

# ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY CORRIDOR LAND USE PLANNING WORKSHOPS

**NOVEMBER 2007**

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Landscape Architecture • Historic Preservation • Planning • Environmental Assessment

675 Pulaski Street, Suite 1000 Athens, GA 30601

# THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS NOVEMBER 2007

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Planning Department is, as of this report, in the process of preparing a county-wide Comprehensive Plan. A significant part of the plan will deal with land use and future development. Citizen involvement has been a key component of the planning process, with a number of citizen led steering subcommittees submitting reports to ACC. ACC also desires to have citizen input in developing recommendations for land use and design associated with different corridor types within the county. A series of workshops were planned and held to focus on different types of corridors currently facing development pressure. The corridor types were based on the Corridor Management Program Strategy (see Illustration A). Each workshop addressed two corridors of the same type with the goal of developing recommendations applicable to similar corridors throughout the county. The recommendations will be provided to the Planning Commission as part of the Comprehensive Plan process.

### **1.2 Workshop Goals**

The specific goals of the workshops were to analyze and evaluate each of the corridors to identify:

- Appropriate future land uses,
- Appropriate new and infill design, and
- Planning strategies to achieve the recommended use and design scenarios

### **1.3 Workshop Format**

The workshops were held at The University of Georgia School of Environmental Design studios on Broad Street in downtown Athens. The workshop format was interactive and designed to encourage public participation. Each workshop began with an introduction, including an overview of the schedule for the day and how the workshops fit into the comprehensive plan process. The subject corridors were described and similar corridors were listed. Participants were encouraged to think not only about these specific corridors, but other similar corridors in Athens-Clarke County.

After the introduction, participants were divided into two groups, one for each of the subject corridors. (Attendees were allowed to choose which group to join.) The morning session focused on the character of the corridors, positive and negative attributes, modes of transportation used along the roadway, concerns about the future of the corridor as well as visioning how it should look in the future. A series of five “brainstorming” type questions were used to cover these subjects. Comments were recorded on large sheets of paper and with the participants help were categorized and summarized. At the end of the morning session the two groups were joined again for a brief summary of the comments and issues. The comments from each group were read and compared for similarities and differences.

The afternoon session focused on strategies and policies to help achieve the goals identified in the morning session. Depending on the number of participants (attendance decreased for the afternoon sessions) the two groups were sometimes combined into one. The goals of the afternoon session were generally more difficult for the participants to achieve. Group leaders used different techniques or “talking points” to encourage input. At the end of the afternoon session, the recommendations and/or visions were summarized with a final opportunity for input or comment.

(It should be noted that workshop participation included some input from Planning Commission and ACC Commission members.)

A sample agenda is included in Appendix D.

## 2.0 WORKSHOP SUMMARY

### 2.1 Residential Rural Corridors: June 2, 2007

#### “From Rural to Suburban: Residential Corridors in Single-Family & Rural Areas”

The first workshop focused on the following two residential roads: Barnett Shoals Road from Old Lexington Road to the Oconee County line and Cleveland Road from Meeler Lake to Fowler Mill Road. Both roads have a rural feel and several adjacent subdivisions that are evident to varying degrees. The residential density is more apparent on Barnett Shoals, which at this time appears to be under greater development pressure. Similar corridors in ACC include Tallassee Road, Old Lexington Road, and Jefferson River Road.

Approximately 20 participants signed up for the Barnett Shoals Road group and 10 for Cleveland Road. A summary of participant comments for each question follows. A full list of comments is included in Appendix A.

*Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you enjoy on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Residents along both roadways enjoyed the scenic qualities, natural beauty and rural character of these corridors. Barnett Shoals residents also noted a sense of community among many of the neighbors.

*Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you do not like on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Concerns and “dislikes” were focused primarily on the volume and speed of automobile traffic (congestion is more of a concern on Barnett Shoals than Cleveland Road). Increasing development pressure, including the density of development and “spec” houses were also major concerns. Some Barnett Shoals residents noted lack of coordination between ACC departments and were concerned about the possibility of spot zoning. Cleveland Road residents noted lack of coordination with the school board (and questioned the wisdom of Cleveland Road elementary school being located in such a low density area) and the lack of any alternative transportation.

*What mode of transportation do you currently use along the county’s rural-suburban corridors?*

Almost all transportation on both roads is automobile-based. Additionally there is recreational walking, jogging and biking, mostly in adjacent neighborhoods. Horses are occasionally ridden along the roads; a small number of participants were interested in small-scale, targeted service bus routes.

*What are your top two concerns about the county's residential rural-suburban corridors?*

The groups felt this question was similar to the second question and did not list any new items. (The intent of the question was to address concerns about the future of the corridor rather than its current conditions.)

*Provide two descriptors of what you would like the county's residential rural-suburban areas to look like in 20 years?*

The vision for the future as expressed by both groups aligned closely with their current "likes" along the corridors. They would generally like the corridors to remain as they are. The Barnett Shoals group would like to preserve the ACC greenbelt (the term generally used for Rural Areas as designated on the Future Land Use Map) and have permanent protected greenspace. They noted that future development should be consistent with the setback and character of existing development.

The afternoon session was focused on ways to achieve the above listed goals. It began with a discussion of appropriate and compatible land uses. Both groups felt that parks, particularly passive parks, were a compatible use as well as small scale, family owned agriculture (no poultry or swine production). The Cleveland Road group thought that institutional use could be appropriate. The Barnett Shoals group also supported artist's studios, cottage industries, and bed and breakfasts.

In general, both groups had less to suggest for specific tools and strategies that would achieve these goals, however they did provide some general policy and process recommendations. These included:

- Ability for citizens to have more input to developers
- Policing/enforcement of existing ordinances and regulations
- A process for neighborhood planning
- Require neighborhood interconnections (pedestrian and bike)
- Incentives for conservation versus agriculture use
- Encouraging regional planning between adjacent counties and at the state level

The group facilitators suggested some specific tools, and with input from the groups, the following general recommendations were developed:

- Create a county scenic byway designation. This might include limits on road width, setback requirements and vegetative buffers with native species.
- Use SPLOST funds as a resource to acquire public greenspace and/or scenic easements.
- Create a rural residential character area as a potential new zoning district. This would be a modified version of the conservation subdivision with a 1 unit per 5 acre minimum as well as a tree canopy requirement. (See illustration on following page.)

Other ideas included identification and protection of wildlife corridors, limits on utility expansion, protection of water resources, and creation of a rural alliance or advocacy group.



*Potential Rural Residential Character Area - Transition Between AR and RS Zoning*

## 2.2 Multi-Use Corridors: July 14, 2007

### “Transitional Corridors: Diverse Uses Along Athens-Clarke County’s Gateways”

The second workshop focused on multi-use roadways that have a diversity of land uses, serve as gateways to Athens-Clarke County, and also happen to be state or US highways. The selected corridors are currently under development pressure, with active or pending projects that will increase the density of what have traditionally been rural roadways.

The first corridor is Jefferson Road (SR 129) from the Athens Loop to the Jackson County line. Part of the highway has recently been widened from two lanes to four. The second study area was broadened to include an area of pending development in the northeast quadrant of Highway 29 North and Highway 72. The study area was defined as these two roads from Calhoun Drive to Harve Mathis Road. Similar corridors include Atlanta Highway, Lexington Road, and Commerce Road.

Approximately 15 participants signed up for the Jefferson Road group and 10 for Highway 29N/72.

*Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you enjoy on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Both groups liked the “open” character of the corridors with large undeveloped parcels and rural scenery. The Jefferson Road group also liked the diversity of uses, the limited number of billboards and large signage, the adjacent old Jefferson Road (with significant pedestrian and bicycle use), and the lack of “destination” shopping. The Highways 29N/72 group liked the easy-to-travel, safe roadways with new medians and the intersection of the two corridors that serves as a gateway. They also felt there were good opportunities for quality development to provide more convenient services to the area.

*Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you do not like on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Commonalities in dislikes related to visual aspects such as “clutter” and rundown areas along the roadway. The Jefferson Road group had a long list of additional items including:

- lack of transportation options (too car oriented)
- fragmented uses/disconnect between types of uses
- grain elevators/tanks (visual appearance)
- the scale of the new road construction/widening
- safety issues including at-grade train crossings and fuel trucks trying to negotiate the crossings, speed in commercial/residential areas, no safe crossing points for pedestrians, deep and steep roadside ditch, too many driveway/curb cuts, and the high speed limit with lots of traffic lights
- pedestrian unfriendly, few amenities
- lack of neighborhood center grocery stores / restaurants
- unshaded concrete
- night lights/glare from businesses

The Highways 29N/72 group had a short list including:

- storm drainage problems
- rush hour traffic congestion
- litter

*What mode of transportation do you currently use along the county’s transitional gateway corridors?*

Automobiles are by far the primary transportation use for both corridors. The group noted that Athens Transit serves Athens Technical College and parts of Jefferson Road, but was not used by participants. Recreational biking and walking was noted along Jefferson Road (mostly Old Jefferson Road). It was also noted that safety is a big issue in crossing the Jefferson Road bridge at the loop, making bicycle/pedestrian continuity with Prince Avenue very difficult.

*What are your top two concerns about the county's transitional gateway corridors?*

The concerns for each group were somewhat different and are noted as follows:

Jefferson Road:

- future developments and their impact on visual quality; need to preserve scenic beauty
- lack of sidewalks, pedestrian and bike facilities
- lack of visual cues to reinforce lower speeds appropriate for an urban corridor (transition from rural highway to urban)

Highways 29N/72:

- infrastructure (sewer – what is being provided to accommodate new development?)
- lack of development (other counties are providing resources)
- increasing property taxes for existing residents when more commercial development occurs
- concerns about government services, primarily fire (this was before the new fire station opened on Danielsville Road)

*Two descriptors of what you would like the county's transitional gateway corridors to look like in 20 years?*

Both groups would like to see well-planned and designed quality development occur. (Strip mall development is not desired by most participants). The Jefferson group wanted a neighborhood center that was small and local business based with community services. They also liked the idea of a wide right-of-way with tree lined sidewalks set back from the road. The Highway 29N/72 group felt that new residential development should serve a range of income levels.

As a way to organize the afternoon discussion, the groups were asked to provide more detail about the desirable characteristics for three of the themes from the morning session: neighborhood centers, gateways, and roadway or corridor appearance.

*Neighborhood Center characteristics:*

- not automobile-only; easily accessible to pedestrians and bikes and buses/public transportation
- safe pedestrian access between uses at the center
- mix of materials, appropriate scale and proportion, "sense of place"
- internal provision for storm water
- reduce parking space ratio requirements / provision for community space
- parking lot trees/ street trees / increase canopy / save old trees
- mixed uses; no gas stations
- green space / public space/ civic use / community information

*Gateway characteristics:*

(several of the ideas are based on the idea of a linear gateway rather than a fixed location)

- improve the visual quality of the interchange with the bypass
- street trees along road to “soften road”
- ACC entry signs
- “signature” planting, low maintenance
- location corresponds to reduction in speed – roadway design provides visual clues

*Roadway/Corridor characteristics:*

- bikeways separate from road where feasible – but not just parallel; vegetated buffer; consider alternate locations for pedestrian/bike trails
- street trees
- incentives for property owners to participate in corridor improvement
- light pollution limits
- planted medians for pedestrian refuge
- viewshed protection using tools such as scenic easements / property acquisition / overlay district
- explore alternate access or interconnectivity for some uses to reduce curb cuts for safety

## **2.3 Urban Residential Corridors: August 18, 2007 “The Future of our Traditional Neighborhoods”**

The third workshop focus areas included several blocks of existing in-town neighborhoods (as opposed to linear corridors) in order to better address the range of issues associated with existing traditional neighborhoods.

The first study area, traditional east Athens, was bounded by First Street, Moreland Avenue, East Broad Street and North Peter Street. The second area, Hancock corridor, boundaries were The Plaza, Hill Street, North Finley Street and West Broad Street.

*Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you enjoy on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Both groups were positive about the presence of many mature trees in their neighborhoods, walkable sidewalks, the historic character of many of the houses, and their neighbors. The latter includes the number of long time residents (Hancock corridor) and the diversity (age, race, and income) of the neighborhood (East Athens).

In addition, the East Athens group noted:

- parks and recreational facilities
- historic area
- traffic islands (green space)
- location ( close to downtown)
- availability of transit
- revitalization is taking place

- established neighborhood schools and libraries and churches
- infill development that is of appropriate scale and character

Additional items listed by the Hancock group included:

- quiet setting
- affordable homes
- sense of safety

*Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you do not like on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Both groups had dislikes associated with new infill development that is occurring in their neighborhoods, including the density of new development, its scale, and the resulting lack of compatibility with existing housing stock. Residents also noted the presence of litter, parking in front yards, a lot of cars parking on very narrow streets and an increasing number of renters in their neighborhoods.

Other current dislikes expressed by each group are noted below.

East Athens:

- lack of affordable housing
- unkept lots/vacant houses
- aging infrastructure: roads, curbs, storm water, sidewalks
- lack of enforcement
- traffic management problems
- developers tearing down small homes and building bigger ones
- crime
- gentrification
- lack of protection for existing residents
- increased taxes
- unequal distribution of ACC funds, trees and maintenance

Hancock area:

- too much thru traffic on local roads in neighborhoods
- lack of commerce & services that serve the neighborhoods (CN is too broad)
- losing sense of community
- commercial development that is not dense and mixed use

*What mode of transportation do you currently use?*

Automobiles, bicycles, walking, taxis, and public transit were all used.

*What are your top two concerns about the county's intown traditional neighborhoods?*

Concerns for the future of each neighborhood were related to current issues and dislikes, including high-priced new infill houses, increasing property taxes and gentrification with no

protections for long-term residents. Associated issues were potential loss of the sense of community and the loss of historic structures.

*Two descriptors of what you would like the county's intown traditional neighborhoods to look like in 20 years?*

There was a long list of responses to this question, particularly from the Hancock corridor group (see Appendix C). In general, both groups were interested in having all of the positive features of their neighborhoods maintained, preserved, and potentially improved in the future. They would like to see the character of the neighborhoods remain intact. They were also interested in the addition of local businesses to serve these communities.

The afternoon session started with a discussion of two issues based on the morning's discussion topics. The first centered on infill housing. What characteristics should infill have in order to fit with the existing neighborhoods? The comments centered on scale and size of new development. Lots sizes should be similar to existing historic lots and housing of a similar scale that is proportional to the lot. Materials and style should also be compatible with the existing houses. In addition, parking facilities should not dominate the lots; their scale and location should fit in with neighborhood character.

The groups discussed potential land uses that would be welcome additions to their neighborhood. There was interest in commercial, community stores, with Five Points serving as an example, though on a smaller scale. Participants felt that locally owned businesses were appropriate, national franchises were not. A list of phrases that describe the compatible land uses is in Appendix C.

The final part of the session focused on tools and planning strategies for intown neighborhoods. The following possibilities were discussed with input from ACC staff and others knowledgeable about these techniques.

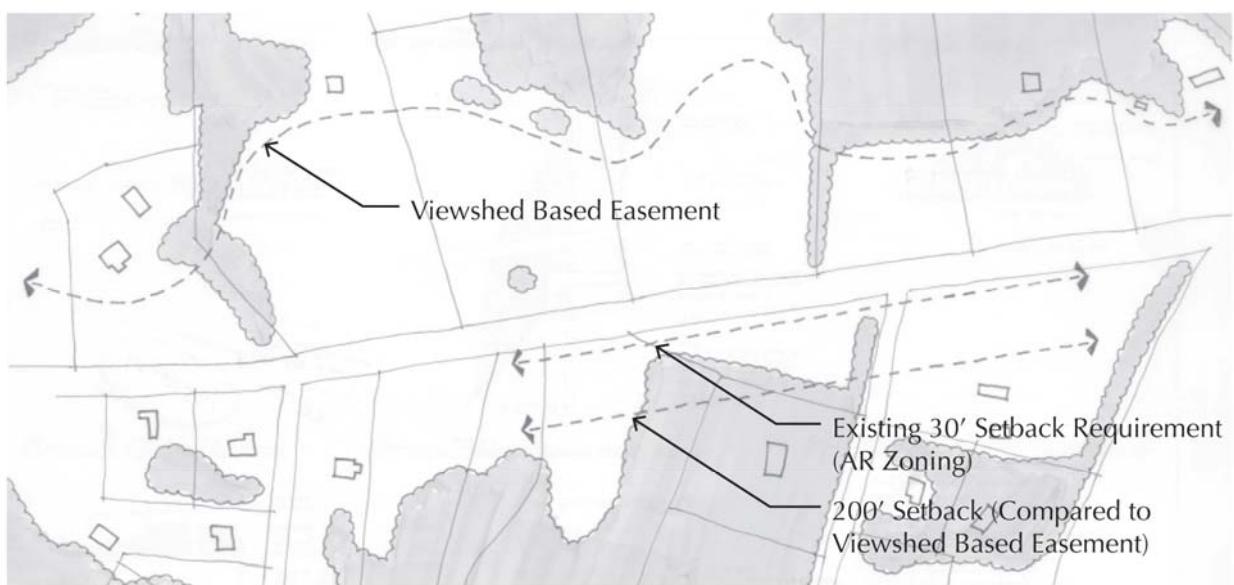
- Overlay districts i.e.; Raleigh, N.C.
  - conservation overlay as an example; most likely to be implemented if it is a neighborhood led initiative; does not limit or regulate uses
- Local Historic District
  - tax freeze option; design review process for home improvements
- TAD ( Tax Allocation District – to fund infrastructure)
- No interest loans for elderly homeowners
- Property tax relief
  - elderly homeownership tax rate freeze
- Utilize existing organizations to communicate with established neighborhoods i.e.; churches, East Athens Development Corporation
  - door to door; neighborhood preferable as meeting location
- Alternative tools for input
  - maps; questionnaires
- Zoning application/rezoning meetings at time that neighborhood can attend
- Effective zoning-change notification for neighborhoods

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided as potential means to achieve the vision of the workshop participants for corridors within ACC. Potential tools and strategies for implementing these are also listed.

#### **Maintain greenspace, agricultural and pastoral viewsheds in rural and rural residential character areas**

1. Establish a county scenic byway designation with associated regulatory and management guidelines. To be most effective, regulations should be viewshed based and not based on a static setback dimension. (See illustration below.)
2. Establish scenic easements on designated scenic corridors. This would lower tax assessments to property owners for the placement of an easement with development restrictions on part of their property.
3. Explore ACC direct purchase of land to maintain scenic viewsheds. (This could serve as an alternate or complementary approach to scenic easements.)
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of front setback requirements for primary rural corridors in maintaining a primarily undeveloped viewshed. (AR zoning allows a 30 foot front setback. A minimum of 100 feet would be more in keeping with rural character.)



*Viewshed-Based Easement Compared to Specific Setback Distances*

**Maintain 2-lane/existing road width for primary rural corridors**

1. Coordinate with Transportation and Public Works and review Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study for projects that would widen roads designated as rural corridors. Evaluate the benefits of maintaining a 2 lane road.
2. Proceed with intersection improvements required for safety. Accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle safety should be a major consideration in improvement plans.

**Protect ownership by long term residents and the character of traditional intown residential neighborhoods**

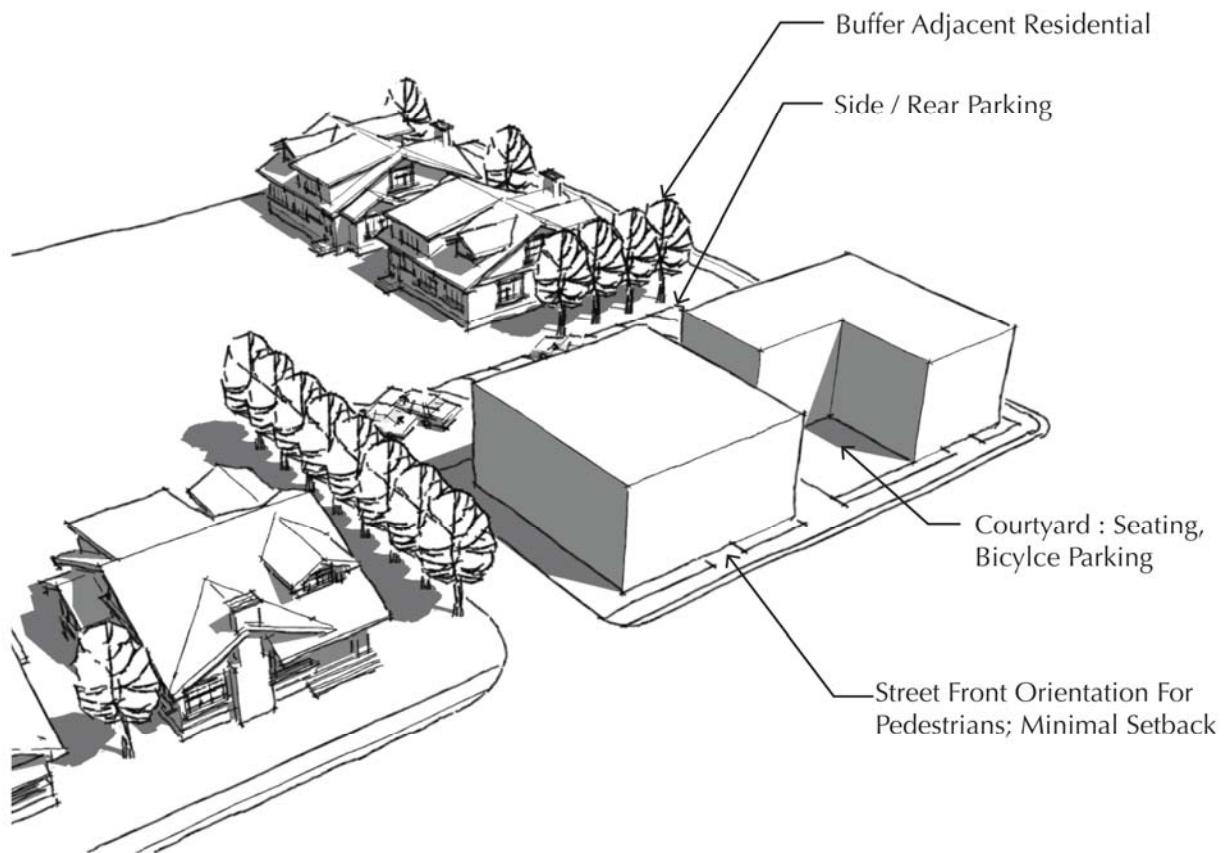
1. Encourage senior citizens to take advantage of existing tax benefits with an informational/educational program. Consider any potential local tax options that may benefit seniors.
2. Establish an overlay district to promote compatible architecture and design. The requirements should address size and scale of new construction as well as location and extent of parking areas.
3. Consider historic district designation (it was noted that regulations may be challenging for some residents to negotiate).

**Implement roadway improvement projects/streetscape projects with bicycle lanes, accessible sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings, and street tree plantings**

1. Use guidelines for project design as found in the Corridor Program Management Strategy Plan.
2. Encourage additional funding for projects through the Mayor and Commission; funding for State routes is dependent upon the Georgia Department of Transportation.

## Support development of neighborhood-oriented commercial services in established traditional residential areas

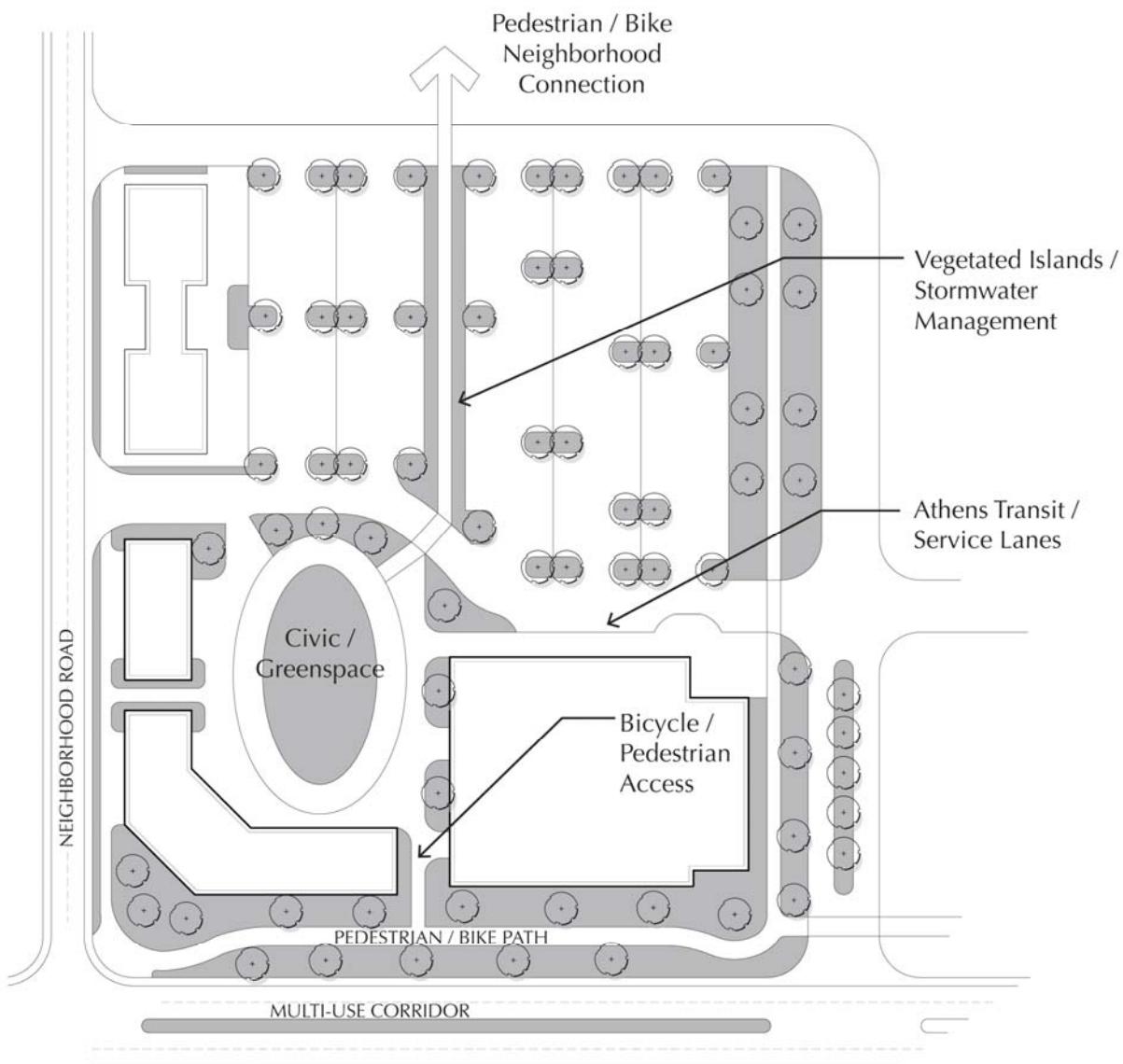
1. Designate appropriate areas on the Recommended Character Areas plan and the Growth Concept Map as part of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Establish an overlay district with appropriate requirements for neighborhood commercial development.
3. Evaluate the zoning ordinance requirements for possible modification to support neighborhood-oriented commercial. (In general the current C-N category corresponds to neighborhood interest in commercial development, though revising maximum building height of 65 feet to 40 feet would keep structures at more of a neighborhood scale. Similarly, minimum landscape requirement of 25% may be difficult to achieve with smaller lots and could be revised to 15% or less. On-site parking requirements should be minimal to encourage bicycle/pedestrian access.)



## Neighborhood Commercial Services - Suggested Characteristics

**Encourage development of neighborhood centers with convenient pedestrian and bicycle access; sensitivity to appearance and adjacent neighborhood desires including extensive tree canopy, “dark sky” lighting, and ecological stormwater management**

1. Designated areas on the Recommended Character Areas plan and the Growth Concept Map as part of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Establish overlay district with requirements for neighborhood center development.
3. Evaluate potential zoning ordinance modifications to support neighborhood center development with appropriate development characteristics. (See illustration below.)

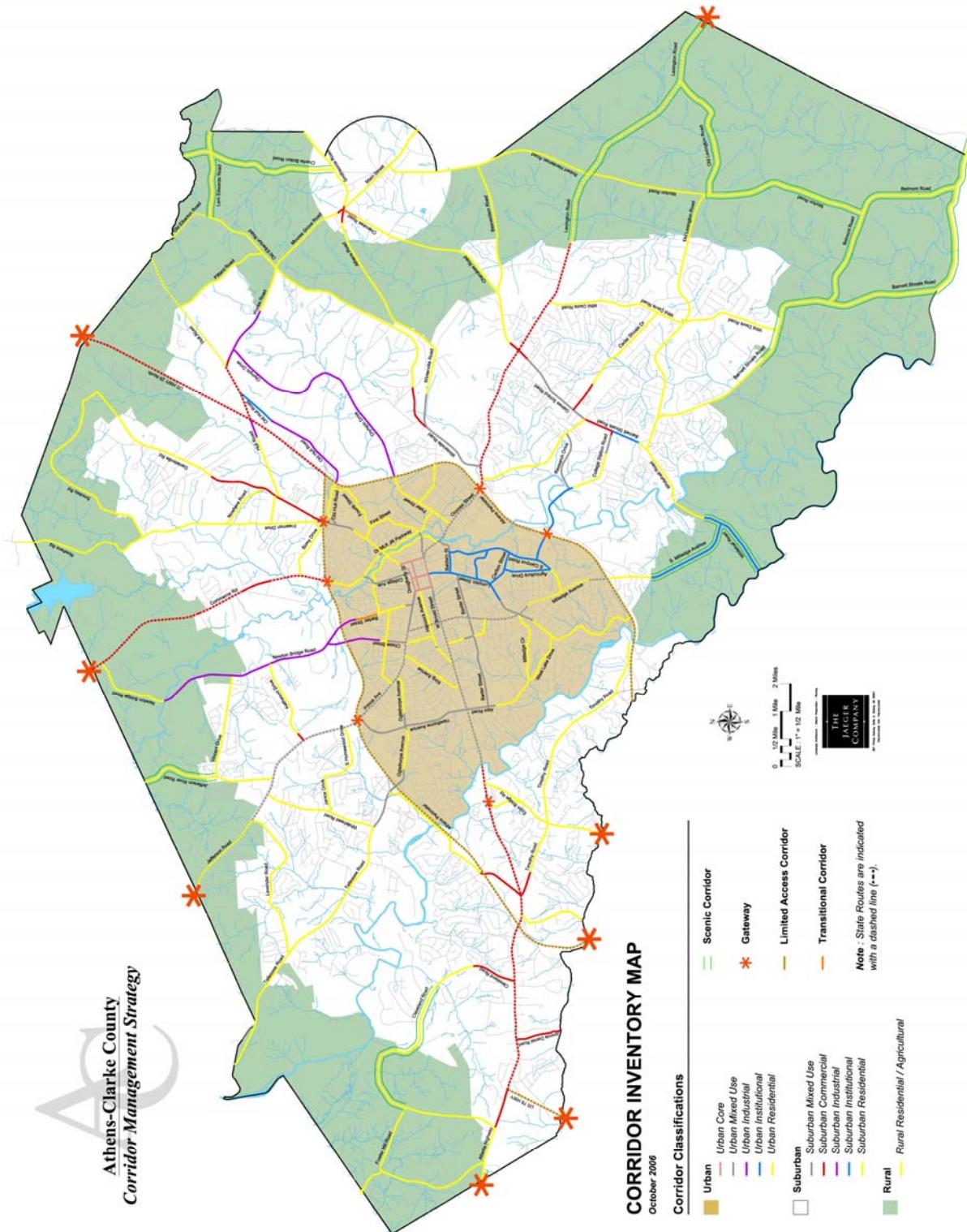


*Neighborhood Center – Suggested Characteristics*

Some of the residents expressed concern with the level and quality of communication with the ACC government and enforcement of existing regulations and ordinances. These are beyond the scope of this report's recommendations, which are focused on land use, corridor character and design. There were positive comments from many participants about the value of the workshops and the opportunity to interact with residents from other parts of town as well as various ACC elected and appointed officials.

Many people find participation in informal meetings, such as these workshops, to be easier and less intimidating than the opportunities for public input offered at regular Planning Commission or Mayor and Commission meetings. The extent of participation in both these workshops and the overall comprehensive plan process speak well of the interest and commitment of local citizens to the future of Athens-Clarke County.

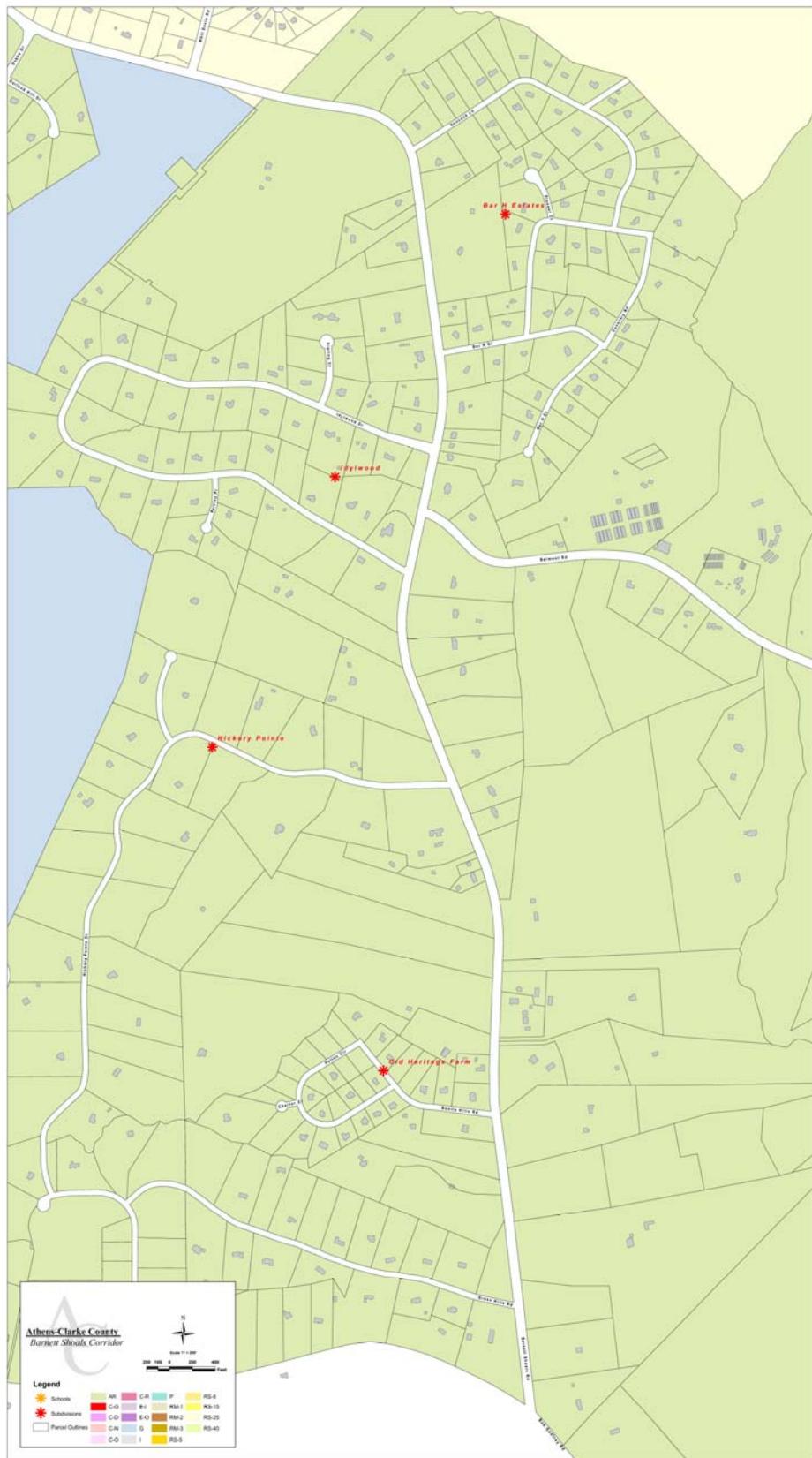
## ILLUSTRATION A Corridor Inventory Map



**ILLUSTRATION B**  
**June 2nd Workshop**  
**Barnett Shoals Corridor – Part I**



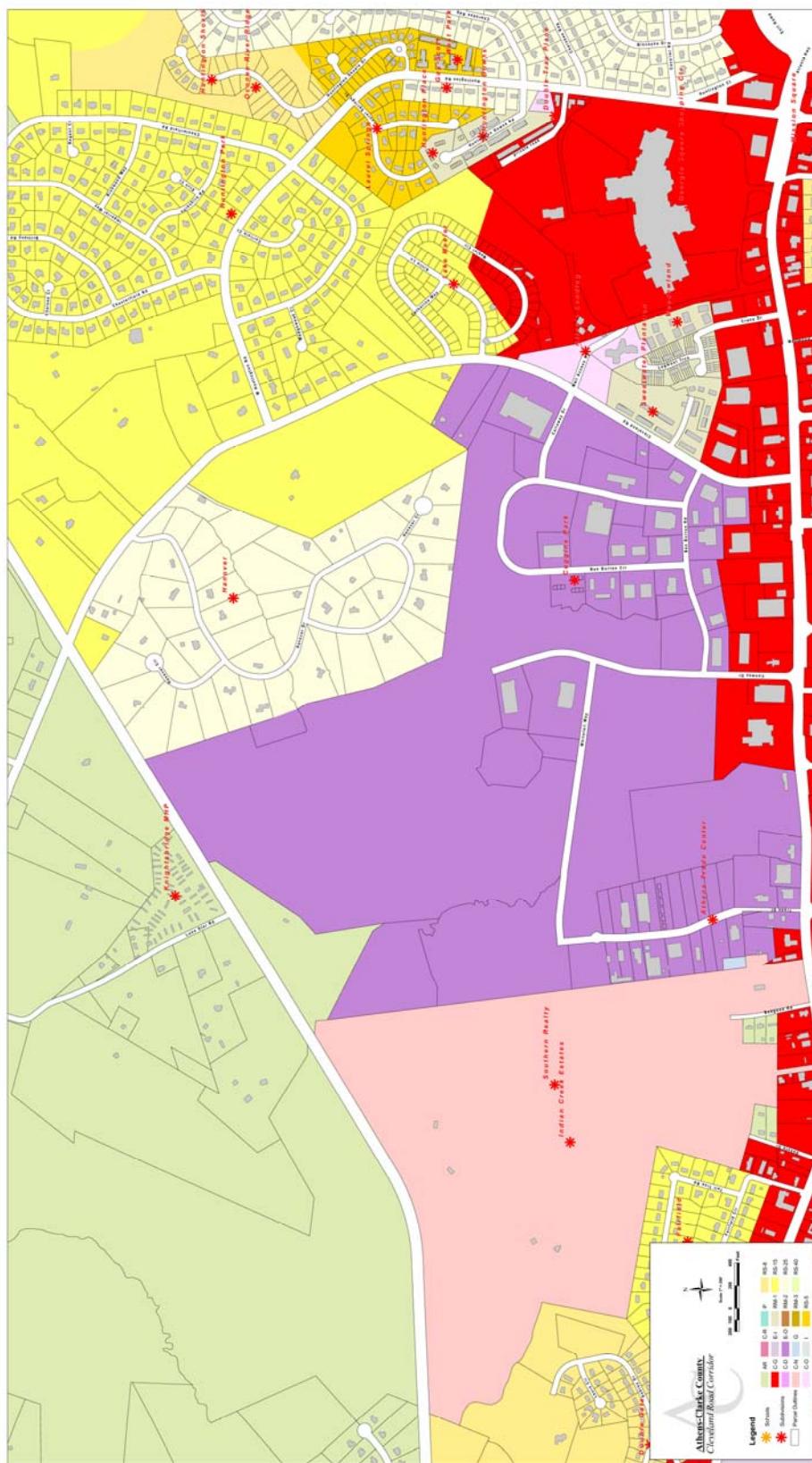
**ILLUSTRATION C**  
**June 2nd Workshop**  
**Barnett Shoals Corridor – Part II**



## **ILLUSTRATION D**

### **June 2nd Workshop**

### **Cleveland Road Corridor – Part I**

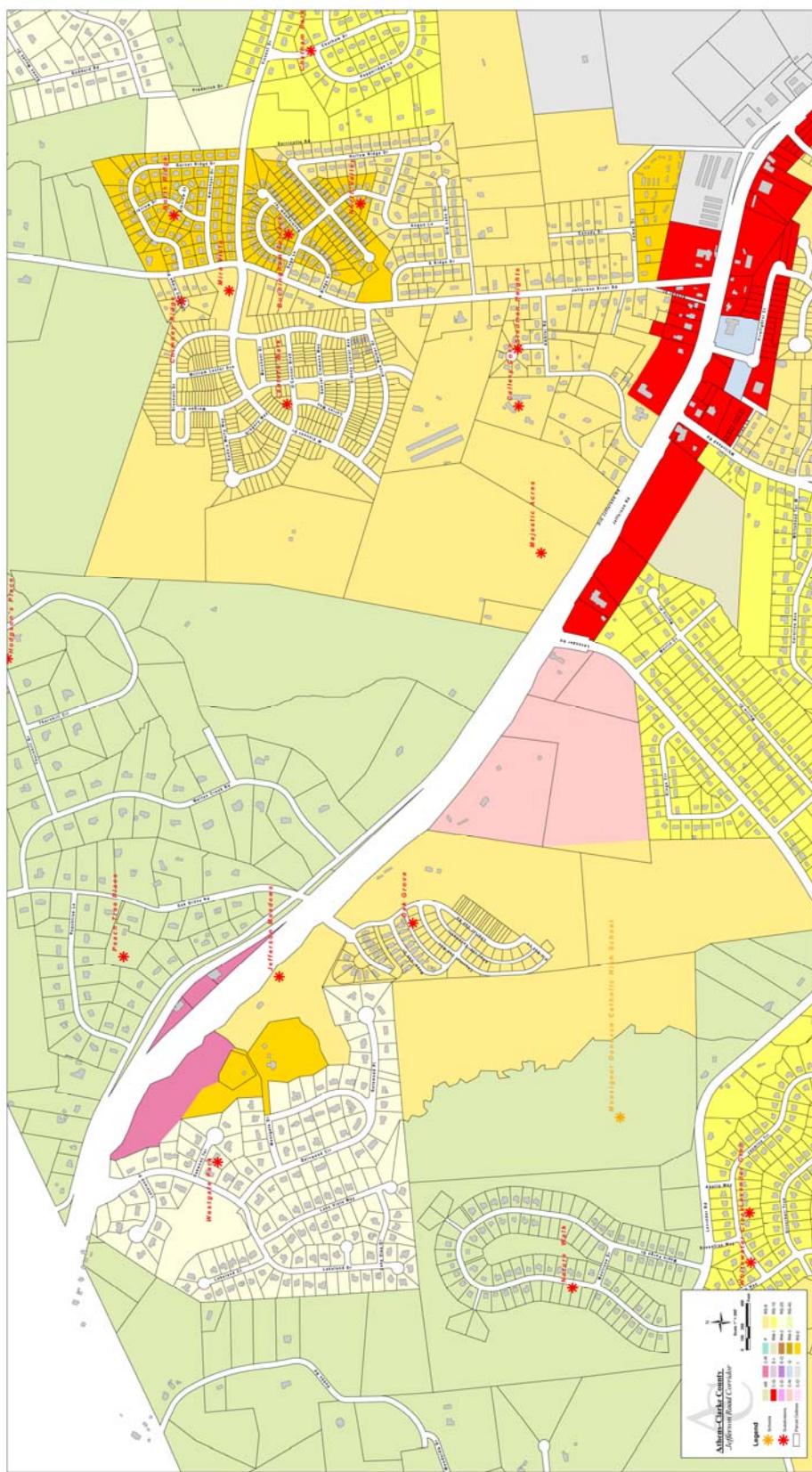


## **ILLUSTRATION E**

### **June 2nd Workshop**

### **Cleveland Road Corridor – Part II**

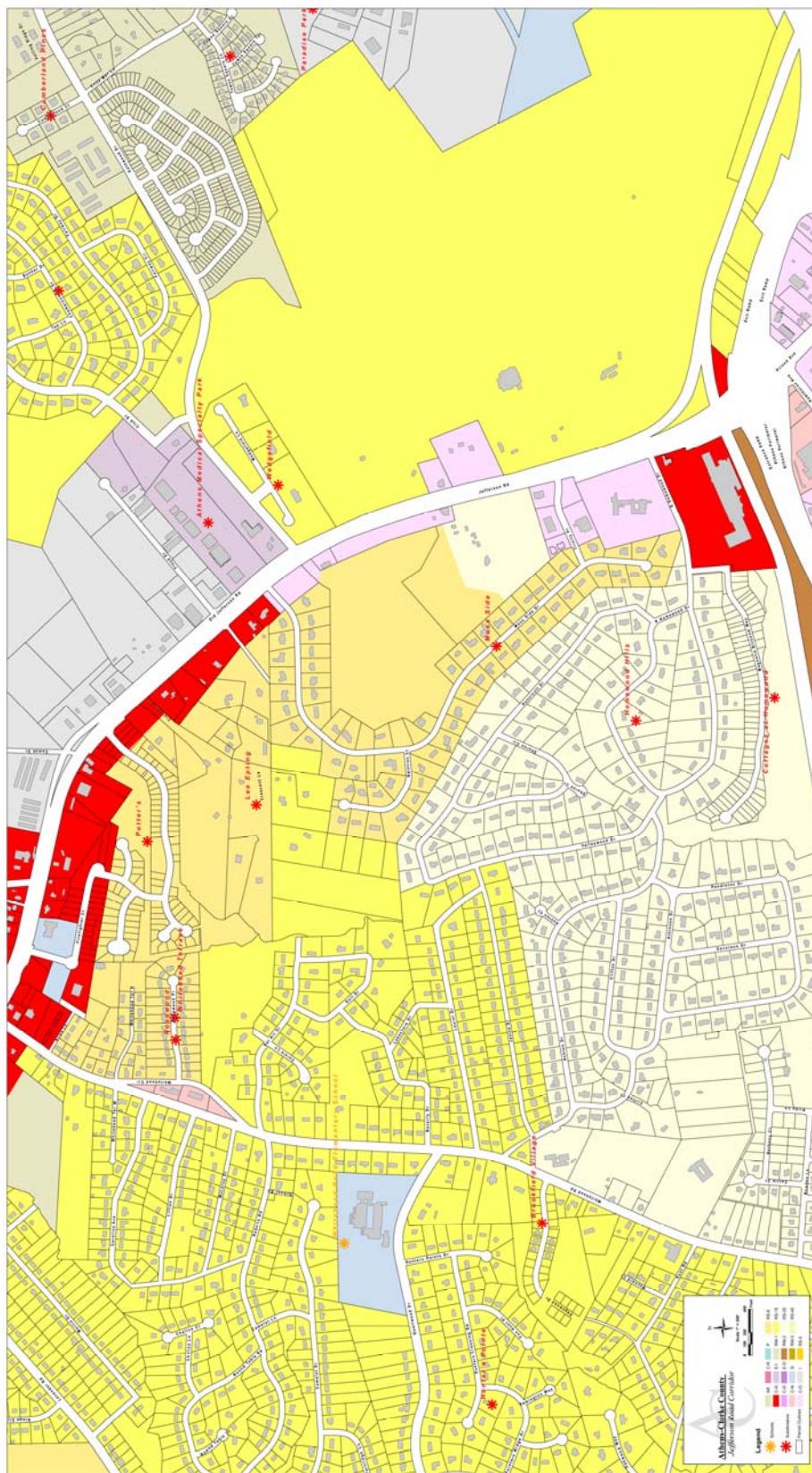
**ILLUSTRATION F**  
**July 14th Workshop**  
**Jefferson Road Corridor – Part I**



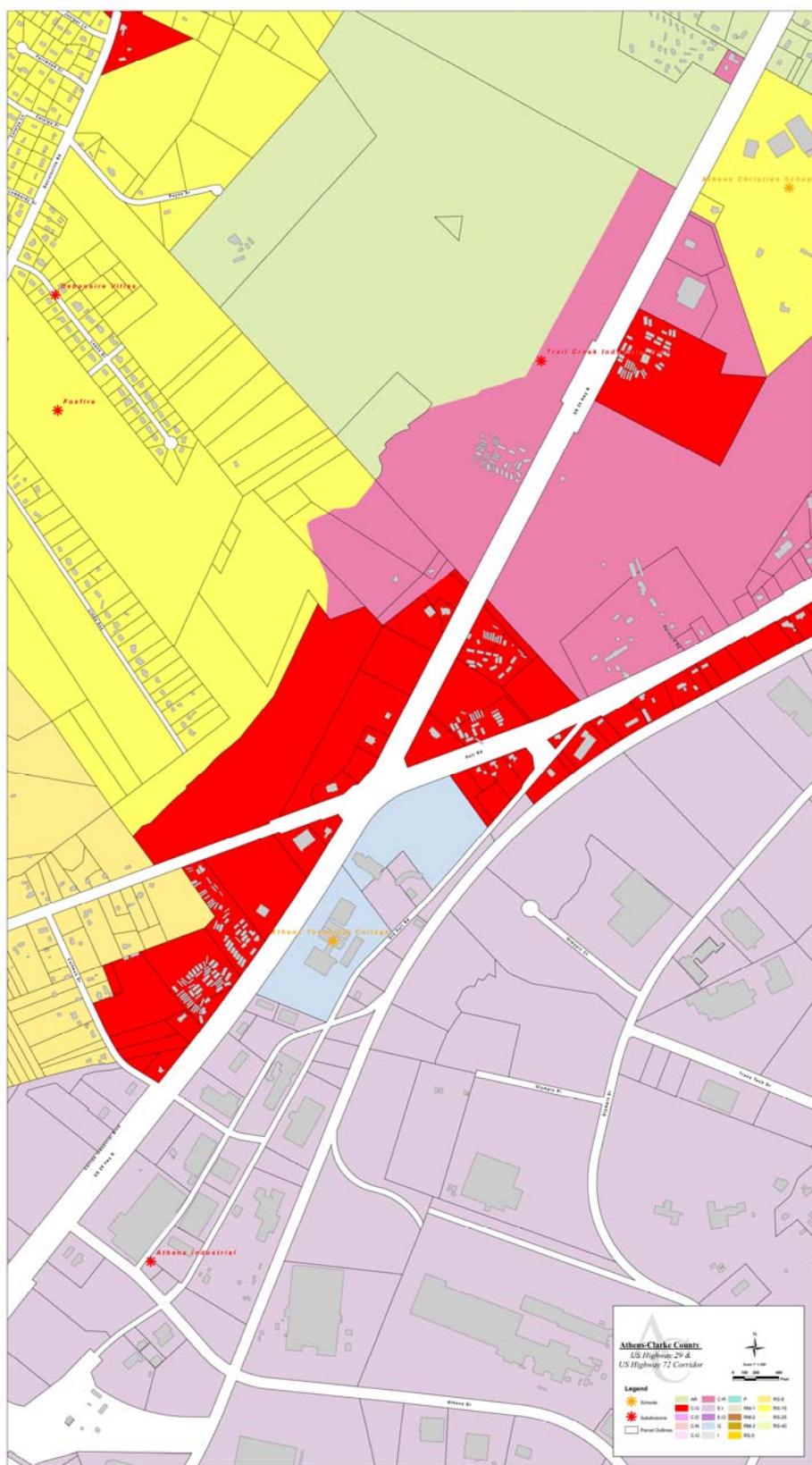
## **ILLUSTRATION G**

### **July 14th Workshop**

### **Jefferson Road Corridor – Part II**



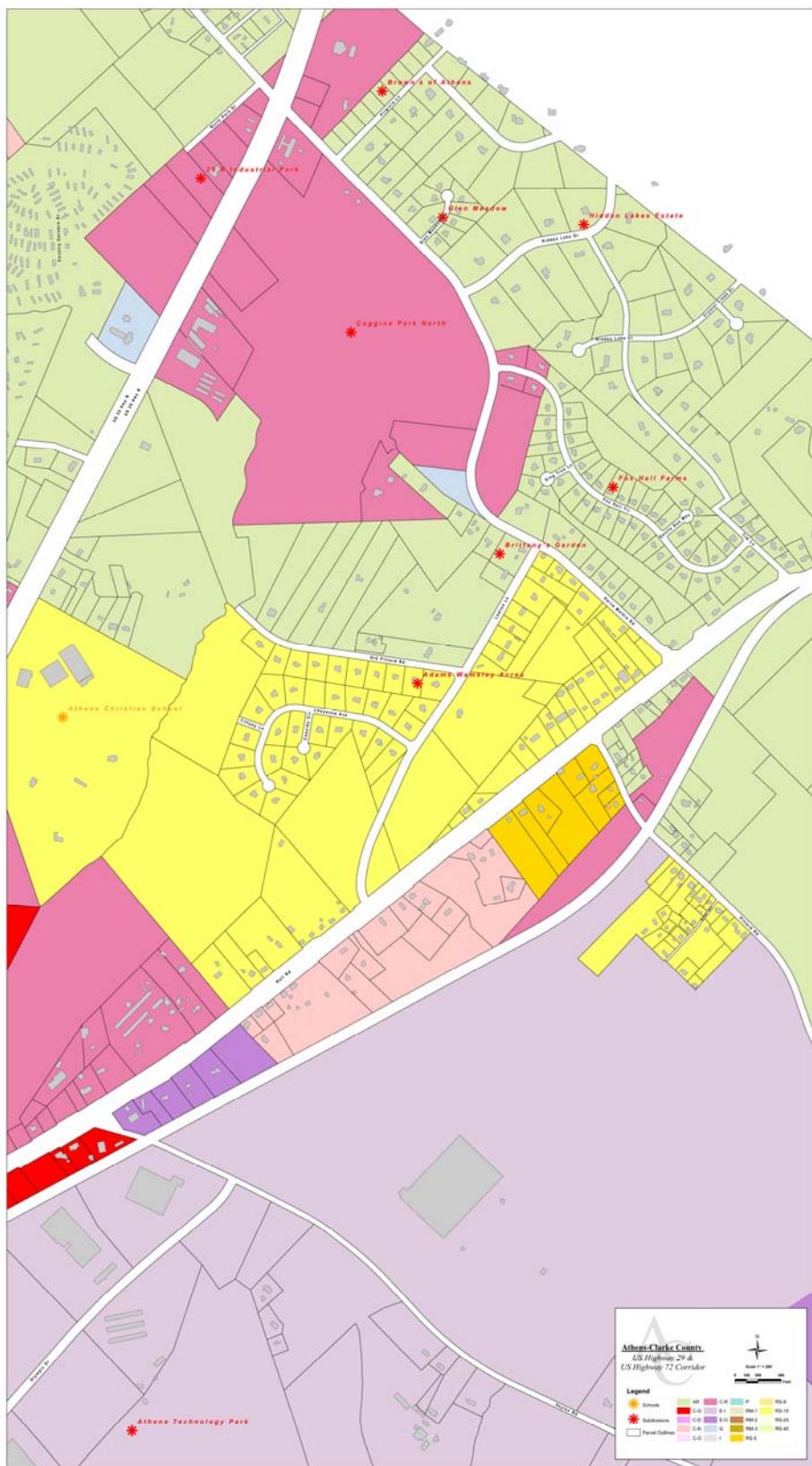
**ILLUSTRATION H**  
**July 14th Workshop**  
**Highway 29 Corridor – Part I**



## **ILLUSTRATION I**

### **July 14th Workshop**

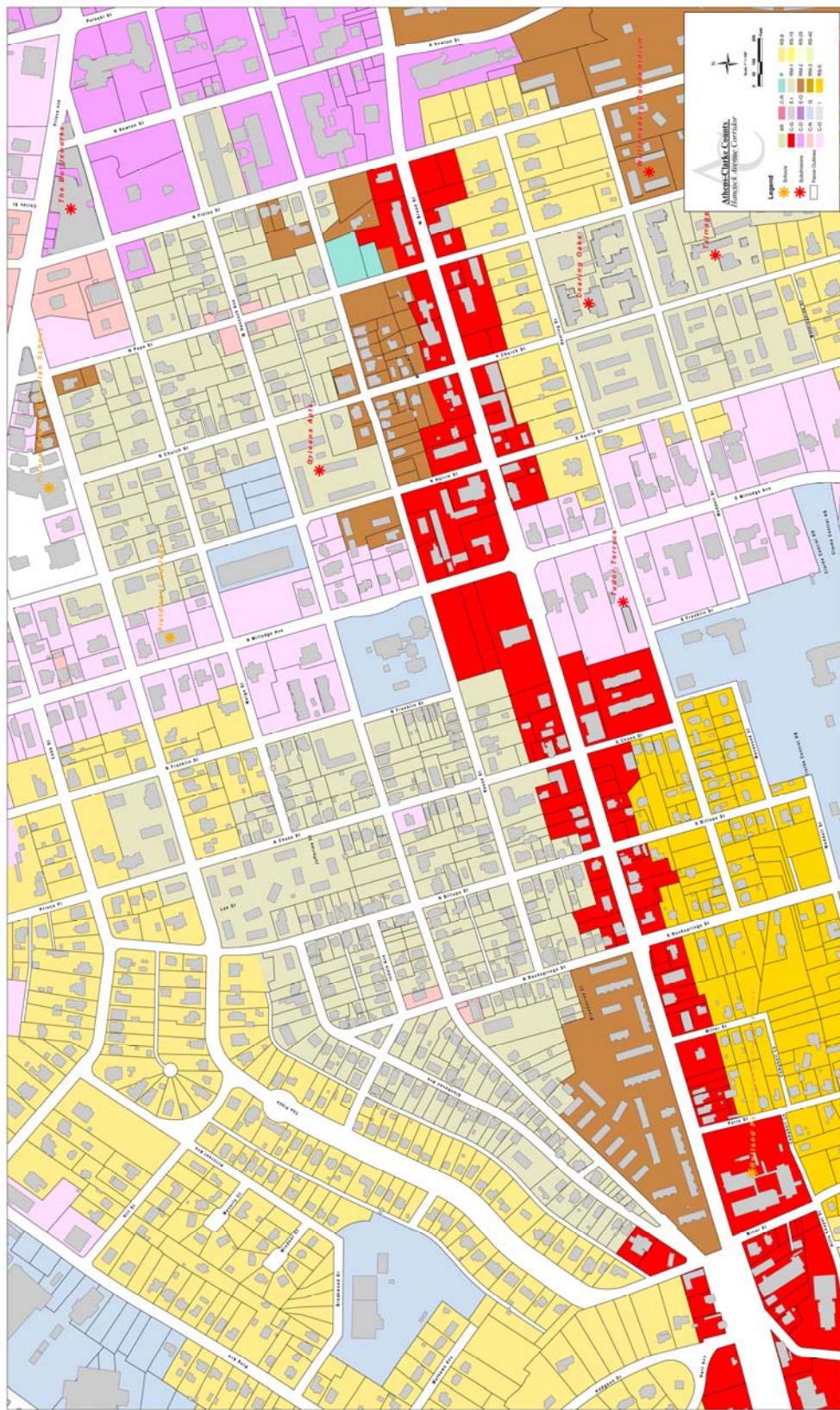
### **Highway 29 Corridor – Part II**



## ILLUSTRATION J

### August 18th Workshop

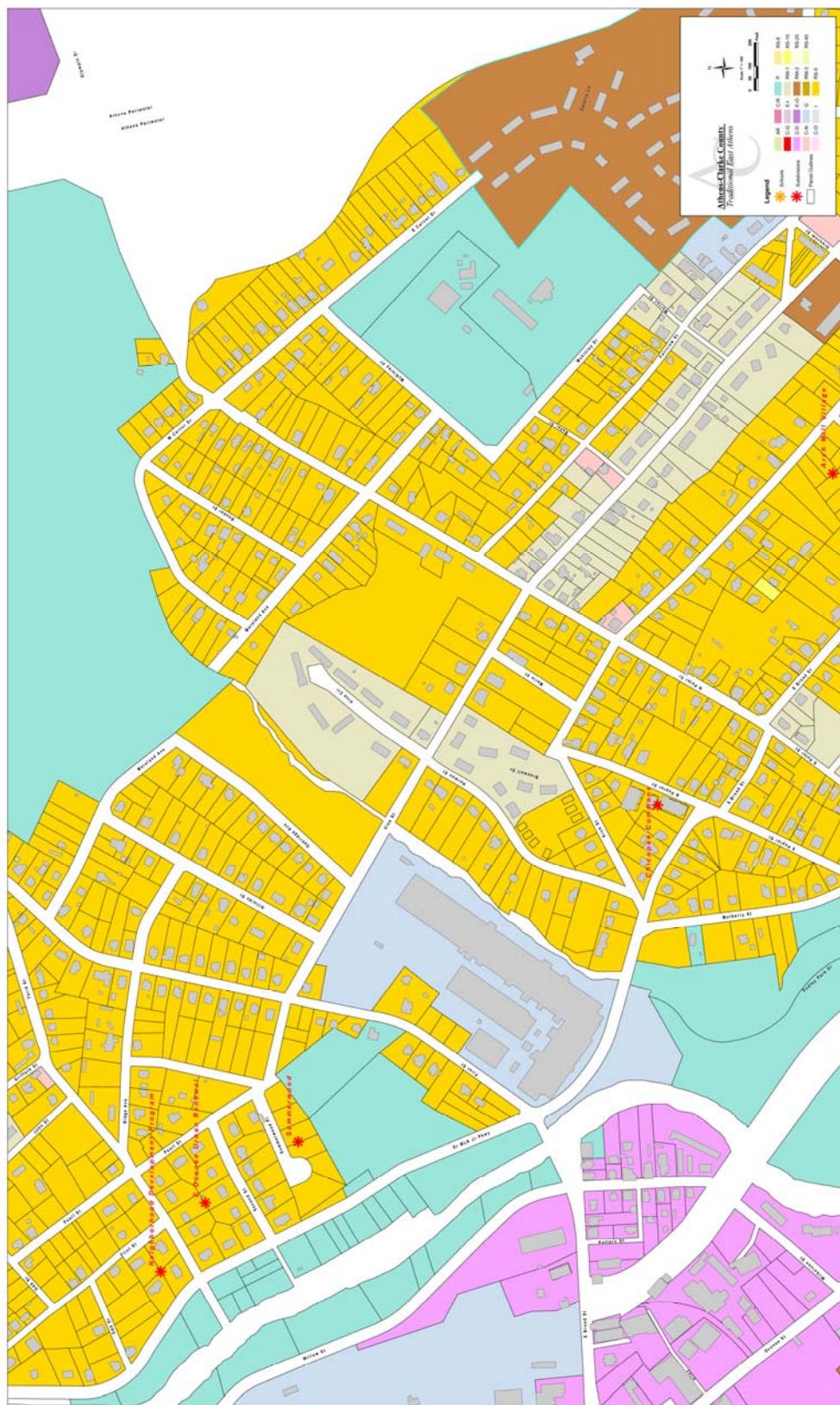
### Hancock Avenue Corridor



## **ILLUSTRATION K**

### **August 18th Workshop**

### **Traditional East Athens**





*Barnett Shoals Road*



*Cleveland Road*



*Jefferson Highway*



*Highways 29N and 72*



*East Athens*



*Hancock Area*

## **ILLUSTRATION L** **Corridor Character Photographs**

## APPENDIX A

### June 2nd Workshop

### From Rural to Suburban: Residential Corridors in Single-Family & Rural Areas

1. *Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you enjoy on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

#### Barnett Shoals:

- Unspoiled
- Trees
- Vistas
- Rural
- Peaceful
- Clean
- Sense of history
- Sense of place
- Pastures
- Horses
- Dark / unlit
- Low density
- Quality of life
- Individuality
- Uncluttered
- Primitive
- Cared for
- Escape
- Narrow road width
- Sense of community
- Wildlife
- Quiet
- Serene
- Byway
- Safe
- Walkable
- Bikeable
- Sounds at night
  - Cicadas
  - Frogs
  - Whippoorwills
- Relief
- Natural features and ecology
- Tailored

#### Cleveland Road:

- Natural beauty
  - Streams

- o Pasture
- o Vistas
- o Wildlife
- o Woodland
- Scenic
- Convenient access
- Successful transportation
- Curvilinear road alignment
- Not a shortcut

2. *Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you do not like on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

Barnett Shoals:

- Congestion
- Recent development
- Spec houses
- Traffic speed
- Packs of bikes at no passing zones
- Absence of alternate transportation routes
- Lack of enforcement of auto and bike safety
- Risk of spot zoning
- Increasing density
- Lack of coordination between counties
- Development beyond corridor
- Outside threats
- Transitional label
- Gap in greenbelt continuity
- Shallow setbacks
- Gateways (not unique)
- Berms / landscaping

Cleveland Road:

- Speed of automobiles
- Narrow road
- Large school in low density area
- Development pressure
- No connection to transit system

3. *What mode of transportation do you currently use along the county's rural-suburban corridors?*

Barnett Shoals:

- Automobile
- Walking – recreational
- Jogging

- Bikes – some commuters, most recreational
- Horses – less frequent now, power line right-of-way
- No bus route – not desired by ½, desired by ½ (small scale)

Cleveland Road:

- Automobile
- Recreational walking
- Bikes

*4. What are your top two concerns about the county's residential rural-suburban corridors?*

Barnett Shoals:

- Congestion
- Increased density
- Traffic
- Housing
- Spec housing
- Spot zoning
- Protection / preservation of rural character
- Lack of coordination with adjacent counties
- Threat of development beyond corridor
- Gap in greenbelt continuity

Cleveland Road:

- Loss of vistas
- Excess speed
- Widening road for fast auto traffic
- Loss of wildlife
- Residential density (< 5 acres)
- Adjacent community development

*5. Two descriptors of what you would like the county's residential rural-suburban areas to look like in 20 years?*

Barnett Shoals:

- Greenbelt preserved
- Protected permanent greenspace
- Future development enhances/is consistent with existing
  - Setbacks
  - Views/vistas
  - Non-cookie cutter development
  - Sustainable design
- Dark night
- Scenic byway
- (see qualities in first question and sustain them!)

- Narrow road width
  - Separate use paths

Cleveland Road:

- Separate bike/pedestrian (multi-use) trail facility
- Horse trail facility
- Low density residential
- Rural school with multi-use connection to suburban residential
- Narrow road – slow speed

**Workshop 1 (afternoon)**

*What are appropriate and compatible future land uses for rural-suburban residential corridors?*

Barnett Shoals:

- Parks
  - Passive, trails
  - County property?
- Limited agriculture use
  - Small-scale farming
  - No poultry/swine production
- Artists' studios / cottage industries
- Bed and breakfast

Cleveland Road:

- Agriculture appropriate for single family
  - Tax incentives for such uses
- Single family residential
  - Rural residential as transition
- Institutional
- Park – active and passive

*What Strategies and Policies can be used to guide infill and new development?*

Barnett Shoals:

- Character area – close consideration of rural residential areas as a transition from R to AR
- Ability for citizens to have more input to developers
- Policing/enforcement of ordinances and regulations
- Process for neighborhood planning
- Require neighborhood interconnections (ped and bike)
- Scenic byway designation
  - County-level
  - Width of road (limits of )
  - Setbacks
  - Buffer areas

- Types of vegetation
- Native plants
- Incentives for conservation versus agriculture use
- SPLOST \$ as a tool
  - o Public greenspace as infrastructure
  - o Property acquisition for scenic byway
- Ensure protection of water resources/waterways
  - o Restoration of water sources

**Cleveland Road:**

- Multi-use trail-linear park loop-safe route to school
- Maintain existing road widths and curvilinear alignment – for speeding and growth purposes
- County-wide scenic resource
  - o ID
  - o Prioritize
  - o Enter into greenspace acquisition/conservation easement
- Develop scenic corridor standards
  - o Maintain existing vegetation
  - o Guidelines for residential development
- Encourage state level regional planning
- Rural resource character area
  - o New zoning district?
  - o Modified conservation subdivision for this type/area
  - o 1 unit per 5 acre minimum
  - o Tree canopy requirement
- ID and protect wildlife corridors
- Dark sky ordinance
- Limit utility expansion
- Vegetation management education/co-operation with utilities
- Create rural alliance (proactive advocacy group for rural areas in county)

## APPENDIX B

### July 14<sup>th</sup> Workshop

#### Multi-Use/Transitional Corridors: Jefferson Road & Highway 29 North

1. *Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you enjoy on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

##### Jefferson Road:

- Openness
- Rural / pasture views
- Open space – large parcels
- No outdoor advertising
- Diversity of uses along road
- Creativity of owners
- Old road alignment
- Pedestrians and cyclists
- No destination shopping

##### Highway 29 North:

- Cattle tunnel (change to pedestrian use)
- Quick transportation
- Least developed
- “Open”
- Potential / opportunity
- Safer roadway
- Medians (future landscaping)
- Intersection “marks” Athens

2. *Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you do not like on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

##### Jefferson Road:

- Lack of transportation options (too car oriented)
- Fragmented uses / disconnect
- Visual clutter
- Grain elevators / tanks (visual)
- Scale of new road construction
- Train-grade crossings / fuel trucks
- Speed in commercial / residential areas
- Pedestrian unfriendly / no safe crossing points
- Lack of neighborhood center grocery stores / restaurants
- Lack of safety for access (fuel trucks)
- Roadside ditch safety
- Unshaded concrete
- Night lights / glare from businesses
- Too many road cuts

- High speed limit with lots of lights

Highway 29 North:

- Opportunity – Visual quality needs improvement
- Storm drainage
- Traffic (certain times of day) school, work start / stop hours
- Litter

*3. What mode of transportation do you currently use along the corridor?*

Jefferson Road:

- Car
- Walk – recreation and destination
- Bike – Safety at loop bridge
- Bus

Highway 29 North:

- Automobile
- No reason for pedestrian (currently)
- Athens transit (to Athens Tech)

*4. What are your top two concerns about the corridor?*

Jefferson Road:

- Future developments and visual quality / preserve scenic beauty
- Sidewalks / pedestrian and bike facilities
- Lack of visual cues to reinforce lower speeds for urban corridor appropriate (transition from rural to urban)

Highway 29 North:

- Infrastructure (sewer)
- Lack of development (other counties providing resources)
- Property taxes for existing residents when commercial comes
- Concerns about government services (fire)

*5. In 20 years... What would you like the county's transitional / gateway corridors to look like?*

Jefferson Road:

- Defining / not “cookie cutter” / unique to Athens
- Not 316 and not “Disney”
- Wide row – tree lined with sidewalks – separate from road / curbs / gutters
- Visual / speed clues that this is urban
- Developed neighborhood center / pocket park / mixed use / grocery store / post office / civic use / bank
- Accommodate other modes of transportation
- Welcome signage / feature

### Highway 29 North:

- Keep existing level of service on roads
- Commercial driven development
- Quality development design – well organized
- Commercial development at 29 / 72 needs to have access to both highways
- Must be welcoming / gateway
- Catch consumers on the way out of ACC
- Node – develop at existing intersections (not “strip out” the corridor)
- Well organized, professional development
- New residential needs to be priced to allow multiple incomes
- Multiple residential levels (income)
- Development nodes, not strips

### **Workshop 2 (afternoon) Jefferson Road / Highway 29 North combined**

*What are desirable characteristics of Neighborhood Centers?*

- Not auto-only
  - attracts pedestrians and bikes
  - multi modal center
  - buses / public transportation
- Safe and easy pedestrian access between uses at center
- Mix of materials
- Scale and proportion
- Internal provision for storm water
- “sense of place”
- Density of mixed uses
- Reduce parking space ratio / sf of community space
- Parking lot / street trees / increase canopy / save old trees
- No gas stations
- Green space / public space
- Government / public space / civic use / community info

*What are desirable characteristics for a Gateway or a linear series of Gateways?*

- Interchange with bypass – improve visual quality
- Street trees along road “soften road”
- Pedestrian bridge
- Entry signs
- “Signature” planting
- Flexible planting
- Easy maintenance
- Corresponds to reduction in speed – visual clues

*What are desirable characteristics for the Corridor?*

- Bikeways separate from road – but not parallel / vegetated buffer or along road if
- More appropriate
- More connectivity

- Street trees
- Alternate locations for pedestrian / bike trails
- Incentives for property owners – easements
- Light pollution limits
- Planted medians for pedestrian refuge
- Viewshed protection – easements / property acquisition / overlay
- Explore alternate access for some uses to reduce curb cuts for safety

## APPENDIX C

### August 18<sup>th</sup> Workshop

#### Urban Residential Corridor Areas / Traditional Neighborhoods

1. *Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you enjoy on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

##### Hancock Avenue:

- Quiet setting
- High quality houses/architecture/buildings/historic character
- Community – sense of community
- Mature street trees
- Walkable sidewalks
- Long time neighbors
- Affordable homes
- Sense of safety

##### Traditional East Athens:

- Parks & recreational facilities.
- Beautiful trees, hills, building character
- Friendly
- Diversity (age, income, ethics)
- Walking, biking (sidewalks)
- Historic area
- Traffic islands (green space)
- Location (close to downtown)
- Transit
- Revitalization
- Established neighborhood schools and libraries and churches
- Infill development which is of appropriate scale and character

2. *Give two words to describe visual quality or quality of life that you do not like on the corridor or other similar corridors?*

##### Hancock Avenue:

- Local roads in neighborhoods
- No thru traffic
- Lack of commerce & services w/ neighborhoods that serve the neighborhoods (CN zoning is too broad)
- In fill is too dense- zoning allows too dense
- In fill is not compatible w/ historic buildings
- Litter from new renters
- Transition from homeowners to greater amounts of renters
- Losing sense of community
- Commercial development that is not dense and mixed use

Traditional East Athens:

- Transportation
- Affordable housing
- Too many cars
- Unkept lots/vacant houses
- Parking in yards/ cars parked on narrow roads
- High Density / crowded
- Existing sidewalks in disrepair
- Infrastructure ( roads, curbs, storm water management
- Uncontrolled infill
- Lack of enforcement
- Traffic management
- Litter
- Tearing down small homes and building bigger
- Crime
- Gentrification
- Protect existing residents
- Increased taxes
- Unequal distribution of funds, trees and maintenance

*3. What mode of transportation do you use?*

Hancock Avenue:

- Automobile
- Walking
- Biking
- Bus
- Motorcycle / Scooters

Traditional East Athens:

- Transit (UGA and Athens-Clark County)
- Walking
- Biking
- Automobile
- Taxi

*4. What are your top two concerns about the county's Urban Residential Corridor Areas / Traditional Neighborhoods?*

Hancock Avenue:

- Loss of sense of community
- Protect elderly property owners
- Protect generational wealth
- Gentrification
- Demolition of historic buildings
- Over priced infill

- In appropriate infill
- Displacement of long term residents
- Conversion from residential to other uses

Traditional East Athens:

- Keeping the diversity – enforcement of zoning regulations./ design guidelines
- Information not distributed well thru out the community
- Range of services – commercial
- Lack of planning for the whole area instead of just a block of area
- Property taxes
- Demo by neglect
- Demo of historic structures
- Protecting existing long term residents
- Affordable housing
- Parking/narrow streets (by students/staff)
- Following up on previous discussion with ACC regarding HUD, Habitat

*5. How should the area look in 20 years?*

Hancock Avenue:

- Elderly homes rehabbed/upgraded
- Retain property ownership by long time residents
- Assist w/ home maintenance for elderly
- Neighborhood as a lifestyle
- A new face for public housing
  - integrated into community
  - ownership – vested residents
  - not institutional housing but transitional housing
  - workforce & life skills for neighborhoods res.
  - roads are not closed off
  - no dead ends/ cul de sacs
- Mixed income residents
- Alternative transportation
  - golf carts for elderly
  - more options – safe bike riding
- Leash law enforcement
- Appropriate zoning – residential density
- Residential character
- Single family zoning
- Infill design standards to complement historic buildings
- Increased homeownership
- Visually pleasing commercial corridor
- Safe, well-lit streets
  - unsafe areas lit
- Commerce that serves the community - grocery, drycleaners - no more parking
- Library/ school in neighborhoods

- Small daycare (privately owned)
- Families in neighborhoods
- Parks – developed /improved
- Community owned business
- More mom & pop /less national franchised
- Maintain community churches
- No more parking lots, preserve historic homes/buildings
- Demolition ordinance - to limit speculative demolition
- Landscape beautification in public r.o.w. – trees/ streetlights
- Preserve street trees
  - programs at city/county level to maintain trees
- More emphasis/communication/education on city services ( rain barrels, trash & recycling)
- Retain historic streetscape materials ( brick sidewalks /granite curbs)
- Bury utilities
- Less towers or less obvious towers
- Local designation of historic buildings/neighborhoods
  - helping elderly maintain historic buildings – design assistance
- Preservation /rehabilitation of historic cemeteries; \$\$\$ money from tourism
- Senior friendly community
  - definition of family
  - diversity in income, age and ethnicity
- Distinct neighborhood character preserved
- Well maintained homes historic & infill
- Established, diverse community
- Neighborhood scale commerce
- Streetscape which reflects historic neighborhood character
  - Street trees, granite curb, brick sidewalk
  - Safe & functional transportation alt.
  - Commercial corridors are redeveloped into attractive high density areas
  - Neighborhood streets carry neighborhood traffic
  - Developed & maintained park system

*Traditional East Athens:*

- Keeping historic character (recognizable to past residents)
- Locally designated historic district
- Same residents as right now/ still diverse
- New infrastructure curbs/roads/drainage/transit
- Guidelines should serve all residents, not drive them out
- Neighborhood stores /services - mixed use
- Renovated/rental properties maintained
- A united /cohesive community
- Accessory units - rear apartments
- Master plan for area

## Workshop 3 (afternoon) Hancock Avenue / Traditional East Athens combined

*What are desirable characteristics for infill development?*

- Scale matches existing
- Driveways compared to parking “lots”
- Minimum lot size like historic lot sizes of the neighborhood
- House size appropriate to lot size
- Pervious pavement in drives
- Encourage communication between community and developer
- Higher environmental performance
- Compatible materials and style
- Neighborhood specific design guidelines
- No new public housing which follows past acc public housing model
- New transportation for infill follows traditional road building – grid, connectivity, no cul de sacs
- Incentives to promote low income options – work force housing
- Less auto dependant
- Tree preservation incentives and enforcement
- Parking scale is relative to housing scale – handled well on-site
- Infill that serves work force or long term residents
- Accessory dwelling units

*What other neighborhood land uses are compatible with these neighborhoods?*

- Community stores like five points
- Community job opportunities
- Commercial mixed into neighborhood
- Dense community nodes with shared parking

*What types of mixed uses are compatible with these neighborhoods?*

- Neighborhood as lifestyle – live / work / play
- Commercial operations which serve the neighborhood
- Neighborhood scale commerce
- Use existing businesses to establish community nodes
- Make use of underground economy
- Plan for commercial districts in neighborhood before they develop
- Provide necessary infrastructure
- Zoning or special use which allows business within neighborhood
- Neighborhood scale parking – shared parking

Tools for “In Town” neighborhoods

- Overlay districts
- Conservation overlay
- Local district overlay
  - Neighborhood led incentive
  - Does not limit / dictate use

#### Local Historic District

- Tax freeze option
- Design review process for home improvements
- Educational opportunities for community before designation

#### TAD – Tax Allocation Dist.

- To fund infrastructure improvements

#### Property Tax Relief

- Elderly homeowner property tax freeze
- Utilize existing organizations to communicate with established neighborhoods. I.e. churches, East Athens Development Corporation
- Door to door communication
- Meetings in community location
- Alternative tools for input
  - Maps
  - Questionnaire
  - Door to door
- Zoning change meetings at time that neighborhood can attend
- Effective zoning change notification for neighborhoods

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP**  
**“Urban Residential Corridor Areas / Traditional Neighborhoods”**

**WORKSHOP AGENDA 18 August 2007**

**9:00 Registration**

**9:15 Introduction and Overview of Urban Residential Corridor Areas / Traditional Neighborhoods**

*9:50 Break*

**10:00 Focus Groups: Generating Corridor Issues**

**11:30 Report Findings from Focus Groups**

**12 – 1:15 Lunch on Your Own**

**1:20 Focus Groups: Creating Strategies and Solutions**

*2:30 break*

**2:45 Report Findings from Focus Groups**

**3:30 Wrap Up / Next Steps**