

# ENVISIONING STATESBORO'S FUTURE

## CITY OF STATESBORO COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

Community Assessment  
August 2008



LOTT  BARBER

**RS&H**

# **CITY OF STATESBORO**

## **Comprehensive Master Plan**

Community Assessment

August 2008



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### **PURPOSE**

The Comprehensive Plan provides a community vision for the next twenty years and a road map for how to work together to achieve that vision. The plan will be developed through a very public process involving community leaders, stakeholders, and citizens. The plan enables the City of Statesboro to maintain its Qualified Local Government Status, which is required for state grants and loans. The requirements for a Comprehensive Plan are established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The Plan is comprised of three main components: Community Assessment, Community Participation Program, and the Community Agenda. This document is the *Community Assessment* portion of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Statesboro, Georgia.

### **ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of the *Community Assessment* is to analyze and assess local conditions as they currently exist, based on an analysis and inventory of existing conditions, land use patterns, and public policies. The rules for local comprehensive planning, as established by the DCA, suggest that only summaries of data focused on “issues and opportunities” be presented to policy makers, and that the main presentation of data and inventory occur in an appendix of the community assessment. A “Data Appendix” also accompanies this document as a technical appendix.

The *Community Assessment* is primarily a staff driven process with community input on issues and opportunities. The Assessment will provide a solid foundation for the creation of the future vision for the city, to be articulated in *Community Agenda*. This effort can play a critical role in maintaining and directing growth in a manner that is consistent with the community’s vision for the future.

The *Community Assessment* includes the following information:

- Listing of potential issues and opportunities
- Analysis of existing development patterns
- Analysis of consistency with the Quality Community Objectives
- Analysis of supporting data and information
- Data Appendix (Separate document)

## IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following section contains a list of potential issues and opportunities for further study and consideration. This list will be modified based on technical analysis and stakeholder input received during preparation of the *Community Agenda* section of the Comprehensive Plan. The original list of issues and opportunities was obtained using stakeholder feedback obtained at several workshops held in the Spring 2008, concurrent with the drafting of the *Community Assessment* document. This feedback is part of the public involvement process and is not meant to be taken as official policy, nor do these public comments necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the City of Statesboro, including its staff and elected officials.



The Issues and Opportunities are categorized according to eight community elements, derived from the DCA Standards, as well as general “Quality of Life” issues that might not be reflected in any of the other categories:

- I. POPULATION CHANGE**
- II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**
- IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**
- V. HOUSING**
- VI. LAND USE**
- VII. TRANSPORTATION**
- VIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**
- IX. QUALITY OF LIFE**



The following Issues & Opportunities were identified by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and members of the community. These Issues & Opportunities do not necessarily reflect majority opinion and will be further evaluated during the development of the *Community Agenda*.

## **I. POPULATION CHANGE**

- Demographic trends show continuous population growth through 2030 (at least a 50% increase over 2000 numbers)
- Student population at Georgia Southern University (GSU) is expected to increase
- GSU will require all freshman to be housed on campus

## **II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Address lack of “major” grocery store, chain stores, department stores
- Vacant commercial spaces and storefronts are a problem
- More grocery stores are needed
- Not enough high-wage jobs in the city
- Consider development opportunities for infill properties
- More coordination needed between GSU, Ogeechee Technical Institute, and local industries regarding workforce training
- Enhance workforce training and continuing education options to include: literacy, technical writing and computer applications
- Revitalize/redevelop the remaining land at former hospital site (currently vacant land)
- More collaboration needed between city and GSU (ex: information technology facilities and infrastructure, entrepreneur support)
- Business attraction and expansion activities do not seem to be meeting their potential
- Significant amount of population without secondary degrees
- Median household income and per capita income very low
- Make more industrial, office and commercial land available in city
- Clean/green industries should be encouraged
- Development Authority (or similar entity) should concentrate on City of Statesboro, not just as a subset of the county or downtown only
- More businesses are needed that cater to youth and provide alternatives to alcohol/drug use and other delinquency (ex.: renovate bowling alley; youth-oriented restaurant, such as “The Varsity” in Atlanta but with healthier food)

### **III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

- Preserve undeveloped forest and agriculture lands within the city wherever possible
- Consider alternative approaches to stormwater drainage and retention based on contemporary best management practices (BMPs)
- Reuse former hospital property as public park
- Provide more youth-oriented parks/playgrounds
- Provide more picnic tables and trees in parks
- Prevent wetlands from being filled (too many wetlands are being developed, causing runoff into neighboring properties)
- Historic character of the downtown district needs to be formally recognized and protected
- Protect integrity of historic neighborhoods by creating overlay districts that restrict certain uses that are incompatible with existing ones and that protect historic architecture while ensuring new architecture is compatible
- Preserve wooded areas and create walking paths, wherever possible
- Promote appreciation of nature and outdoor exercise in our city parks and wooded areas
- Strengthen tree ordinance to protect existing trees and to reduce and/or eliminate clear-cutting on development sites
- Retain and/or plant more trees in parking lots and around new buildings
- Plant new shade trees along all city rights-of-way, wherever space allows; do this in concert with sidewalk expansion
- Require existing trees to be preserved wherever possible
- Link bicycle paths in the city and county with GSU campus
- Provide a park for pets (i.e., dog park)

### **IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

- Provide more sidewalks and pedestrian facilities needed throughout city
- Provide more bicycle lanes and facilities needed throughout city
- Implement curbside recycling program
- Consider youth employment services and placement programs
- Police department is excellent; build upon existing strengths
- Coordinate with county to expand water and sewer along all major roadways
- Recycling drop-off program is efficient and convenient; consider adding more recycling options to current facilities
- Consider implementing “pay as you throw” program for garbage to reward recycling
- Better coordination efforts needed between city and county regarding public safety, recreation (city parks), and infrastructure planning
- Luetta Moore Park and recreation facilities need modernization and other improvements

- Renovate swimming pool facilities on Zetterower Avenue, to provide recreation for children and families without transportation

## **V. HOUSING**

- Better enforcement of zoning ordinances needed in residential neighborhoods (ex.: too many people living and parking at some properties)
- Provide more affordable housing options for low-income families
- Address dilapidated rental properties in residential neighborhoods (ex.: Pittman Park neighborhood has many rental units and is becoming increasingly blighted)
- Strengthen nuisance abatement (garbage, dilapidated buildings, etc) and code enforcement in all residential neighborhoods
- Address concerns over too many college students and rental properties in residential areas
- Remove dilapidated houses in residential neighborhoods (ex.: Gordon, Lafayette Street, West Main Street)
- Address concerns over the perceived surplus of rental units within the city
- Address garbage and other items deposited in front of rental properties as students move in and out of units
- Current zoning does not promote mixed uses
- Allow and encourage mixed units in appropriate neighborhoods and redeveloped areas
- Provide more housing options downtown
- Provide more mixed use (opportunities to live, work, shop, dine, and play)
- What will happen to apartments and rental properties as GSU builds more dorms?
- Downtown neighborhoods seem to be declining
- Create and implement plan for revitalization and infill of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods
- Encourage diversity of SES within neighborhoods
- Beautify and revitalize distressed and blighted areas (ex.: Blich Street / MLK Blvd. neighborhoods)
- Encourage integration and promote psychological well-being of all residents

## **VI. LAND USE**

- Consider traffic calming measures, such as replacing “suicide lane” (turn lane) with planted medians
- Address proliferation of PUDs with housing only
- Address lack of mixed use in PUDs
- PUDs have no apparent pattern and lack of planning



- New residential development tends not to tie into street pattern of surrounding neighborhoods
- More public swimming pools
- More bicycle lanes (wide roads = opportunity)
- “Commercial creep” into downtown residential neighborhoods causes unattractive breaks in building flow and appearance
- More housing in central business district
- More mixed use
- Complete and extend existing sidewalks and create new sidewalks
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity
- Plantings along roadways and in medians increases “charm factor” and reduces the “highway factor”
- More land zoned industrial/office/commercial

## **VII. TRANSPORTATION**

- Public transportation needed
- More crosswalks
- More pedestrian signage
- Install sidewalks on Gentilly Road
- Address commercial truck traffic through town and enforce speed limits
- Bicycle trail not felt to be safe
- GSU campus is now closed to thru-traffic between Fair Road and Hwy 301, creating more traffic along Fair Road; need cooperation between city and GSU to alleviate congestion
- Residential streets (ex.: Savannah Avenue) have become high traffic “speed zones” through town
- Install more curb cuts to accommodate bicycle, stroller and wheelchair access to sidewalks
- Improve landscape maintenance along sidewalks (e.g., trim shrubs)
- Connect neighborhoods with bicycle paths along major roads
- Ensure safe routes – pedestrian and bicycle – to all city schools
- Better enforcement of crosswalk laws and pedestrian rights-of-way
- Install planted medians in turn lanes for beautification and traffic calming
- By-pass is nearly obsolete and is not yet finished
- No direct way to go from shopping mall area to college without driving through residential neighborhoods

- Consider installing turn arrows at east and west traffic signals on East Main Street and Zetterower Avenue
- Recent road improvements seem to only serve new development (i.e., Tillman Park, High School expansion)
- Curb cuts and ingress/egress on Hwy 301 and Fair Road at bypass are too close to the bypass intersection
- Reduce number of ingress and egress points along bypass; require property owners to share an entrance and exit
- More sidewalks
- More bicycle storage facilities
- More bicycle access to local business (e.g., GSU and residential neighborhoods)

### **VIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

- Better cooperation and coordination between city and county on planning issues
- Consider consolidating city and county governments
- Better cooperation and coordination between city and county on public safety
- Better cooperation and coordination between city and county on recreation
- Some agencies and groups are not coordinating with each other
- Greenway proposed by Recreation Department needs support of both City Council and County Commission
- Better coordination between city and Board of Education regarding siting of new schools
- Establish code enforcement officers whose sole responsibility is to enforce property maintenance ordinances

### **IX. QUALITY OF LIFE**

- How do we reward student excellence?
- More sidewalks
- Improved access to fresh produce (markets, grocery stores)
- Improve homeless/mental health services
- Address food security and access, especially for families with hungry children
- More options for family entertainment
- Increase support for charter school
- Improve community healthcare
- Address drug use and youth gangs
- More alternative education options
- Health and obesity concerns can be addressed by improving opportunities to walk within the community

- More active-use parks in walking distance to residential neighborhoods
- More adult day care options for seniors
- Address the city's homeless population
- Increase cultural (art, dance, music) and education opportunities for children and adults

## ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Analysis of existing development patterns enhances Statesboro's ability to accommodate growth, and to plan for the future provision of public services and facilities. Analysis of existing land use patterns will provide insight for the planning of long-range growth and development. Land use planning which coordinates and supports efficient growth and development patterns can also promote sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources, and provision of adequate and affordable housing.

### **I. EXISTING LAND USE**

The existing land use map is a reflection of the way in which land is being presently used, regardless of the existing zoning. Using aerial photos, existing data, field verification, and other materials, the land use information for the city was classified according to nine (9) standard land uses, defined as follows:

#### *Agriculture / Forestry*

This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting. There are limited examples of this category of land use in Statesboro, with most such land uses to be found on adjacent lands in the county.

#### *Commercial*

This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service, and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

#### *Park / Recreation / Conservation*

This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses as well as land conserved as green space where development is restricted. These areas may be publicly or privately owned and may include public parks, playgrounds, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.

#### *Industrial*

This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, or other similar uses.

*Public / Institutional*

This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include college campuses, hospitals, churches, cemeteries, etc. This category does not include facilities that are publicly owned, but which are classified more accurately in another land use category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities are included in the Park / Recreation / Conservation category, while landfills are included in the Industrial category.

*Single-family Residential*

The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single family dwelling units.

*Multi-family Residential*

Multi-family dwelling units are typically rented rather than owner-occupied and include traditional apartment buildings as well homes which were once single-family but are now used for student housing or similar group quarters. They are recognized separately to call attention to their heaviest concentrations in relation to other land uses and areas of the city (for example, adjacent to the downtown core and the GSU campus).

*Transportation / Communication / Utilities*

This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, or other similar uses.

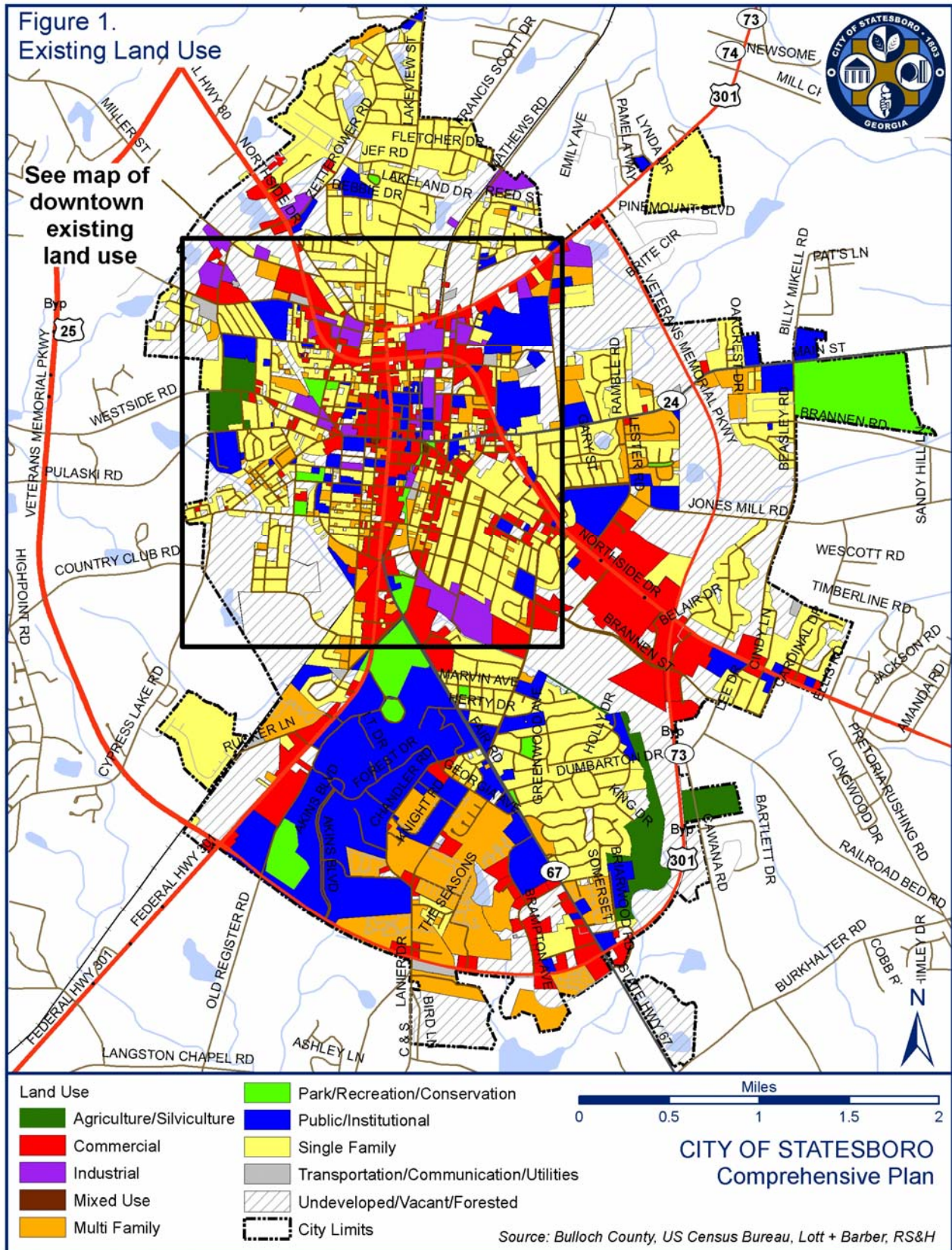
*Undeveloped / Vacant Land*

This category is for lots or tracts of land that are served, or can be easily served, by typical public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned. These sites can be ideally suited for infill development wherever adjacent land uses do not conflict with the new development.

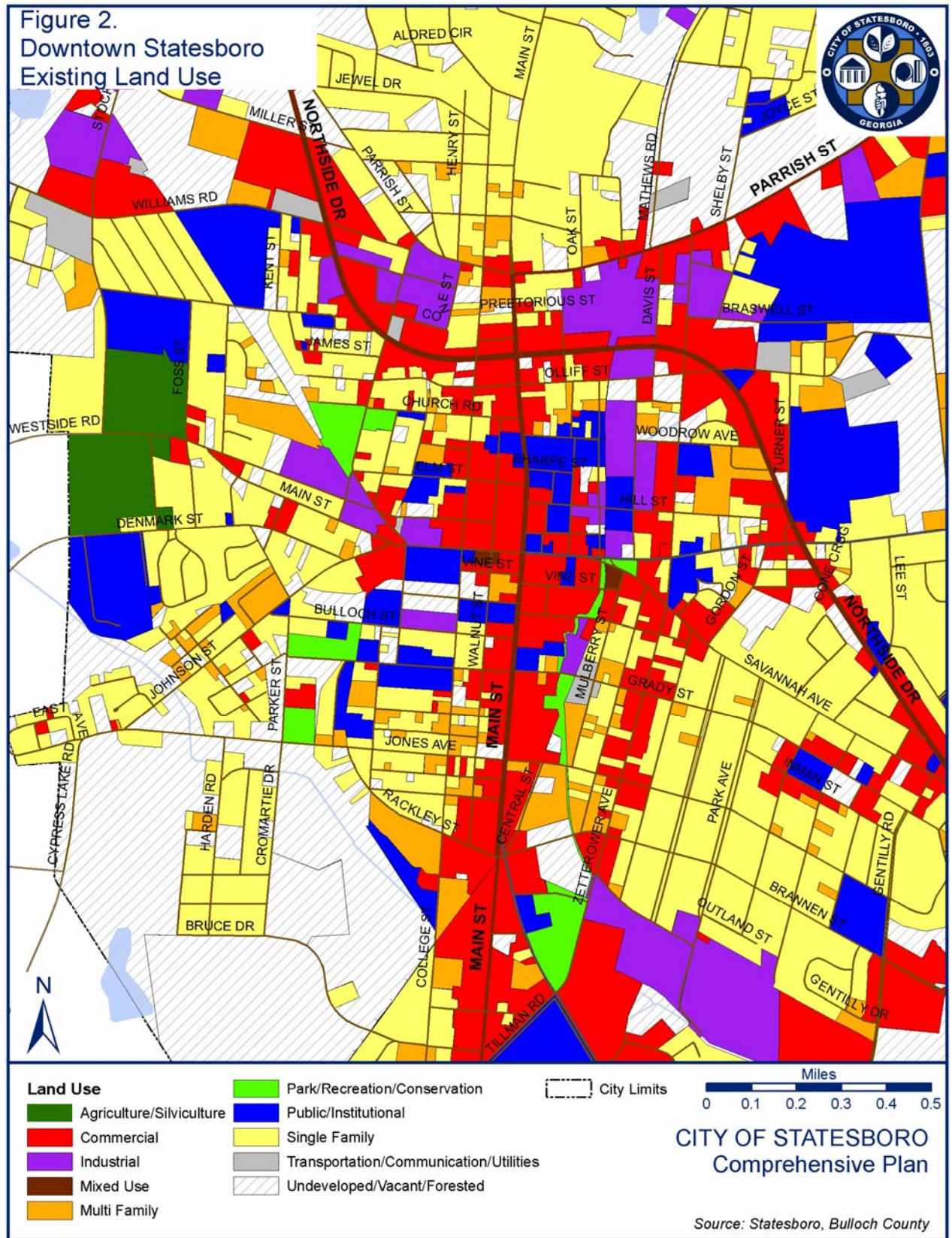
*Mixed Use*

These areas consist of residential and commercial uses on the same land or else are directly contiguous in a fine-grained development pattern. Traditionally, development downtown followed a mixed-use pattern, and today this is where examples of this use can still be found.









The following sections will discuss how growth and land use changes affect natural and cultural resources as well as the potential for infill development and re-development opportunities throughout the City. Also included in this section are the areas where development should be directed and where it should be avoided. Existing land use maps are current as of January 2008.

Table 1 shows the amount of land and percent allocation of each land use in the city.

<b>Table 1: Existing Land Uses</b>		
<i>Land Use Categories</i>	<i>Total Acres</i>	<i>% of City's Total Acreage</i>
Agriculture/Silviculture	192	2.2%
Commercial	1,063	12.3%
Industrial	210	2.4%
Mixed Use	1	0.0%
Multi Family	783	9.0%
Park/Recreation/Conservation	220	2.4%
Public/Institutional	1,293	14.9%
Single Family	2,635	30.4%
Transportation/Communication/ Utilities	47	0.5%
Undeveloped/Vacant/Forested	2,223	25.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,667</b>	<b>100%</b>

The city is primarily urban / suburban, with the dominant land use of single-family residential (30.4%). Undeveloped / Vacant Land is the second largest land use (at 25.7%), although it should be noted that some of this land includes undevelopable areas, such as wetlands. These areas are not classified as conservation, however, unless the land is permanently protected from development. Public / Institutional uses, which account for 14.9% of total land, are comprised primarily of higher education (GSU), followed by governmental services, public schools, and health care. Commercial uses (12.3%) are predominant along highway corridors and downtown. Agricultural land uses (2.2%) such as farming, livestock grazing and silviculture, once provided the traditional way of life and land use in the city and surrounding areas, but is today no longer a dominant land use within the jurisdiction.

Industrial and commercial land uses account for 2.4% of the total area. As new industries locate in Bulloch County and Statesboro and attract more workers, new services and other businesses will begin to cater to the growing population. With Statesboro as the economic engine of the



region, existing lands that fall under the Industrial and Commercial use categories are likely to infill or redevelop, possibly with adjacent uses expanding to include Industrial and Commercial. Careful consideration will need to be given to the balance of development that is industrial or commercial in nature, especially as it relates to surrounding land uses and available transportation networks.

Mixed uses, such as commercial use on the ground floor and residential above, were once more prevalent in downtown Statesboro. During a period of decline and disinvestment in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a recent resurgence of mixed uses downtown, with new residential units appearing above storefronts in several of the city's historic buildings. The amount of mixed use compared to total area is negligible (less than 0.1%), but there is potential that these uses will continue to spread throughout the city in appropriate areas. GSU has also recognized the importance of mixed use development and is including commercial uses within some of its new dormitory buildings.



More than 2,200 acres are currently classified as Undeveloped / Vacant, with much of this property located adjacent to existing residential subdivisions and commercial areas at the periphery of the jurisdiction. These currently undeveloped lands are likely to face development pressure from both residential and commercial interests in the near future. Other undeveloped lands located in or near the core of the city provide opportunities for more intense levels of commercial activity. Some of these properties may also be suited for mixed use developments, in continuance with historic development patterns downtown.



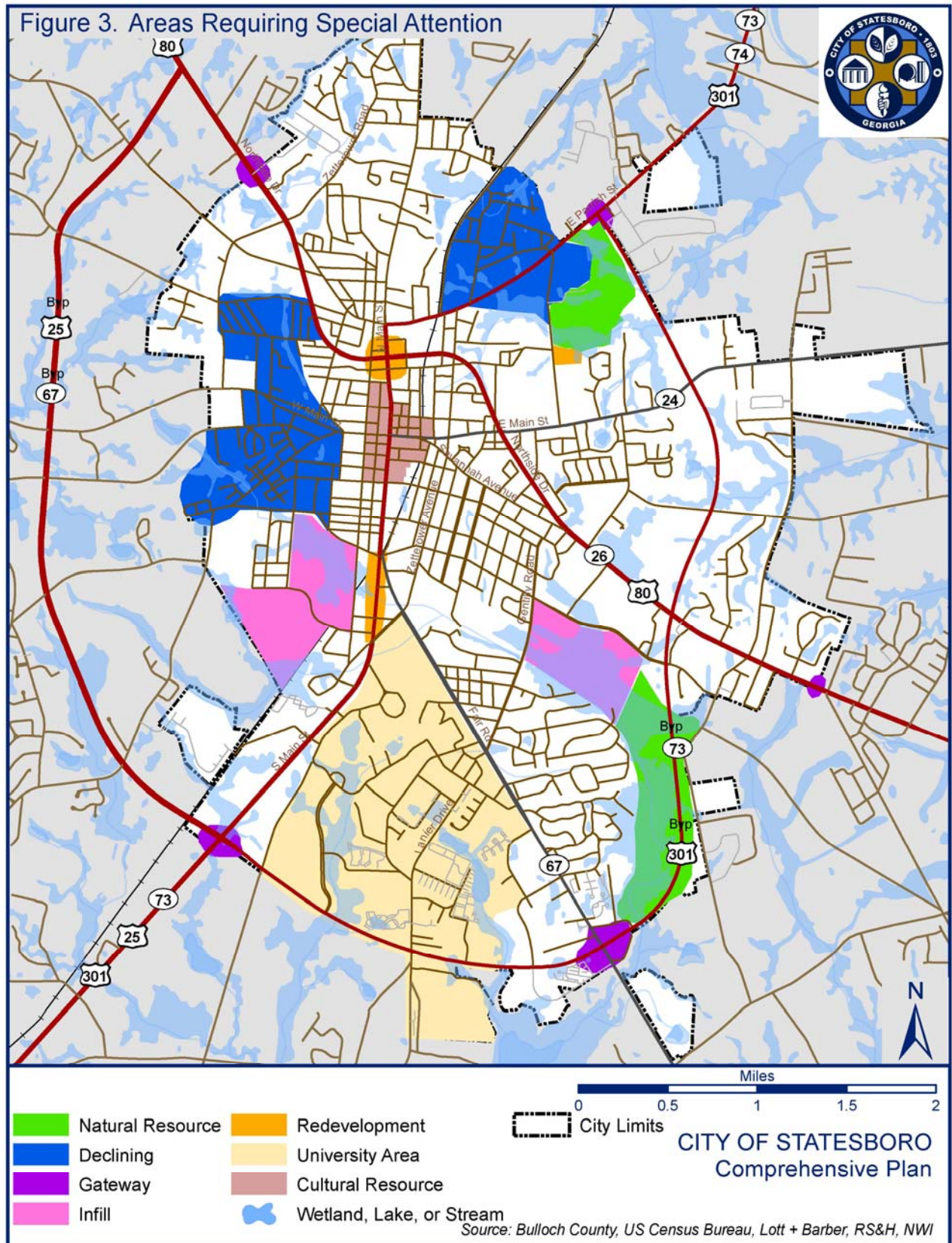
## **II. AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION**

These areas are defined by the DCA as:

- Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)
- Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole

The Areas Requiring Special Attention identified in the City of Statesboro are indicated on the following map (Figure 2). Narrative regarding these areas follows.

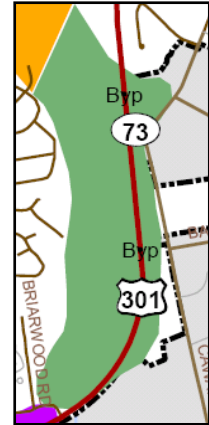




## Natural Resources

### *South-East Wetlands (Bypass)*

This area lies primarily to the west and partially to the east of the stretch of the Bypass north of Highway 67. Wetlands comprise the largest percentage of this area, which may not be suitable for development due to flood hazards. This area should be conserved in a natural state wherever possible, with careful attention given to development and drainage conditions in immediately surrounding areas. The forested higher grounds to the west of the bypass also serve as a buffer between the roadway and residential areas beyond.



### *North-East Wetlands*

These wetlands and forested lands are located between Highway 301 North, Packinghouse Road and the Bypass. Wetlands comprise a large percentage of this area and should be conserved in a natural state, with careful attention given to development and drainage conditions in immediately surrounding areas.



## Cultural Resources

### *Downtown*

The area considered as downtown is not only the historic core of the city, but of the surrounding region as well. The high quantity and quality of historic commercial architecture here is unmatched anywhere else in the city or county. However, the area is also subject to the vicissitudes of development and taste, meaning that, without adequate recognition and protection, the fabric of downtown may be threatened in the future. The vitality of downtown as a thriving mixed-use center is also unique to the area and will require special attention to ensure that connectivity, accessibility and walkability are maintained and enhanced.

## Rapidly Developing Areas

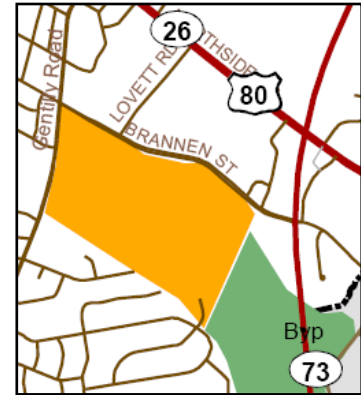
### *Gateways*

Some of these areas have already seen rapid growth, especially at the highway 301 South and Highway 67 gateways. Careful attention should be given to the quality of development at these intersections, as they provide the first face of the city to visitors and residents. Traffic flow and access also need to be addressed to reduce curb cuts and create shared access points for commercial properties. Wayfinding should be user-friendly and commercial signage should be tasteful and not allowed to dominate the streetscape. Where these areas have an overlap with county land, coordination between the city and county will be needed to ensure appropriate development and maintenance of these areas as gateways.

## Infill Areas

### *Brannen and Gentilly (Shopping Center and Adjacent Properties)*

The existing shopping center at Brannen and Gentilly roads has lost its anchor store and is becoming a greyfield (defined as a previously developed vacant site, typically retail in nature). The intersection, with its high traffic flow, is ideally suited for redevelopment. The undeveloped properties to the south, along Gentilly Road between the existing shopping center and the railroad bed, and to the east, along Brannen Road to the Bypass, are also likely to be developed with commercial uses. Taken together, these areas present a historical opportunity to create mixed-use infill with an internal network of streets that connect to surrounding residential and commercial areas. The location of this property within 0.75 mile proximity to the GSU campus and 1.25 miles to downtown indicates that it could become a community center for the east side that is built upon a highly-connected street network, featuring medium density development and excellent bicycle and pedestrian accessibility. Within this area may also be an opportunity to tie into the proposed county greenway, which would begin at the existing railroad bed.



### *Properties West of South College Street*

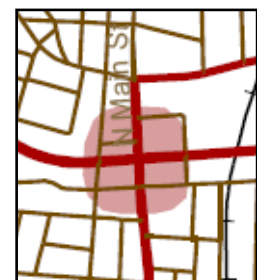
The area bounded by South College Street to the east, Cromartie Drive to the west, and Jones Street to the north, with Bruce Drive to the south and agricultural/forest land beyond, may face development pressures in the near- to mid-term. These properties are located within one-half mile of the GSU campus and less than 0.75 miles to downtown. There may also be opportunity for mixed-use infill blocks along the South College Street frontage.



## Redevelopment Areas

### *Downtown Gateway*

The entrance into downtown from Highway 80 (Northside Drive West) and Highway 301 North (North Main Street) is currently underdeveloped and poorly maintained as a gateway condition. Infill development should be targeted at corner properties and then move to adjacent parcels. Streetscaping enhancement and proper signage/wayfinding should accompany redevelopment efforts as the intersection transitions into a more attractive downtown gateway.





### *Packinghouse Property*

This property occupies a site directly to the east of Packinghouse Road. The Packinghouse has not been in use for a number of years and is currently unsafe to occupy. However, it has become something of an “attractive nuisance” for area youth and is subject to vandalism and graffiti.



The property is across the street from a *Suburban – Developing* character area, which could have some influence over the future land use of the Packinghouse property. The possibility to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the Packinghouse should be considered as a possible alternative.



## **Declining Areas**

### *West Side Neighborhoods*

Housing conditions within these neighborhoods are generally poor, with some dilapidated housing and vacant properties where substandard housing has been removed. There are limited commercial and shopping opportunities within or adjacent to these neighborhoods, although some properties have been zoned commercial. This area is roughly bounded by Williams Road to the north, Northside Drive and Blitch Street to the east, West Jones Avenue to the south, and Stockyard Road to the west. The southwestern boundary of this area is not defined by a street but is mostly contained by undeveloped forest and agricultural uses. Strategies for reinvestment and provision of quality affordable housing, in partnership with outside agencies such as Habitat for Humanity, will be needed in order to revitalize these neighborhoods and connect them with downtown and surrounding areas in a meaningful way.



### *Whitesville and East Parrish Street Neighborhoods*

Similar to the West Side Neighborhoods, these also face significant disinvestment and contain substandard housing. Strategies for revitalization may be similar to those used on the West Side, but the comparative isolation of this area may pose a challenge when trying to reconnect with surrounding neighborhoods.

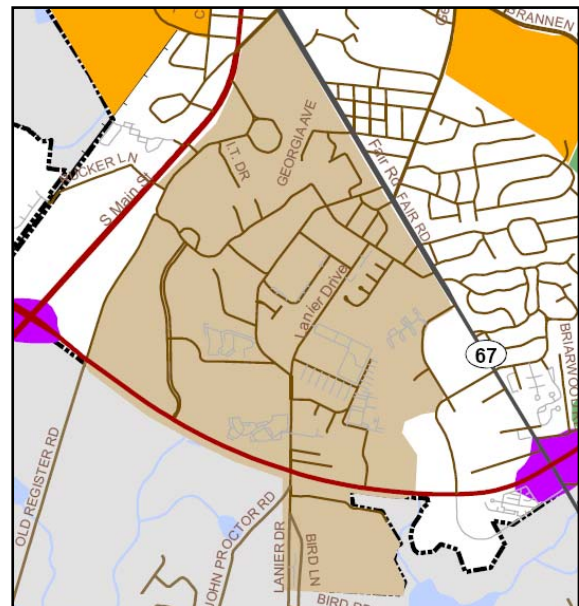


## **University Area**

This area is home to the GSU campus and surrounding residential and commercial areas. Because of the unique influence of the University, this area has opportunities and challenges that are magnified by the large number of student renters living there. This area may be expanded in the future to include adjacent residential neighborhoods which may be facing similar challenges.

The increasing supply of University housing, such as dorms and apartment buildings, have slightly reduced demand for off-campus housing in recent years, and a requirement for all freshman to live on-campus will further reduce the number of off-campus renters in the near-term. However, as enrollment increases so will demand for rental units within the private market. Rental properties in this area tend to have high turnover and are prone to neglect by tenants and owners, creating a situation where homeowners sell their properties and leave. In some areas, this process has the tendency of creating neighborhoods that are dominated by rental properties, as can be seen in the residential area immediately adjacent to the east of campus along Herty Drive and to the southeast of campus and west of Fair Road.

Commercial properties in this area are also unique in their specific catering to students. Community disturbance issues such as public drunkenness, noise ordinance violations and larceny are more common in this area, some of which may be exacerbated by the presence of student-oriented bars and restaurants, along with a large number of private parties which are typical of a college neighborhood.





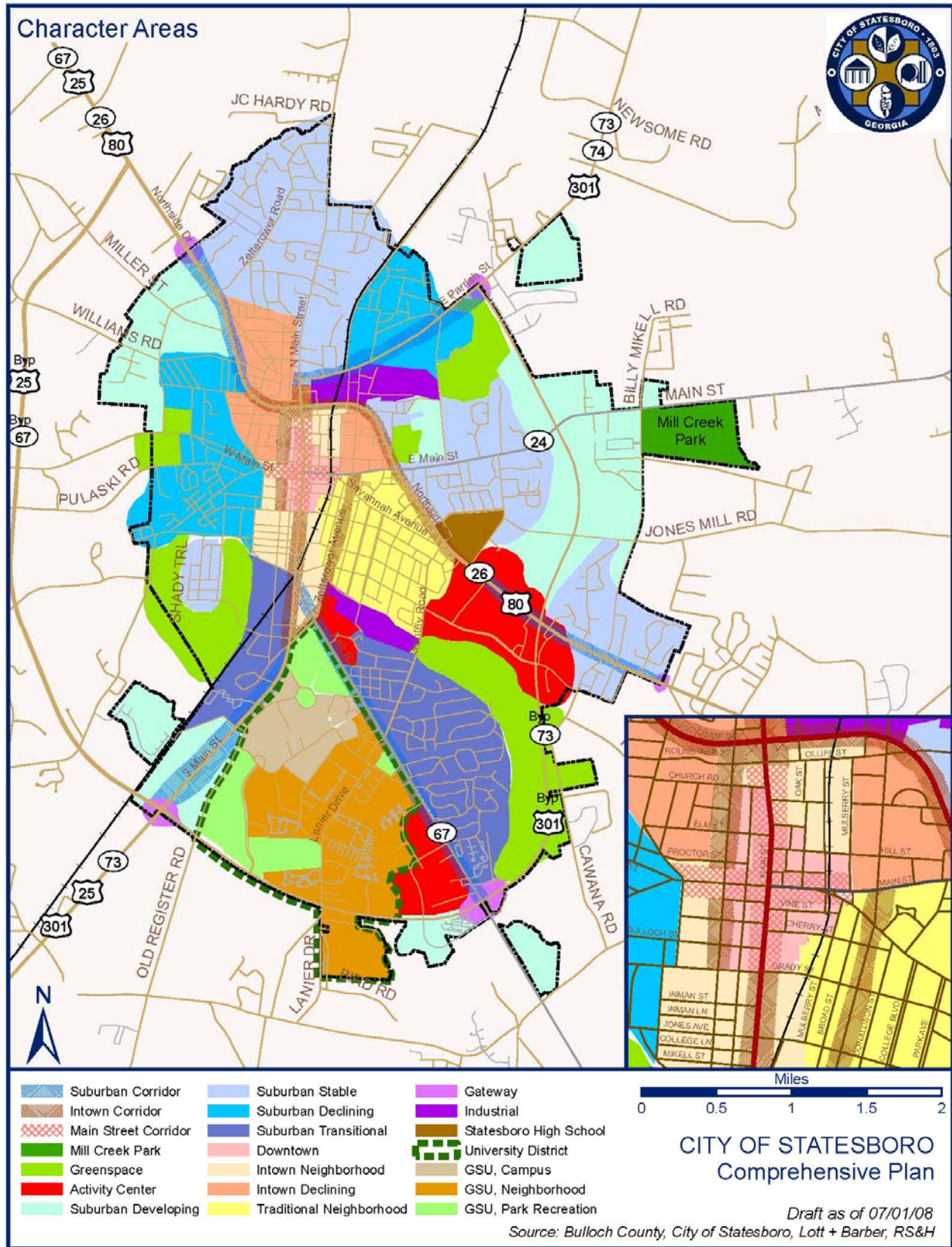
### **III. RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS**

The DCA defines a Character Areas as: “A specific geographic area within the community that:

- Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor);
- Has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into more attractive village development pattern); or
- Requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.)

Each Character Area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision. The Character Areas described in the following section were created with input from the Steering Committee, City staff and the consultant team. The map of Recommended Character Areas is shown as Figure 3.

Figure 4



## Downtown

Downtown is the historic core of city, with traditional commercial land uses and limited residential in the form of apartments and condominiums. There is an interconnected street grid, with the heaviest activity along the main streets and College Avenue to the west. Lots are typically small with zero-lot line buildings and shallow or no setbacks from the street right-of-way. There is also continuous sidewalk system throughout Downtown and a link with the McTell Trail, with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the GSU Parks and Recreation area to the south.



### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Maintain integrity of interconnected grid and pedestrian circulation
- New development should respect historic context of building mass, height and setbacks
- Historic structures should be preserved or adaptively reused wherever possible
- Encourage mixed-use infill and redevelopment
- Create local historic districts
- Economic development strategies should continue to nurture thriving commercial activity
- Enhance tree planting to include more shade trees and ornamental streetscape plantings
- Ensure that future phases of streetscape enhancements are developed in harmony with previous efforts as well as economic development goals of the City and the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority (DSDA) / Main Street program
- Continue to promote downtown as the cultural hub of the region (for example, through programs sponsored by the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority and the Averitt Center for the Arts)

## Main Street Corridors (overlay)

Historic Main Streets in the Downtown area were the center of commerce and shopping from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sidewalks and attractive streetscaping can be found along both Main streets. Predominant building types include two- to three-story commercial buildings typical of regional construction and styles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some buildings within





the corridor have been demolished for parking space, but remaining buildings still define and contribute to the historic character of this area.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Same as *Downtown*

### **Traditional Neighborhood**

Traditional residential neighborhood developed from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, features connected street grid linked with downtown. Sidewalks found on both sides of major streets; lesser streets have limited facilities. Portions of Savannah and Zetterower avenues are transitioning into predominately commercial uses; these corridors are also major traffic thoroughfares between downtown and the *Activity Centers*.



*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Ensure that new development and land uses do not encroach upon or detract from the character of the recognized National Historic Districts within this area
- Consider creating local historic districts to protect Savannah Avenue and other historic residential areas from inappropriate development and to restrict the demolition or substantial alteration of recognized historic structures
- Enhance existing pedestrian connectivity by repairing/replacing sidewalks and adding new ones, where necessary
- Plant shade trees along streets and sidewalks

### **In-town Neighborhood**

These areas surround downtown and feature more residential land uses. Other uses are similar to those found downtown, but with much lower density and intensity. In-town areas tend to have a well-connected network of streets linking with the downtown area. Sidewalks and streetscaping are limited or non-existent.



*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Encourage residential infill and redevelopment in these areas that maintain the existing character; limit commercial uses to primary arteries
- Enhance existing pedestrian connectivity by adding new sidewalks and repairing/replacing old ones where necessary
- Plant shade trees along streets and sidewalks

**In-town Neighborhood – Declining**

Similar to *In-town Neighborhoods*, these areas of disinvestment and poor property maintenance result in substandard housing and vacant properties.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Focus on infill and redevelopment in distressed areas to create quality housing (affordable and market-rate)
- Continue to implement programs such as Habitat For Humanity that meet the housing needs of existing residents
- Enhance existing pedestrian connectivity within the neighborhood by adding new sidewalks and repairing/replacing old ones where necessary
- Plant shade trees along streets and sidewalks

**In-town Corridors (overlay)**

These corridors are auto-dependent and provide connectivity with the downtown area, although historic architecture and land uses do not appear in the same quantity and density as downtown. Sidewalk facilities are available but may be discontinuous in places. Residential uses may abut these corridors, with some street connectivity between character areas.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Envision these corridors as extensions of downtown, with high levels of connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods
- Encourage the infill of mixed uses wherever possible
- Consider a streetscaping enhancement program similar to the one downtown
- Require shade trees to be planted in parking lots and along highway corridors

- Require infill and redevelopment within these corridors to be pedestrian-oriented and linked with surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Encourage the redevelopment of the corridor between downtown and the GSU campus to provide an attractive, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere between these two character areas; retail and other uses that provide “stepping stones” between the university and downtown should be promoted
- Encourage architectural styles and building types that refer to historic structures found downtown or existing along the corridor

### **Activity Centers**

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Commercial uses dominate this category, especially large strip malls, shopping malls and department stores. Fast food and franchise dining establishments are also found here, especially as outparcel developments. Little or no pedestrian and bicycle circulation found in these areas, which are auto-dependent and largely separated from nearby residential areas.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Infill and redevelopment in these areas should occur according to a master plan that allows for mixed uses, transportation choices and urban design that mitigates the appearance of auto-dependence (such as screening parking lots or locating large parking areas primarily to the sides and rear of buildings)
- Future developments and highway improvements within these areas should include pedestrian and bicycle access to surrounding neighborhoods
- Connect these areas with existing and proposed networks of bicycle paths, sidewalks and multiuse trails (such as the McTell Trail and the proposed county greenway)
- Require shade trees to be planted in parking lots and along highway corridors
- Focus on redevelopment in areas of disinvestment (such as those that have become or are in danger of becoming “greyfields”). Development strategy should encourage uses and activities that are suitable for the immediately-surrounding character areas

### Suburban Corridors (overlay)

These corridors feature larger lot sizes and less intense activities than the *In-town Corridors*. Auto-dependent, primarily commercial land uses (similar to those found in the *Activity Centers*) occur on outparcels and at intersections. Sidewalks are limited or non-existent.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- These areas have some characteristics similar to the *Activity Centers* character areas; development strategies for those areas should be followed wherever appropriate
- Similar to the *Suburban* character areas, it is suggested that all large-scale (multi-lot) developments be master-planned and include mixed-uses wherever appropriate

### Suburban – Stable

Primarily residential consisting of single-family houses. Street network has limited connectivity; sidewalk facilities limited or absent. Commercial development tends to occur in the form of strip malls and other convenience shopping on outparcels along main roads. School grounds and small office parks may also be found in these areas.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Any new development should be master-planned to include mixed-uses wherever appropriate. These developments should blend residential uses with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses, and services, linked together in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips
- Promote walking and bicycling as an alternative means of transportation
- There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each subdivision
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and restrict “franchise” or “corporate” architecture



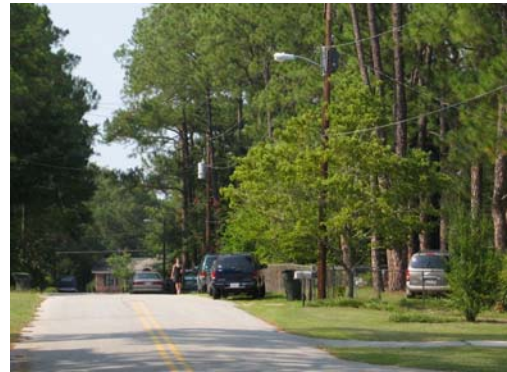
- Wherever possible, connect to the existing and proposed network of bicycle paths and multiuse trails (such as the McTell Trail)
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities

### **Suburban – Transitional**

Similar to *Suburban Stable*, but with some houses in poor condition, presumably due to owner neglect. Single-family houses may have been converted to multi-family rentals and limited parking space on individual lots may be an issue.

#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Strengthen enforcement of code violations for private property, including property maintenance, parking, and structural conditions
- Ensure adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities for students commuting to and from GSU campus



### **Suburban – Declining**

Similar to *Suburban Transitional*, but with more obvious signs of owner neglect. Property maintenance violations may be common. Visible evidence of reinvestment is scattered and uneven. Housing units are predominantly rental.

#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Strengthen enforcement of code violations for private property, including property maintenance, parking, and structural conditions
- Ensure adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link these neighborhoods with adjacent areas.

### **Suburban – Developing**

These areas are currently undeveloped or minimally developed but are under pressure to grow in a suburban manner, which has conventionally featured separate land uses, primarily single-family residential uses, and strip mall development along outparcels. These developing areas can be found at the periphery of the city, adjacent to existing suburban development and highway corridors.

### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Within these areas, identify places of natural beauty and sensitive natural resources (such as wetlands) and protect these areas from development
- New development should be master-planned to include mixed-uses wherever appropriate. These developments should blend residential uses with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses, and services, linked together in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision
- Promote walking and bicycling as an alternative means of transportation
- There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each subdivision
- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street network connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain regional character, and restrict “franchise” or “corporate” architecture
- Promote street designs that foster traffic calming, such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities



### **GSU – Academic Campus**

This is a traditional four-year college campus. Academic and administrative buildings, residence halls and dorms, student activity centers, cafeterias, performing arts venues, and ancillary buildings are found in the campus core, which is organized around an internal pedestrian circulation system. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within the campus is excellent. Parking lots are found along the periphery, allowing students, faculty and staff to park and walk to buildings and facilities in the core.



*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Encourage future growth within the academic core
- Host formal discussions between GSU and the City on how to strengthen physical “town and gown” connections between the campus and adjacent commercial and residential areas.
- Consider the pros and cons of the greenbelt around campus, which physically separates the campus from the greater community
- Continue to preserve open spaces such as Sweetheart Circle and areas of natural beauty, including Herty Pines
- Collaboratively address parking needs on campus that may also affect public and private property in surrounding areas
- Consider the installation of parking structures on campus as a parking solution. Potential sites include the existing parking areas near the Hwy 67 entrance, along Old Register Road, and along Chandler Road

**GSU – Parks and Recreation**

These areas feature formal athletics fields, including GSU athletics NCAA football and baseball stadiums. Some passive open spaces are also found in limited supply. The University’s student recreation center is also located within the southwestern Parks and Recreation Area.

**GSU – Student Neighborhood**

Residential areas adjacent to the GSU campus, primarily oriented to student housing. Multi-family, duplex and single-family housing types are all found in this district. Student-oriented commercial uses are found along primary arteries, including restaurants/bars and nightclubs. Interspersed throughout this area are GSU properties including residential halls.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Strengthen enforcement of code violations for private property, including property maintenance, parking, and structural conditions

- Ensure adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities for students commuting to and from GSU campus

### **Mill Creek Park**

The largest public recreation facility in the city and county, Mill Creek Park has a variety of playing fields, playgrounds, walking paths, and passive open spaces. The park also features a water park and indoor swimming facility. Parking areas are consolidated behind the playing fields, with vehicular circulation on the periphery. The park occupied land that was annexed by the city and is abutted by the county on three sides. These areas in the surrounding county are directly influenced by the park; land uses in this area will need to be considered in annexation becomes a possibility.



### **Greenspace**

These areas include a range of uses, but are characterized primarily by lack of built structures and surface paving. Agriculture and silviculture uses appear on the periphery of the city. Wetlands and undeveloped forest (non-silviculture) are also found throughout the city.



#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Within these areas, identify places of natural beauty and sensitive natural resources (such as wetlands) and protect these areas from development; consider the use of conservation easements for increased protection in perpetuity
- New development should be master-planned and carefully linked to surrounding developed areas through a network of streets
- Wherever possible, connect new development with existing and proposed networks of bicycle paths and multiuse trails (such as the McTell Trail)



## Industrial

Heavy industrial uses within the city include concrete plants and wood mills. These areas are auto-dependent and have limited commercial activities on frontage parcels. Internal street networks are limited or non-existent; as is typical of industrial areas, connectivity with surrounding character areas is non-existent.



### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Mitigate the appearance of these areas as they present themselves to adjacent corridors and surrounding character areas. Where necessary, consider trees and other planted buffers as a visual screen and to attenuate noise levels associated with industrial activities
- Encourage infill and redevelopment within these areas that consists of industrial uses similar or complimentary in nature to existing uses

## Statesboro High School

The campus of the city's only public high school, the uses consist of primarily educational and administrative buildings with associated parking and vehicle circulation. Athletic fields and ancillary facilities are also included. SHS is largely auto-dependent, with most students and staff arriving by car or bus. Limited pedestrian and bicycle connectivity exists to link the surrounding residential areas.

### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with surrounding streets and neighborhoods
- Require shade trees to be planted in parking lots and along adjacent public roads

## Gateways

These areas are located at the intersections of the by-pass and Highways 67 and 301 South and at the city limits where Highway 301 North and Highway 80 North and South intersect. The gateways at the intersection with the by-pass are auto-dominant and feature commercial, auto-oriented land uses on most corners of



their intersections. Traffic lanes are very wide, with separate left turn lanes and median strips. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are present but not connected to any nearby facilities, making accessibility difficult.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street network connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain regional character, and restrict “franchise” or “corporate” architecture
- Promote street designs that foster traffic calming, such as narrower streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities

## ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs)

### **QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES: LOCAL ASSESSMENT**

In 1999, the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve her unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities.

This assessment is meant to give a community an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the DCA, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community “you are here.” Each of the fifteen QCOs has a set of yes/no questions, with additional space available for assessors’ comments. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of “yes” answers for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. “No’s” may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives.

This initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the community’s policies, not an in-depth analysis. There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Its merit lies in completion of the document and the ensuing discussions regarding future development patterns as governments undergo the comprehensive planning process.

Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective, it may consider a “yes” to each statement a benchmark toward achievement. This assessment is an initial step. Local governments striving for excellence in quality growth may consider additional measures to meet local goals.

<b>Development Patterns</b>		
<b>Traditional Neighborhoods</b>		
<b>Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	X	
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development "by right" so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	X	
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.		X
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.		X
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X	
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X	
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X	
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X	
9. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X	

- Several zoning districts are classified as mixed use (mixture of commercial, residential, institutional, and/or residential uses). However, the majority of zoning districts allow for a single use only.
- Neo-traditional development is currently allowed only in Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
- The existing tree ordinance does not prevent total land clearance (and tree removal) of a developable site. Incentives and/or requirements for land developers to retain significant shade trees and native species on site should be included in the tree ordinance, in addition to requirements for planting new trees.
- Many of the city's main thoroughfares do not possess shade trees or other types of ornamental street trees.
- Keep Bulloch Beautiful operates regular beautification programs and organized clean-ups within the city.



- Many streets and public rights-of-way outside of the downtown and the surrounding residential areas lack pedestrian amenities.
- Downtown and the areas surrounding GSU are the only districts area where several errands can be, and frequently are, carried out on foot.
- Several, but not all, schools are located near the students that they serve. Elementary schools located in residential neighborhoods can be accessed safely on foot or bicycle. However, the majority of the student population and school staff commute by bus or car.

School Name	Location
Julia P. Bryant Elementary	Residential neighborhood
Langston Chapel Elementary	Rural roadway (Bulloch County); no residential proximity
Langston Chapel Middle	Rural roadway (Bulloch County); no residential proximity
Mattie Lively Elementary	Residential neighborhood
Mill Creek Elementary	Suburban roadway, adjacent to residential areas
Sallie Zetterower Elementary	Residential neighborhood
Statesboro High School	Suburban roadway; adjacent to residential areas
William James Middle School	Rural highway (Bulloch County); no residential proximity

<b>Infill Development</b>		
<b>Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.		X
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.		X
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.		X
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		X
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.		X

- The Downtown Statesboro Development Authority is compiling a list of vacant sites and other properties available for development that are located within its boundaries. A similar inventory is not available for the entirety of the jurisdiction.
- The city does not have a large amount of brownfields.
- Small lot development is allowed downtown only, by approval of the City Council.

<b>Sense of Place</b>		
<b>Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	X	
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.		X
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.		X
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X	
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X

- Downtown Statesboro has a distinct sense of place that needs to be maintained and enhanced.
- The majority of areas outside of downtown and GSU, particularly commercial districts along the city's highway corridors, lack a sense of place.
- The city has identified numerous historic districts and neighborhoods within its jurisdiction. However, there are currently no local ordinances in place to protect historic buildings or to preserve the context and integrity of the historic districts and neighborhoods.
- The city is considering a restriction on metal siding on commercial buildings.
- The city has a signage ordinance that it enforces.

<b>Transportation Alternatives</b>		
<b>Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We have public transportation in our community.		X
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	X	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X	
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.		X
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		X
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X	

- GSU operates a bus system for faculty, students and staff which could serve as the backbone for a community-wide public system.
- Sidewalks in new developments are only required along arterial and collector streets.

<b>Regional Identity</b>		
<b>Each region should promote and preserve a regional “identity,” or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X	
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).	X	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.		
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X	

6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X	
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- In terms of architectural quality and context, Statesboro has many buildings and historic districts from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that are representative of the styles and heritage of south Georgia.
- The city recently inaugurated a farmers market.
- Statesboro serves as the economic and cultural hub of the region, providing surrounding communities with business, entertainment and education opportunities. This role needs to be thoroughly embraced and marketed to the surrounding region.
- For a community of its size, Statesboro has exceptional access to cultural events, activities and performances through its association with GSU. The city also promotes the arts by sponsoring the Averitt Arts Center, which has become a cultural center for the downtown district.

<b>Resource Conservation</b>		
<b>Heritage Preservation</b>		
<b>The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	X	
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		X
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.		X

- Historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but are not locally designated or protected.
- To prevent loss of or irrevocable alteration to the city's valuable historic resources, preservation needs to be seen as an important issue and championed by an appointed historic preservation commission.
- Development within downtown is required to be compatible with its surroundings, but specific design guidelines do not exist.



<b>Open Space Preservation</b>		
<b>New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		X
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		X
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.		X
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.		X

- Conservation of the city's remaining agricultural and forest land needs to be seen as a priority. Green spaces and open agricultural are a part of the city's unique heritage.

<b>Environmental Protection</b>		
<b>Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		X
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		N/A
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.		X
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.		X
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.	X	
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X	
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.		X
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).		X

- Forests, agricultural lands, wetlands, streams, and other natural resources within the city are increasingly being encroached upon and/or replaced by new development.
- The city follows state and federal requirements for defining and protecting its natural resources.
- The city uses conventional best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater, but recent advances in stormwater management are not currently reflected in these practices. Recent BMPs include reduction of impervious surfaces, on-site stormwater retention in the form of bio-swales, and residential and commercial re-use of graywater.

<b>Social and Economic Development</b>		
<b>Growth Preparedness</b>		
Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.		X
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X	
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.		X
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X	
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		X
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X	
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.		X
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X	

10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X	
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- The city has access to recent population studies which city officials feel underestimate the actual population growth.

<b>Appropriate Businesses</b>		
<b>The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X	
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X	
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.		X
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	X	

- The largest employers in Statesboro include GSU, East Georgia Regional Medical Center, and several industries and corporations, with no particular sector of employment being overemphasized.
- The presence of locally- and regionally-based businesses (smaller business operations are often referred to as “mom and pops”) has diminished in recent years due to competition from national chain retailers and restaurants. Local businesses in the community need to be supported in order to maintain a vibrant and diverse business culture that retains economic ties with Statesboro and Bulloch County.

<b>Employment Options</b>		
<b>A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X	
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X	

3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X	
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X	
<b>Housing Choices</b>		
<b>A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.</b>		
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.		X
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X	
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).	X	
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.		X
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	X	
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X	
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X	
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X	
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	X	
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.		X

- Public housing, provided by the Statesboro Housing Authority, is at capacity and has a continuous wait list of families who need affordable housing. This indicates that more units need to be provided for the neediest residents.
- The community has an active Habitat for Humanity program.

<b>Educational Opportunities</b>		
<b>Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.</b>		
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	X	

2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X	
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X	
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X	

- Workforce training and adult education are provided by Ogeechee Technical College (OTC) and the Continuing Education Center at GSU.
- GSU and OTC provide excellent higher education opportunities for students within the region. Proximity to colleges and universities in the Savannah area (50 miles away) significantly increases the available options.

<b>Governmental Relations</b>		
<b>Regional Solutions</b>		
<b>Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X	
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X	
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X	
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X	
<b>Regional Cooperation</b>		
<b>Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X	
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.		X



3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	X	
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	X	

- The City of Statesboro and Bulloch County are preparing their respective comprehensive plans separately. However, they are currently collaborating on a countywide transportation plan.
- City officials meet as needed with neighboring jurisdictions; has regular meetings with GSU.

## SUPPORTING ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INFORMATION

### I. INTRODUCTION

The following analysis is based on the technical data and information contained in the Data Appendix. This analysis is provided to provide a summary of the most relevant information of the community's data, especially as it relates to the community's preliminary identification of Issues and Opportunities.

### II. ANALYSIS

#### *Population*

By the year 2030, the projected population of the City of Statesboro is projected to increase by approximately 50% over 2000 figures. Among the historic and projected growth for Statesboro, Bulloch County, the State of Georgia, and the United States, Statesboro has had the highest cumulative growth rate over the last 15 years relative to its size, at 55.5%. Due to the major university presence, the median age in 2000 was 22 years, which is significantly lower than the state median age of 34.6 and the county median age of 26.1. These trends are likely to continue, with a 16% increase by 2030. The young median age can present certain challenges, especially when many of these people are not full-time residents.

Of the total population, racial composition in 2000 consisted of 56.2% white, 40.3% African American, 0.07% Native American, 1.4% Asian, and 2.1% other races. Over time, the proportion of white persons has decreased while African American and, to a lesser degree, other minority races have increased relative to the total. Other minority races are anticipated to undergo minimal percentage increases. When compared to the rest of the state, Statesboro has a higher proportion of African American population and a lower proportion of other minority races. Hispanic ethnicity also consists of significantly lower proportion of Statesboro's population than in the state or nation.

#### *Economic Development*

From 1990 to 2000, all employment industries except for manufacturing and wholesale trade, added jobs in the city. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services saw a large increase from 1990 to 2000, going from 2.7% to 18.8% of employment. These trends are expected to continue over the next several years. Service employment categories are expected to see an increase of over 200% from 1990 levels by 2030. Statesboro has a lower proportion (57%) of residents in the labor force the state and national average. This is likely due to the number of residents in that age group that attend GSU full time.

Based on the 2000 Census, the median income for a family was \$35,391 and the per capita income was \$12,585. However, a study commissioned by the City of Statesboro<sup>1</sup>, reported a per capita income between \$13,561 and \$14,254. Also, the estimated household income according to the study is between \$37,568 and \$42,042. The disparity in numbers is likely due to the fact that many incomes reported are those of college students, most of which are employed part-time or not at all. Other issues reflected by the Census Bureau may also be due to the large student population. For example, over 30 percent of household incomes are below \$10,000, which is well below the 2000 poverty line of \$17,600. Bulloch County has 0.93 jobs for every housing unit, which is below the standard target of 1.5 jobs per housing unit.

The top three employers in the city include Georgia Southern University (GSU), Briggs & Stratton and the Board of Education. According to the 2000 Census, educational, health and social services accounted for 27.1% of Statesboro residents' employment in 2000. GSU also contributes to the local economy in a variety of ways, for instance through indirect spending by students, faculty, and staff within the community. According to the GSU website, the university has a regional economic impact of \$719 million.

### *Housing*

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in Statesboro increased by 60%. During this timeframe, the total number of single family units increased by 22%, while the production of multi-family units increased by 113%, driven by the large student population. However, this rapid increase of construction of new multi-family units has led to concerns about the decline of older units which can transition into substandard housing.

In 2000, single units (detached and attached) comprised less than half of the housing types in Statesboro, while multiple units comprised a staggering 53% of housing units. This percentage is significantly higher than in the State of Georgia, in which multiple units comprise just over 20% of housing units. The City implemented a Residential Subdivision Incentive Program in 2001 to encourage the development of more single-family housing. Beginning in 2005, the City did see a significant increase in the number of single family building permits issued, which has continued since this time.

Growth in Statesboro, when examined together with that in Bulloch County, reveals a pattern of suburban growth around the city, primarily on the north side of town, to the east of downtown, and in the southeast across from the GSU campus. Growth rates in the city are anticipated to continue to increase as land is developed and/or redeveloped, and as more areas become annexed

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<sup>1</sup> *Estimation of Household Income and Per Capita Income Excluding Traditional College Students: An Adjustment to the Census 2000 Data for Statesboro, GA*, Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development, Georgia Southern University, May 14, 2003.

into the jurisdiction. Larger suburban homes and estate homes may become fewer in number as sufficient acreage for large lot home sites will be unavailable. Further annexation may be necessary before these housing types become more widely available within the city limits.

The median age of housing structures in 2000 was 15 years, reflecting a high rate of housing production. The rate of increase in housing production between 1990 and 2000 was slightly greater than population growth.

As a measure of affordability, cost-burdened households are those that are paying 30% or more of their net income on total housing costs; severely cost-burdened households are paying 50% or more of net income on total housing costs. Information from the US Census in 2000 estimates approximately 15 percent of the households in Statesboro were cost-burdened (as compared to 12% of the state) , while another 28 percent were severely cost-burdened (compared to 8% of the state). Again, this significant disparity between Statesboro and Georgia statistics is influenced by the large student population. In 2001, GSU had an enrollment of almost 13,000 undergraduates. Only 2,718 of these students live in university housing, leaving a balance of 10,080 students living in Statesboro or surrounding areas.

#### *Natural and Cultural Resources*

Agriculture, forested areas, and vacant land account for 18.8% of the existing land use in the City, indicating potential for permanent conservation. Parks, recreation areas and multi-use trails account for another 2.4% of land, most of which is under the direct management of the Parks & Recreation Department and GSU. Together, the above uses occupy almost 24% of the total land in the city. With increasing population growth and development pressures, consideration for these resources will be important if the city is to maintain its recreation areas, green infrastructure and other open spaces.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Federal 404 permitting program is designed to protect wetlands and waters of the State. The City of Statesboro has relied on this program to mitigate the impacts of development on the City's wetlands. As such, the city has been at least partially effective in protecting areas that provide valuable floodplain storage and water quality treatment for stormwater runoff.

A National Register project was sponsored by the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority in the late 1980s. This included a survey of the city's resources which resulted in the listing of seven commercial and residential historic districts, and four individual properties. These listings could provide the basis for future local historic districts and guidelines. In addition to the listings on the National Register, numerous locally important resources have been identified which

contribute to the historic fabric of the community. Many of these may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

### *Community Facilities*

Water and Sewer – The City currently provides public water and sewer services and currently has adequate capacity to meet projected demands. Capital improvements have been identified for both systems in order to maintain current level of service and to meet the growing demands of the community. Statesboro participates in intergovernmental agreements with Bulloch County and the Statesboro-Bulloch County Development Authority for water and sewer service outside the city limits.

Public Safety – The Statesboro Police Department recently constructed a new facility, which should meet the needs of the department for at least the next 15 years. The police and fire departments both have mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions and organizations. EMS/Rescue services are provided by Bulloch County. All of these departments are currently meeting the needs of the community. In addition, Georgia Southern University also houses its own public safety department on campus, which includes officers deputized by the Bulloch County Sheriff's Department.

Recycling - The main recycling center is owned and operated by Bulloch county and is located at the transfer station on Lakeview Road. The center was designed to handle 150 tons per day, but is currently operating beyond capacity at 250 – 300 tons per day. Plans to increase the capacity at both the transfer station and recycling facility are part of the city's current capital improvements in cooperation with the county. As the city grows, the recycling center and collection stations, as part of its expansion, could also be upgraded to include more types of recyclable materials. The city will also need to begin researching the feasibility of curbside recycling services and educating residents about the recycling process.

Parks - The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends 10 acres of recreational space per 1,000 residents. Statesboro currently maintains a ratio of approximately 4.4 acres per 1,000 residents, less than half the national standard. The city will need to add more greenspace and parkland as the population grows or it will continue to fall further behind the national standard.

The Recreation Department is facing a shortage of indoor athletics facilities, such as a gymnasium and indoor basketball courts, which will need to be met in order to avoid over-reliance on the facilities of other institutions. A recent land donation (28+ acres) known as Fred Fletcher Park will be developed according to a master plan in the near future. The Recreation



Department has plans to renovate and upgrade facilities at Luetta Moore Park and Memorial Parks.

Public Housing - The Statesboro Housing Authority currently manages 148 units in the city, serving a total of 116 families. However, the Authority has a waiting list with approximately 25 eligible families in need of housing at any given time, indicating that there is a shortage of units. Each of the public housing units has been upgraded and remodeled, some more than once, but many units are in need of being replaced due to their age.

Streets, Sidewalks & Transit - Sidewalks are currently needed in several areas of the City, including along Gentilly Road, Lester Road, East Main Street, and North Main Street. Bicycle lanes are also needed along several of the city's main traffic thoroughfares. A feasibility study is needed to determine bicycle routes, followed by an implementation plan to include bicycle facilities with scheduled roadway improvements.

Currently, GSU operates the only transit service in the. The GSU bus system transports students between classroom buildings and parking facilities, with limited connectivity to apartment buildings. The city should conduct a feasibility study to determine how the existing bus system could link with a larger, city-wide system to provide service to the general public. Such a system would potentially link GSU, downtown and the shopping district, as well as surrounding residential neighborhoods.

#### *Intergovernmental Coordination*

As the county seat of Bulloch County, strong coordination with the county and other municipalities will become increasingly important. Close coordination with Georgia Southern University will continue to be important, especially to address the issues and opportunities presented by a large student population living off-campus. Community issues such as transportation and housing will require a cooperative partnership for the benefit of both entities.

The Bulloch County School Board provides the public school system for Statesboro. Coordination of the location of new schools can enhance pedestrian and bicycle access schools and ensure safe routes to schools. Several schools are already linked to their surrounding neighborhoods by sidewalks and, in some instances, bicycle lanes. It will be necessary to strengthen and maintain these links in order to meet the future needs of the community and to accommodate those who choose to walk or bicycle to school.

The Statesboro-Bulloch County Development Authority and the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority are both important partners in promoting quality economic development in the City. In addition, the Statesboro Arts Council operates the Averitt Center for the Arts,

which was established to provide a venue for community arts activities and performances while serving as a cultural centerpiece for downtown Statesboro. The Arts Council also cooperates with the Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau to fund arts-based programs and performances that expand tourism in the city.

As Statesboro embraces its role as a regional economic center it will become increasingly important for the city to maintain and strengthen its relationships with other governmental bodies and outside agencies.

### *Transportation Systems*

Transportation within the City of Statesboro is primarily vehicular, as is typical for a city of its size, location, and supply of housing and employment centers. Statesboro does have a mile-long bicycle/pedestrian path named McTell Trail (after local musician “Blind” Willie McTell). It is the only city facility of this nature. The city could consider plans to extend this trail throughout the city and to the proposed county greenway, providing even greater connectivity in the city and the greater community.

The most significant parking issues relate to the GSU campus and surrounding neighborhoods. The transition from traditional single family homes in residential neighborhoods to student housing is causing significant parking issues in these neighborhoods. This is a significant concern to the community.

Many daily trips on Statesboro’s transportation system occur during the commute between home and work. The location of residential and employment land uses therefore greatly impacts the level of demand on the transportation system. As shown in the Transportation Data Appendix, 56.9% of Statesboro workers lived in Bulloch County in 2004, while 43.1% commuted from outside the county.

In 2004, over 60% of employed Statesboro residents worked within Bulloch County and over 50% worked within Statesboro. With a stronger jobs-housing balance, this number might increase so that commute trips would become shorter overall and residents might take advantage of walking or bicycling to work.

### **III. COMPLIANCE WITH RULES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA**

The City of Statesboro has implemented environmental regulations for the protection of Wetlands and Groundwater Recharge Areas consistent with DNR’s Rules for Environmental Planning.

#### IV. ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Georgia General Assembly adopted the “Service Delivery Strategy Act” (OCGA 36-70) in 1997. This Act requires all counties and cities in Georgia to prepare and adopt Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) for their jurisdictions on a countywide basis.

The SDS preparation process is intended minimize the duplication of services and competition between local governments and to resolve inefficiencies in the delivery of those services. It was also to provide a mechanism to resolve disputes over local government service delivery, funding equity, and land use. The SDS preparation process provides a tool for addressing incompatible land use plans, as well an agreement on how governments would provide funding for each specific service in each area.

With the inception of the Department of Community Affairs’ rule changes effective May 1, 2005, the SDS and accompanying agreement must be addressed in conjunction with the preparation of the new local Comprehensive Plan. Table 1 provides a summary of the current Service Delivery Strategy. Necessary updates will occur concurrently with the development of the Community Agenda.

Table 1: Service Delivery Strategy			
Service Provided	Service Provided by		Inconsistencies
	City of Statesboro	Bulloch County	
Animal Control	No	Yes	None
Building Inspection, Permits, Planning, Subdivision Review, and Zoning	Yes	Yes	None
Code Enforcement	Yes	Yes	None
Courts	Municipal	Yes	None
Drainage Maintenance	Yes	-	None
E911/Communication	No	Yes	None
Economic Development	Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority		None
Emergency Management	\$5000 annual contribution	Yes	None
Emergency Medical Service	No	Yes	None
Engineering (Design)	Yes	Yes	None
Extension Service	UGA Extension Service		None
Fire Protection (provided by each municipality located in a fire district, and independent Fire	Yes. Fire tax dist 5-mile radius around fire stations	Yes, 8 rural volunteer fire depts.	None

<b>Table 1: Service Delivery Strategy</b>			
<i>Service Provided</i>	<i>Service Provided by</i>		<i>Inconsistencies</i>
	<i>City of Statesboro</i>	<i>Bulloch County</i>	
Dept within other parts of the County)			
Forestry	Georgia Forestry Service		None
GIS/Mapping	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	None
Hospital	East Georgia Medical Center		None
Indigent Defense	No	Yes	None
Jail	No	Yes	None
Landfill	Yes	Yes	None
Law Enforcement	Yes	Yes	None
Parks and Recreation	No	Yes	None
Public Health Service	Health Department		None
Public Works (Administrative)	Yes	-	None
Registrar	No	Yes	None
Road/Street Construction	Yes	Yes	None
Road/Street Maintenance	Yes	Yes	None
Senior Citizen Programs	No	Yes	None
Social Service	Division of Family and Children Services		None
Solid Waste Collection	Yes	No	None
Solid Waste Management	Yes	Yes	None
Storm Water Collection	Yes	-	None
Tax Assessment	No	Yes	None
Tax Collection	Yes	Yes	None
Wastewater Collection and Treatment (service may extend within ½ -mile of municipal boundary)	Yes	No	None
Water Supply and Distribution (service may extend within ½ -mile of municipal boundary)	Yes	No	None

<sup>2</sup> The County maintains the system county-wide and provides services to the City via a maintenance fee. The City also maintains its own GIS for creating its own maps, using the County data.