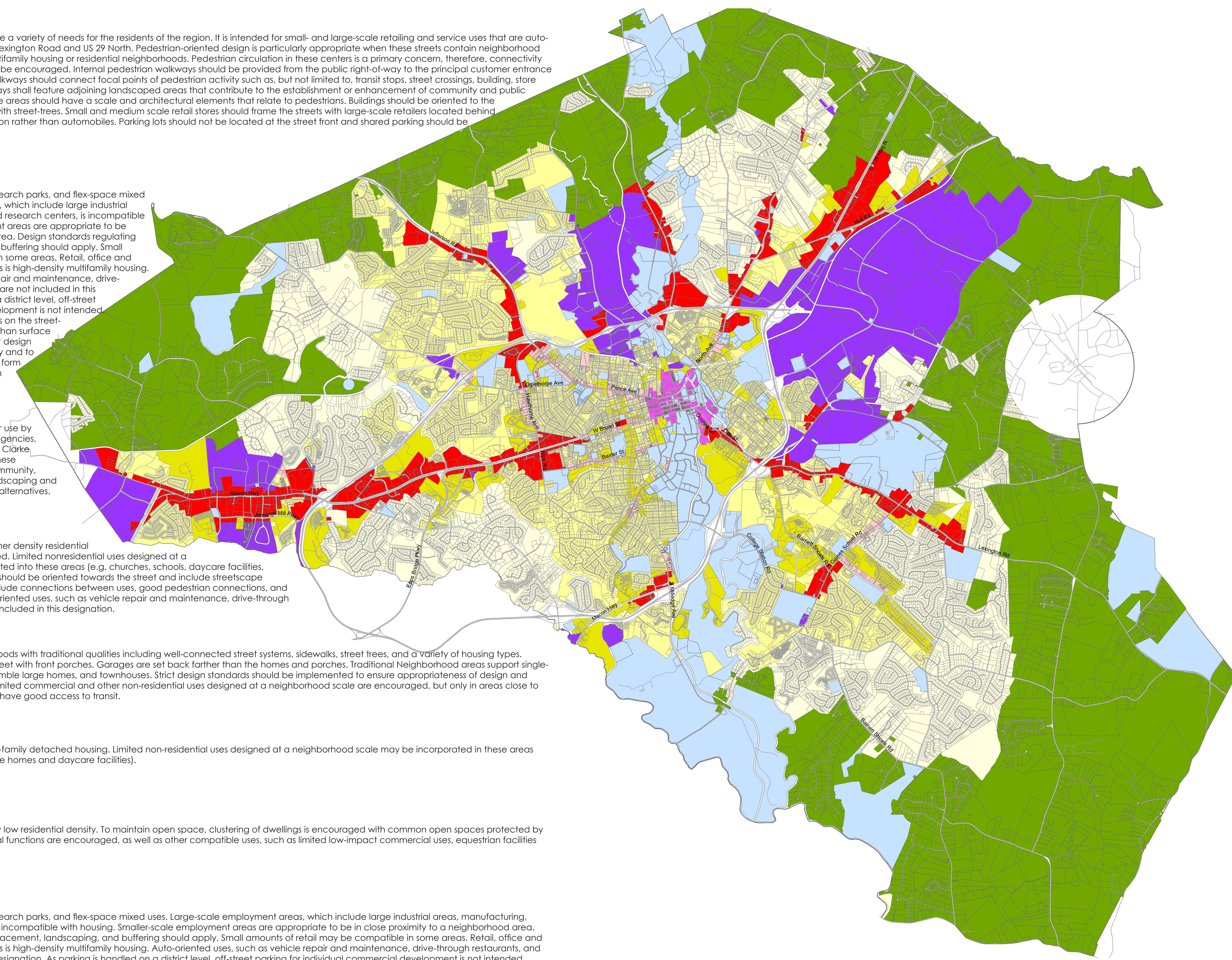
Rural

Rural lands are intended to have very low residential density. To maintain open space, clustering of dwellings is encouraged with common open spaces protected by conservation easements. Agricultural functions are encouraged, as well as other compatible uses, such as limited low-impact commercial uses, equestrian facilities and other animal boarding uses.



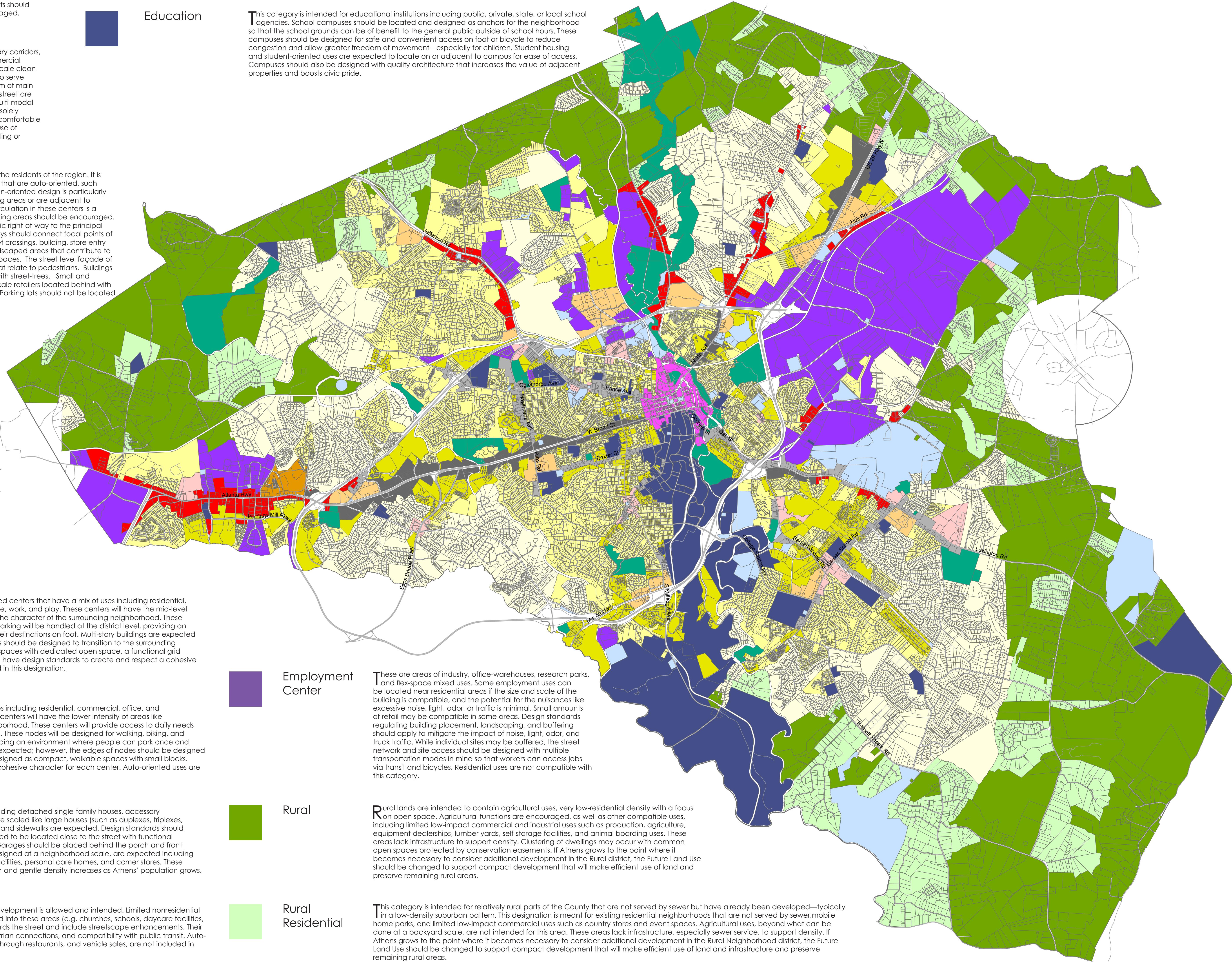
Employment Center

These are areas of industry, office, research parks, and flex-space mixed uses. Large-scale employment areas, which include large industrial areas, manufacturing, office parks, and research centers, is incompatible with housing. Smaller-scale employment areas are appropriate to be in close proximity to a neighborhood area. Design standards regulating building placement, landscaping, and buffering should apply. Small amounts of retail may be compatible in some areas. Retail, office and entertainment uses are encouraged, as is high-density multifamily housing. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. As parking is handled on a district level, off-street parking for individual commercial development is not intended. Parking structures with commercial uses on the street-level frontage are encouraged rather than surface parking lots. This area should have strict design requirements to protect historic integrity and to ensure that new buildings develop in a form and architectural style compatible with existing downtown character.



# The Proposed New Future Land Use Map

<b>Major Corridor</b>	<p>These are primarily commercial or multi-family areas intended for small and large-scale retail and other commercial services. Residential uses are allowed—especially in mixed arrangements such as above the ground floor in multi-story buildings, horizontally mixed or as a buffer to surrounding residential neighborhoods. While some areas may be auto-oriented, pedestrian circulation and inter-parcel connectivity should be incorporated into the design. Main entrances should face the street and have direct pedestrian walkways to the street. Corridors should be served by public transit and have multi-modal opportunities. Parking lots should not be located at the street front and shared parking is encouraged.</p>
<b>Minor Corridor</b>	<p>These areas are intended to develop and redevelop secondary corridors, such as Prince Avenue and Baxter Street, with a mix of commercial and residential uses, and other compatible uses such as small-scale clean industry, schools, houses of worship, and daycares, that can also serve adjacent neighborhoods. Commercial uses should take the form of main street storefronts and multi-story buildings oriented towards the street are expected. These corridors should be designed to function as multi-modal boulevards, that are highly compatible with transit, rather than solely focusing on automobile throughput. These corridors should be comfortable to traverse on foot or sit alongside in café seating through the use of enhanced design elements (street trees, sidewalk furniture, lighting or traffic calming).</p>
<b>General Business</b>	<p>These are commercial areas that serve a variety of needs for the residents of the region. It is intended for small- and large-scale retailing and service uses that are auto-oriented, such as Atlanta Highway, Lexington Road and US 29 North. Pedestrian-oriented design is particularly appropriate when these streets contain neighborhood shopping areas or are adjacent to multifamily housing or residential neighborhoods. Pedestrian circulation in these centers is a primary concern; therefore, connectivity within and to surrounding areas should be encouraged. Internal pedestrian walkways should be provided from the public right-of-way to the principal customer entrance of all principal buildings on the site. Walkways should connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as, but not limited to, transit stops, street crossings, building, store entry points, and plaza spaces. Walkways shall feature adjoining landscaped areas that contribute to the establishment or enhancement of community and public spaces. The street level facade of these areas should have a scale and architectural elements that relate to pedestrians. Buildings should be oriented to the street and corridors should be lined with street-trees. Small and medium scale retail stores should frame the streets with large-scale retailers located behind with focus given to pedestrian circulation rather than automobiles. Parking lots should not be located at the street front and shared parking should be encouraged.</p>
<b>Downtown</b>	<p>This is the densest and most unique neighborhood of the county. It is a regional center that offers a mix of uses, housing, civic or municipal functions and employment opportunities. Parking structures with commercial uses with street-level frontage are encouraged, however they should have strict design requirements to protect historic integrity and to ensure that new buildings develop in a form and architectural style compatible with existing downtown character. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. Surface parking lots are not encouraged.</p>
<b>Urban Center</b>	<p>These areas are the second most dense districts of the county. They serve people from beyond the county by offering a mix of uses, housing, and employment opportunities. They should incorporate shared-use facilities such as Greens, plazas or other third spaces. Parking should be handled at the district level or in structures with commercial uses at street-level. These nodes should have mixed-use opportunities in a vertical arrangement at their core and step-down to lower scaled multi-family structures toward their edges. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. Surface parking lots are not encouraged.</p>
<b>Town Center</b>	<p>These areas are envisioned to be developed and re-developed centers that have a mix of uses including residential, commercial, office, and entertainment where people can live, work, and play. These centers will have the mid-level intensity of areas like Beechwood Shopping Center, based on the character of the surrounding neighborhood. These nodes will be designed for walking, biking, and transit access. Parking will be handled at the district level, providing an environment where people can park once and access all of their destinations on foot. Multi-story buildings are expected to be oriented towards the street; however, the edges of nodes should be designed to transition to the surrounding neighborhood. Nodes will be designed as compact, walkable spaces with dedicated open space, a functional grid system, and a prioritization on multi-modal transit. Nodes should have design standards to create and respect a cohesive character for each center. Auto-oriented uses are not included in this designation.</p>
<b>Neighborhood Center</b>	<p>These areas are envisioned to be areas that have a mix of uses including residential, commercial, office, and entertainment where people can live, work, and play. These centers will have the lower intensity of areas like Normaltown, based on the character of the surrounding neighborhood. These centers will provide access to daily needs that provide useful walks for residents of nearby neighborhoods. These nodes will be designed for walking, biking, and transit access. Parking will be handled at the district level, providing an environment where people can park once and access all of their destinations on foot. Multi-story buildings are expected; however, the edges of nodes should be designed to transition to the surrounding neighborhood. Nodes will be designed as compact, walkable spaces with small blocks. Nodes should have design standards to create and respect a cohesive character for each center. Auto-oriented uses are not included in this designation.</p>
<b>Neighborhood Residential</b>	<p>These residential areas include a variety of housing types including detached single-family houses, accessory dwellings units, townhouses, and multi-family buildings that are scaled like large houses (such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes). Well-connected street networks, street trees, and sidewalks are expected. Design standards should be implemented to ensure compatibility. Houses are encouraged to be located close to the street with functional front porches and a direct walkway connection to the street. Garages should be placed behind the porch and front façade. Limited commercial and other non-residential uses, designed at a neighborhood scale, are expected including home-based businesses, houses of worship, schools, daycare facilities, personal care homes, and corner stores. These neighborhoods should be characterized by incremental growth and gentle density increases as Athens' population grows.</p>
<b>Mixed-Density Residential</b>	<p>These are residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended. Limited nonresidential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated into these areas (e.g. churches, schools, daycare facilities, small businesses and offices). Buildings should be oriented towards the street and include streetscape enhancements. Their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation.</p>
<b>Single-Family Residential</b>	<p>These are residential areas with single-family detached housing. Limited non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated in these areas (e.g. churches, schools, personal care homes and daycare facilities).</p>



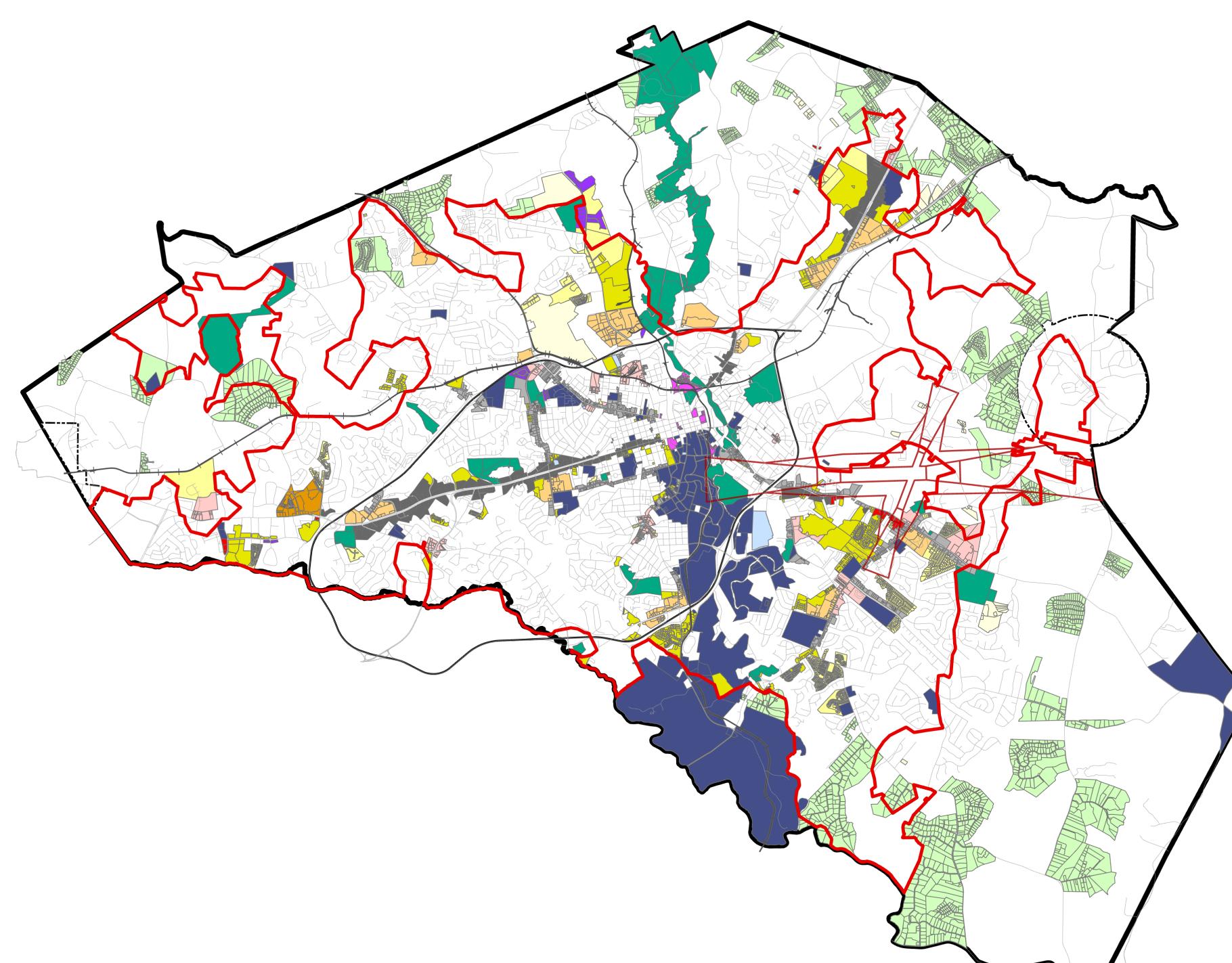
# Stepping Down

The Growth Concept Map accepted by the Mayor & Commission provides the foundation for the work of the Future Land Use Steering Committee. They discussed the entire community but focused on the nodes and corridors to arrive at a consensus on what needed to be changed to fit the 20-year vision set forth by the community. Their effort led to the expansion of the current nine Future Land Use designations, to sixteen.

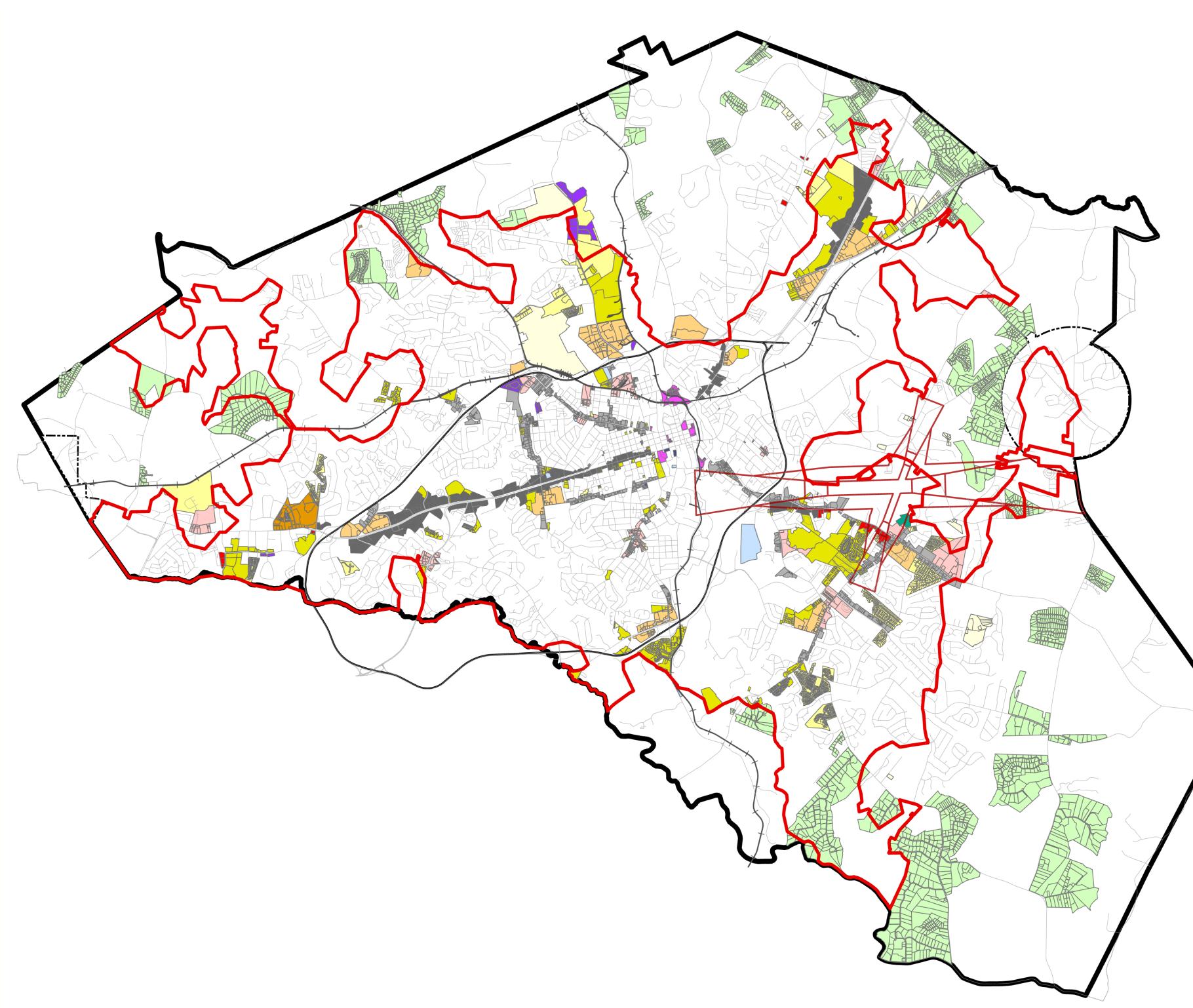
The Steering Committee added two main types of designations for wanted **future growth** and **"ground-truths"**. Additionally, they broke apart the Government category into Government, Education and Parks & Open Space. **Future growth** designations, like the Centers, focus on locations that are ripe for redevelopment or have the opportunity to be anchor points for Athens-Clarke County residents, businesses and visitors.

**Ground-truths** are locations that have already seen change, both in scope and use, their designation has been changed to accurately reflect how the land is being used.

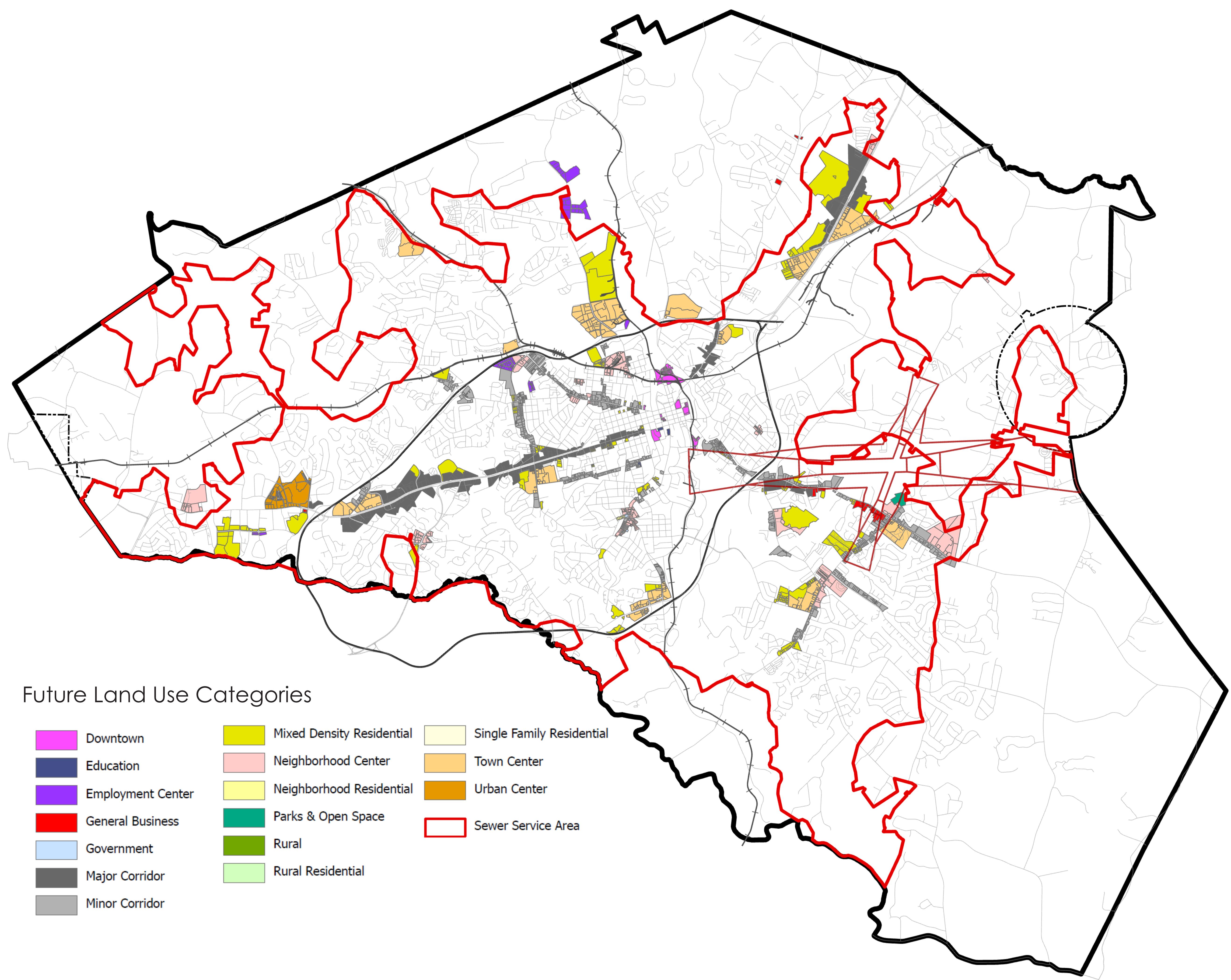
After every change was proposed, the maps were reduced down to what parcels actually have proposed changes. The major changes total **5.56%** of the county's total land mass.



All parcels with a Future Land Use designation change equal **27%** of the county's total land mass



All changes with Government, Parks & Open Space, and Education parcels removed equals **17%** of the county's total land mass



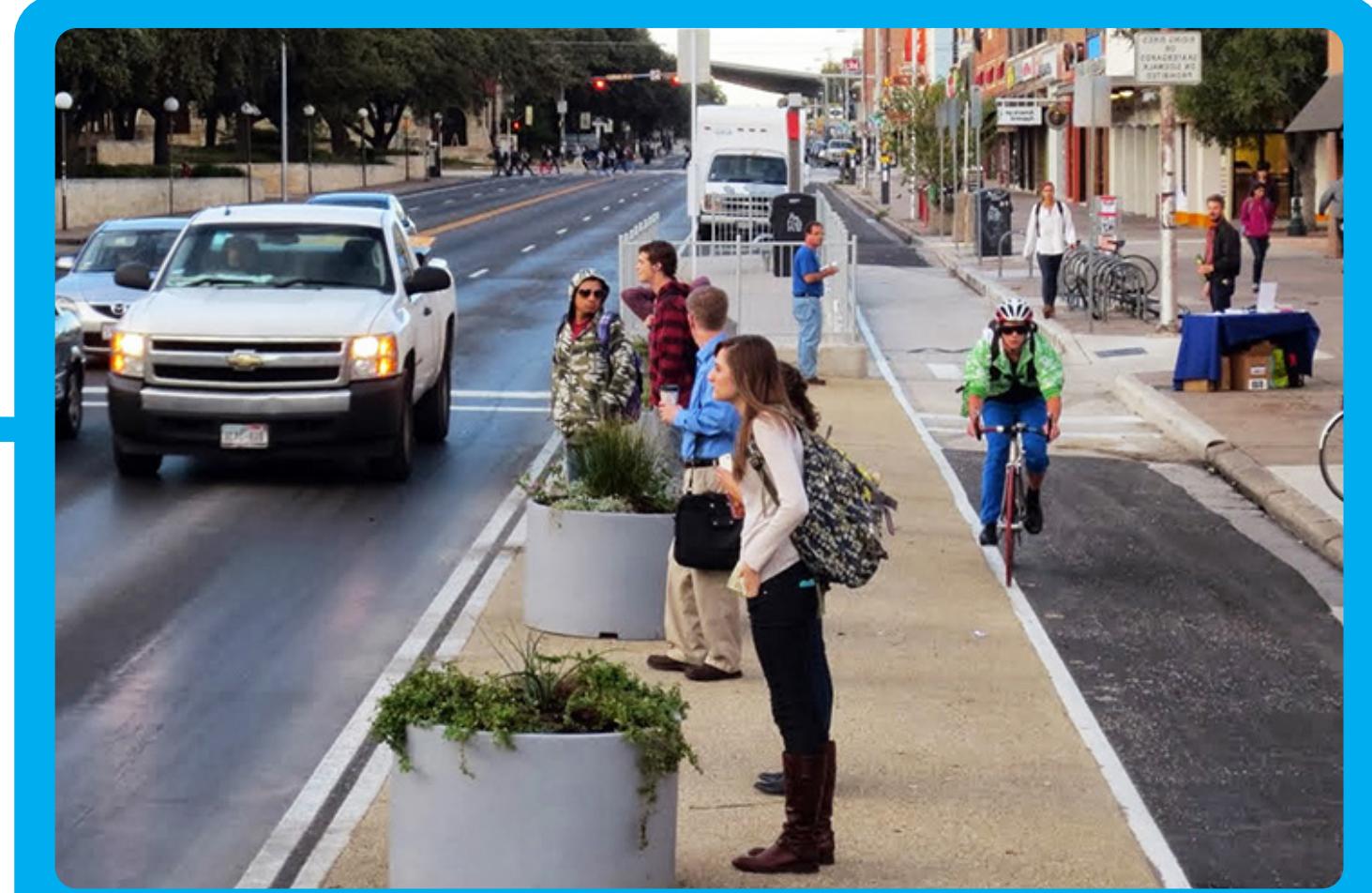
With all of the Government and ground-truth parcels removed, what's left equals **5.56%** of the county's total land mass

## Future Land Use Categories

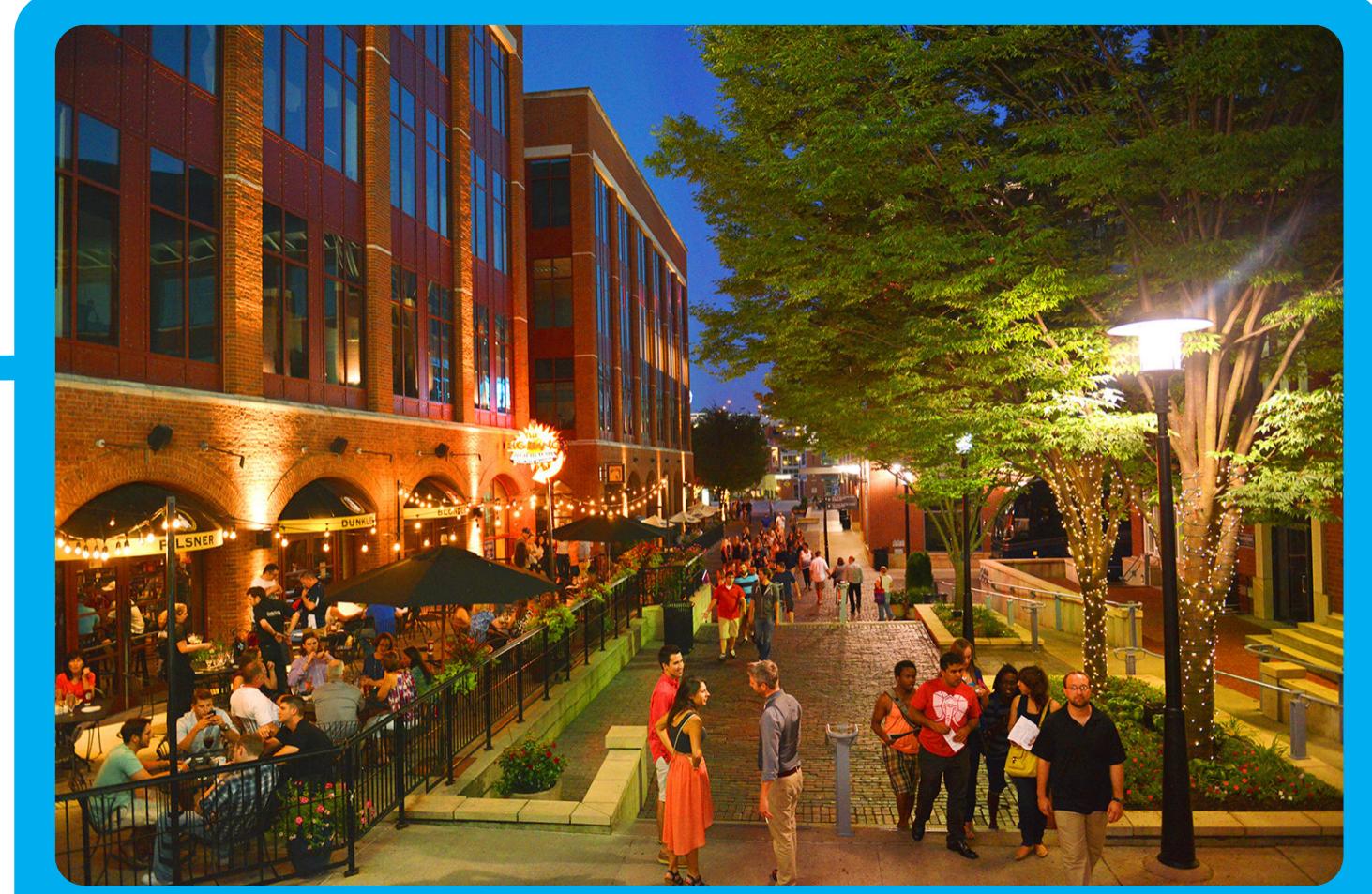
Downtown	Mixed Density Residential	Single Family Residential
Education	Neighborhood Center	Town Center
Employment Center	Neighborhood Residential	Urban Center
General Business	Parks & Open Space	
Government	Rural	Sewer Service Area
Major Corridor		
Minor Corridor	Rural Residential	

# Category Characteristics

Future Land Use Designations	Character	Primary Use	Intensity	Height	Design	Frequency/proximity	Zoning Compatability
Major Corridor	Multi-Modal Transit-Friendly Access, Boulevard, connected parcels, Arterials or collector roads	Mixed Commercial Residential, & Office	High	3-7 stories (40-70 ft.)	Buildings At/Near Street, limited front parking, less ingress/egress	Municipal, Annual, weekly, daily	RM-2, RM-3, C-O, C-G, IN, G, P
Minor Corridor	Smaller scale Transit-Friendly Access; Local or collector roads	Mixed/adjacent Commercial, Residential & Office	Medium	2-4 stories (20-40 ft.)	Buildings At/Near Street, Parking At the Side/Rear	Municipal, Local, weekly, daily	RS-5, RM-1, RM-2, C-O, C-N, IN, G, P
General Business	Small-to-Large Scale Retail, Automobile-Oriented Uses	Commercial, Office, Residential	Low to Medium	1-6 stories (10-60 ft.)	Buildings facing the street, limited front parking, consolidate curb cuts, interparcel access	Municipal, Annual, weekly, daily	RM-3, C-O, C-N, C-G, E-O, IN, G, P
Downtown	On-street or structured parking, Public Spaces, Historic, Prominent Civic Buildings	Mixed Commercial Residential, & Office, Entertainment, Institutional	Very High	10 stories (100 ft.)	Historic, shared parking, Buildings At Street	Regional, Daily, weekly	C-D, IN, G, P
Urban Center	Park Once, streetscape, Public Green	Mixed Commercial Residential, & Office	High	4-7 stories (40-70 ft.)	Shared parking, Buildings At Street	Regional, municipal, weekly, monthly	RM-2, RM-3, C-O, C-G, IN, G, P
Town Center	Park Once and Walk to Multiple Places, Intentional third spaces	Mixed/adjacent Commercial & Residential	Medium	2-5 stories (20-50 ft.)	Shared parking, Buildings At/Near Street	Municipal, weekly, monthly	RM-1, RM-2, RM-3, C-O, C-N, C-G
Neighborhood Center	Walkable from nearby neighborhoods, Intentional Public Gathering Spaces	Mixed Commercial & Office, some residential	Medium	1-4 stories (10-40 ft.)	On-street or rear parking, Buildings At/Near Street	Local, weekly, daily	RM-1, RM-2, C-O, C-N, IN, G, P
Neighborhood Residential	Pocket Parks, Safe and Convenient to Walk, Kid-Friendly, Variety of Housing Types serving all ages and stages of life	House-Scale Residential, Small-Scale Commercial, Institutional	Low to Medium	1-2.5 stories (10-25 ft.)	Buildings Near Street, Recessed Garages, Usable Front Porches/Stoops, On-Street Parking	Local, daily	RS-5, RS-8, RS-15, RS-25, RM-1, RM-2, C-N, G, P
Mixed Density Residential	Shared Greenspaces, Kid-Friendly	Multi-Family Residential, Limited Commercial, Institutional	Medium	2-4 stories (20-40 ft.)	Multi-Family Buildings Arranged Around Shared Greenspaces	Municipal, weekly, daily	RM-1, RM-2, RM-3, C-N, IN, G, P
Single Family Residential	Pocket Parks, Safe and Convenient to Walk, Kid-Friendly	House-Scale Residential, Limited Commercial, Institutional	Low to Medium	1-2.5 stories (10-25 ft.)	Usable Front Porches/Stoops, Variety of Yard Sizes and Setbacks	Local, daily	RS-5, RS-8, RS-15, RS-25, RS-40, G, P
Employment Center	Job centers, trucking, Manufacturing, Employment campuses	Industrial, Manufacturing, Fabrication, & Warehousing	Medium	1-10 stories (10-100 ft.)	Large campuses or multi-tenant structures, surface parking	Regional, daily	C-O, E-O, E-I, I, IN, G, P
Rural	Farmland, Cluster Development, Open Space, No Sewer	Agricultural, Residential, Outdoor Recreation	Very Low	1-6.5 stories (10-65 ft.)	Very large residential lots, farms, conservation, parks	Local, daily	AR, RS-40, C-R, G, P
Rural Residential	Residential & Commercial, No Sewer, Cluster Development	Residential, Commercial, & Institutional	Low to Very Low	1-6.5 stories (10-65 ft.)	Non-sewer residential lots, conservation subdivisions, hobby farms	Local, Daily	AR, RS-40, C-R, IN, G, P
Government	Municipal functions, Publicly Accessible Buildings Should Have Multi-Modal Transit-Friendly Access	Office, Maintenance & Storage, Public Safety	Low to Medium	1-5 stories (10-50 ft.)	Municipal functions, accessible	Municipal, monthly, weekly	G
Education	Community served	Schools & Offices	Low to Medium	1-3 stories (10-30 ft.)	Expansive campuses, community gathering	Municipal, local, monthly, daily	IN
Parks & Open Space	Larger programmed parks, native parks, pocket parks, third spaces, Multi-Modal Access	Parks, Preserved Greenspace	Very Low	0-1 stories (0-10 ft.)	Integrated into surrounding neighborhoods, Bucolic	Municipal, local, monthly, weekly, daily	P



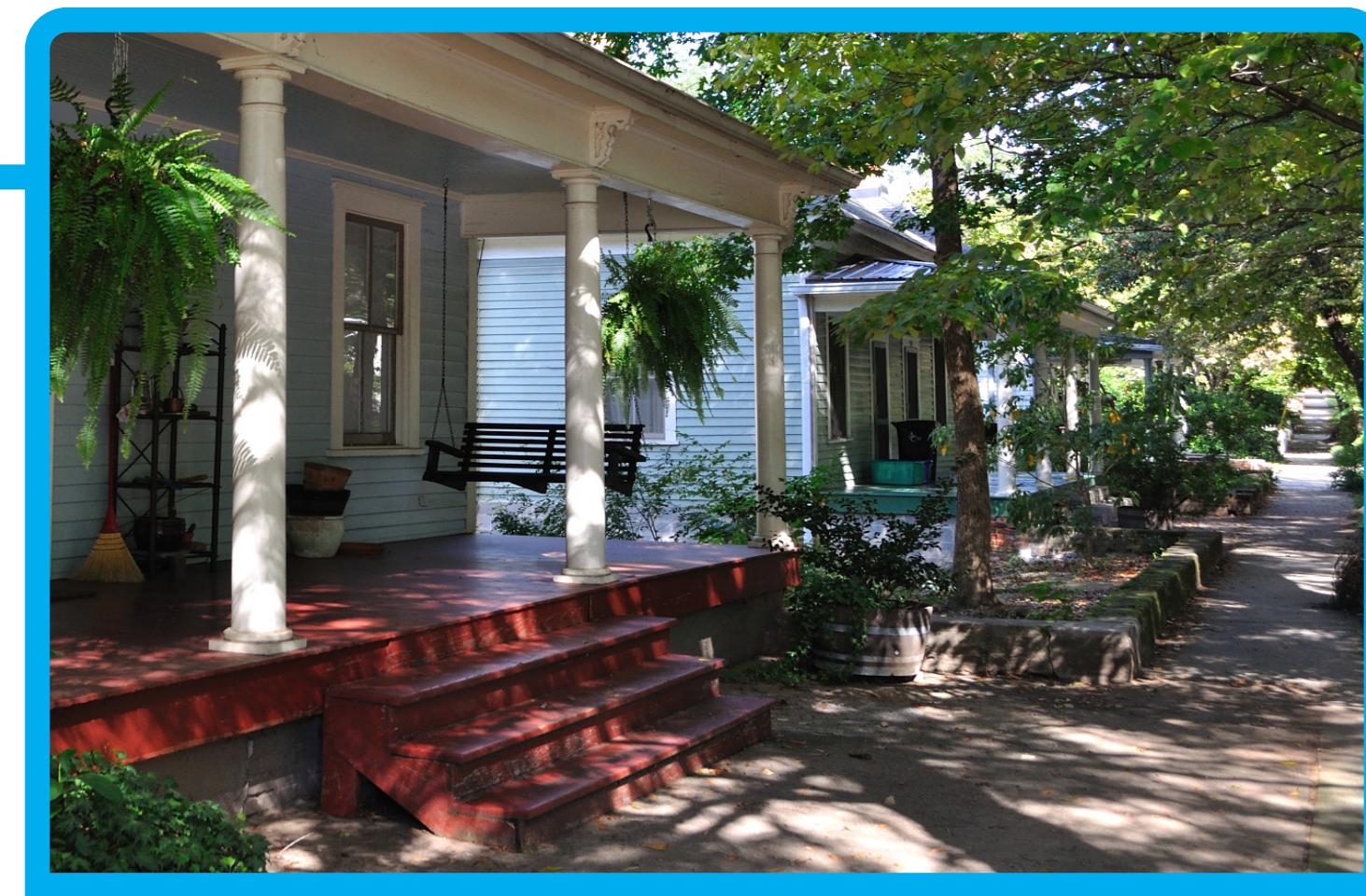
Complete Street, Austin, TX



Ludlow Alley, Arena District, Columbus, OH



Parson's Alley, Duluth, GA

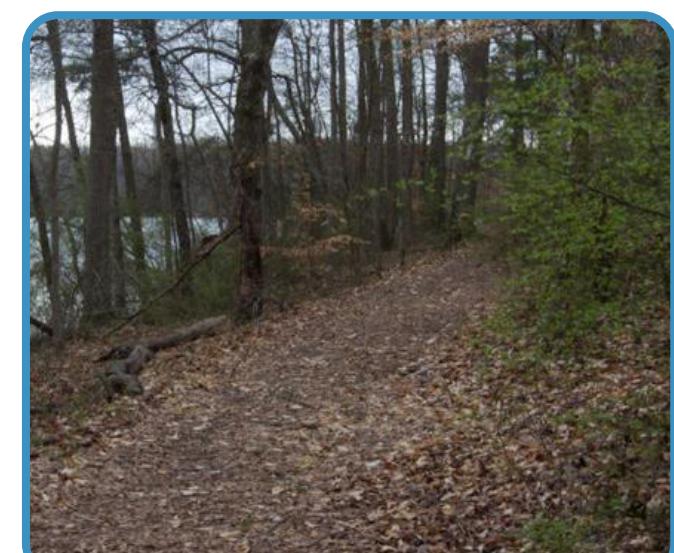


Boulevard, Athens GA

## Transect Zones

### T-1 - Natural Zone

- Wilderness areas
- Unsuitable for development due to topography



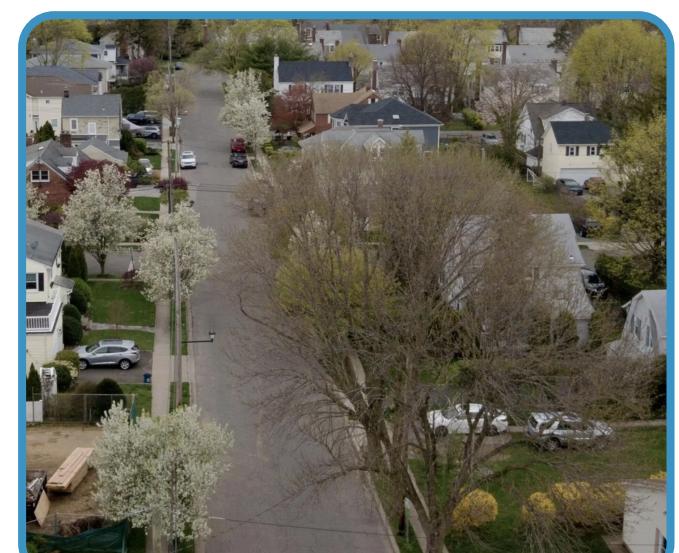
### T-2 - Rural Zone

- Woodland, grassland, agriculture
- Sparse amount of buildings
- 1- to 2-story buildings



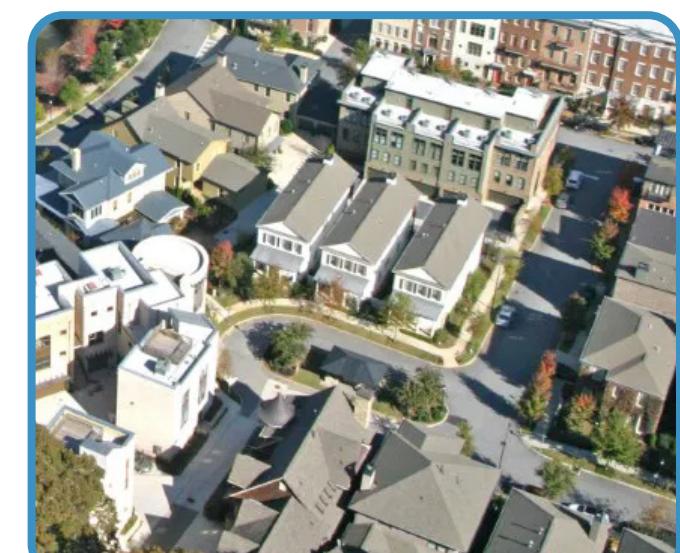
### T-3 - Sub-urban

- Low density detached res.
- Non-gridded roadways
- Deeper setbacks



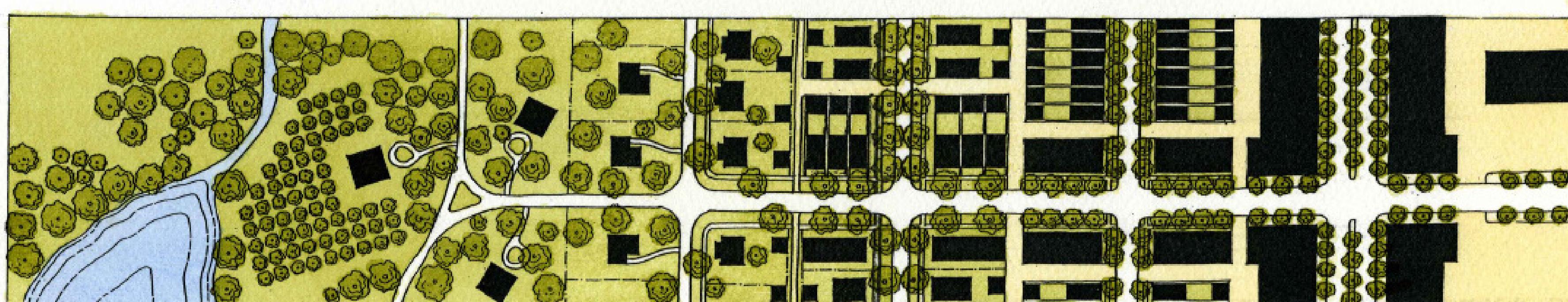
### T-4 - General Urban

- Mixed-use with res. focus
- Gridded roadways
- Taller buildings



### T-5 - Urban Center

- Highest density mix of uses
- Tight network of streets, wide sidewalks



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## What Is A Transect?

A transect is a tool within Planning used to showcase the changes between what characterizes one land type to the next, and the context involved between each area. Traditionally, a transect is broken down into six zones, titled T1 through T6. These zones range from natural zones (T1) to Urban Core Zones (T6).

Today, Athens-Clarke County has T1 through T5 zones, with the outskirts of the county being the natural area, and T5 being the downtown area. Much of the planning process is formed around these zones, with attention given to the context of the existing area. While areas can naturally become more urbanized over time, transects help planners transition areas into new zones without fundamentally changing the character.

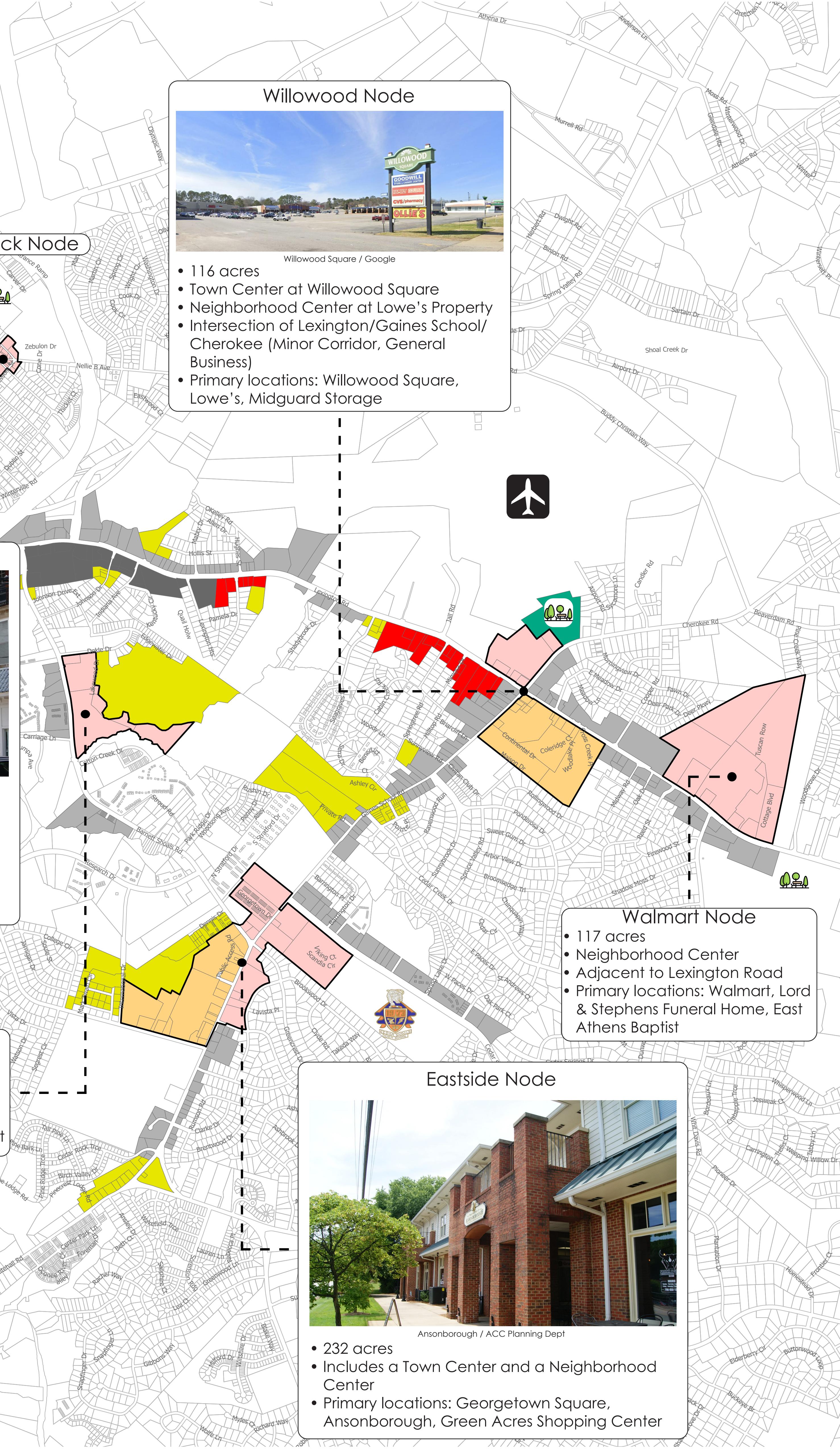
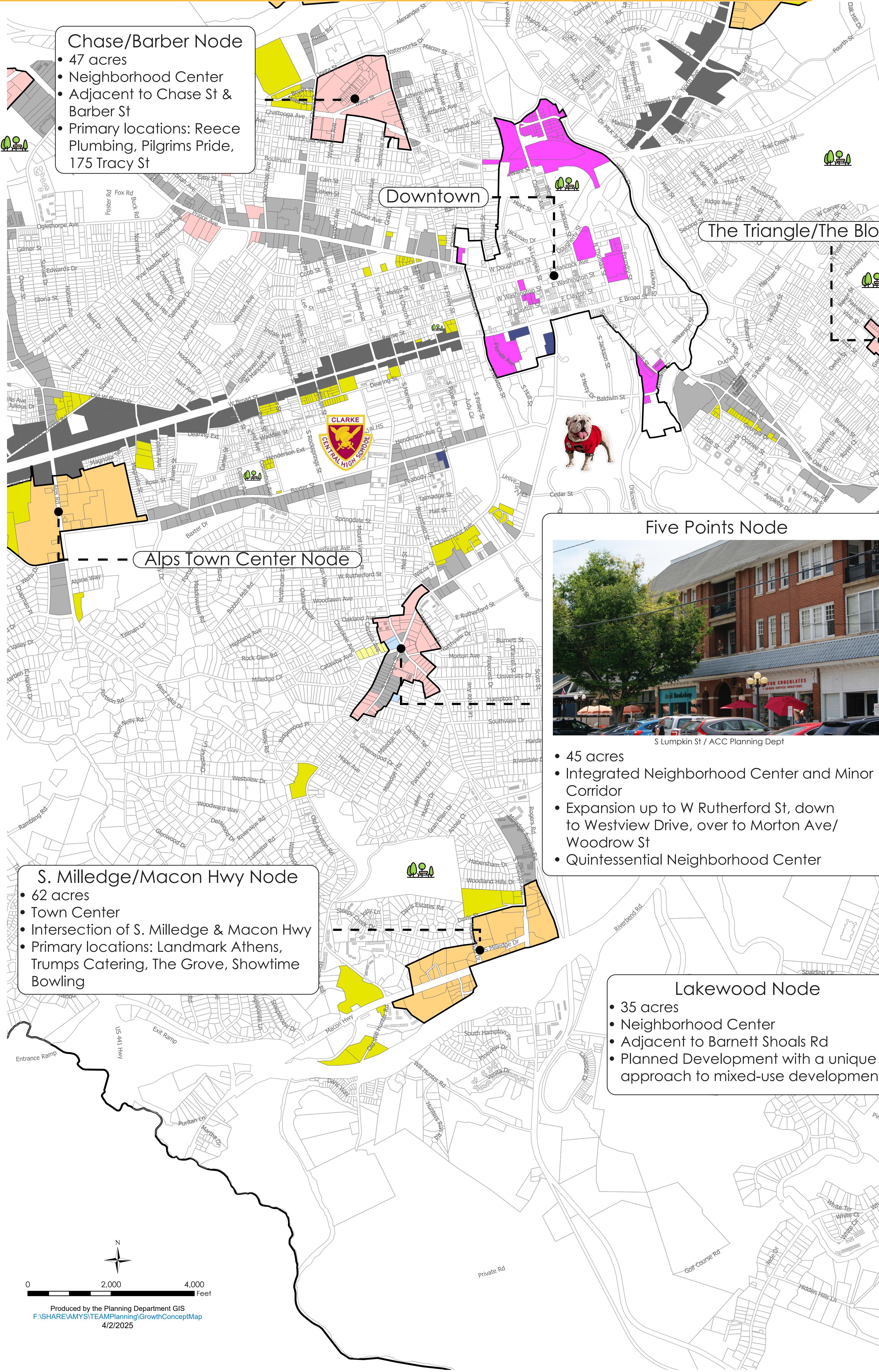
# Western Portion of ACC



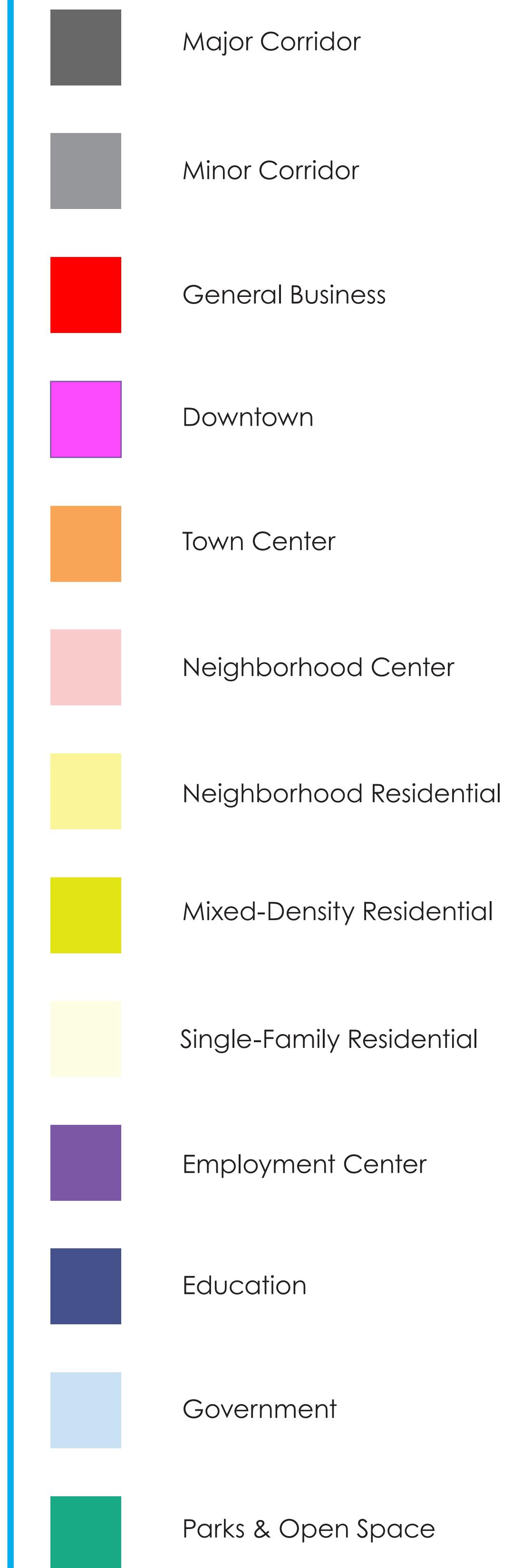
# Central/North Portion of ACC



# Eastern Portion of ACC



## Proposed Future Land Use Map Categories



Note: All colored-in parcels are properties in which the Future Land Use Steering Committee recommended changes.

# What's The Big Idea?

## Major Points of Future Land Use

### Growth Pressure

The market tells us that with ACC's near constant growth rate of 1%, the expectation is that 30,000+ new residents will join us by 2045



### Greater Variety In Housing

Having the flexibility to find a housing type that best suits each person's lifestyle, from purchasing to renting



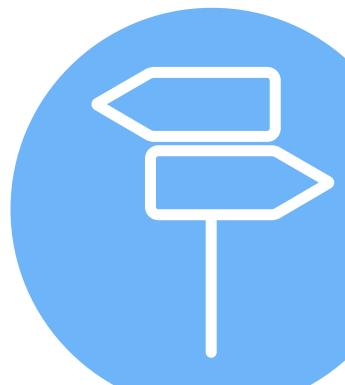
### Well-Planning And Maintained Infrastructure

The current infrastructure has the potential to handle growth, if done in a deliberate fashion. Maintaining our gravity-fed system means less costly surprises



### Centers and Corridors

Focusing on locations that are at the crossroads of corridors, and the corridors themselves maximizes the multi-modal opportunities and better uses existing systems when redevelopment occurs



## Why Do This?

If we plan properly, we can accommodate new residents in ways the community can absorb. This growth helps build value for the community

With an expanded housing market, new wealth creating occurs as well as opportunity to equity and generational equity while also expanding the tax base

ACC is able to provide a necessity without worry of long-term breaks in the various systems

Provides additional business opportunities, cultural uniqueness, and a sense of identity or place for business districts and neighborhoods throughout the county

## What Could Happen?

### Unfettered Development

Leads to unsustainable patterns, inconsistent connections, and unplanned developments that do not maximize infrastructure and strain municipal resources



### Stagnation

Must rely on a smaller variety of commercial and residential options, limiting ACC's ability to diversify. Budgets become harder to balance without relying on increases in some form of taxation



### Failing or Expanded Infrastructure

ACC will need to perform costly repairs when there is an unforeseen problem. Would need to expand the system beyond what we can afford



### Missed Opportunities

ACC will not have the ability to appropriately react to multi-faceted problems as they occur and will not have a stable base to operate many key necessities and amenities

