

CITY OF COMMERCE, GEORGIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

COMMUNITY AGENDA 2010-2030

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The first phase of the comprehensive planning process consisted of preparation of three reports: (1) a “Community Assessment,” (2) a “Technical Appendix to the Community Assessment, and (3) a “Community Participation Program.” The Community Assessment and Community Participation Program were accepted by the region and state in early 2010.

This document is the “Community Agenda,” which was prepared following review of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. At its most basic level, a “Community Agenda” according to the administrative rules for local planning effective May 1, 2005, consists of at least the following: a summary of issues and opportunities; a future development map of character areas; policies; and a short-term work program. Implied within these requirements is supportive demographic information, such as population and employment projections.

The Community Agenda is intended to resolve issues and capitalize on opportunities identified during the process of preparing the Community Assessment. The final list of issues and opportunities is provided in an appendix to this Community Agenda. However, the description of how the issues are resolved or opportunities are capitalized on is provided in each of the various substantive chapters of this Community Agenda.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS COMMUNITY AGENDA

Following this introduction (Chapter 1), this document is organized according to thematic chapters on: protecting the environment (Chapter 2), preserving Commerce’s history (Chapter 3), planning for people and living areas (Chapter 4), growing the economy (Chapter 5), character areas (Chapter 6), land use (Chapter 7), facilities to accommodate growth (Chapter 8), moving people and goods around (Chapter 9), and working with the larger community (Chapter 10). Following those chapters with topical or substantive focus are chapters on policies (Chapter 11) and implementation (Chapter 12). All policies are consolidated into a single chapter so that are more easily and comprehensively referenced. The short-term work program appears in the implementation chapter.

PURPOSES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Community Agenda is first, a physical plan intended to guide the physical development and redevelopment of the city by describing how, why, when, and where to build, rebuild, or preserve aspects of the community. Second, the Community Agenda covers a long-range planning horizon of 20 years (i.e., to the year 2030). Third, the Community Agenda is “comprehensive” in the sense that it covers the entire city limits (, plus it encompasses all the functions that make a community work and considers the interrelatedness of functions. The Community Agenda is based on the foundation that if the city knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there.

The Community Agenda is intended to serve numerous purposes. It provides a primary basis for evaluating all future development proposals, whether they are requests for rezoning, applications for special use permit or subdivision plat approval, and others. The Community Agenda is also intended to provide guidance for operating and capital improvement budgets. Business persons, investors, real estate brokers, and developers can learn from the plan what

the future vision of the community is, as well as the overall direction and intensity of new growth. Market analysts and researchers can draw on the wealth of data provided in the Community Assessment (a separate precursor document) for their own specific needs. Other local governments, regional entities, and state agencies also look at the contents of the Community Agenda as the best available statement of municipal policy and intent.

The ultimate clients, however, for the Community Agenda are the Commerce Mayor and City Council and the Commerce Planning Commission. By adopting the Community Agenda, the City Council has made an extremely important expression of their consent and support for the policies and work program contained in the Community Agenda. Completion of the comprehensive planning process according to state rules allows a local government to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) status and, thus, maintain its eligibility to receive certain state grants and loans.

CHAPTER 2 PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Natural and cultural resources are inventoried and shown on maps in the technical appendix of the community assessment.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

Commerce is in compliance with the water supply reservoir requirements of the Environmental Planning Criteria. However, without an intergovernmental agreement and corresponding regulations by Banks County, Maysville, and Jackson County (all of which contain land within the Grove Creek small water supply watershed) to enforce the City of Commerce's ordinance and the Environmental Planning Criteria, there may not be all of the proper and legal enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure protection. The community agenda, therefore, calls for further assessment as to whether other local governments outside the jurisdiction of its land use authority have put in place (or have proposed to implement) these same regulations adopted by Commerce.



Refer to the Community Assessment Technical Appendix for detailed citywide maps of environmental and natural resources, such as the one excerpted above (soils with development limitations).

If such regulations do not exist in all of the applicable local government jurisdictions, Commerce needs to pursue adoption of an intergovernmental agreement to enforce its regulations or secure/ensure adoption of those regulations by other applicable local governments.

Commerce has complied with the buffer requirements for water supply watersheds and has exceeded environmental planning requirements by making such stream buffer requirements applicable to all streams in Commerce, not just those lying within small water supply watersheds. However, where streams lie within water supply watersheds outside of Commerce's city limits, there is a need (as identified above) to try and ensure other local governments have put in place the same stream buffer requirements within the small water supply watersheds with water intakes serving Commerce. The short-term work program calls for Commerce to ensure other local governments have adopted watershed protection regulations for its drinking water supplies.

WETLANDS

Commerce is in compliance with this part of the DNR Rule for wetland protection (Section 391-3-16-.03, "Criteria for Wetlands Protection"). Commerce's data appendix (part of the community assessment) describes where wetlands are in the city and contains a map of wetlands based on the best available data. The rules do not specifically require that local governments adopt a wetlands protection ordinance; therefore, there is no specific requirement that local governments adopt a wetland protection ordinance.

This Community Agenda calls for a review and strengthening of wetlands protection regulations during the rewrite of the city's zoning ordinance. Such regulations would be in addition to those provided in the Open Space Design Overlay District of the Commerce Zoning Ordinance.

FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION

Commerce has adopted a flood damage prevention ordinance as a part of its zoning ordinance (see Chapter 3.06). Additionally, Chapter 38 of the City Code includes a flood damage prevention ordinance. The ordinance provisions follow the standard model but are in need of updating. Also, Commerce needs to reconcile the two versions and consolidate them into one. Furthermore, there are revisions needed to adopt the new flood plain maps which will go into effect late in the year 2010. Revisions are anticipated to be completed and adopted by the time this Community Agenda is adopted.

SOIL EROSION CONTROL

Chapter 30 of the Commerce City Code includes a soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance. Such ordinances are required to be updated whenever there are changes to the 1975 state soil erosion and sedimentation act. Presently, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has called for local governments to update the soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance by 2010, to reflect changes to the state's soil erosion law. Revisions are anticipated to be completed and adopted by the time this Community Agenda is reviewed and adopted.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

At issue is how much greenspace is realistic in Commerce, and then, what programs will be used to acquire or encourage preservation of such sites. A combination of regulatory measures and acquisition strategies could be used. However, it is considered unlikely that the city will be able to fund large pieces of land for greenspace or regulate its way into increasing its overall percentage of open space in the city. Also, Jackson County has proposed the designation of regional forest preserves in the county, one of which is located south of I-85 along the North Oconee River, near Commerce.

Section 11.4 of the city's subdivision regulations indicates that every developer shall set aside a minimum of twenty percent of the total subdivision acreage as dedicated greenspace." However, that ordinance only applies to the subdivision of land, not land development generally (See Sec. 4.1). Therefore, this provision has limited applicability. More is needed to address greenspace requirements on land that does not require subdivision.

Commerce's zoning ordinance (see Chapter 3.05) establishes an OSD, Open Space Design, overlay district. Procedurally, development under this overlay district is required to obtain approval by the planning commission and city council. As such, the district is voluntary. The standards involved in this district are very much like a conservation subdivisions ordinance, in that it defines open spaces, establishes development standards (such as preserving the natural state of landscape insofar as practicable). Development under this overlay district is subjected to a rigorous, detailed review and approval procedures, and there is no additional density incentive to be gained by developers if they choose this option. The regulations do not establish a minimum lot size, but a minimum lot frontage of 75 feet is required for lots in this district. A minimum of 40 percent of the land area must be set aside as permanent open space.

Commerce's official zoning map has several parcels that are designated as "green space." While Commerce has a detailed open space design overlay district in place in its zoning ordinance, there is not a great deal of incentive to undertake development according to its rules. Since it is voluntary, it is applied in Commerce only to the extent that developers choose to follow the overlay district. The preliminary review of this zoning overlay district suggests that some of the regulatory provisions regarding what is acceptable open space may be confusing and/or overlapping. Any disincentives such as a complicated review process and rigorous standards not applicable under conventional development scenarios will prevent this district from being applied to any significant degree. Many of the standards are good environmental practices that should be applied in other zoning districts, not just through the overlay district procedure. As a part of its rewrite of the zoning ordinance, Commerce will also critically reevaluate its open space requirements and determine if they meet long-term objectives for green space and open space.

TREE PROTECTION AND BEAUTIFICATION

Article 12 of the city's subdivision and land development regulations specify minimum tree density requirements outside building envelopes. Per the city's zoning ordinance, trees cannot be removed from a site until a building permit has been granted (Sec. 1.04.009 zoning ordinance). Those regulations promote the preservation of islands with multiple trees and significant tree stands as opposed to the protection of individual trees throughout a given site. Tree protection zones are required to be delineated on plans. Tree fencing is required to be installed for existing trees to be protected. Trees must comprise 67 percent of the minimum plant units required in the city's landscaping ordinance (see Sec. 4.08.009(B)); thus, the ordinance requires significant planting of trees.

Commerce has applied for designation as a Tree City. This will open up funding opportunities for tree programs, including possible tree plantings to screen auto-oriented businesses along SR 98 (Maysville Road). Beautification of this corridor as a major gateway to Commerce is important to the character and well-being of downtown Commerce. Designation as a Tree City USA will mean Commerce should integrate certain activities into its work program in order to maintain that status. These opportunities are reflected in the city's short-term work program.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND GREEN PRACTICES

More attention can be given to promoting "low impact development," which has been defined as an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. The low impact development approach designs the open space system first, then develops the housing and other land uses adjacent to the public open space. Streets and open spaces need to be planned and developed in a way so that they serve natural ecological functions and reduce pollutants from stormwater. Rainwater needs to be considered a neighborhood resource, and stormwater management facilities should be designed so that they become neighborhood amenities.

There are a number of programs and practices that Commerce could consider implementing, including but not limited to the following:

- Identification and revitalization of “brownfield” (environmentally contaminated) sites.
- Conducting and/or encouraging private inventories of construction/demolition materials that can be reused and recycled (e.g., building materials deconstruction and reuse plans).
- Promotion of renewable energy resources such as solar electricity.
- Green building (e.g., green roofs) and green building code practices, such as but not limited to the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System.
- Stream bank stabilization using plant materials
- Other sustainable practices such as use of porous (pervious or permeable) materials and installation of rain gardens and bioretention areas.

Commerce’s zoning ordinance already requires, in all zoning districts, the use of porous pavement materials for driveways, parking lots, bike paths, and sidewalks except where it is not feasible for specified reasons (Chapter 4.01). This Community Agenda calls for Commerce to integrate low impact development design standards and other green practices in its development regulations.

CHAPTER 3 PRESERVING COMMERCE'S HISTORY

People move to and continue to reside in a given area for some reason or another. Often, the choice of where to reside relates to their historical roots, but also how comfortable folks are in a given place. History contributes to a community's sense of place and character. The character of places, such as the historic downtown business district and neighborhoods, may be threatened over time. Maintaining and promoting historic character will not happen on its own. A concerted effort is warranted if Commerce is to maintain and enhance its existing historic character.

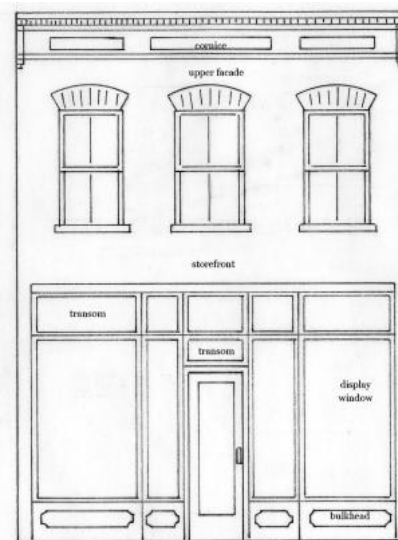
There are substantial numbers of historic resources in Commerce. These are mapped in the technical appendix, and the DDA office maintains a copy of the detailed 1993 historic resource inventory. The city is generally cognizant of the number of historic resources in the city, which include commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential land uses.



Jackson County, 1883
Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia

STATUS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN COMMERCE

The city has undertaken a number of initiatives, such as purchasing the old post office for a city hall, renovating an old mill as the city's civic center and providing a façade improvement program in the downtown for commercial businesses via its Downtown Development Authority. Those noteworthy accomplishments demonstrate Commerce's significant efforts to preserve and promote some of the most prized historic resources. Additionally, downtown property owners understand the importance of history to the city and are active in revitalizing their properties. The *Commerce Design Review Guidelines* were originally created in 1991 to provide specific criteria for alterations, changes, construction, and demolition in the Commerce Commercial Historic District.



Commercial building details as illustrated in the Commerce Design Guidelines

Despite these positive accomplishments, Commerce has underachieved when it comes to historic preservation programs. Historically, Commerce's elected leadership has chosen not to pursue a local historic preservation program to the point of regulating architecture and preventing the demolition of historic structures. Commerce has adopted a demolition ordinance, but it has not ensured the preservation of existing historic resources since it delays rather than prevents demolition of historic structures. There are three national register districts but no local preservation districts.



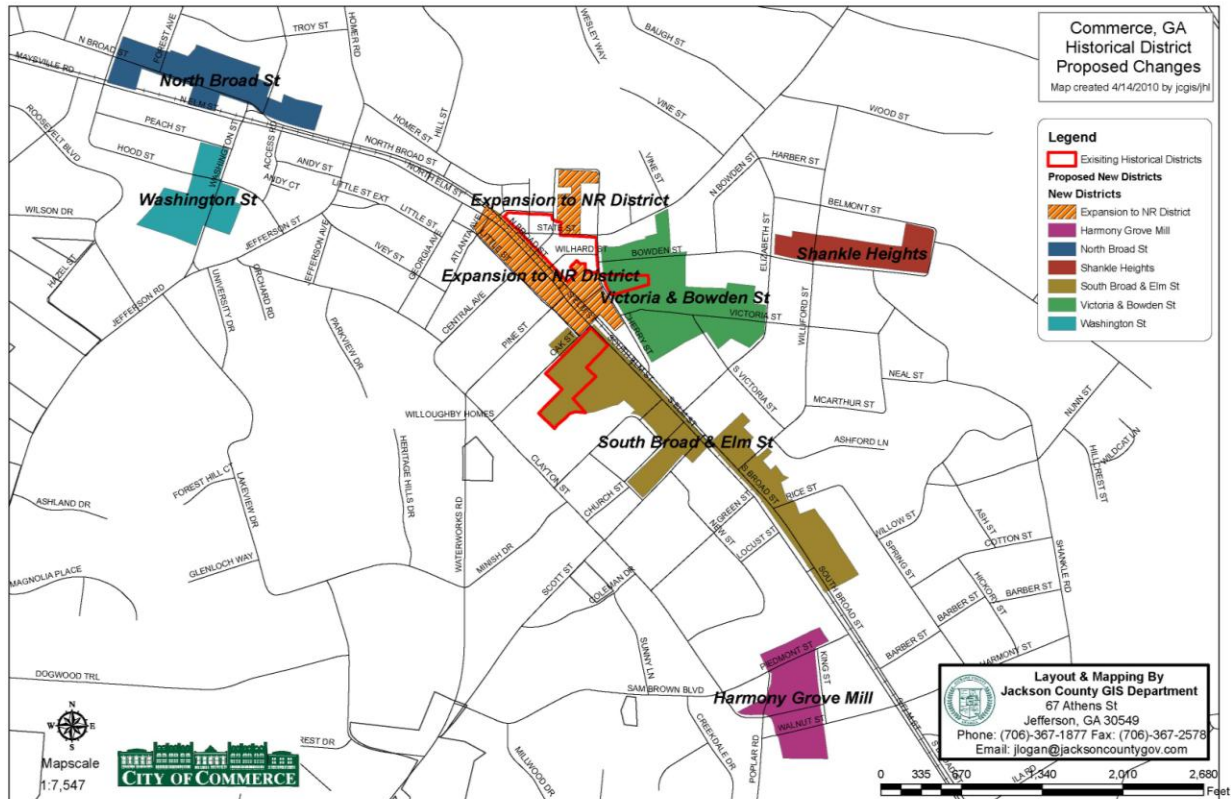
One of many prized historic sites in Commerce.

Although the city has a voluminous inventory of historic resources (completed in 1993), that inventory is now dated, and not enough has been done to look at the potential for designating additional national register and local historic districts. There is much that can be done with regard to heritage preservation, and there is increasing concern about the protection and preservation of historic resources.

In February 2010 as a part of preparing this community agenda, efforts were made to identify, map and assess many of the historic resources within the city limits of Commerce, GA, with the specific purpose of identifying potential local and National Register-worthy historic properties and districts.

POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Seven areas have been identified in this Community Agenda as having potential for local historic district designation (a local zoning overlay) or National Register designation (a federal designation). While local designation creates an opportunity for local design review, federal designation provides additional potential for federal grant-in-aid funds and tax credits. Dual designation provides more "tools in the toolbox" to preserve the historic character and architectural integrity of the downtown area. These areas are described as follows in order of preservation priority, based on the observations of the planning consultant. Each of these districts is shown on the accompanying map and described in the paragraphs which follow.



Expansion of National Register District for Downtown Central Commerce

The existing boundaries of the Commerce Commercial National Register Historic District should be expanded. The current boundaries of the National Register historic district is roughly bounded by Line, State, Cherry, Sycamore and Broad Streets; efforts should be made to expand the historic district south across Broad and Elm Streets to Little Street. This expansion would add several blocks of historic commercial and industrial buildings to the district, thereby successfully framing the central spine of the downtown. Others areas of downtown that should be considered for addition to the district include (1) the western portion of the block bounded by Cherry, Wilhard and View Streets that contains several commercial storefronts as well as a large brick industrial building, and (2) parcels along Cherry Street including City Hall and 1556 South Broad Street (see map). Interested local parties (government, local organizations, and private citizens) should work with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office to determine the best method to accomplish the revisions to the National Register listing.

Downtown Central Business

The City of Commerce should designate a local historic district in the downtown area that is generally bounded by Little, View, Broad, and Cherry Streets (see map). Note that this proposed local historic district follows the boundaries of a proposed revision to the existing National Register Historic District, as described above. This local district would include the historic commercial core of Commerce located within the larger Central Business District as defined by the DDA (see map in Chapter 4 of this Community Agenda). The local historic district as proposed would include more than 45 contributing historic properties, as well as vacant lots and at least 15 non-contributing properties. Non-historic properties are buildings constructed

less than 50 years ago or are historic buildings that have lost their architectural integrity through exterior design changes. The benefit of including both historic and non-historic properties in a local historic district is that the review of exterior changes to existing buildings and new construction provides greater assurance that changes to the district will be more in keeping with the historic character of the downtown.



Illustrative historic resources in the downtown central business district.

South Broad Street and Elm Street

There is a concentration of historic residential and institutional buildings fronting Broad and Elm Streets in the blocks directly south of downtown. The homes date from the turn of the century into the early to mid-twentieth century and illustrate the expansion of the city beyond the immediate downtown area. Some architectural styles represented include Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, Craftsman and Tudor Revival. Traditional house forms include Gabled Ell Houses and New South Cottages, among others. The designation of a local historic district is recommended for the area of South Broad and South Elm Streets (see map) and would include 21 contributing properties and 4 non-contributing properties. This district if locally designated would include the Gov. L.G. Hardman House on Elm Street (listed on National Register) and the First Baptist Church.



Illustrative historic resources in the proposed S. Broad Street and Elm Street historic district.

Harmony Grove Mill Village

The mill houses built for workers of the Harmony Grove Mill (pictured right) were constructed in an approximately eight block area in the vicinity of the mill complex. Constructed as early as 1893, many of these historic mill houses still reflect their original side-gabled form with front porches and duplex doors. The most intact area of homes remains around the extant mill building, bounded by Piedmont, King, and Walnut Streets, where the original employee housing buildings flank the tree lined streets extending west of the mill.



Harmony Grove Mill, now IFI Furniture

This area is recommended for designation as a local historic district in order to help preserve the history and physical integrity of this mill village landscape, which represents a significant part of the industrial and economic history of Commerce. It would contain 27 contributing and 8 non-contributing properties. The mill village, with the mill complex, is also a strong candidate for consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. National Register designation can trigger a variety of additional funding sources for rehabilitation.



Harmony Mill Village

North Broad Street

This area is located north of downtown on a three-block stretch of North Broad Street. Similar in age to the proposed South Broad and Elm Street district, this area also features turn-of-the-century and early twentieth century architecture, such as the Neoclassical style and the New South Cottage form. The buildings in this proposed district are more vernacular in form than in the South Broad Street/Elm Street district. This proposed local historic district would include 16 contributing properties and 5 non-contributing properties.



Illustrative historic resources in the proposed North Broad Street historic district.

Washington Street

This area features a collection of intact early twentieth century houses, with examples of the Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. This proposed local historic district would include 10 contributing properties.



Illustrative historic resources in the proposed Washington Street historic district.

Shankle Heights

Shankle Heights is an early suburban development within the city of Commerce, dating largely from the 1920s through the 1950s. Featuring good examples of Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival and American Small House architecture, the most architecturally intact section along Shankle Heights is proposed for local historic district designation and includes 10 contributing properties.



Illustrative historic resources in the proposed Shankle Heights historic district.

Victoria Street and Bowden Street

This area features some fine examples of early twentieth century residential and institutional architecture, including Craftsman style bungalows and New South cottages. The First Presbyterian Church, now the Commerce Cultural Center, and the Seaborn M. Shankle House (listed on National Register) would be included in this district. There are 23 contributing properties and six (6) non-contributing properties in this proposed district.



Illustrative historic resources in the proposed Victoria Street and Bowden Street historic district.

POTENTIAL LANDMARKS

Local landmark designation is similar to the designation of an historic district (or group of buildings/resources) except that the landmark is an isolated building or site, not located within a historic district. Examples of potential landmark buildings within the City of Commerce include (but are not limited to) the following: First Methodist Church (Cherry Street), Dr. Will B. Hardman House (Pine Street), E.B. Anderson House (Oak Street), 1029 South Elm Street, Greyhill Cemetery (pictured right), and Harris-Waters Store (Broad Street)



Illustrative "landmark" status resources.

CONCLUSIONS

There is reportedly a core of about 20 preservationists in the city supportive of preservation, including support for establishing a historic preservation commission and adopting ordinances that prevent rather than delay demolition. But, overall, the city may still lack a preservationist ethic. Currently, historic preservation programs are limited to a façade program for commercial building rehabilitation and certain incentives, rather than a regulatory approach.

Commerce adopted a demolition ordinance with regard to historic resources, but it does not prevent demolition of historic buildings. Instead it establishes a deliberation period in place through hearings, which ultimately gives the city time to consider other options to demolition. This ordinance was put in place after loss of a historic resource on the site of the current Walgreens Drug Store. There are historic design guidelines, but they are voluntary and without "teeth" to enforce. This "light" version of historic preservation will not be adequate to protect the abundant historic resources in the city.

As noted above, the vast historic resources in Commerce would suggest that more protection, via locally established historic districts and landmarks, is needed. Commerce should take historic preservation to the next level and establish the recommended local historic districts, as described here in this Community Agenda. Such action would replace the demolition ordinance with stronger preservation controls.

CHAPTER 4 PLANNING FOR PEOPLE AND LIVING AREAS

Planning is fundamentally about people – especially, where they live. The community assessment provides an understanding of the various characteristics of the people in the city now, such as their age, race, and income, as well as likely characteristics for people who will move into Commerce in the future. We all know that the city will grow, but how much has an important bearing on demands on critical facilities, such as schools, water systems, and government generally. The degree to which facilities and services will need to change and improve is addressed in a separate chapter.

Nothing concerns people more than things that impact their homes and neighborhoods. People have preferences about how they live, and there is a diversity of preferences. People and households are not always able to match their preferences with their economic means. Almost everyone who moves into the city in the future will be a part of a “household” and thus the plan needs to analyze, predict, and/or forecast the demands and needs for housing that will be created in the future. Planning is about ensuring that people have places to live, and that to the extent possible within their own means, it is affordable and as desirable as possible.

POPULATION ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Addressing the Needs of an Increasingly Elderly Population

A significant percent of seniors in Commerce as of 2000, which is expected to increase even more significantly during the planning horizon, means that Commerce’s comprehensive plan should confront issues of how housing, facilities, and services will need to change to accommodate the growing senior population. For instance, housing preferences change as more seniors move in, or current residents age in place – this may signal a need for housing that is more suitable for the senior population. It may also signal a significant increase in the need for retirement communities and alternative living arrangements including care facilities.

Capitalizing on the Advantages of Having Seniors in the Community

Commerce’s comprehensive plan should also delve into the positive aspects of having a larger than typical senior population. While many seniors have fixed, limited incomes, others have retirement incomes. Hence, the buying power in the community can potentially be a benefit to the city. This may also translate into higher demands for health care and businesses that cater to the needs of seniors. Some communities embrace the notion that they are “retirement” communities and have resources and programs that are “senior friendly.” As another example, seniors have often retired from the workforce and therefore have significant leisure or free time available to volunteer for community enhancement efforts. Commerce’s comprehensive plan should explore these possibilities and consider recommendations to become a senior-friendly community and capitalize on the volunteer potential that a healthy senior population provides.

Lower-Income Households and Implications

Based on 2000 data, the assessment indicates that Commerce has a larger-than-average share of lower-income households when compared with the county as a whole. Generally, cities are not significant providers of social services, and they tend to rely on higher levels of government (county, state, and federal), and the private sector (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, churches, etc.) for various means of social assistance to help needy households. It was determined during the

planning process that city government would not be involved in responding to the specific needs of low-income households. The role of some beneficial services other than community development (which the city will pursue) should be considered and if appropriate supported by private entities and groups. See also housing issues in the next subsection.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Projections of population in Table 4.1 indicate that Commerce is expected to increase by approximately 1,800 persons during the 20-year planning horizon.

**Table 4.1
Population Projections, 2010-2030
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Geographic Area	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
City of Commerce	6,600	6,970	7,259	7,878	8,407
Jackson County (Countywide)	64,564	72,531	81,409	90,287	99,165

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2010.

HOUSING PROJECTIONS

Housing units projections for Commerce and Jackson County are provided in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2
Housing Unit Projections, 2010-2030
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Geographic Area	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
City of Commerce	2,583	2,733	2,845	3,060	3,245
Jackson County (Countywide)	23,824	26,764	30,040	33,316	36,592

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2010.

HOUSING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Commerce is the most inclusive area of housing in all of Jackson County. Within the city, there is the widest variety of housing options possible, including manufactured homes on individual lots, manufactured home parks, single-family detached subdivisions with wide varieties of lot sizes and characteristics, duplexes, townhouses, apartments, and housing above commercial stores in the downtown. Commerce, however, does not address accessory dwelling units in its zoning code, has little if any vacant land zoned for apartments, and limits residential densities in many zoning districts to an amount that may not be feasible to develop. Therefore, there is more it can do to promote a diverse range of housing opportunities.

Balanced Housing

There is a trend toward encouraging higher end housing in Commerce. That trend is considered appropriate given that Commerce will benefit from an infusion of higher income residential properties and households. One should recognize, however, the limitations on the market for such housing and not over-emphasize higher end housing. Commerce is still largely a blue collar town, and the city's housing policies need to also recognize the continued need for low and moderate income housing in addition to promoting higher-end housing.



Single-family Dwelling in Commerce

Public Housing

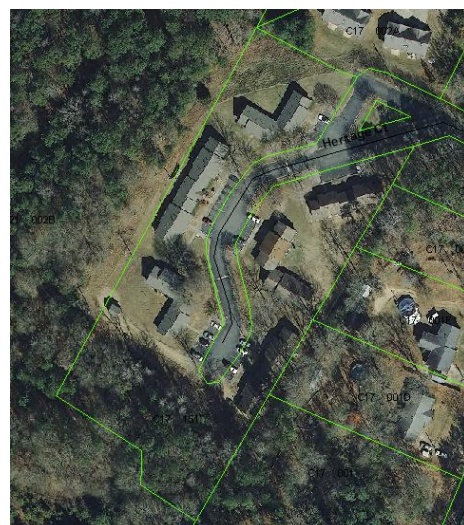
Commerce has a housing authority and has also engaged in community development efforts in the past. Direct social services by the city to lower-income households, such as the construction of additional lower income housing units, are unlikely, given that those services are provided privately and by higher levels of government. The role of public housing is not expected to change to any significant degree in Commerce during the planning horizon, since federal policies generally no longer favor construction of public housing and rely mostly if not exclusively on housing vouchers.



Public Housing (Apartments) in Commerce along Waterworks Road



Public Housing Along Duncan Circle



Public Housing, Heritage Court

Special Needs Housing

Generally, there is a correlation between age and disabilities – as age increases, so too does the likelihood or occurrence of disabilities. Commerce has a disproportionate amount of elderly, and the percent of total population who are seniors is expected to increase significantly over time. The implications with regard to housing the senior population and persons with disabilities is fairly self-evident. Persons with significant mental, sensory, or physical disabilities need assistance within and outside the home. This places most of the housing needs for disabled persons in the area of “institutionalized” care, which may translate into more nursing and group homes.

However, some of the people with disabilities will reside, if opportunities exist, within detached single-family residences with limited supervision and care, or in other words, outside the context of institutionalized living arrangements. While living as any other household in a single-family detached dwelling is desirable, some communities regulate them as group homes and do not allow them outright as a permitted use in single-family zoning districts. Providing opportunities for compatible “community living arrangements” in single-family zoning districts is consistent with the state’s quality community objective for “housing choices.” Therefore, local zoning regulations need to ensure that they provide appropriate housing opportunities for disabled populations, without discrimination by other households in the neighborhood. The plan establishes policies to accomplish the objectives of fair housing for the disabled.

Apartments and Higher Density Housing Options

While Commerce has its own significant share of multi-family units, it is likely that the city will need more apartments as its commercial and industrial workplaces develop. The future land use plan anticipates those needs and plans for them, both in terms of stand-alone multi-family complexes and apartments and townhouses built as a part of mixed-use developments.

Accessory Dwelling Units

The zoning ordinance does not define or regulate accessory dwelling units, but they are generally a second unit either established within an existing dwelling or in a separate building on the same lot as a dwelling. Accessory dwelling units are increasingly used in other areas for housing elderly persons who wish to remain close to their families. For instance, seniors are often reluctant to move out of their own unit because the environment is familiar and they are emotionally attached to their homes.



 Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Planning & Development Consultants

A unit above a garage, added to an existing lot, is frequently termed an accessory dwelling unit.

For detached single-family units owned by single seniors, converting the unit to a principal dwelling with an accessory dwelling unit would allow seniors to stay in their unit while another household occupies previously unused portions of the home. As the homeowner, the senior has the option of living in either the apartment or primary dwelling. The added income and security of having another person close by can be a deciding factor in enabling a homeowner to age in place. Accessory apartments for the elderly also permit seniors to have some

independence while maintaining close proximity to one or more family members. Zoning ordinances can provide for the establishment of attached accessory units in existing single-family subdivisions as another method of meeting needs for affordable housing. Policies in this Community Agenda state that appropriate opportunities should be provided for accessory apartments.

Manufactured Housing

The city currently has a variety of manufacturing housing developments, including single-wide and double-wide homes on individual lots, and manufactured home parks. At issue is the extent to which Commerce will continue to allow manufactured housing as an option for affordable, workforce housing, and the extent to which it needs to balance those needs with regulations on the location, placement, and aesthetic characteristics of manufactured homes. No change over existing regulation in terms of manufactured housing is provided in this Community Agenda.

Inclusionary Zoning and Mixed Income Housing Strategies

Inclusionary zoning is a tool that specifies a certain percentage of affordable homes must be included in a given development. Mixed income housing strategies specifically attempt to mix together home types for different income groups in the same development. This community agenda includes a policy which encourages mixed income housing and a minimum number of low and moderate income housing units within mixed-use developments in appropriate locations.

Minimum House Sizes

Local governments often regulate the size of dwelling units by zoning district. As a part of rewriting the city's zoning regulations, the city will critically consider whether minimum house sizes (heated floor area per dwelling unit requirements) are necessary and/or the extent to which such requirements may restrict workforce housing and housing unit affordability.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Commerce has some of the lower value housing in the county as a whole, and lower property values. During the planning horizon, Commerce needs to initiate more concerted efforts to maintain, stabilize, and enhance certain residential neighborhoods in the city. The community agenda describes community development activities which will be needed and where such programs will need to be targeted for the most effective impact. In the chapter on land use (see map of areas requiring special attention), the Johntown area of Commerce is suggested as the highest priority target area for concerted community development activities.

CHAPTER 5 GROWING THE ECONOMY

Commerce, like any other municipality, desires to have a strong and sustainable economy. People need places to work. By choice or perhaps due to limits on job availability, not all of the city's residents will work in the city, and not all of Jackson County's residents will work inside the county. This chapter focuses on maintaining, nurturing, and promoting the economy of the city.

The City of Commerce has a number of opportunities to expand its economic base and employment opportunities. One of its biggest strengths is that it is the health services center of Jackson County as well as the adjacent multi-county region (including Banks and Madison Counties). Commerce has industrial parks and has annexed and zoned land for future industrial development, which will provide opportunities for future "blue collar" jobs. The city has a healthy downtown which provides a mix of retail, service, finance, insurance, real estate, and other job opportunities. There is substantial opportunity to increase employment in retail, lodging, accommodation and food services in various business districts in the city. Commerce also has some government jobs, but it is not the county seat.

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

Employment data for municipalities such as Commerce are not available. Therefore, reliable estimates and projections of employment in the city cannot be produced. It is estimated that Commerce's current employment is approximately 4,500, though that figure should not be cited with any authority. Job growth during the next five years (2010 to 2015) is expected to be quite slow, and from 2008 to 2018 Jackson County as a whole is anticipated to add less than 5,000 jobs according to Jackson County's Community Agenda. The largest anticipated areas of job growth will be in the health care industry, a significant share of which is likely to occur in Commerce. It is the consultant's opinion that Commerce should plan for an increase of approximately 500 jobs during the next five years, and a total increase of 3,000 new jobs during the planning horizon. Again, these figures should not be cited with authority, as they are only professional judgments for purposes of estimating community facility needs (see Chapter 8). The capacity for future employment, though, is substantially higher, as the city has extensive vacant land zoned for commercial and industrial development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES

Downtown Development

Commerce's downtown may not have reached its potential for being the center for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment in the area. The downtown has some competition in that the Tanger Outlet mall is located closer to an interchange of Interstate 85 (Banks Crossing) and therefore attracts more visitors. Commerce's downtown can compete, however, with all other places of gathering in the city and county, particularly if the city continues to improve pedestrian access, capitalizes on its downtown investments (such as the Civic Center and Cultural Center), targets additional businesses to locate downtown (particularly lodging, restaurants, and specialty retail), and further nurtures the unique character of downtown.



Commerce has identified its downtown with small logo signs: "A City on the Right Track."



Downtown Commerce

Civic Center

The Commerce Civic Center is considered a lynchpin in terms of downtown economic development. It presents considerable opportunities to attract economic activity in the downtown. The Civic Center is operated by the city's Civic Center and Tourism Authority. The bottom floor is currently leased out, but there is ultimately room for expansion. Current capacity for meetings is 1,000 people or more, roughly. The Community Agenda calls for Commerce to capitalize on opportunities to use this facility to maximize economic development.



Commerce Civic Center, Aerial View



Commerce Civic Center
Photo Credit: W. A. Storing

Cultural Center

The DDA runs the Cultural Center facility in Commerce, including leasing and rental. The cultural center has a capacity to accommodate about 250 people. Located next to the Civic Center, the Cultural Center reinforces the city's presence in the downtown and increases prospects for future downtown development.



Cultural Center, Aerial View



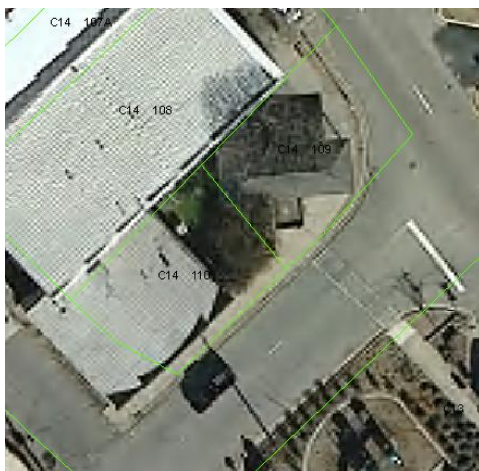
Commerce Cultural Center

DDA Office and Business Information Center

DDA also owns the building in which the DDA office is located. Also, with assistance from a Rural Business Enterprise Grant, the City of Commerce renovated the building next to the DDA office as a business information center which will include information as well as meeting and training space (approximately 2,100 square feet total). Also, this new facility will have public restrooms, the first public ones available in the downtown.



DDA Office Downtown



Business Information Center and DDA Office, Aerial View



DDA's Business Information Center Adjacent to the DDA Office

Redevelopment Opportunities

There are significant opportunities for redevelopment in Commerce. There are some blighted buildings in the downtown, such as the demolished storefront below. One of the most strategically important redevelopment opportunities is the old sewing plant (a.k.a., "Oxford Property" and QRM) across from the Civic Center. A second property with significant adaptive reuse potential is the old mill site currently occupied by IFI (furniture) for distributing furniture;

this property has an authentic mill village behind it. Both of these opportunities are shown as areas requiring special attention (potential redevelopment sites) in the chapter on land use. The Downtown Development Authority should identify, prioritize and pursue redevelopment prospects, and this community agenda urges increased attention to redevelopment prospects.



Vacant and dilapidated spaces in the downtown's existing retail footprint should be the highest priority for redevelopment



Oxford Property



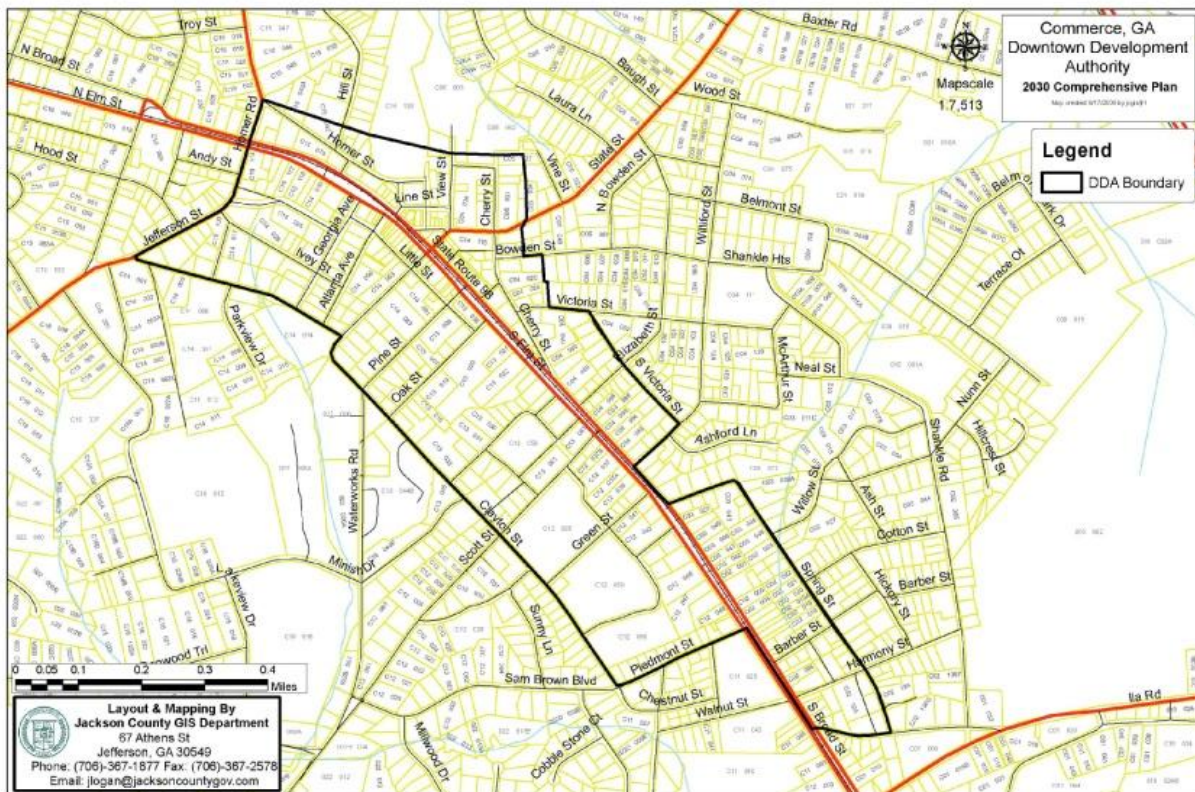
Mill Village, U.S. Highway 441 Bus. south of downtown core

Commerce also needs to encourage the re-occupation of existing retail spaces, some of which are becoming increasingly vacated. The comprehensive plan steering committee discussed the prospects for adopting a “big box” retail ordinance, one that would require re-occupancy or demolition if a large retail vacates a large building. That and other strategies need to be considered to ensure the city does not witness a disproportionate increase in retail vacancies.

Boundary of Downtown Development Authority

The boundary of the DDA (see map below) was discussed during the planning process. Specifically there exists some debate regarding whether the boundary of the DDA is too large or too small. There are benefits to having the tools of the DDA available to the largest possible area. But there is also some concern that the DDA boundary is actually too large resulting in a

dilution of resources, effort, and attention over an unnecessarily large area. The DDA boundary was listed as an issue to be addressed in this community agenda.



Discussions with DDA members and other stakeholders during the planning process did not result in a firm suggestion on how to reconcile this issue. If one compares the downtown commercial business zoning district and the historic district maps, the DDA boundary does encompass a substantially larger area. There are clearly some blighted or deteriorating commercial structures in the northwestern part of the DDA boundary (south of Jefferson Street). And, there is clear justification to include South Broad Street as there are properties that could benefit from focused rehabilitation and redevelopment opportunities. There are places within the DDA boundary, such as the cemetery plot north of Piedmont Street and some residential properties the probably do not need to be included in the DDA boundary.

On the other hand, there are some properties along the northernmost boundary (between State Street and Homer Road) which are clearly redevelopment opportunities but are only partially contained within the DDA boundary. Given this analysis, the work program calls for the DDA to hold one or more workshops on amending the current DDA boundary. The DDA should consider the merits of including additional lands with redevelopment potential but also scale back its jurisdiction to exclude some residential and some institutional areas that are unlikely to require redevelopment.

Annual DDA Work Plan

A bullet list of work program items called “2009 plan of work” was established by the Downtown Development Authority and is integrated in the short-term work program of the comprehensive plan. A lot of the DDA’s current efforts revolve around improving city-owned downtown parking facilities and access thereto. It is also recognized that much of the tourist draw in the downtown

is associated with various festivals sponsored by the city and downtown merchants (e.g., Fridays after Five, Georgia Council for the Arts). The short-term work program calls for the city to maintain and expand festivals and formal events for economic development purposes.

Growth of Health Care Industries

With the national, state and local economies suffering in a major recession which started in the third quarter of 2008, one of the industries least impacted by those downward spiraling economic trends was the health care industry. That is one of Commerce's strengths, as it has the only hospital in Jackson County (and the only one accessible to other major parts of Banks and Madison Counties). As such, Commerce is poised to continue growing its economy in the health care industries. Another benefit of growing health care industries in Commerce is that there is a shortage of the number of jobs in health care when compared with the number of Jackson County residents working in health care. This Community Agenda supports a continuation of emphasis on growing the health care industries in Commerce.

Transportation and Warehousing

Clearly, Jackson County has much potential to further develop transportation and warehousing industries, given its many miles of frontage along both sides of Interstate 85, as well as two important north-south US. Highways (129 and 441). Commerce, in particular, is well suited for this type of industrial growth, given that it has much frontage on U.S. Highway 441 and has annexed across Interstate 85. Jackson County has more workers in these industries than there are jobs in Jackson County, suggesting that attraction of new jobs in this industry will be beneficial to working residents desiring to maintain employment inside the city versus commuting outside the city or county.



Huge potential exists for Commerce to attract warehousing and distribution centers, such as this one developed in the I-85 corridor west of Commerce, in unincorporated Jackson County.

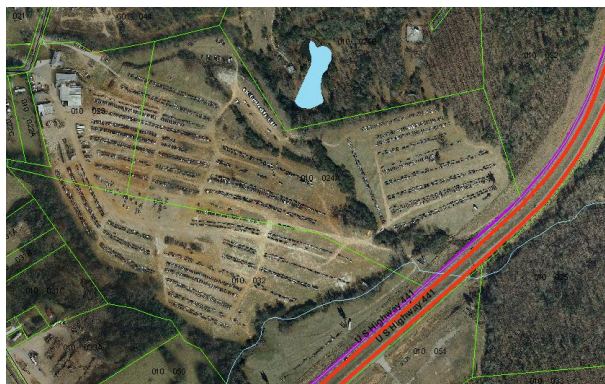
Connection to Racing: Auto Enthusiasts and Weekend Warriors

There is a largely unrecognized automobile enthusiast culture in Commerce, stemming partly from racing opportunities in the region, including but not limited to Road Atlanta, Gresham Motorsports, and Atlanta Dragway (though none is within Commerce). There are also some so-called "weekend warriors" who help make up this culture in Commerce. This activity has some spin-off economic effects, such as small auto shops, decals for cars, motor work, etc. Racing is therefore viewed as an opportunity for economic development in Commerce and is reflected in the economic development strategies of the comprehensive plan.

CHAPTER 6 CHARACTER AREAS

Commerce also has some traditional neighborhoods close to downtown that further enhance the downtown area's quality of place. There are opportunities to expand the downtown central core into transitional areas between the central core and those traditional neighborhoods. Furthermore, there are significant needs with regard to connecting those traditional, in-town neighborhoods with sidewalks for pedestrian access.

Outside of the downtown and its surrounding traditional neighborhoods, many of the city's subdivisions exhibit an attractive, inviting residential character. However, there are commercial corridors, particularly SR 98 between downtown and Interstate 85, that deserve better treatment architecturally and functionally. Furthermore, there are some junkyards located along U.S. Highway 441 which tend to detract from the character and quality of place of Commerce. These issues are highlighted in the areas of special attention (see Chapter 7 of this Community Agenda).



Aerial view of large automobile graveyard which is partially visible from U.S. Highway 441.

The map of character areas (referred to in state rules as a "future development map") presented in this chapter is not a zoning map, and it is not an existing land use map, either. Rather, the character area map shows areas that have, or are expected to take on, unique characteristics that distinguish them from other parts of the city. The titles of these character areas imply there is a predominant land use for each. That is true for the suburban residential, institutional campus, highway commercial, and industrial workplace character areas in particular. However, the driving force behind preparing a character map is to identify unique character, as opposed to suggesting one specific land use. Some of the character areas may therefore consist of different land uses.

LIST OF CHARACTER AREAS

The character area map contains the following areas which are described in detail in the pages that follow:

Mixed Use and Commercial Areas

- Downtown Commercial Core
- Greater Downtown
- Neighborhood Retail/Service – Mixed Use
- Mixed Use – Large-Scale Master Planned
- Highway Commercial

Conservation and Agricultural Areas

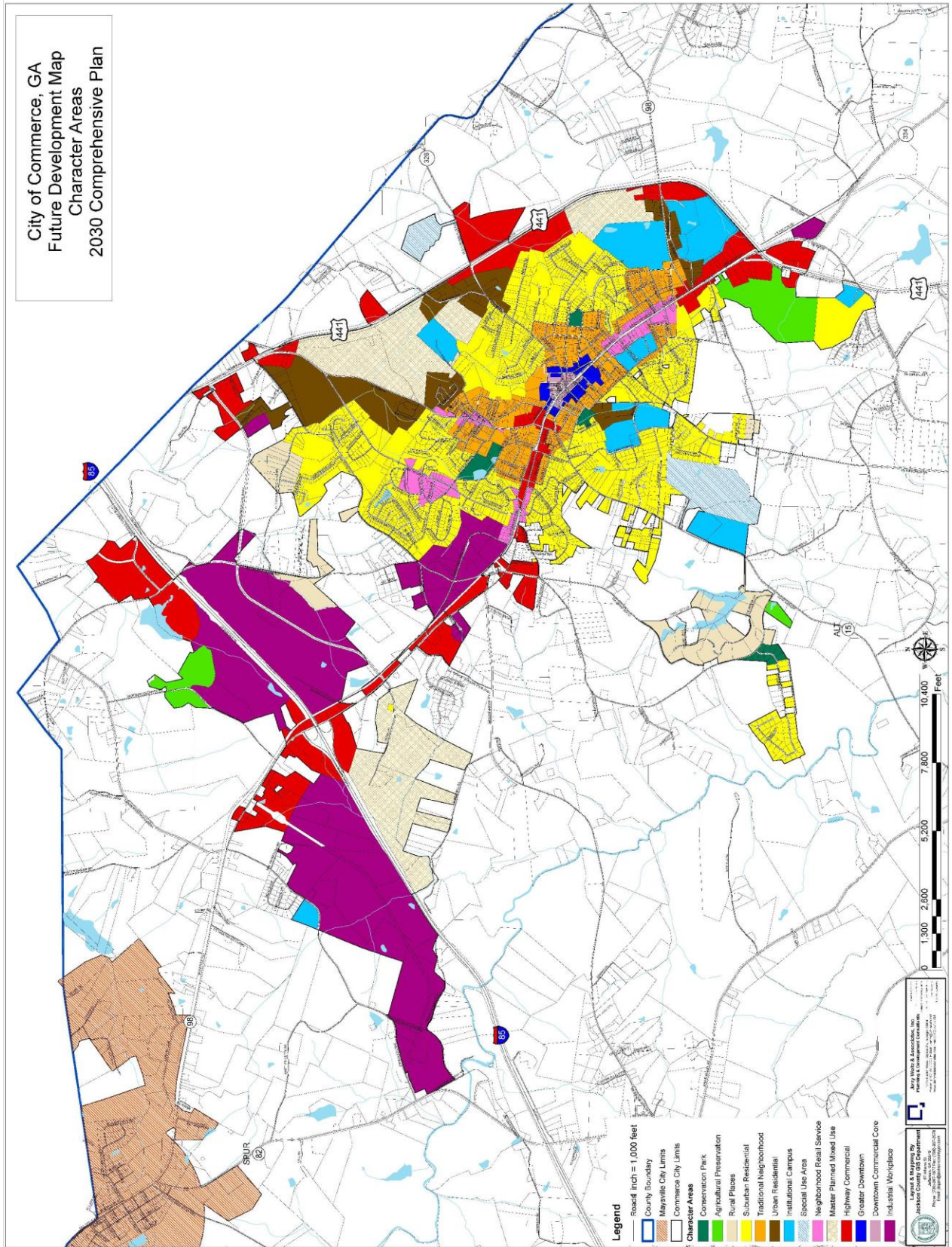
- Conservation – Park
- Agricultural Preservation

Residential Areas

- Urban Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Suburban Residential
- Rural Places

Single-Function Areas

- Institutional Campus
- Industrial Workplace
- Special Use Area (as designated)



DOWNTOWN CORE

Summary Description:	Compact business core of the downtown
Defining Character:	Main street retail; shops primarily front the railroad and streets on both sides of the railroad
Location/Applicability:	Limited to one location
Relationship to Existing Development:	Existing development, one location only
Primary Land Uses:	Commercial (retail and service)
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Office, institutional; can include housing
Density or Intensity:	Highest intensity retail development
Street Pattern:	Very small blocks; grid pattern
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Zero or no setback on front; no lot coverage limitations
Parking Characteristics:	Individual sites do not have off-street parking; served by public parking lots and on-street parking
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Improved pedestrian streetscapes and major efforts to promote walkability
Sanitary Sewer	Available and required
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Served by small urban plaza/park
Redevelopment Prospects:	Possible but preservation ethic prevails
Overarching Principle(s):	Commercial core of city; identifiable sense of place
QCOs Implemented:	Regional Identity; Sense of Place; Employment Options; Appropriate Businesses; Heritage Preservation; Transportation Alternatives
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	CBD, Central Business District; Revised permitted uses to exclude uses not conducive to the downtown core's function
Additional Regulations Needed:	Local historic preservation ordinance making design review mandatory and design guidelines applicable rather than voluntary
Special Programs Needed:	Downtown Development Authority jurisdiction; streetscape improvements

Downtown Core



Aerial Photo Zoomed in on Commerce's Downtown Core



Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and on-street parking characterize the Downtown Core.



Buildings in the downtown core provide a more or less continuous front that frames the streets. Street trees soften the building frontages.



Historic resources exist in the Downtown Core, and part of it is included on the National Register of Historic Places.



Streetscape improvements (wide sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, banners, trash receptacles) and on-street parking characterize Commerce's downtown core.



Side streets approaching the downtown core can be relatively narrow, with an alley-like appearance.

GREATER DOWNTOWN

Summary Description:	Compact mixed use fringe area taking on major characteristics of downtown core
Defining Character:	Area of potential extension of downtown core
Location/Applicability:	Surrounds the urban core (one location)
Relationship to Existing Development:	Existing development; significant additions encouraged through redevelopment and adaptive reuse
Primary Land Uses:	Commercial (retail and service)
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Office, institutional, can include housing
Density or Intensity:	May take on intensities of downtown core in some places; less intense at fringes
Street Pattern:	Block and street grid pattern; greater block lengths than found in downtown core
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Zero or no setback on front; lot coverage limitations similar to downtown core but less intense at fringes
Parking Characteristics:	Some sites have off-street parking; partially served by public parking lots and on-street parking
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Some sidewalks exist, but improved pedestrian streetscapes are needed to promote walkability
Sanitary Sewer	Available and required
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Served by small urban plaza/park
Redevelopment Prospects:	Encouraged but preservation ethic prevails
Overarching Principle(s):	Expansion of downtown core; redevelopment;
QCOs Implemented:	Regional Identity; Sense of Place; Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options; Heritage Preservation; Transportation Alternatives; Traditional Neighborhood; Infill Development
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	CBD, Central Business District (may need intensity limitations and redevelopment guidelines); OCR, Office-Commercial Residential
Additional Regulations Needed:	Local historic preservation ordinance making design review mandatory and design guidelines applicable rather than voluntary

Special Programs Needed: Downtown Development Authority jurisdiction; extension of streetscape improvements

Greater Downtown



Greater Downtown surrounds the Downtown Core. Pedestrian access is provided but can be improved.



A rather abrupt change occurs between the Downtown Core and Greater Downtown. There are opportunities to expand the Core.



Redevelopment is appropriate in certain parts of the Greater Downtown, offering opportunities to extend the same building form as is in the Core.



Areas south of the Downtown Core transition to residential. Higher density housing on small lots or within mixed use buildings is appropriate in the Greater Downtown character area.

NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL/SERVICE – MIXED USE

Summary Description:	Lower intensity version of downtown, mixed use district with a linear pattern following a major thoroughfare or railroad
Defining Character:	Railroad or major thoroughfare frontage; focal area for surrounding residential neighborhoods; transitional in nature
Location/Applicability:	Multiple locations: (1) U.S. Hwy. 441 Bus. southeast of greater downtown; (2) Old Maysville Road west of Hospital Road (3) Medical campus along Hospital Road; and (4) Homer Road (US Hwy. 441 Bus.) North of SR 98 at and around Pine Ave.
Relationship to Existing Development:	Existing development; change of land use occurring primarily through adaptive reuse of single-family dwellings
Primary Land Uses:	Mix of single-family dwellings on small lots; adaptive reuse of dwellings for office, institutional, service, or retail uses
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Concentration of professional offices in medical campus; new construction via redevelopment in Homer Road area only
Density or Intensity:	Lower intensity compatible with abutting or nearby residential neighborhoods; limited generally small buildings (less than 5,000 square feet)
Street Pattern:	Linear pattern along railroad or major thoroughfare; block pattern exists or is preferred on adjacent blocks
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Varied, based on opportunities and existing character; building coverage varies depending on location
Parking Characteristics:	Off-street parking required, but at lower than typical ratios due to walking from adjacent neighborhoods
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Walkability is currently limited but is proposed to be improved with connections to adjacent neighborhoods; the major road is a through route and preserves the through-traffic function
Sanitary Sewer	Available and required
Park and Recreation Facilities:	None; in Homer Road area, small plazas and pocket parks may be incorporated via revitalization efforts
Redevelopment Prospects:	No, except for Homer Road area
Overarching Principle(s):	Compatible, low-intensity neighborhood mixed use
QCOs Implemented:	Traditional Neighborhoods; Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options; Transportation Alternatives

Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate: C-1, Neighborhood Commercial District
OCR, Office-Commercial Residential District

Additional Regulations Needed: Some areas (except Homer Road) may require historic preservation jurisdiction to ensure maintenance of character

Special Programs Needed: Community Development (Home Road area especially)

Neighborhood Retail/Service – Mixed Use



U.S. Highway 441 Business has a combination of residences and businesses developed in a linear fashion along the railroad and parallel streets.



Medical Office Adjacent to Hospital. The BJC Medical Center Area is one area that fits this character description.



Representative Scale Desired For Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use



Along Homer Road, this vacant commercial store is the proper scale, and if redeveloped, can serve as a focal point for adjacent neighborhoods.

LARGE-SCALE, MASTER-PLANNED MIXED USE

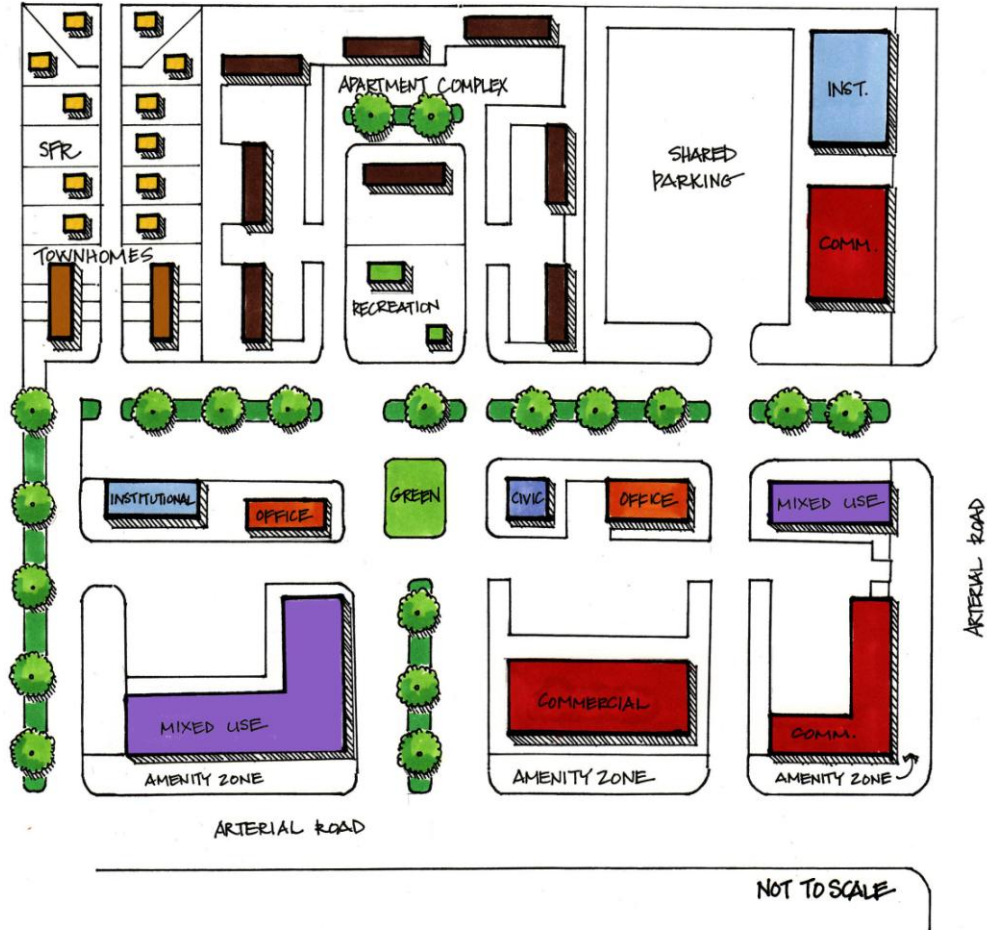
Summary Description:	Large-scale (25-40 acres or more) Greenfield sites planned with a complementary mix of uses based on market trends
Defining Character:	New, freestanding, complete communities
Location/Applicability:	Large, undeveloped sites along U.S. Hwy. 441
Relationship to Existing Development:	None; Greenfield sites – but they need to provide proper connections to adjacent built-up areas
Primary Land Uses:	Residential, commercial, office, civic-institutional, park and recreation; Primarily non-auto oriented commercial
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	None specified; all uses except industry are appropriate; auto-oriented uses by special use permit
Density or Intensity:	Generally at a scale slightly more dense than suburban shopping centers; may include Main St. retail and multiple story buildings; higher intensity at center, transitioning to lower density at edges
Street Pattern:	Block pattern preferred, including some blocks at scale of a downtown; use of alleys encouraged; through-traffic accommodated via new arterials or collectors
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Varied, based on location within master planned development; Main Street-style commercial at center
Parking Characteristics:	Off-street parking required; on-street parking may be provided, as well as off-street public parking lots
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Designed for walkability; all roads have sidewalks; may incorporate off-road trails.
Sanitary Sewer	Required and generally available
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Varied, from central greens to scattered urban plazas and pocket parks to neighborhood parks to greenways; minimum open space requirements applied
Redevelopment Prospects:	None (Greenfield)
Overarching Principle(s):	Complete community with jobs-housing balance
QCOs Implemented:	Sense of Place; Appropriate Businesses; Employment Options; Housing Opportunities; Transportation Alternatives; Open Space Preservation
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	Combination of current zoning districts; however, a new, master planned mixed-use zoning district is needed

Additional Regulations Needed:

Guidelines for mixed-use master-planned developments; Traffic impact study required

Special Programs Needed:

Market study to justify mix of uses and dwelling types included



ILLUSTRATIVE MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTER

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HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

Summary Description:	Predominantly automobile-serving commercial uses
Defining Character:	Suburban; shopping centers; outlet malls
Location/Applicability:	Multiple locations: (1) U.S. Hwy. 441; (2) U.S. Highway 441 Bus. West and southeast of greater downtown; SR 98 (Maysville Road) west and east of I-85; (4) Outlet Mall influence area at I-85 near Banks Crossing
Relationship to Existing Development:	Existing developed corridors except U.S. Hwy. 441 (mostly undeveloped) and Outlet Mall influence area
Primary Land Uses:	Lodging, big box retail, convenience stores, auto sales and service, outlet mall, fast-food restaurants, and shopping centers
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	A wide variety of additional uses are possible, including office and institutional; residential uses are generally not included
Density or Intensity:	Typically up to 15,000 square feet of building per acre
Street Pattern:	Primary access via highway; outlets formed by driveways; frontage roads encouraged; inter-parcel access required
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Mostly single-story buildings; Set back from highway frontage with parking in front; building coverage usually does not exceed 35 percent
Parking Characteristics:	Off-street parking required; some or most in front
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Automobile dominated but provisions for pedestrian access along highway and pedestrian connections to individual developments
Sanitary Sewer	Available in most locations; development discouraged without sewer except low-intensity, approved interim development
Park and Recreation Facilities:	None; minimum open space required; frontage landscape strips and buffers to side and rear when abutting residential districts
Redevelopment Prospects:	Revitalization and redevelopment encouraged in existing corridors; unlikely in Greenfield areas
Overarching Principle(s):	Serve the public traveling via auto; move regional through-traffic; improve aesthetics of existing development
QCOs Implemented:	Appropriate Business; Employment Options
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	C-2, General Commercial District

Additional Regulations Needed:

One or more specific architectural overlays; big-box retail ordinance (to discourage long-term vacancies)

Special Programs Needed:

Public street tree planting strips along existing highways; targeted economic development efforts to fill vacant spaces; may require redevelopment powers for obsolete/blighted buildings

Highway Commercial



Auto Dealership at U.S. 441 and U.S. 441 Bus. Pedestrian access is limited or non-existent.



Auto Dealership at SR 98 south of I-85.



Formerly home to a Bi-Lo food store, this shopping center on U.S. Highway 441 Business (Homer Road) is representative of several retail space vacancies in this character area.



Ingles Shopping Center @ U.S. 441 and SR 334

Highway Commercial



Walgreens, at U.S. 441 Bus. and SR 98, is set back from the street with parking in front.



This shopping center on SR 98 (Maysville Road, across the railroad) is representative of the auto-oriented character



Sign blight: Portable sign on roof; ground sign with panel missing



Screening of storage yard and commercial building.



Newer commercial development along U.S. Highway 441 with more landscaping



Inter-parcel connections between businesses on U.S. Highway 441 are needed.

INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE

Summary Description:	Manufacturing, industrial, storage and warehousing
Defining Character:	Suburban; truck-oriented; freestanding industrial sites; Storage and distribution centers; business parks
Location/Applicability:	Multiple locations: (1) North of I-85 north and south of SR 98 (Maysville Road); (2) East of I-85 north of SR 98 (Maysville Road); (3) SR 334 east of U.S. Hwy. 441
Relationship to Existing Development:	Some locations developed; mostly undeveloped in anticipation of future development
Primary Land Uses:	Manufacturing, industrial, storage and warehousing (usually single-function)
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Selected business, restaurants, and offices
Density or Intensity:	Up to 20,000 square feet per acre
Street Pattern:	Oriented to arterial or within planned industrial or business park designed to accommodate trucks; controlled (security) access to some individual sites
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Generous front building setbacks in campus-style setting; building coverage is 50 percent or less
Parking Characteristics:	Dominated by truck parking; off-street parking required
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Generally unsafe for walking due to truck traffic; pedestrian facilities provided along arterials and primary internal subdivision or industrial park streets
Sanitary Sewer	Available in some locations; development discouraged without sewer except low-intensity, approved interim development
Park and Recreation Facilities:	None; minimum open space required; variable campus –style design; buffers at side and rear when abutting residential districts
Redevelopment Prospects:	Unlikely (mostly Greenfield locations)
Overarching Principle(s):	Provide employment within industries and workplaces that capitalize on location of major thoroughfare or limited access highway; movement of freight/goods
QCOs Implemented:	Appropriate Business; Employment Options
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	M-1, Light Industrial District; M-2, Heavy Manufacturing

Additional Regulations Needed:

Campus site planning guidelines; industrial and business park covenants;

Special Programs Needed:

Formal industrial recruitment strategies/efforts

Industrial Workplace



Industrial building within industrial Park



Steve Reynolds Industrial Boulevard (looking north) is ready for industrial development



Monument-style entrance Signage Suggests Quality Environment



Green edge along street includes shrubs and mature street trees; Individual ground signs are small/low to ground



New Industrial Workplaces Planned for I-85



Desired Architecture – Industrial Workplace

INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

Summary Description:	School and Major Institutional Campuses
Defining Character:	Free-standing, single-function
Location/Applicability:	Multiple locations (schools and future designated sites)
Relationship to Existing Development:	Existing school campuses; mostly undeveloped in anticipation of future development
Primary Land Uses:	Public and private schools; hospitals; large churches and other religious institutions; utility offices; major governmental installations, institutionalized residential living facilities
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	None specified; may be flexible through special use process; may be mixed uses integrated
Density or Intensity:	Single-story up to 20,000 square feet; multi-story with FARs of up to 0.75
Street Pattern:	Large block (usually 20-40 acres or more) with controlled or limited access; secondary access encouraged
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Generous front building setbacks in campus-style setting; building coverage is 40 percent or less; may include multiple-story buildings up to four stories
Parking Characteristics:	Frequent traffic; high turnover parking; truck delivery or bus traffic; off-street parking required; larger, more dense institutions may make use of structured parking
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Pedestrian access essential for schools; other facilities may have limited internal pedestrian activity but must provide for pedestrian movement from major road into the development
Sanitary Sewer	Required and generally available, or can be extended
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Schools have ballfields and playgrounds; others generally lack improved recreation except as may be provided on individual basis by employers; minimum open space requirement
Redevelopment Prospects:	Unlikely (mostly Greenfield locations)
Overarching Principle(s):	Provide the institutional needs of the public
QCOs Implemented:	Educational Opportunities; Appropriate Business; Employment Options
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	Generally permitted in all zoning districts

Additional Regulations Needed: Traffic impact study may be required

Special Programs Needed: None, except coordination with school board for infrastructure

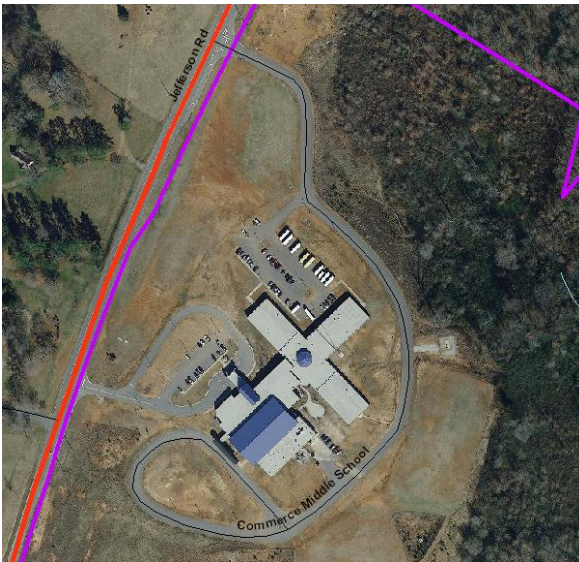
Institutional Campus



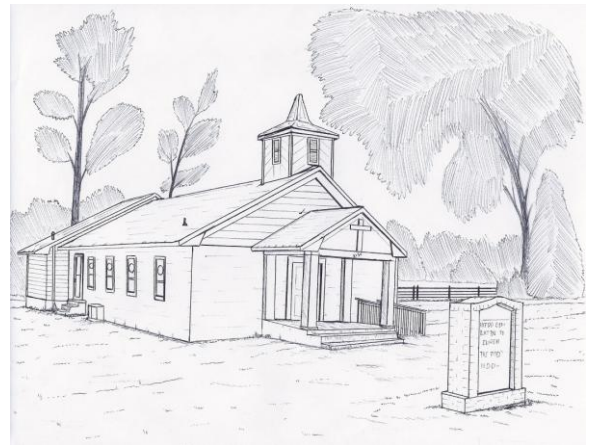
**New School Under Construction,
Main School Campus**



**Historic Church Campus
off U.S. Highway 441 Bus.**



Commerce Middle School Campus



Small-scale, historic church

SPECIAL USE AREA (AS SPECIFIED)

Summary Description:	Single-function special land use (as specified)
Defining Character:	None that can be generalized; depends on special use
Location/Applicability:	Golf course; treatment plant
Relationship to Existing Development:	Assigned to existing facilities only
Primary Land Uses:	Any special use as assigned and described
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Uses accessory or incidental to the principal uses
Density or Intensity:	Varied depending on use
Street Pattern:	Usually single-controlled access from arterial
Building Orientation and Coverage:	According to master plan
Parking Characteristics:	Varied depending on use
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Generally not conducive to pedestrian access but may vary based on use
Sanitary Sewer	Depends on the particular use
Park and Recreation Facilities:	None; or use itself may be recreation oriented
Redevelopment Prospects:	Generally none
Overarching Principle(s):	Provide for the essential utility, recreation, or other needs of the public
QCOs Implemented:	None that can be generalized
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	Best handled through special use permit process
Additional Regulations Needed:	Specific use regulations desirable
Special Programs Needed:	None



Golf Course



Treatment Plant

URBAN RESIDENTIAL

Summary Description:	Urban-density communities
Defining Character:	Usually master-planned with amenities and buffers
Location/Applicability:	Various locations
Relationship to Existing Development:	Several existing; some Greenfield
Primary Land Uses:	Mobile home parks in some existing locations; apartments, condominiums, and townhouses
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Ancillary civic-institutional; active recreation
Density or Intensity:	6-8 units per acre existing; 12-14 acres Greenfield
Street Pattern:	Usually single access from arterial or collector street; may be arranged in block pattern with or without alleys; private streets are typical; controlled access permitted
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Generally courtyard style around parking and green spaces
Parking Characteristics:	Varied off-street parking; in front of unit; grouped in common bays; on-street parking permitted; structured parking unlikely but possible
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Planned adjacent to and with access to commercial development; entire site is planned with pedestrian sidewalks; off-site trails optional/encouraged
Sanitary Sewer	Required and available or can be extended
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Active and/or passive recreation required for new developments
Redevelopment Prospects:	Generally none, except for manufactured home parks in prime commercial locations; mostly Greenfield)
Overarching Principle(s):	Mixed, higher density housing types
QCOs Implemented:	Housing Options
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	R3, Two-Family Residential District (Medium Density) R4, Multi-Family Residential; R5, Single-Family Residential District for Manufactured Home Parks and Subdivisions
Additional Regulations:	None except perhaps for evaluation of permitted densities

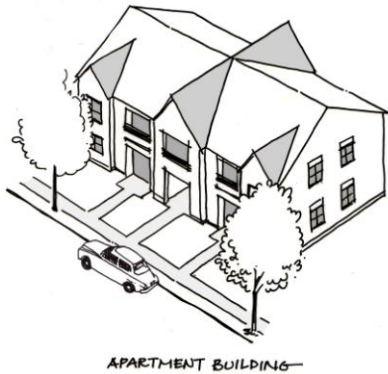
Urban Residential



Apartments

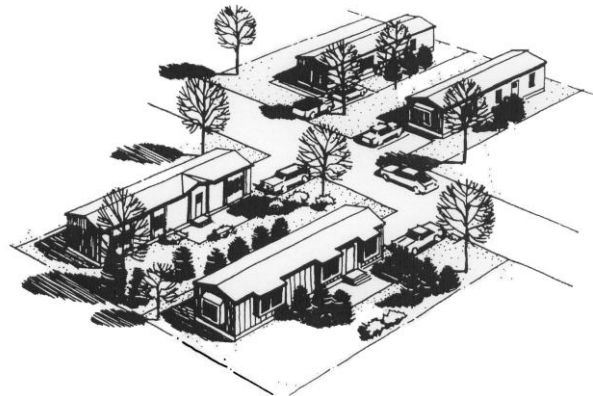


Manufactured Home Park



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Apartment fronting Street



Source: *Time-Saver Standards for Housing and Residential Development*. 2nd Ed. Joseph De Chiara, Julius Panero, and Martin Zelnik, Editors. New York: McGraw-Hill Professional, 1995. Chapter 11, Figure 17, p. 977.

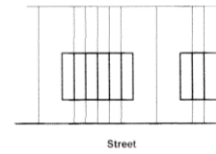
Manufactured Homes



Townhouses/Condominiums



Source: John Matusik and Daniel Deible. "Grading and Earthwork." Figure 24.30 in *Land Development Handbook*, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002, p. 571.



Townhouses
(Attached Single Family Fee Simple)

Townhouses

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

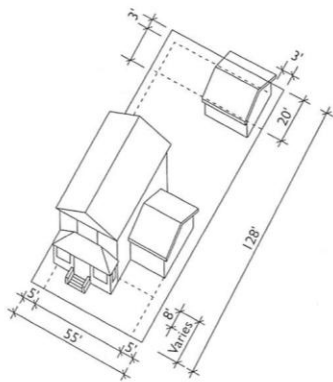
Summary Description:	Pre-1960s residential neighborhoods located close to downtown or other commercial activity center
Defining Character:	In-town convenience; smaller lots; grid street pattern
Location/Applicability:	North and south of downtown core and greater downtown character area
Relationship to Existing Development:	All existing, though there is potential for extension of existing traditional neighborhoods into adjacent vacant lands
Primary Land Uses:	Detached, single-family dwellings on individual lots
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	May have attached housing types (no more than 20 percent of total units); ancillary civic-institutional; parks and recreation; accessory dwelling units above garages are possible; home occupations
Density or Intensity:	3-5 units per acre existing; up to 6 units; residential lots as low as 5,000 square feet
Street Pattern:	Arranged in block pattern with or without alleys; no private streets or controlled access; narrow block widths; cul-de-sacs prohibited
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Close to front street; front porches encouraged; Narrow lot widths (50-70 feet)
Parking Characteristics:	Off-street parking (1-2 spaces per unit) from rear of lot only; on-street parking permitted
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Sidewalks along both sides of all streets; facilities may be lacking in existing areas
Sanitary Sewer	Required and available
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Existing parks may be within walking distance; new development incorporates small playgrounds and “greens”
Redevelopment Prospects:	Not anticipated but not precluded in existing areas
Overarching Principle(s):	Denser, walkable residential dwelling with some land use variety
QCOs Implemented:	Sense of Place; Housing Options; Traditional Neighborhoods; Infill Development; Transportation Alternatives
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	R3, Two-Family Residential District is closest; however, a new TND, Traditional Neighborhood Development District is needed

Additional Regulations Guidelines for traditional neighborhood development

Special Programs Needed: None



Traditional neighborhoods ring many parts of the Greater Downtown Commerce character area, some with adequate sidewalks, and others without sufficient pedestrian amenities.



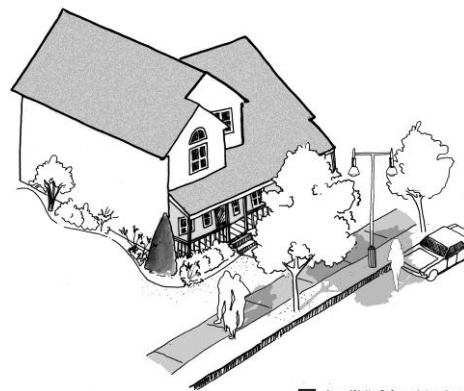
Source: Kindell, Peter J., "Building Types," p. 189 in *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006)

Source: Hill, John, W. *Design Characteristics of Maryland's Traditional Communities*, Figure 4, p. 5.1-2 in *Time Saver Standards for Urban Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003)

Narrow lots, shallow front building setbacks, front porches, and garages located to the rear are desirable characteristics.



Homes near potential redevelopment area.



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Illustrative Dwelling in Traditional Neighborhood

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Summary Description:	Conventional suburban subdivisions
Defining Character:	Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs
Location/Applicability:	Multiple locations, usually outside walking distance of downtown
Relationship to Existing Development:	Almost all locations are existing
Primary Land Uses:	Detached, single-family dwellings on individual lots
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	May include churches or other civic-institutional uses; parks may be located within subdivision; home occupations
Density or Intensity:	As low as 0.6 acre lot without sewer; generally not more than 1.0 acre lots
Street Pattern:	Curvilinear; cul-de-sacs, usually connected to collector streets but may abut arterials; cut through traffic discouraged by design or via traffic calming measures
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Front setbacks are typically 25-35 feet and more, with other yards at least 10 feet in width; Lot widths are 70-100 feet and more
Parking Characteristics:	Off-street parking (2 spaces or more per unit); On-street parking may be permitted but is discouraged
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Sidewalks required within 1 mile of schools; encouraged in other locations on at least one side of street; facilities may be lacking in existing areas
Sanitary Sewer	Typically available though not required
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Served by existing off-site parks; new, larger subdivisions incorporate green or park space
Redevelopment Prospects:	None
Overarching Principle(s):	“American Dream” suburban homes
QCOs Implemented:	Housing Choices; Infill Development
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	R1, Single-Family Residential (Low Density) R2, Single-Family Residential (Medium Density)
Additional Regulations Needed:	None specified

Suburban Residential



Suburban Neighborhood in Commerce



Upscale Home in Commerce



Streets are wide and usually curvilinear



CONVENTIONAL SUBURBAN SUBDIVISION

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Conventional Suburban Subdivision Layout



Suburban Moderate Housing



Suburban Upscale Housing

RURAL PLACES

Summary Description:	Rural living amidst undeveloped lands and agriculture
Defining Character:	Rural (lack of regularity)
Location/Applicability:	At the edges of the suburban area in places lacking sewer service; new development may be planned as large-lot (estate) subdivisions
Relationship to Existing Development:	All locations are existing
Primary Land Uses:	Detached, single-family dwellings on individual lots
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	Farms, forests, gardens, and orchards; livestock raising (may require special permit); farm storage buildings; new public schools prohibited
Density or Intensity:	Maximum density is typically one unit per acre; many areas have much lower density (up to five-acre tracts)
Street Pattern:	Irregular, based on old farm access patterns; low-volume, narrower throughways (may be private drives); curvilinear designs acceptable cul-de-sacs discouraged; open space or conservation subdivisions encouraged at very low densities.
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Front setbacks are generous (60-100 feet or more typical); varied, irregular frontage; some lots may lack road frontage
Parking Characteristics:	No organized parking facilities except for garages and usually unpaved areas in front of or at side of house
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Generally no improved pedestrian facilities available; narrow roads are used by pedestrians without conflict due to low traffic volumes
Sanitary Sewer	Not available and not planned; rely on septic tanks
Park and Recreation Facilities:	None – surrounding open spaces and farms provide for open space character and feel
Redevelopment Prospects:	None (inapplicable)
Overarching Principle(s):	Open space and low-density rural settlement
QCOs Implemented:	Sense of Place; Housing Choices; Environmental protection due to low density involved

Existing Zoning Districts AR, Agricultural Residential District
 Appropriate: R1E, Single-Family Estate Residential

Additional Regulations None specified
 Needed:

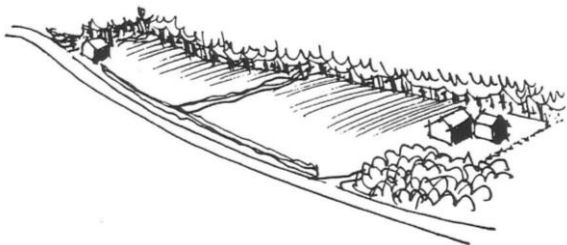
Special Programs Needed: None specified



Rural residences are typically located on narrower, unpaved roads, amidst agricultural lands.

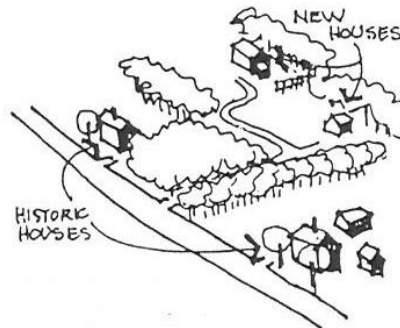


Land along Woods Bridge Road, just outside Commerce, quickly becomes rural in character.



Source: Craighead, Paula M., Editor. The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances, Figure 31, p. 36 and Figure 50, p. 53. (Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, 1991)

Siting homes at edges of fields rather than in the middle of them helps retain rural character.



Where historic rural residences exist, new homes should be set back to let them dominate the rural road scene.



Rural Settlement Pattern along Woods Bridge Road Outside Commerce

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Summary Description:	Large tracts of farmland and forests
Defining Character:	Rural (lack of regularity) and agrarian
Location/Applicability:	Beyond the suburban fringe, further out beyond rural places (limited applicability in City of Commerce)
Relationship to Existing Development:	All locations are existing (outside urban service areas)
Primary Land Uses:	Farms and farm-related uses and buildings; farm dwellings (single-family)
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	None
Density or Intensity:	Larger farms are 35 acres or more; generally 10 acres is minimum to qualify for the current use assessment program; minimum lot size outside the current use assessment program is 8 acres; permissions for occasional lot creation, usually for family members
Street Pattern:	Lack of improved street access; narrow, usually single-lane driveways or gravel roads; long without turnarounds
Building Orientation and Coverage:	Varied and irregular frontage; some lots may lack road frontage
Parking Characteristics:	No organized parking facilities except for garages and usually unpaved areas in front of or at side of house
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Generally no improved pedestrian facilities available; narrow roads are used by pedestrians without conflict due to low traffic volumes
Sanitary Sewer	Not available and not planned; rely on septic tanks
Park and Recreation Facilities:	None – surrounding open spaces and farms provide for open space character and feel
Redevelopment Prospects:	None (inapplicable)
Overarching Principle(s):	Open space; working rural landscapes
QCOs Implemented:	Sense of Place; Open Space; Environmental Protection, due to low density involved
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	A-F, Agricultural Farm District

Additional Regulations Needed: None specified

Special Programs Needed: None specified



Agricultural land in the current use assessment (conservation valuation) program of Jackson County. Property is in Commerce, just south of I-85.



Pasture land with livestock, just outside Commerce, north of I-85. Also in the conservation valuation program.



Representative Agricultural Scene

CONSERVATION – PARK

Summary Description:	Undeveloped or Active or Passive Recreation
Defining Character:	Open space; green space
Location/Applicability:	Within residential neighborhoods
Relationship to Existing Development:	All locations are existing
Primary Land Uses:	Parks; playgrounds, passive recreation
Secondary or Possible Land Uses:	None
Density or Intensity:	Inapplicable
Street Pattern:	Served by neighborhood local street(s)
Building Orientation and Coverage:	None; recreation buildings if they exist are master planned
Parking Characteristics:	Off-site parking spaces are grouped together, usually in a single lot
Pedestrian Friendliness:	Access from adjacent residential neighborhoods strongly desirable; existing facilities may be inadequate
Sanitary Sewer	Probably available but not needed
Park and Recreation Facilities:	Varied from picnic tables to playgrounds to ball fields to passive recreational facilities
Redevelopment Prospects:	None (inapplicable)
Overarching Principle(s):	Recreation
QCOs Implemented:	Open Space; Environmental protection, if sensitive environmental areas are included on the site
Existing Zoning Districts Appropriate:	Not applicable; permitted use in virtually all zoning districts
Additional Regulations Needed:	Guidelines for conservation easements
Special Programs Needed:	Purchase of development rights; transfer of development rights



Willoughby Park



Gazebo at Willoughby Park

**Table 6.1
Character Area Acreage by Category in 2030
City of Commerce**

Character Category	2030 Acres	% Total Area
Conservation -- Park	102.7	1.5
Agricultural Preservation	209.2	3.0
Rural Places	287.2	4.2
Suburban Residential	1,675.8	24.5
Traditional Neighborhood	387.3	5.6
Urban Residential	387.8	5.6
Institutional Campus	385.1	5.6
Special Use Area	168.4	2.5
Neighborhood Retail-Service	116.7	1.7
Master Planned Mixed Use	728.1	10.6
Highway Commercial	862.2	12.5
Greater Downtown	36.9	0.5
Downtown Commercial Core	14.4	0.2
Industrial Workplace	1,509.9	22.0
Total	6,871.7	100%

Source: Jackson County GIS Department.

CHAPTER 7 LAND USE

The character area map for the year 2030, described in Chapter 6, provides an overarching policy framework for character but does not provide sufficient policy guidance for specific, individual land uses. Therefore, this Community Agenda includes a future land use plan map in addition to the character area (future development) map described and presented in the prior chapter.

A future land use plan map is “optional” under the local planning requirements. Since it is not required, it is worth explaining why the city has elected to also include a future land use plan map. There are two principal reasons. First, if the local government has adopted zoning regulations (as Commerce has), it needs a future land use plan map in order to guide decision-making with respect to individual, use-oriented zoning categories. Without it, character area approaches usually do not provide enough specific guidance with regard to land uses to legally support rezoning and special use decisions. Second, a future land use map is more useful than a character area map in terms of facility planning decisions, because one can more easily project housing, population, and employment if the specific future land uses are known.

LIST OF FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The Future Land Use Plan for the year 2030 divides the city into the following categories. They are described in detail in the following section of this chapter.

Park/Recreation/Conservation

Agricultural/Forestry

Residential

- Residential – Rural
- Residential – Suburban, up to 1.33 units per acre
- Residential – Suburban, up to 4.0 units per acre
- Traditional Neighborhood Residential
- Multi-family Residential

Public-Institutional

Transportation/Communications/Utilities

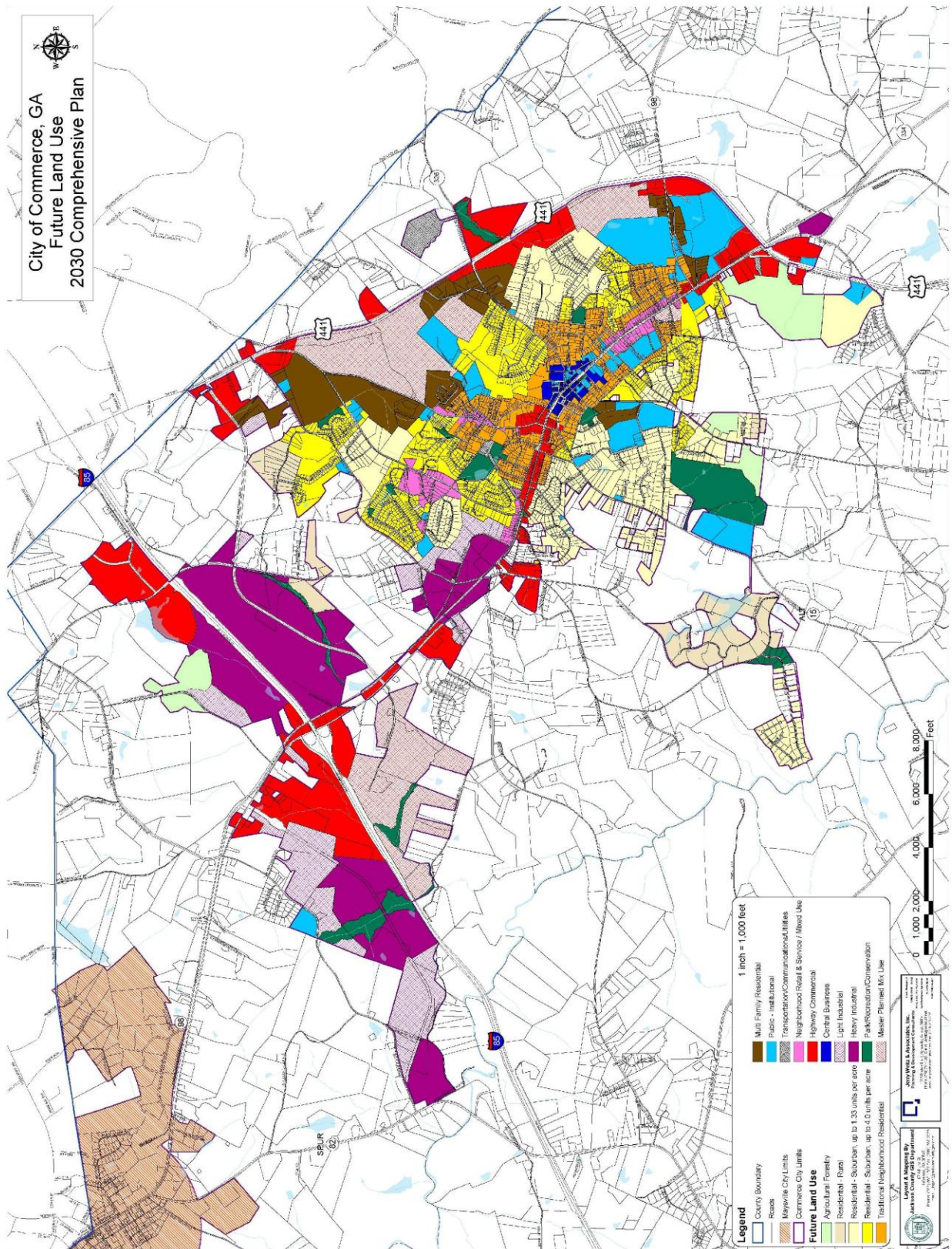
Commercial

- Neighborhood Retail and Service/Mixed Use
- Highway Commercial
- Central Business
- Master Planned Mixed Use

Industrial

- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial

Acreages for each category are shown in Table 7.1. The future land use plan 2030 map is provided on the following page. More detailed descriptions of these categories follow the table and map.



**Table 7.1
Land Use Acreage and Land Use Change, 2009 and 2030
City of Commerce**

Land Use Category	Existing 2009 Acres	% Total	Future 2030 Acres	% Total	2009-2030 Change in Acres
Park/Recreation/Conservation	141.1	2.0	298.1	4.3	+157
Agricultural/Forestry	2,539.8	36.7	245.1	3.6	-2,294.7
Residential – all single-family categories	1,727.9	25.0	2,258.4	32.9	+530.5
• Residential – Rural	n/c	--	280.9	4.1	--
• Residential – Suburban, up to 1.33 units per acre	n/c	--	910.0	13.2	--
• Residential – Suburban, up to 4.0 units per acre	n/c	--	706.4	10.3	--
• Traditional Neighborhood Residential	n/c	--	361.1	5.3	--
Multi-family Residential	120.0	1.7	372.5	5.4	+252.5
Public-Institutional	206.0	3.0	486.3	7.1	+280.3
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	55.4	0.8	50.2	0.7	-5.2
Commercial – all categories	283.4	4.1	1,068.0	15.5	+784.6
• Neighborhood Retail and Service	n/c	--	105.7	1.5	--
• Highway Commercial	n/c	--	924.1	13.5	--
• Central Business	n/c	--	38.2	0.5	--
Industrial – all categories	270.0	3.9	1,374.8	20.0	+1,104.8
• Light Industrial	n/c	--	952.2	13.9	--
• Heavy Industrial	n/c	--	422.6	6.1	--
Master Planned Mixed Use	n/c	--	718.0	10.5	+718.0
Vacant/Undeveloped (existing only)	1,577.5	22.8	n/c	--	-1,577.5
TOTAL ALL LAND USES	6,921.1	100%	6,871.4	100%	--

Source: Jackson County GIS Department. Existing land use from Community Assessment..

DESCRIPTIONS OF FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP CATEGORIES

Park/Recreation/Conservation

This category, which corresponds with the conservation—park character district as shown on the character map, includes lands dedicated to both active and passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned, and they may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, forest preserves, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. Parks, recreation, and conservation land will more than double from 141 to 298 acres during the planning horizon, reflecting mostly the protection of flood plains.

Agricultural/Forestry

This category corresponds with the agricultural preservation category on the character area map (see Chapter 6). Much of the land in this category is simply vacant or undeveloped, but other tracts are forested and there may be some raising of livestock or cultivation of crops in this future land use category. Residential land uses are allowed but they are limited to single-family, stick-built homes on individual lots and manufactured homes on individual lots. Residential uses by definition are included but they primarily relate to the larger agricultural or forestry tract.

Agricultural and forestry uses will witness substantial conversion to other uses during the planning horizon. While constituting more than 2,500 acres and more than one-third of the land

use acreage in Commerce in 2009, agriculture/forestry will be reduced to 245 acres in the city by 2030.

Residential Categories

The future land use plan divides residential into mostly single-family types (multiple subcategories) and multi-family residential uses. In addition, some residential development is expected in the master-planned, mixed use future land use category.

The rural residential future land use category corresponds to the rural places character area as shown on the character area map and as described in Chapter 6. The single-family residential future land use districts (up to 1.33 and up to 4.0 units per acre) correspond with the suburban residential character area as shown on the character area map. Each of these future land use categories is primarily limited to detached, single-family residential dwellings.

The traditional neighborhood residential future land use category corresponds with the traditional neighborhood character area. While most of the dwellings in that category are detached, single-family, it is possible to have more diverse housing unit types in this category. See “traditional neighborhood” in Chapter 6 for more information.

The multi-family residential future land use category corresponds with the “urban residential” character area as described in Chapter 6. Residential uses included in this category include manufactured home parks (existing only), duplexes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments.

Single-family residential uses will increase by approximately 530 acres during the planning horizon. The future land use plan favors suburban, low-density, detached single-family use (910 acres total in 2030), followed by medium density (up to 4.0 units per acre) detached single-family suburban dwellings (706 acres). Higher density residential options including traditional neighborhood residential (361 total acres in 2030) and multi-family residential (an increase of approximately 252.5 acres from 2009 to 2030). The future land use plan also provides for the protection of a rural residential area (281 acres total) throughout the planning horizon.

Public/Institutional

This category includes federal, state, or local government uses, and a wide variety of institutional land uses. Government uses include county-owned facilities, fire stations, post offices, and schools. Private institutional uses include schools, colleges, churches, cemeteries, and private non-profit meeting halls, among others. The future land use plan for the year 2030 anticipates and plans for extensive additions to public-institutional land in the city; acreage will more than double in this category from 206 acres in 2009 to 486 acres in 2030. Public institutional land uses will increase as a percentage of total land area from 3 percent to 7.1 percent during the planning horizon.

Transportation/ Communications/Utilities

This category applies primarily to electricity facilities like power substations and major transmission lines and cell towers, but also includes municipal sewage treatment plants. This category will see little if any change in terms of total acreage during the planning horizon.

Commercial Categories

The future land use plan map includes a number of subcategories. The Neighborhood Retail and Service category corresponds with a character district by the same name and is anticipated to be predominantly lower intensity office, retail and service commercial uses but may also include dwellings when existing (freestanding) or located as a part of an office or commercial structure (i.e., mixed use). There are 105 acres devoted to this category in Commerce.

Extensive highway commercial land use will be added in Commerce during the planning horizon, totaling approximately 924 acres and 13.5 percent of the total land area in 2030. It is difficult to estimate the exact land use change in this category since some commercial land uses would be in the “neighborhood” rather than just the “highway” category, but is estimated that some 600-700 new acres of highway commercial land use will be added during the planning horizon. This future land use plan category corresponds with the highway commercial character area as shown on the character area map and described in Chapter 6 of this Community Agenda.

The “central” business future land use category corresponds with the “downtown core” and “greater downtown” character area designations described in Chapter 6. Rather than expanding in acreage, new development in this future land use category will consist predominantly of commercial infill development and redevelopment, probably at higher intensities than existing now in these character areas.

Counting all commercial categories and anticipated commercial development within the master-planned mixed use future land use plan category, Commerce will have more than 1,000 acres of commercial development at buildout according to the 2030 future land use plan, constituting some 20 percent of the total land area.

Industrial Categories

Light industrial future land use category includes lands dedicated to light industrial uses as described in the Commerce zoning ordinance, including warehouses, wholesale trade facilities, and research and development facilities. Heavy Industrial future land use may include any “light” industrial uses but also manufacturing operations, processing plants, and factories, and it may also include mining or mineral extraction activities.

Industrial lands in total will increase from 270 acres and about 4 percent of the city’s total land area in 2009 to 1,375 acres and 20 percent of the total land area in 2030. This represents an addition of more than 1,100 acres of new industrial development in the city by the end of the planning horizon.

Master Planned Mixed Use

This category encourages an appropriate mix of residential, office, civic-institutional, retail-service, and open space in a planned environment. It corresponds with the master-planned, mixed use category described in Chapter 6 and as shown on the character area map. No existing development exists in this category, though there is one large parcel in Commerce that is approved for mixed-use development. Local planning requirements indicate that local governments need to designate parameters for development when mixed future land use categories are included. Accordingly, the following recommended specifications are suggested for mixtures of land uses in this future land use category (see Table 7.2).

**Table 7.2
Recommended Land Use Mix Parameters
Master-Planned Mixed Use Future Land Use Category**

Land Use	Minimum Acreage (Percent of Total)	Maximum Acreage (Percent of Total)	Minimum Percent Share Total Dwelling Units	Maximum Percent Share Total Dwelling Units	Maximum Density or Intensity
Park, recreation, conservation, open space	20%	None	--	--	--
Detached, single-family residential	20%	35%	40%	60%	5.0 units per acre
Multi-family housing, all types	15%	25%	20%	40%	14.0 units per acre
Commercial and civic-institutional	20%	40%	--	--	30,000 square feet per acre
Industrial	Not anticipated				

Note: Civic-institutional uses should not be less than 5% of the total acreage of the development. The recommended jobs-to-housing units ratio is a range from 1.3:1 to 1.7:1 for the entire development.

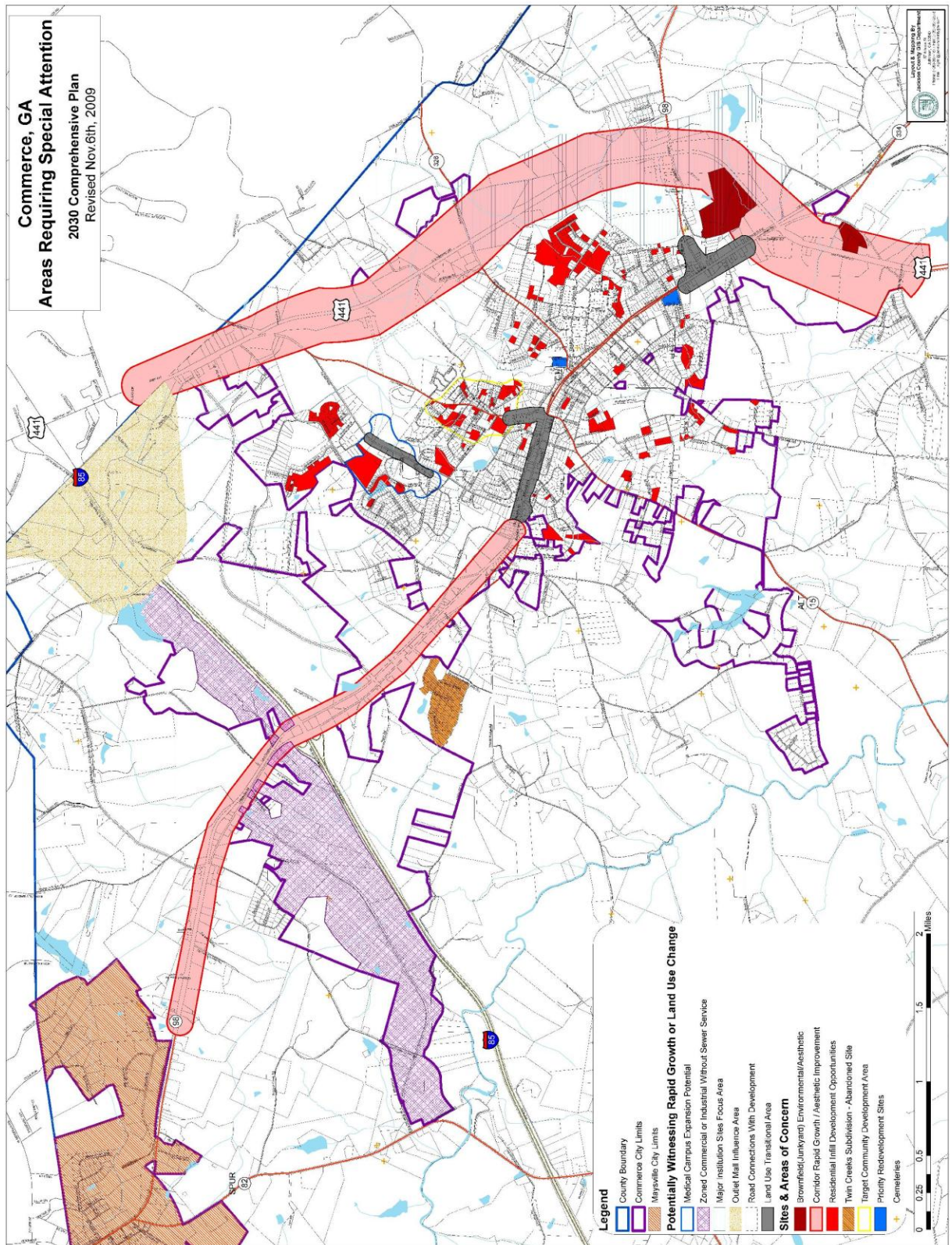
SPECIAL AREAS OF LAND USE CONCERN

There are a number of areas that were described in the Community Assessment as areas requiring special attention which can be implemented with overlays to the zoning districts now in place in Commerce. These areas were identified in this category and shown on the map of Areas Requiring Special Attention, as reproduced in this Chapter. Those areas pertaining to land use are reiterated here in this Chapter.

Maysville Road (SR98) Corridor

The entire SR 98 corridor from Maysville, crossing I-85, and into greater downtown Commerce, is shown as a corridor that will receive rapid growth during the next five years or when the economy recovers fully from the great recession of 2008-09. The whole corridor is not uniformly within the city limits of Commerce – in fact, sizable portions of it are unincorporated Jackson County. The City of Maysville, at the north end of the corridor, generally plans for the corridor to have sewer service extended from Commerce or Jackson County for commercial and industrial development in Maysville’s city limits. There is a realistic chance that Maysville Road from Maysville city limits to greater downtown Commerce will become one seamless corridor developed with commercial and industrial land uses. Indeed, west of Interstate 85, major industrial development is planned and zoned in Commerce.

The Maysville Road corridor, in its entirety, has significant existing development along most of the corridor, interspersed with vacant lands. Substantial automobile-oriented development already exists. Maysville Road intersects with Interstate 85, which has older gas stations or truck fuel stops at three of the four interchange quadrants. Due especially to location, this corridor is expected to witness a number of complex land use changes and issues, including redevelopment of underutilized lands or low-value commercial development, Greenfield development, industrial-residential land use conflicts, commercialization of currently residential areas, and potential complications with regard to intergovernmental delivery of services and utilities.



This means that Jackson County and Commerce, both of which regulate land use in the corridor, need to coordinate access management, land use, utility provision, and aesthetic policies and regulations. The corridor east of Interstate 85 is also especially targeted for aesthetic improvement.

U.S. Highway 441 Corridor

The entire corridor of U.S. Highway 441 from Banks County (Banks Crossing) past White Hill School Road is shown on the map of Areas Requiring Special Attention. It is designated on the map primarily because commercial development is expected to progress along the highway from the Banks Crossing area into Commerce and unincorporated Jackson County. The U.S. Highway 441 corridor will likely witness a mostly piecemeal, lot-by-lot commercial development pattern extending in a linear (and mostly progressive) fashion from Banks Crossing, at least for that part closest to Banks Crossing. Some of the corridor is served by sanitary sewer, and other parts are not. Commerce has annexed up to the western right-of-way of U.S. Highway 441, and in a few cases beyond it to the other side of U.S. Highway 441. This means that Jackson County and Commerce, both of which regulate land use in the corridor, need to coordinate access management, land use, utility provision, and aesthetic policies and regulations. Aesthetically, there is an opportunity for Commerce and Jackson County (unless annexed into Commerce) to extend streetscape improvements such as those installed in the Banks Crossing area, as development marches up the hill along U.S. 441 into Commerce.

Moving away from the immediate influence of Banks Crossing (i.e., the westernmost segment of the corridor), there are sizeable tracts that are vacant or agricultural. These tracts are prime developable real estate, with a variety of land use patterns possible depending on how well growth is managed. The whole corridor is not pre-zoned for commercial development, however. One would expect commercial development potential along most if not all of the U.S. Highway 441 corridor, but yet there are opportunities to plan the pattern and mixture of uses in a different way – one that anticipates the value of the corridor lands for major institutional development, and different scales of mixed-use development. One has to be most concerned about the possible occurrence along U.S. Highway 441 of pre-mature, unplanned, lower-value, piecemeal, commercial development occurring without provision of all urban utilities and services.

Outlet Mall Influence Area

In addition to commercial development progressing along U.S. Highway 441 in a linear, corridor fashion, it is also expected that the Banks Crossing major activity node will expand peripherally into Jackson County. The map of Areas Requiring Special Attention formally recognizes this potential development pattern which could raise a host of issues. In particular, the large vacant buildings formerly known as “The Pottery” already represent an important adaptive reuse issue/opportunity within Banks Crossing itself. One has to at least consider the possibility in the long-term future that the Banks Crossing outlet mall area will get entirely transformed into a different (more intense) scale of development, depending on utility availability.

Medical Campus Expansion Potential

The area surrounding the BJC Medical Center is shown on the map of Areas Requiring Special Attention primarily because it is likely to continue witnessing spinoff growth of medical offices which may extend into the adjacent residential neighborhoods. There is also an opportunity to make this area into a neighborhood commercial node. However, there is another reason why this area is shown as an Area Requiring Special Attention. It is anticipated that the BJC Medical

Center could possibly leave its current location for a larger site. Indeed, there has already been some discussion about relocating the medical center. In that case, it is important to anticipate the reuse and/or redevelopment of the medical campus area, as medical practitioners are likely to follow the hospital to its new location, thus leaving significant vacancies in the current campus area. It is in Commerce's best interest to plan for reuse and redevelopment of the current medical campus, if BJC Medical Center vacates the current location in favor of a larger property.

Major Institutions Sites Focus Area

As Jackson County grows, because of its readily available sewer service, Commerce is the likely location for any major institutions that will locate in the county in the future. For instance, it is widely anticipated that a hospital campus larger than the BJC medical center will be needed during the planning horizon. Also, some stakeholders in the county would like to attract more educational opportunities, which will need large sites with good access. Furthermore, land use plans usually do not anticipate and reserve large sites for new schools and large churches which outgrow their existing sites and need more room for building and parking expansion. It is therefore advisable that Commerce formally recognize the future needs of larger institutions and plan sites for them.

The map of Areas Requiring Special Attention also shows several large sites, primarily along U.S. Highway 441, for the potential accommodation of large institutional sites. While not usually planned for in a local government land use plan, it is important for Commerce to anticipate substantial additions to the institutional land uses in the city during the planning horizon. In particular, there will likely be demand for such uses as a new hospital (see discussion above), perhaps new schools, large churches, government uses, and perhaps even a satellite campus for a major university. The major institutions sites focus area overlaps the U.S. Highway 441 Corridor also shown on the map of Areas Requiring Special Attention. The focus area is believed to reflect the most advantageous locations for major new institutions from a public facilities and services standpoint, as well as accessibility.

Land Use Transitional Areas

The map of Areas Requiring Special Attention identifies three major areas where significant land use change is anticipated to occur. One such area is the Hospital Road corridor within the aforementioned Medical Campus Expansion Area. As already noted, this area is expected to witness additional medical office growth, so long as the BJC Medical Center maintains its current location. This could mean the conversion of residential properties for office uses, and perhaps additional supporting neighborhood commercial land uses.

A second area identified as potentially undergoing significant land use transitions in the future is that part of the Maysville Road (SR 98) corridor between Westwood Road and Jefferson Street (SR 15 Alt.) and including part of U.S. Highway 441 Business (Homer Road) past Carson Street. In this area, there are significant numbers of detached, single-family homes which front the highways, and it should be anticipated that there will be pressure to convert and/or redevelop them into commercial uses.

A third area is the SR 98 (Elm Street) corridor southeast of the downtown core, and also extending along SR 98 toward the U.S. Highway 441 corridor. That area is mostly developed with commercial uses, but is also expected to witness significant transitions in land use from single-family residential uses to commercial developments.

Significant Infill Development Potential

Commerce has some nonresidential sites that may offer nonresidential infill development potential, but it is more appropriate to characterize most of Commerce's nonresidential development opportunities as "Greenfield" rather than "infill." However, there are significant opportunities for residential infill development. Several lots and subdivisions are identified on the map of Areas Requiring Special Attention where residential infill development can and should be encouraged.

There is an opportunity or need to ensure that certain existing, established neighborhoods maintain their stability and character. With many vacant lots in some of these neighborhoods, there are both opportunities and potential liabilities. New houses on vacant lots in established neighborhoods can help stabilize property values and community cohesion. Such new homebuilding may require special incentives. On the other hand, new development in such existing neighborhoods can be incompatible with existing homes unless clear, advance thinking is given to what dimensional and bulk requirements for new housing should be. Infill development incentives and regulatory protections need to be addressed during the rewrite of the city's zoning ordinance.

Brownfield (Junkyard)

The map of Areas Requiring Special Attention identifies two junkyards along U.S. Highway 441 as areas of concern. These junkyards are concerns for two reasons. First, with the large number of vehicles on these sites, there is significant potential (not necessarily documented occurrence) for the leakage of gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, brake fluid, etc. into the ground and groundwater from the vehicles stored on site. This makes these areas potentially environmentally hazardous areas. Secondly, these junkyards are at least partially visible from U.S. Highway 441, and they negatively impact the aesthetics of the corridor. For these reasons, the two major junkyards along U.S. Highway 441 are identified for remediation, both environmentally and aesthetically. It is in Commerce's long-term interests that the largest of these junkyards be eventually phased out, discontinued, and cleaned up for reuse as a major institutional site, to the point that acquisition of that site should be considered within the planning horizon. The other junkyard may or may not be phased out but should at minimum be screened from public view.

Large Sites with Redevelopment Potential

As noted elsewhere in this report, there are two major industrial sites that are accepted as having potential for significant redevelopment: The Oxford Property across from the Commerce Civic Center in the downtown area; and the old mill site southeast of the downtown core, which is currently used for furniture storage and has a small "village" of homes beside it. There are other redevelopment opportunities, but these two reflect the major ones that should be considered priorities for redevelopment in Commerce.

OTHER LAND USE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

Quality Commercial Development Standards

Commerce's zoning ordinance contains certain standards which are intended to promote quality development and commercial sites that are compatible with the environment and adjacent land uses. However, there is an opportunity to review and potentially strengthen the city's

regulations with regard to commercial development, to ensure the best possible site planning principles are followed. Since there are many vacant tracts along U.S. Highway 441 that will convert to commercial development during the planning horizon, it is particularly important for Commerce to put those quality development standards in place before they are likely to be needed, as opposed to trying to apply them retroactively, after some development has already taken place. This need will be addressed during the proposed rewrite of Commerce's zoning ordinance.

Amount of Growth Desired (Population Target)

Some local governments consider whether they want to articulate a "target" population in their comprehensive plans. For instance, there may be a certain population level at which the community ceases to maintain "small town" character. During the participation process, there was no sentiment to articulate expectations for future population levels in the city. Therefore, there is no additional action to be taken with regard to this issue.

Permitted Uses in Downtown

There is a need to reassess and amend the uses permitted in the downtown, including furniture manufacturing, DUI school, and storefront churches. Some uses permitted now are not conducive to the downtown fabric/environment of main street retail. Revision of the zoning ordinance in this regard is a part of the city's work program.



Some uses in the downtown core do not contribute to retail shopping objectives.
Photo Credit: W. A. Storing

Commercial Intrusions and Nonconforming Uses in Neighborhoods

In some cases, there are commercial uses at the fringe of or even within established residential areas. While such uses may be "grandfathered" and will continue for some time, the city should consider the extent to which such incompatible uses can remain in their same condition and whether they will be allowed to expand. Some consideration should be given to requiring aesthetic improvements if such uses are going to continue to operate within residential areas. This will be addressed during zoning rewrite.



Commercial use intruding into primarily residential area

“Consistency” Requirements

Some local governments have elected to achieve consistency of their zoning practices with their future land use plans and/or character area maps. For instance, Jackson County does not allow for the filing of zoning changes unless the proposed land use is consistent with the county's future land use plan map. The merits and potential drawbacks of land use consistency were considered in the planning process but a mandatory consistency requirement is not included in this Community agenda.

Code Review and Rewrite

The city's zoning and subdivision regulations are not modernized enough to accommodate the types of development that will be promoted in the new comprehensive plan. As one example, Commerce's zoning ordinance does not contain a mixed-use zoning district, yet it has some significant opportunities to build live-work-play communities as called for on the character and future land use plan maps. One of the most fundamental implementation steps typically called for in the short-term work program of a city or county comprehensive plan is the reconsideration and rewriting of land use regulations. Such a code rewrite will take into account a number of other important issues more specifically identified in this chapter and elsewhere in this Community Agenda.

**CHAPTER 8
FACILITIES TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH**

The quality of life in a given community depends on maintaining existing facilities and adding facility and service capacity in order to continue growing and developing. Without adequate facilities, such as roads, water, sewer, schools, parks, etc., private development will not be possible. The provision of facilities is understandably complex, and the provision of facilities can take several years to plan, design, construct, and operate.

Infrastructure is an overused buzzword, but it captures all of the underlying systems that are needed to support the built environment. Planning is about recognizing and anticipating the needs for and demands on community facilities and services as the area increases its population and employment. These new pressures of growth create a need for additional fire stations, more schools, expanded water systems, larger sewer treatment plants, more government personnel in various departments, and expansion of many other different services like libraries and hospitals.

RECOMMENDED FACILITY DESIGN POPULATIONS

It is recommended that the city use the following targets in terms of evaluating and planning for future facilities. For some facilities, such as police, the combination of population and employment should be used to estimate future facility demands. For others, such as parks and libraries, only the residential population should be considered as they represent the vast majority of the demand for such facilities.

**Table 8.1
Target Design Populations for Facility Planning, City of Commerce**

	2010	2015	2030
Resident Population	6,600	6,970	8,407
Employment in City	4,500	5,000	7,500
Total, Population Plus Employment (functional)	11,100	11,970	15,907

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police facilities include the main police station building and the police annex (space unknown; see figures). The police department constructed its own firearms shooting range on the old landfill site in the city, some seven years ago. Police calls have been increasing significantly over time; for instance, there were 9,300 calls in the year 2001 and in 2009 the number of calls was approximately 28,000. The police department has answered these additional calls with basically the same manpower levels. The police department also provides some code enforcement; the police chief serves as the administrative hearing officer in cases of nuisance abatement. Municipal court administration is also assigned to the police department. Animal control functions are also assigned to the police department; the city during the next five years should explore the prospects of having the county's public development department assume animal control functions, in order to free up existing assigned personnel in the city's police department.



Police and Fire Complex



Police Annex (building at top)

Tax records do not provide full building square footage figures, so they are roughly estimated. Prior research reveals the fire station in Commerce includes four bays and consists of 9,300 square feet. Police building facilities are considered by the police chief to be adequate for the time being. However, an increase in need for more building space is inevitable as the city continues to increase in population and employment. Table 8.2 forecasts public safety facility needs for 5-year and 20-year periods.

One possibility to handle future public safety space needs is to eventually allow the fire department to assume all of the building space now occupied by the police department (including the annex building), then build a new facility for the police department. This idea has merit, as existing police space would appear to be sufficient to meet long-range building space demands for the fire department if vacated by the police department. As indicated in Table 8.2, the city will need an estimated almost 11,000 square feet of space, considering future needs and replacement of the existing space (if eventually occupied by the fire department). The city may not need to build additional police facility space in the short-term (five-year) period. However, as major development comes to the fringes of Commerce, the city should seek one or more decentralized police annexes within a large commercial or industrial facility, once privately developed. Furthermore, over the long-term, Commerce may need fire stations in other parts of the city besides the downtown, in order to maintain response times and answer an increased number of call demands, as development becomes more concentrated. It should therefore be opportunistic in terms of the potential for siting one or more future fire stations within developed or developing commercial or industrial areas on the fringes of the city.

**Table 8.2
Forecast of Public Safety Facility Needs, City of Commerce**

Facility	Existing Facility 2010 (estimate)	Level of Service (LOS) (city)	Needed 2015 at Same LOS (from 2010)	5-Year Need 2015	Needed 2030 at Same LOS	20-Year Need 2030 (from 2010)
Police	5,000 sq. ft.	0.45 sq. ft. per functional resident	5,387 sq. ft.	387 sq. ft.	10,907 sq. ft.	5,907 sq. ft.
Fire	9,300 sq. ft.	0.84 sq. ft per functional resident	10,055 sq. ft.	755 sq. ft.	13,362 sq. ft.	4,062 sq. ft.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE

City Hall and Administrative Spaces

Commerce has a City Hall (27 Sycamore Street) which was originally constructed in 1936 and was used as the city's post office. Commerce purchased the building in 1997 and renovated it for use as a City Hall.



Commerce City Hall (Aerial View)



Commerce City Hall
Photo Credit: W. A. Storing

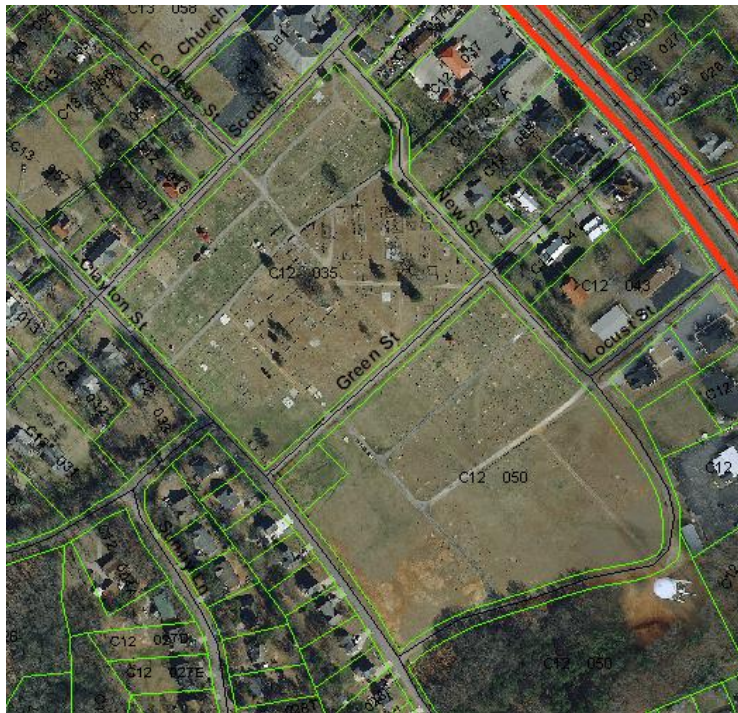
According to tax records, the city hall building is 5,580 square feet. This amounts to a level of service of 0.5 square feet per functional resident (residential plus employment). At issue is whether its existing administrative facilities (i.e., City Hall) will be adequate during the entire twenty-year planning horizon. Right now, the level of service of 0.5 square feet per functional resident is considered a good level of service to maintain. Short-term needs (405 square feet), as shown in Table 8.3, are not significant enough to necessitate a building addition to city hall during the next five years. However, over the long term, Commerce is expected to need 2,374 square feet of additional administrative space for city hall functions.

Table 8.3
Forecast of General Government Facility Needs, City of Commerce

Facility	Existing Facility 2010 (estimate)	Level of Service (LOS) (city)	Needed 2015 at Same LOS (from 2010)	5-Year Need 2015	Needed 2030 at Same LOS	20-Year Need 2030 (from 2010)
City Hall	5,580	0.50 sq. ft. per functional resident	5,985	405	7,954	2,374

Public Works

The City's Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of all city streets, rights-of-ways, and city cemeteries. Facilities are located at 210 Waterworks Road in Commerce. These facilities are anticipated to be adequate during the next five years.



Municipal Cemetery, Aerial View



Public Works, Aerial View

UTILITIES

As a provider of utilities, including natural gas and electricity, Commerce is planning for future demands on those utilities. Office space for the utilities departments is located in a building along Homer Road. The planning and zoning office is also located in that building. The city has shop buildings located behind the administrative office. While there does not appear to be any surplus space, these facilities are anticipated to be adequate during the short term planning horizon.



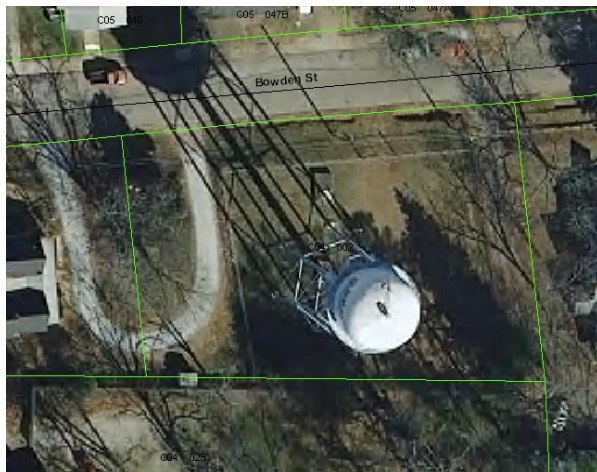
Utilities Department Office and
Work Camp, Homer Road

Water

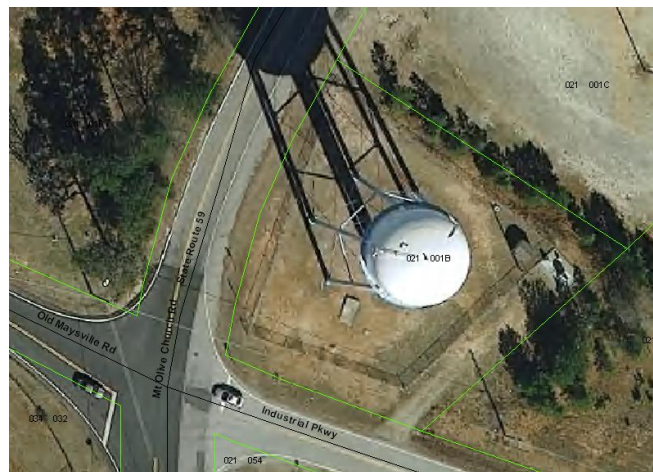
The city's source of water is certainly adequate for the short-term and well into the 20-year planning horizon. Even so, a feasibility study to modify the dam structure at the reservoir to increase storage capacity was completed in January 2009 by Schnabel Engineering, LLC. This study showed that modifications to the dam to raise the normal full pool by four feet would double the storage capacity of the reservoir. The cost to increase the storage at the reservoir was estimated at \$14 million. The timing of that project is dependent on when water demand will increase to a point that the project is needed.

The most recent upgrade to the water plant, which is located on the site of the Grover River Reservoir was completed in 2000, and it increased the treatment capacity to 4.5 MGD. Current average use of water in the Commerce water system is approximately 1.6 mgd, so the plant capacity is also certainly adequate over the short-term.

Commerce's water distribution system consists of four elevated storage tanks (two shown in photos below) with a capacity of 1.6 million gallons. There are 118 miles of water mains (see map) ranging in size from 16 inch to 6 inch and 760 fire hydrants. The system is basically looped within the service territory with the exception of a few dead ends. Water system expansion for new subdivisions and commercial projects is funded by developers and subdividers. Water improvements in the past have been funded by SPLOST. There is a current debt service load of some \$16 million for water and sewer projects. The annual payments to meet the debt load will spike upward by approximately \$350,000 in the near future. The city has identified a series of additional improvement projects it would like to fund in the water and sewer systems if reauthorized this year.



Water Tower, Bowden St.



Water Tower, Industrial Parkway

Water Conservation and Reuse

It is important that governments take steps to promote water conservation. As population growth continues, there is an increased strain on existing water supplies, so water facility expansion is necessary. Water conservation efforts can minimize the levels of increased expansion by cutting down on the amount of water used per capita. Some consideration should also be given during the planning horizon to examining the feasibility of water reuse (gray water) systems, in appropriate parts of Commerce. For instance, landscaping irrigation needs at golf courses, apartment complexes, and perhaps large institutional uses may make it feasible to initiate a water reuse system in Commerce.

Sanitary Sewer

The city's principal Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), located off W.E. King Road (see aerial view, right), has a permitted capacity of 1.05 MGD. An expansion was completed to the plant that increases the capacity to 2.1 MGD as well as complies with the new Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements for water quality. The average daily flow for 2008 was 0.850 MGD. It is projected that the plant will reach 80 percent capacity by 2025.

The city also operates two oxidation ponds in the Banks Crossing area of Banks County, with permitted capacities of 0.067 MGD and 0.041 MGD.



Sewage Treatment Plant, Aerial View

Once the W.E. King plant reaches capacity, it is not anticipated to have any expansion potential, since the feeder lines would have to be upgraded.

Sewer system expansion to new residential and commercial developments is funded by developers. The areas anticipated to require sewer extension in the near future are mostly on the north side of Interstate 85, where substantial additional industrial and commercial development will take place. Commerce also anticipates serving Maysville with additional sewer capacity.

PARKS AND RECREATION

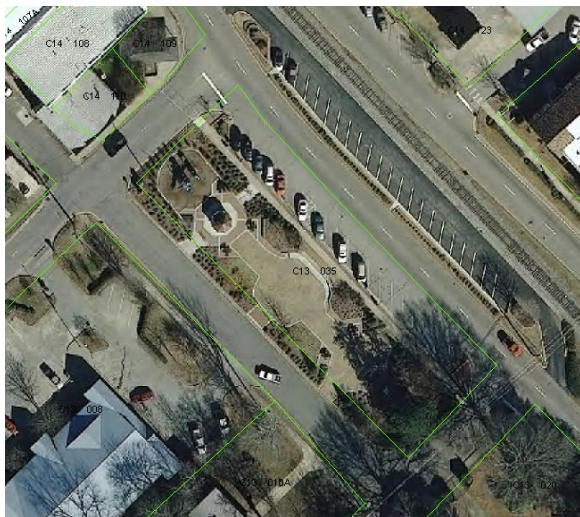
Commerce has three major parks, American Veterans Memorial Park (the largest park, at 27 acres, 20 acres of which are devoted to active recreational use), Richard Ridling Park (approximately 9 acres), and Willoughby Park (about 5 acres). The first two of these provide active recreational facilities (ballfields), while Willoughby Park is passive in nature.



**American Veterans Memorial Park and Vicinity
Carson St. (Aerial View)**



Richard Ridling Park, Shankle Rd. (Aerial View)



Spencer Park (Downtown)



Residential Park at Roosevelt and Maysville Rd.

In addition to these three parks, there are others owned and maintained by the city but not operated as a part of the Parks and Recreation Department. The first of these is Spencer Park,

which it is programmed by the Commerce Downtown Development Authority rather than the Commerce Parks and Recreation Department. Ridgeway Park consists of 3 acres east of American Veteran's Memorial Park; while owned by the city, it is leased to the Boys and Girls Club. Presidential Park consists of one acre of passive space at SR 98 (Maysville Road) and Roosevelt.

In 2008, the City of Commerce completed a parks and recreation master plan. That plan calls for the city to convert an 18-acre piece of property the city owns on Waterworks Road (site of the old water works plant) to a new park sometime in the planning horizon. As the city has prepared a more specific master plan for parks and recreation facilities, which is considered appropriate, no further analysis is provided with regard to future capital facility needs.



Future 18-acre Park Site, Waterworks Road

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE

Public Health

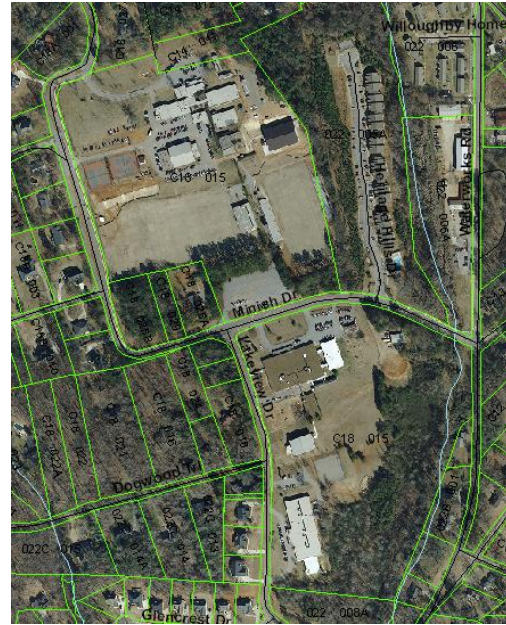
A public health office is located in the "Jackson Campus," a shopping center within the city limits of Commerce (623 South Elm Street) which was purchased by Jackson County (it consists of 67,349 square feet). These facilities are considered adequate in the short term to serve the city's needs.

Hospitals

BJC Medical Center is located in Commerce. BJC Medical Center consists of 90 licensed hospital beds, 167 nursing facility beds, and a staff of over 400 medical professionals that provide a range of in-patient, out-patient and long-term nursing care services including 24-hour emergency services, surgical services, obstetric services, laboratory services, radiology services, physical therapy services, outpatient clinics, and other services. There has been some discussion about relocating the medical center to a larger campus. During the planning horizon, that prospect is considered probable.

Commerce City Schools

Commerce has its own public school system, separate from Jackson County. Enrollment has remained relatively stable in recent years. The school system has been active constructing new schools, including the new Commerce Middle School on SR 15 Alt. As the school system is an independent entity, future capital needs are not addressed here. However, it is important to note that the city school system and the Commerce Department of Parks and Recreation cooperate with one another – for instance, the city has no indoor facilities to use and so it utilizes city indoor recreational facilities for citywide programming. Similarly, the school system does not have adequate outdoor facilities and thus utilizes the city park system for outdoor recreation programming.



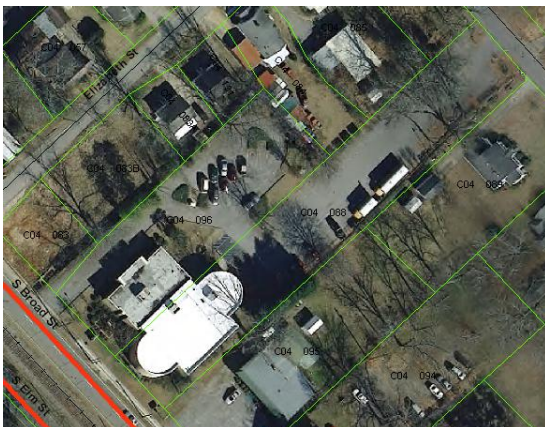
Commerce City Schools, Central Complex

Libraries

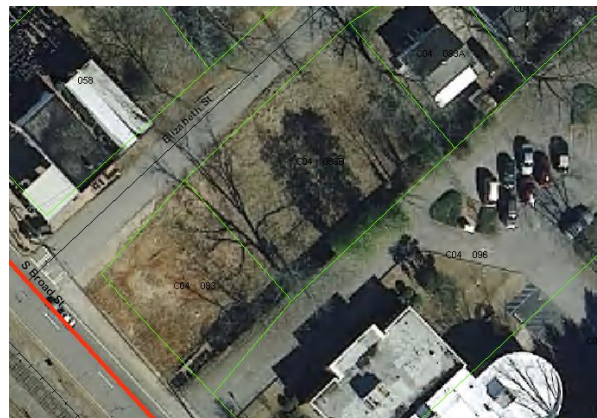
Jackson County presently does not have a library system, and unincorporated areas are reliant upon the municipal provision of libraries. Commerce has the largest library (9,000 square feet) in Jackson County, located at 1344 South Broad Street. It is operated by the city, but the system exists within what is considered a loose federation, the Piedmont Regional Library System, which provides library services to Banks, Barrow, and Jackson Counties.



Commerce Library



Commerce Library (aerial view)



Land Adjacent to Library for Potential Expansion

The Regional System provides access to PINES, courier service to share materials across the system and the state, cataloging and processing of books and other materials, administration of state funds (including construction funds), operating extension services, and other services. Additionally, the Regional System also does most of the acquisition and selection of books, a time-consuming task that requires much professional judgment, especially on limited budgets.

Facility needs are shown in Table 8.4 for the city limits only. However, one must consider that the Commerce library serves a much larger and wider service area, including unincorporated Jackson County, since the county does not provide its own libraries.

**Table 8.4
Forecast of Library Facility Needs, City of Commerce**

Facility	Existing Facility 2010 (estimate)	Level of Service (LOS) (city)	Needed 2015 at Same LOS (from 2010)	5-Year Need 2015	Needed 2030 at Same LOS	20-Year Need 2030 (from 2010)
Library	9,000	1.36 sq. ft. per resident	9,479	479	11,433	2,434

Commerce library is planning for a 5,000 square foot addition which once constructed will be considered adequate at least for the city in the short term. Again, however, if Commerce library is expected by the county to serve the needs of unincorporated residents, then additional space beyond that programmed improvement will most likely be needed.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

Commerce should consider whether it can formally implement a capital improvement program. Without one, decisions about capital facilities funding are made on a year-to-year, ad hoc basis. Commerce should recognize potential funding shortfalls in terms of maintaining existing facilities, and it needs to anticipate major capital improvements to address growth pressures. This community agenda calls for the city to maintain and routinely update a capital improvement program. A major source for capital improvements is the SPLOST, which is up for reauthorization in 2010. The short-term work program includes a broad outline for city projects if the SPLOST referendum is successful.

CHAPTER 9 MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS AROUND

People have to get around to work, school, shop, and visit friends and family. We all need various goods to sustain ourselves and our families, and that means movement of those goods by bulk, in trucks along our highways or along rail lines. While goods in the city must be moved by truck along roads or perhaps along railroads, people have some other choices. The car is king in Jackson County and Commerce when it comes to mobility. There are currently no viable choices for most people and households, except to travel by automobile. While looking ahead to better options about getting around, Commerce must ensure that its roads and other transportation systems will meet future needs and demands as the community grows. This means an emphasis on where new roads should go, what intersections need improvement, and which highways will need to be widened.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is not available in Commerce except via the county's rural public transportation services. It is unrealistic to expect that Commerce will develop mass transit, given its location and relatively low densities. Furthermore, the city has few if any opportunities for mobility via bicycles. Clearly, Commerce is auto-dependent, with Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 441, along with several state routes running through the city.

Jackson County's rural transit program provides one of the only means of travel for some people. At issue is the level of commitment Jackson County will provide in the future as these needs grow, and whether it will be sufficient to serve the mobility needs of Commerce's transit-dependent population. The county's comprehensive plan community agenda calls for the county to continue and enhance the rural public transit program. Furthermore, a public transportation plan is being developed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission for Jackson County as a whole. Commerce should strive to implement that plan as it relates to the city.

RAILROADS

Commerce has a number of local surface streets that cross railroads at grade. To some extent, it has already considered some of the issues associated with at-grade crossings of railroads and local roads. However, it may behoove the city to consider further the safety aspects of these crossings and opportunities for elimination of infrequently used railroad crossings.



At-grade railroad crossing causes delays for through-traffic on U.S. Highway 441

If streets cross railroad tracks at grade, they need to have adequate crossing restrictions (gates), flashing lights, and warning signs. At-grade crossings of railroads should be eliminated if they pose safety concerns. Railroad crossings also can affect public safety response times if road access is delayed or constrained by a railroad crossing, when a train is traveling through.

There is also potential for cooperative agreements with railroad companies for installing improvements such as additional safety features, pedestrian crossings, and beautification efforts (e.g., planting in the railroad right-of-way). Policies in city's Community Agenda reflect these issues.

ROADS

Countywide Roadways Plan

A Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028, which was prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. for Jackson County. The City of Commerce was involved in that planning effort and that plan addresses major roadway needs in the city as well as the unincorporated areas. The document is some 268 pages and combines detailed inventories of road conditions in addition to plans for short-term and long-range road system improvements. This section extracts information pertaining to Commerce from the Countywide Roadways Plan.

Functional Classification of Roads

A map of road classifications in Commerce has been prepared from the Countywide Roadways Plan. Road classifications are divided into "urban" and "rural" depending on road improvements and average travel data. Road classifications include interstate principal arterial (Interstate 85), principal arterials (U.S. Highway 441 and U.S. Highway 441 Bus.), minor arterials, major collectors, and minor collectors. Refer to the following map for functional classifications.

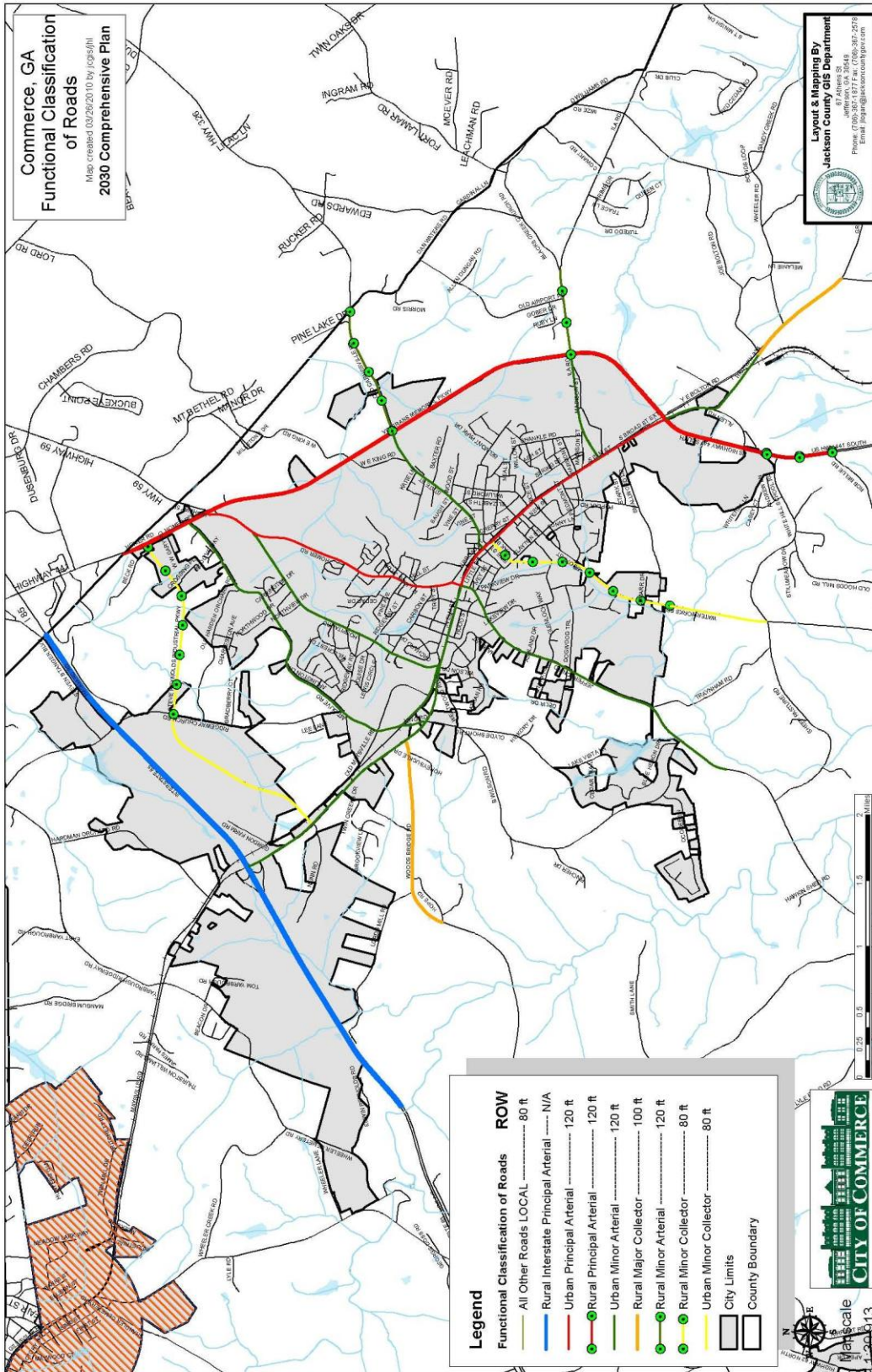
Existing and Future Traffic Conditions

Existing year 2008 average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes were evaluated to determine their current levels of service (LOS). Year 2008 traffic conditions on major roadways in Commerce were summarized in the Technical Appendix of the Community Assessment for the city. Traffic forecasts were prepared for each of the five-year analysis periods from 2013 to 2028 and, subsequently, the levels of service were determined to evaluate the future traffic operations on the existing major roadways in the city and county. AADT and LOS for selected roadways within or near Commerce are shown in Table 9.1.

The largest issue with regard to the road system will be the LOS failure of Interstate 85. By the year 2023, I-85 in Commerce will operate at a LOS "F" unless widened to six lanes. The widening of I-85 to six lanes in the Commerce area is programmed but currently unfunded. Old Maysville Road will experience a LOS "D" by 2023.

Roadway and Other Improvements

The various improvement recommendations of the Countywide Roadways Plan as they pertain to the Commerce area are excerpted and shown on a map in this Community Agenda. Those improvements are also summarized in Table 9.2.



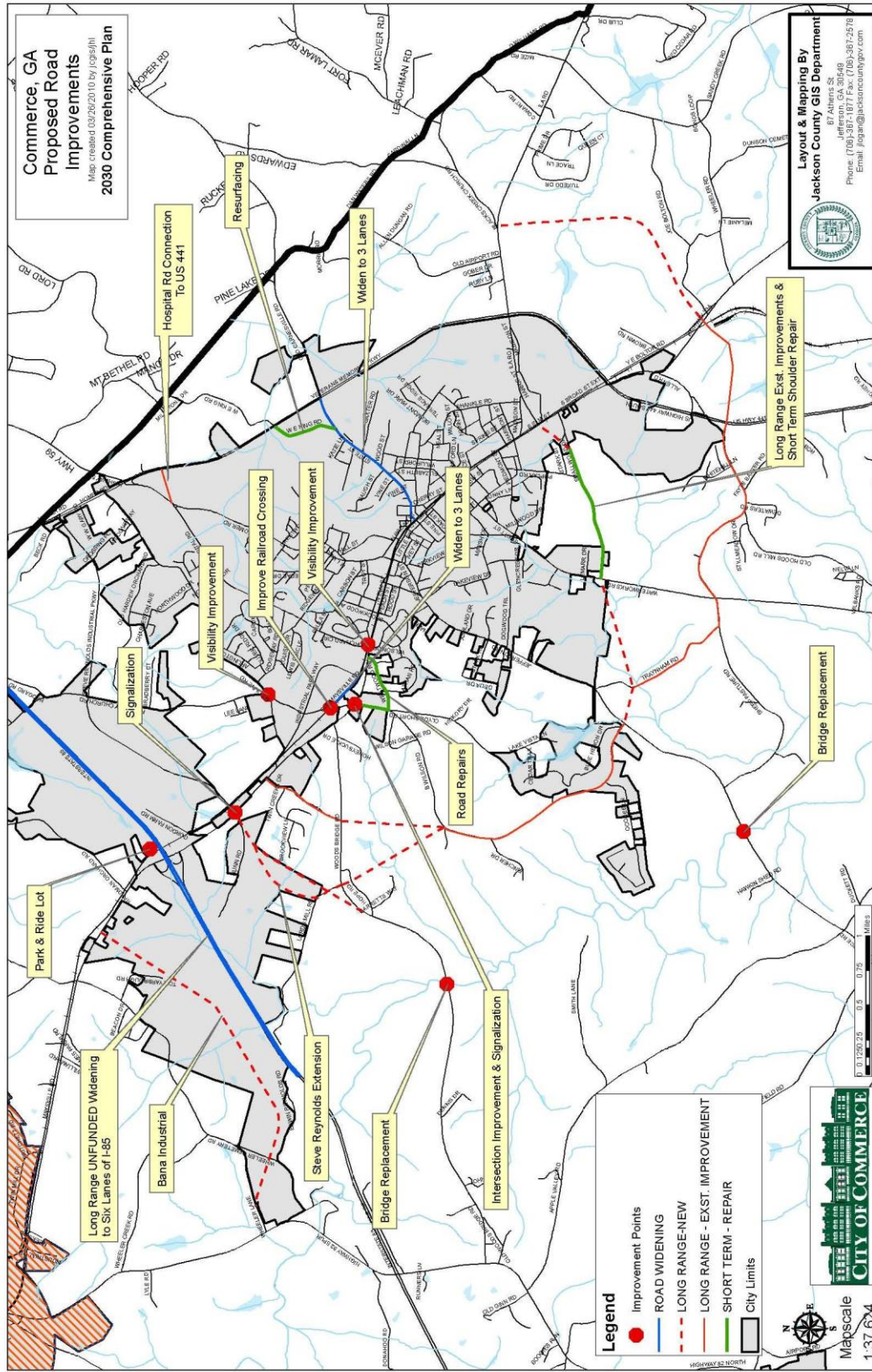
**Table 9.1
Future Traffic Volumes and Levels of Service (LOS)
Major Roadways in Commerce, 2013-2028**

Ref. No.	Road	From	To	2013 AADT	2013 LOS	2018 AADT	2018 LOS	2023 AADT	2023 LOS	2028 AADT	2028 LOS
29	Hospital Rd.	Maysville Rd.	SR 15 Alt.	2,839	B	3,087	B	3,336	B	3,585	B
32	I-85	SR 82 Spur	SR 98	56,611	E	60,236	E	63,862	F(1)	67,487	F (1)
33	I-85	SR 98	Banks Co.	57,277	E	62,882	E	68,487	F(1)	74,091	F (2)
46	Mt. Olive Rd.	SR 15 Alt	Ridgeway Ch. Rd.	2,783	B	3,217	B	3,651	B	4,084	B
47	Mt. Olive Rd.	SR 15 Alt.	SR 98	3,290	B	3,551	B	3,813	B	4,075	B
52	Old Maysville Rd.	Hospital Rd.	King Rd.	4,298	B	4,640	B	4,982	B	5,324	B
53	Old Maysville Rd.	Mt. Olive Rd.	SR 59	4,811	C	6,684	C	8,558	D	10,431	D
62	Ridgeway Ch. Rd.	I-85	Tanger Blvd	2,412	B	2,544	B	2,762	B	2,982	B
63	Ridgeway Ch. Rd.	Reynolds	I-85	2,412	B	2,544	B	2,762	B	2,982	B
83	SR 15 Alt.	Hospital Rd.	US 441	8,920	C	9,671	C	10,422	C	11,172	C
84	SR 15 Alt.	Ridgeway St.	Hospital Rd.	9,229	C	11,528	C	13,826	C	16,125	D
101	SR 334	Allen Rd.	US 441	4,828	C	5,253	C	5,678	C	6,102	C
117	SR 59	US 441	Banks Co.	4,597	C	4,763	C	4,929	C	5,095	C
135	SR 98	King Rd.	Woods Br. Rd.	8,168	C	8,212	C	8,256	C	8,300	C
136	SR 98	Old Maysville Rd.	I-85	9,690	C	10,450	C	11,209	C	11,969	C
142	SR 98	US 441	SR 15 Alt	14,152	B	16,551	B	18,951	B	21,350	B
145	Reynolds Ind. Blvd.	Ridgeway Ch. Rd.	U.S. 441	1,634	A	1,723	A	1,871	A	2,019	A
146	Reynolds Ind. Blvd.	SR 98	Ridgeway Ch. Rd.	1,160	A	1,723	A	1,328	A	1,434	A
147	Tanger Blvd.	Main Mall		6,709	C	7,160	C	7,921	D	8,681	D
148	Tanger Blvd.	S of Nike		1,637	A	1,747	A	1,933	A	2,119	A
169	US 441	Mt. Olive Ch. Rd.	Banks Co.	14,703	A	14,946	A	15,190	A	15,434	A
170	US 441	SR 326	SR 15 Alt.	14,703	A	14,946	A	15,190	A	15,434	A
171	US 441	SR 98	SR 326	12,962	A	13,832	A	14,703	A	15,573	A
179	Waterworks Rd./ Scott St.	SR 335	SR 98	1,234	A	1,315	A	1,449	A	1,583	A
183	Woods Br. Rd.	SR 82	SR 98	1,356	A	1,445	A	1,593	A	1,740	A

(1) Widening to six lanes will improve the level of service to "C."

(2) Widening to six lanes will improve the level of service to "D."

Source: Compiled from Moreland Altobelli, Inc. 2010, Major Roadways Plan, Jackson County, 2008-2028.



**Table 9.2
Roadway and Related Improvement Projects
Commerce Area, 2010 to 2028**

Road or Improvement	From	To	Type of Improvement	Year	Cost	Responsible Entity
IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS TO STREETS – SHORT RANGE						
Smallwood Dr.	Waterworks Rd.	Stark St.	Shoulder repair	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
W E King Rd.	US 441	SR 326	Resurfacing, striping, signage	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Waterworks Rd.			Guardrails at creek crossing location	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
B. Wilson Rd	Westwood Rd.	SR 98	Shoulder and ditch line repair	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Oconee Ln.	B. Wilson Rd.	New subdivision	Base repair and resurfacing	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Westwood Rd.	B. Wilson Rd.	Westview Rd.	Resurfacing	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Westview Rd.	Westwood Rd.	SR 98	Resurfacing and signage	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Lathan Rd. @ Westwood Rd.			Repair drainage problems and resurfacing	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Wofford Rd.	SR 98	King Rd.	Resurfacing and striping	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Blue Heron Dr.	B. Wilson Rd.		Repair or reconstruction	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Cedar Tr.	Blue Heron Dr.	Lake Vista Ln.	Repair or reconstruction	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Ridgeway Ch. Rd. @ Mt. Olive Ch. Rd.			Visibility improvement	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
Hospital Road @ Old Maysville Road			Visibility improvement	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	City
N. Broad St. (SR 98) E of US 441 Bus.			Repair retaining wall	Short Range (by 2015)	To Be Determined	RR; GDOT; City
N. Broad St. (SR 98) at RR line			Repair retaining wall			RR; GDOT; City
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT AND SIGNALIZATION						
SR 98 @ B Wilson Rd. (and related improvements)			Intersection improvement and signalization	2009	To Be Determined	GDOT
Hospital Rd. Connector and realignment of Hospital Rd. at Homer Rd.	Hospital Rd.	US 441	New road	Tier 1 (by 2015)	\$582,000	2008 County Bond Program
Median opening at U.S. 441 and Chatham property			Median opening	Concurrent with development	Unknown	Georgia DOT

Chapter 9, Moving People and Goods Around, City of Commerce, Community Agenda, June 29, 2010

Road or Improvement	From	To	Type of Improvement	Year	Cost	Responsible Entity
Steve Reynolds Blvd. @ SR 98			Signalization	2020	\$80,000	2008 County Bond Program
WIDENING OF EXISTING ROADS						
Old Maysville Road			Widen from 2 to 3 lanes	Long Range	Unknown	City of Commerce
SR 326	US 441	Broad St.	Widen from 2 to 3 lanes	Long Range	Unknown	GDOT
Interstate 85	SR 82	SR 98	Widen from 4 to 6 lanes	Long Range (2022)	\$44,789,000	Georgia DOT
Interstate 85	SR 98	Banks Co.	Widen from 4 to 6 lanes	Long Range (2023)	\$19,866,000 Unfunded	Georgia DOT
NEW ROADS AND ROAD EXTENSIONS						
Commerce Retail Blvd.			New road	Tier 2 (by 2020)	\$10,048,155	2008 County Bond Program
Bana Industrial Blvd.	SR 98/SR 52	SR 82 Spur	New road	Tier 2 (by 2020)	\$5,456,489	2008 County Bond Program
Steve Reynolds Blvd. extension	SR 98	South		Long Range	Unknown	Jackson County; City
B. Wilson Road Extension improvements utilizing existing routes and new location roadways			Corridor and environmental study	2013-2015	\$750,000	Jackson County; City
B. Wilson Rd. Extension Improvements utilizing existing routes and new location roadways			Concept design report, engineering, construction	Long Range (2024-2028)	\$186,141, 000	Jackson County; City
BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECTS (OUTSIDE CITY)						
Bridge, Woods Bridge Road over North Oconee River			Structural evaluation study	2010-2011	\$2,500	GDOT
Bridge, SR 15 Alt. over North Oconee River			Structural evaluation study	2010-2011	\$2,500	GDOT
Bridge, Woods Br. Rd.			Replacement	Long Range	\$2,500,000	GDOT
Bridge, SR 15 Alt.			Replacement	Long Range	\$2,500,000	GDOT
PARK AND RIDE LOT						
Park & Ride lot	I-85	SR 98	Feasibility study	2018	\$15,000	GDOT
Park & Ride lot	I-85	SR 98	Engineering design	2019	\$25,000	GDOT
Park & Ride lot	I-85	SR 98	Right of way	2020	\$150,000	GDOT
Park & Ride lot	I-85	SR 98	Construction (100 spaces)	2021	\$250,000	GDOT

Source: Compiled from Countywide Roadways Plan, 2008-2028, Jackson County

ROAD PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

Access Management along Major Roads

Transportation plans need to establish policies for separating (minimum distances between) street intersections and driveways, principles for lining up driveways on both sides of streets, and placing road median breaks, among others. Because access management relates primarily to safety considerations, it deserves prominent treatment in transportation plans. The city's current regulations will need to be revisited and revised to ensure adequate controls for access points on local and major roads. That task will be undertaken along with a rewrite of the city's zoning ordinance.



The lack of inter-parcel access between businesses along U.S. Highway 441 can increase highway turning movements.

Narrow or Substandard Roads

In a few instances, Commerce has some roads that are narrower than current standards would require. At issue is the extent to which such narrow, substandard roads exist and need to be upgraded. As noted immediately below, sometimes narrow roads contribute to the character of a given area and therefore it would not be advisable to widen them. Due to more pressing road improvement needs and limited funding, the community agenda does not call for improvement of substandard roads.



Narrow (substandard) street in Commerce

Alternative Street Standards for Areas of Varying Character

Community building has become more context sensitive over time, and communities have become increasingly critical of wide subdivision street cross-sections that were developed when engineering considerations were dominant. Commerce will further evaluate whether it needs to change street right-of-way and pavement standards so they are not excessive, or at least provide greater flexibility in New Urbanist developments, conservation subdivisions, and other "context sensitive" places. This is to be undertaken as a part of the zoning ordinance rewrite.

Requirements and Guidelines for Traffic Impact Studies

Transportation plans and implementing regulations should establish policies for when a traffic impact study is required. At issue is the extent to which Commerce should specify when traffic impact studies are required, and if so, what their contents should be. It is anticipated that Commerce will have several large-scale developments which will warrant review of a traffic study to ensure all transportation-related objectives of the comprehensive plan are met. This issue will be reconciled as a part of the rewrite of the city's zoning ordinance.

PARKING FACILITIES

The Downtown Development Authority and the City of Commerce have public parking provided on streets and within public parking lots in the downtown. An inventory of the available public and private parking was conducted by the Downtown Development Authority and is provided in the community assessment.

Parking Lot Improvements

A sketch plan produced by Department of Community Affairs (office of downtown development) and the city's engineers indicates a proposed improvement to connect one city parking lot better to downtown retail via a pedestrian plaza; this involves removal of the civic center loading dock. Better lighting, signage and landscaping need to be installed at City/DDA off-street parking lots/locations. These considerations are factored into the short-term work program of the city.



**One of several off-street public parking opportunities in the downtown core.
Photo Credit: W. A. Storing**

Comprehensive Parking Management Plan

The DDA is calling for a comprehensive parking management plan in its downtown. It has discussed possibilities for installing meters, time limitations and chalking tires, and so forth. Commerce needs to make its off-street parking lots more attractive and safe and functional, with some lighting, better (universally recognized parking directional signs), and landscaping/dress up/ clean up. This item is included in the short-term work program.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION

Bicycling and walking are the most basic and efficient forms of transportation and were once perceived as an important mode of transportation. Both are healthy, low-impact modes of travel that provide low-cost transportation alternatives for all segments of society, including financially disadvantaged, children, elderly, and disabled populations. Many of the trips people make on a daily basis are short enough to be accomplished on a bicycle, on foot, or by wheelchair.

Despite the importance of pedestrian and bicycle travel, the overwhelming majority of transportation improvements are dominated by auto-centric projects. Today, motor vehicles dominate the transportation system, and cycling and walking have been largely relegated to recreational status. Because of this increased automobile dependency, bicycling and walking are now perceived as an increasingly dangerous mode of transportation.

Increased use of bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation requires concentrations of populations within proximity to major trip generators. The majority of development in the northeast Georgia region, outside of Athens, has been low-density, single-family residential

development that has been constructed in isolation from the types of uses (schools, employment, shopping) that generate bicycle and pedestrian activity (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005. Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan).

Sidewalks Inventory and Needs

Commerce has a limited sidewalk network (a map of existing sidewalks is provided in this chapter, since it was not completed for the community assessment). Existing sidewalks are limited mostly to the downtown and a few highway corridors leading out of the downtown area.

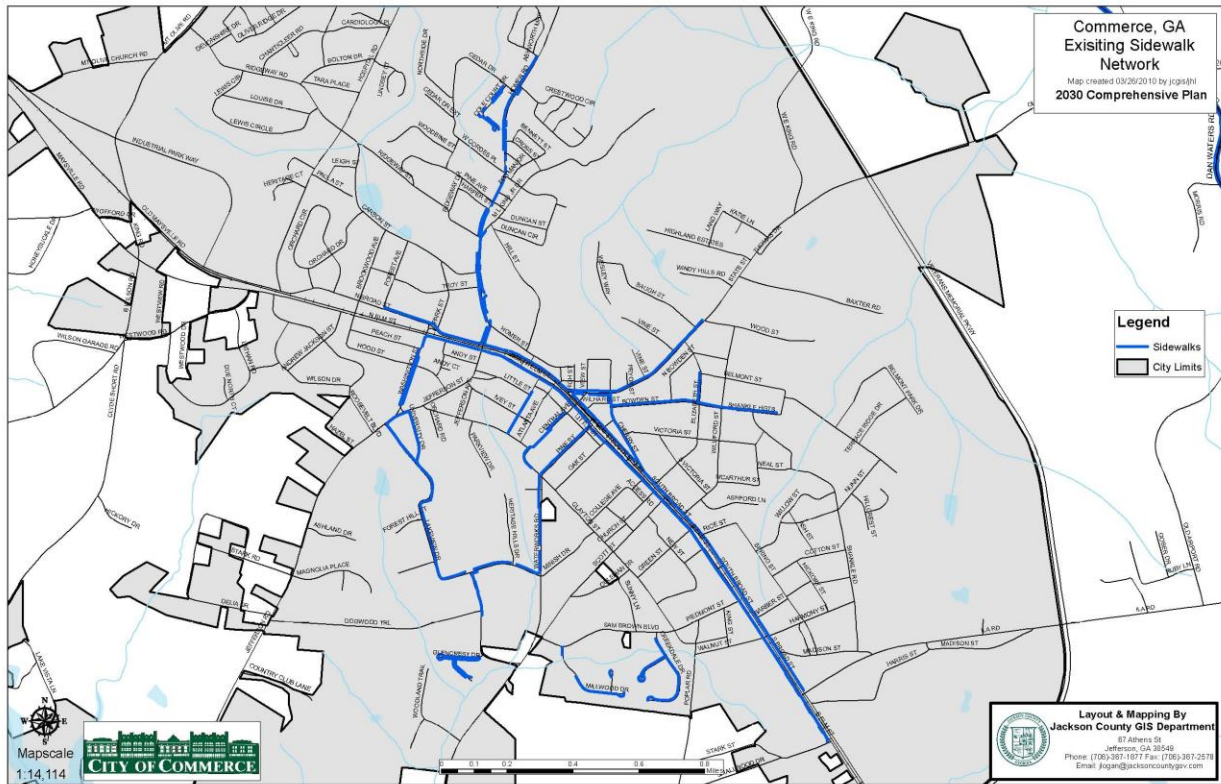
There are insufficient connections via sidewalk between the downtown and historic residential neighborhoods. There is a need to provide a sidewalk extension and improvement plan, and in general to provide much better service for pedestrians. That need is reflected in the city's short-term work program.



Sidewalk along part of Waterworks Road

Sidewalk Requirements

Article 11, Sec. 11.5 of the City's subdivision regulations addresses requirements for sidewalks. However, that section does not specify the locations for which sidewalks will be provided, which should be addressed when the city updates its subdivision and land development regulations.



Extension of Downtown Streetscape

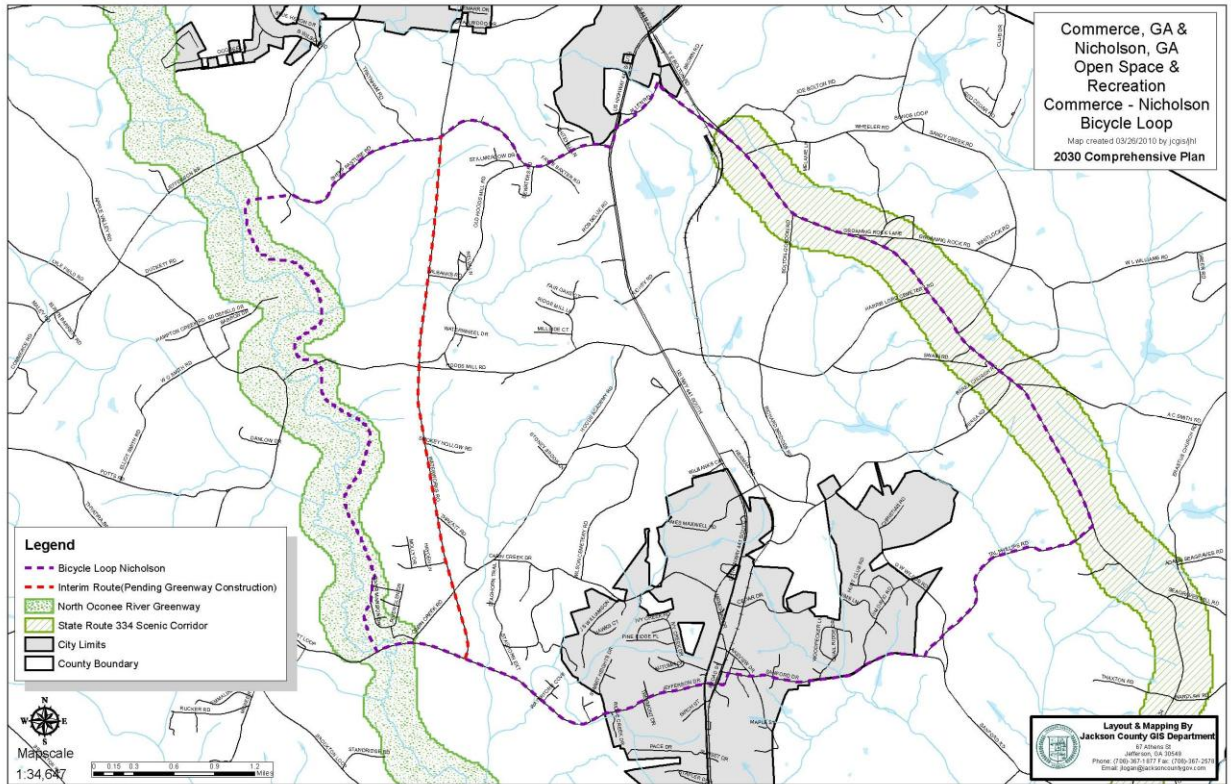
Commerce was one of the earliest to do downtown streetscape improvements, using the original ISTEA program which has evolved under different names since then. The short-term work program calls for extension of the streetscape of downtown.



Attractive streetscapes contribute to the health and viability of the downtown core
Photo Credit: W. A. Storing

Bicycle Facilities

Commerce does not have any formal bicycle lanes or off-site paths. Presently, though desirable, there is not sufficient usage forecasted for Commerce to spend its limited capital improvement funds on bike paths. However, there is one project that has been identified in the comprehensive plans for Jackson County and the City of Nicholson which is also reflected in the City of Commerce's plans – a regional bicycle loop route starting in Nicholson, going along SR 334 (scenic highway) into Commerce, then crossing over to Waterworks Road (or a greenway along the North Oconee River upon its construction), then returning to Nicholson via SR 335 (see figure).



CHAPTER 10 WORKING WITH THE LARGER COMMUNITY

More and more, effective planning efforts for community facilities, environmental protection, transportation, and land use are increasingly beyond the abilities of individual jurisdictions. Residents and businesses in Commerce are a part of a larger community – the county, and the region. People may have their own allegiance to the city or county, but they recognize that Athens is just down the road from Commerce, and increasingly the Atlanta metropolitan growth machine is nipping at the western edges of the county. Just like the United States can no longer consider itself isolated in a growing international world economy, it is increasingly true that Commerce cannot operate without communication, cooperation, or at minimum coordination with the county and regional agencies. Similarly, planning problems cross the city's boundaries and therefore necessitate collaboration with other adjacent local governments in the region. Sometimes, what may be in the "parochial" or local interests of the city may not be best for the northeast Georgia (Athens) region as a whole.

Commerce identifies to a significant extent with Athens-Clarke County, and it is definitely considered "bulldog territory." Much of Commerce is also inextricably bound together with that part of Banks County known as "Banks Crossing." This by definition means that Commerce will need to continue cooperating with Banks County in terms of service provision; Commerce already provides sanitary sewer service to that area. Banks County is also the location of the city's water supply. Commerce is also noted as a part of the broader region which has a number of racing venues. As noted in Chapter 5, there are significant opportunities for Commerce to capitalize on the interest in automobile racing in the region.



Banks Crossing has regional identity, bolstered by the installation of some streetscape improvements.

Commerce has worked well with Jackson County and other nearby municipalities such as Maysville, when it comes to service provision. There are many ways in which Commerce is also linked together with Maysville – again, with regard to public services, Commerce is like a "big brother" to that smaller city in terms of potential sewer service and other facility arrangements. Also, as noted in the areas requiring special attention (see Chapter 7 of this Community Agenda), there is a need for Commerce to coordinate with Jackson County in terms of commercial corridor regulation (i.e., along SR 98 and U.S. Highway 441).

Chapter 5.10 of the Commerce zoning ordinance specifies a process to be followed when there is a dispute between Jackson County and Commerce with regard to annexation and land use. As the state law provisions regarding these disputes have changed over time, Commerce should reconsider this process as articulated in its zoning ordinance.

ANTICIPATING FUTURE ANNEXATIONS

The Community Assessment identified future annexation as a potential future issue or opportunity. As a city annexes land, its service population (including employees and residents) increases, and there is a change in service provision from the county to the city. The annexation of land can have a remarkable impact on public facility and service provision. Therefore, future annexations can be one of the more important considerations when planning for the long-term future of a municipality. Since future annexations cannot be predicted, it is difficult to plan ahead for them. One method of assisting with that uncertainty is to develop policies or a plan for future municipal expansion; such a plan, if prepared, cannot bring certainty to future population projections but could give the city a much better idea of what its future population, employment, and service needs will be.

Unincorporated Islands

The first priority in terms of future annexation by Commerce is the various unincorporated islands. State law provides for a city to annex unincorporated islands created prior to 1991 without consent of the property owner. Table 10.1 provides a list of unincorporated islands that appear to meet the definition of unincorporated islands in state annexation statutes. Commerce should, after appropriate legal review and legal counsel, initiate applications to annex these unincorporated islands if they were lawfully created prior to 1991.

**Table 10.1
Unincorporated Islands Recommended for Annexation by Commerce**

Map/Parcel	Location/Address	Acreage	Existing Land Use
022/032B	220 US 441 S	0.87	Barn and unimproved
022/032A	US 441 S	0.98	Unimproved
C10/027	395 S. Elm St.	0.38	Single-family dwelling
C10/029	373 S. Elm St.	0.49	Single-family dwelling
C10/029A	353 S. Elm St.	0.49	Single-family dwelling
022/031A	295 S. Elm St.	0.98	Single-family dwelling
C12/059	367 Sam Brown Blvd.	0.59	Single-family dwelling
C12/031	287 Scott St.	1.36	Single-family dwelling and poultry house
C13/044A	111 Waterworks Rd.	0.91	Storage warehouse
C12/042	127 Waterworks Rd.	0.45	Service repair garage
C19/083	191 Hazel St.	1.29	Single-family dwelling
034 021D	3765 Maysville Rd.	1.98	Storage warehouse
033/027	3110 Ridgeway Church Rd.	1.5	Single-family dwelling
033/020B	119 Wilbanks Way	1.06	Single-family dwelling
022/007B	Waterworks Rd.	1.0	Pole barn
022/019	1044 Waterworks Rd.	2.6	Single-family dwelling
022/020	1058 Waterworks Rd.	2.95	Single-family dwelling
035/01317	Blue Heron Drive	13.18	Unimproved

Source: Compiled by Jerry Weitz and Associates, Inc.

Beyond this intent to annex unincorporated islands, this Community Agenda does not establish a firm policy with regard to future annexations. Past practice (which will likely continue) is to consider annexations on the basis of voluntary applications of property owners. Commerce with prior annexations up to and north of Interstate 85 has ensured that it will have a future non-residential property tax base. Nonetheless, some other potential annexation areas can be anticipated. There are two corridors in particular where annexation by Commerce is anticipated.

SR 98 Corridor

As noted elsewhere in this Community Agenda, the SR 98 corridor between downtown Commerce and Interstate 85 (and beyond its interchange with SR 98) is partially within the city but many properties are still unincorporated. As that corridor is shown on the county's character area maps as urban and suburban, it would be appropriate for Commerce to eventually annex all properties into Commerce in order to have a coherent boundary along that corridor. As also noted already, the Community Agenda calls for co-adoption of the same development standards by Commerce and Jackson County so that there will not be a significant difference in resulting development aesthetics if such properties are not annexed by the city.

U.S. Highway 441 Corridor

Though not yet as urbanized as the SR 98 (Maysville Road) corridor, the U.S. Highway 441 corridor is partially within Commerce but still predominantly unincorporated. To the extent that the county's character area map designates lands along the east side of U.S. Highway 441 as suburban or urban, it would be appropriate for Commerce to annex lands upon application by property owners along such designated parts of the corridor, particularly since it has capacity to serve that area with sanitary sewer service. If the city and county both co-adopt similar or the same land development and access standards, development should be coherent in this corridor even if Commerce does not annex additional lands. Where the county's character area map shows lands as rural or agricultural in this corridor, it is not considered appropriate for Commerce to annex those lands and approve higher-order (e.g., commercial) development. All urban and suburban areas between U.S. Highway 441 and the Banks County line should be considered appropriate for annexation by Commerce during the planning horizon. Similarly, even if designated rural and/or agricultural in the county, if other properties are annexed by Commerce, it would seem appropriate for Commerce to annex them as well rather than leave unincorporated pockets for Jackson County to serve.

Interstate 85 Corridor

As noted previously, Commerce has annexed along the Interstate 85 corridor. However, there are still unincorporated tracts along I-85 between the current city limits and the Banks County line (i.e., Banks Crossing). In particular, land already developed for outlet mall stores on the north side of Interstate 85 is all that remains between Commerce's city limits and the Banks County line. As that corridor is also designated for urban development in the county's character area framework, it would be appropriate for Commerce to annex along I-85 to the Banks County line. There is also a large, unincorporated area along both sides of Steve Reynolds Industrial Parkway and south of Interstate 85 that is unincorporated but designated for industrial and commercial land use (and urban character) in the county's community agenda. That area as well is considered ripe for annexation by Commerce during the twenty-year planning horizon.

Other Areas Considered

At the present time, the following areas do not appear to merit annexation: The rural residential area west of Mt. Olive Road and east of Ridgeway Church Road which is designated rural by the county's character area maps. This area is not considered ripe during the planning horizon for suburban and/or urban development. Also, properties along Woods Bridge Road and B. Wilson Road are designated rural and agricultural in the county's plan and are therefore not

considered appropriate at this time for annexation and suburban or urban development. This area also currently lacks urban services.

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES

Jackson County initiated discussions in early 2010 with the various municipalities in the county with regard to updating the current service delivery strategy. Commerce has participated in discussions with Jackson County about updating service delivery strategies, and in June the City Council authorized the signing of the strategy by the Mayor.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

There are a number of issues and opportunities with regard to the provision of community facilities and services that will require discussion with Jackson County, Maysville, and perhaps abutting counties within which Commerce has water and sewer service extensions. Review of the county's service delivery strategy reveals there are not very many formal agreements with municipalities with regard to certain services. There is an opportunity to formalize many of the service arrangements with formal agreements that will avoid potential conflicts later. This Community Agenda calls for approval of various intergovernmental agreements.

CHAPTER 11 POLICIES

NATURAL RESOURCE POLICIES

1. **Wetlands – Preservation and Mitigation.** Preserve wetlands where they exist, or as a last resort if they cannot be preserved on-site, mitigate wetland loss by increasing ecologically equivalent wetlands on other appropriate sites (i.e., wetland mitigation through wetland banking).
2. **Wetlands – Review for Development Impacts.** Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):
 - Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
 - Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
 - Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
 - Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
 - Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
 - Whether the project contains significant State historical and archaeological resources, defined as “Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
 - Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
 - Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.
3. **Wetlands – Buffers.** When a development proposal is located close to a wetland, it should establish and maintain a minimum 25 foot wide protective buffer around the wetland.
4. **Wetlands – Uses.** Uses of wetlands may include: Timber production and harvesting; wildlife and fisheries management; wastewater treatment; recreation; natural water quality treatment or purification; and other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Unacceptable uses may include: receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste or other contaminants; and hazardous or sanitary waste landfills.
5. **Water Supply Watersheds.** Maintain in the Commerce City Code regulations that implement the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds (391-3-16-.01, “Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds”).
6. **Floodways and Floodplains.** Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood

plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters.

7. **National Flood Insurance Program.** Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances specified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
8. **Floodways and Floodplains – Observed But Not Mapped.** Extend floodplain management, flood hazard area prevention, and floodway prohibitions to areas of flooding which are not officially mapped but are known through additional study or observation to experience flooding. Maintain and share data on such additional floodways and floodplains with the public and development applicants.
9. **Soils with Septic Tank Limitations.** In cases where sanitary sewer is not available, new lots and land developments should be located and designed to avoid soils with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields, as mapped and provided in the city's comprehensive plan (see community assessment, technical appendix).
10. **Open Space Conservation.**
 - **Conservation.** When subdivision or land development involves land designated on the future land use plan map as conservation, such subdivision or land development should protect all (or at least the vast majority) of the land designated as conservation as permanent open space.
 - **Land Development Impacts.** If land development within a conservation area is permitted, it needs to minimize the impact on water quality and the environment. Acceptable mitigation practices for land development in conservation areas may include limiting pavement and impervious surfaces, natural buffers, and low impact development designs which feature naturalized designs for stormwater management.
 - **Annexation.** If Commerce annexes land designated as conservation, it should provide for the permanent protection of the land designated as conservation by appropriate means in a manner consistent with county policies for the conservation character area.
 - **Access to Abutting Conservation Lands.** Subdivisions and land developments are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide pedestrian easements or fee-simple land dedications to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties.
11. **Habitat Conservation.** The following policies apply:
 - Consider habitat information in review of land developments, including but not limited to the database of the DNR Natural Heritage Program, USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species and the DNR Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities.

- Promote and pursue principles of landscape ecology when reviewing large developments and major subdivisions.

12. **Tree Protection.** The following policies apply:

- **Street Trees.** Encourage or require the planting of street trees in subdivisions and new land developments.
- **Tree Protection.** Restrict the cutting of trees, require the replacement of trees with trees of like species and value.
- **Tree Canopy.** Preserve and enhance tree canopy.

13. **Water Conservation.** Promote the conservation of water by residents, businesses, industries, and institutions, to meet local, regional and state objectives or directives. Participate in private and public educational efforts that are designed to assist in water conservation.

14. **Stormwater Management.**

- Design man-made lakes and stormwater ponds for maximum habitat value and to be amenities for the development.
- Sites should be designed where possible to drain to the rear or side, where detention ponds are more appropriately located. Fenced detention ponds in front yards are strongly discouraged if not prohibited altogether.
- When stormwater detention or drainage is placed adjacent to the right-of-way, slopes should be gentle enough to avoid fencing requirements, and the area should be attractively landscaped.
- New, major residential subdivisions should be required to ensure that adequate funding is available for maintenance of any on-site stormwater detention facilities.

15. **Sustainable Development Practices.**

- Identify and revitalize “brownfield” (environmentally contaminated) sites.
- Conduct and/or encourage private inventories of construction/demolition materials that can be reused and recycled (e.g., building materials deconstruction and reuse plans).
- Promotion of renewable energy resources such as solar electricity.
- Promote, and reward if possible through incentives, “green building” (e.g., green roofs) and green building code practices, such as but not limited to the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System.
- Institute stream bank stabilization using plant materials, where needed.

- Encourage other sustainable practices, such as use of porous materials and installation of rain gardens.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. **Compatible Character.** 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 (Quality Community Objective, Historic Preservation).
2. **Historic Resources Generally.** Identify, preserve and protect historic resources.
3. **Increase Community Support.** Strive to increase community support for historic preservation. Continue to expand upon programs and activities that will instill an appreciation and pride in the city's past.
4. **Incentives.** Provide incentives to protect and preserve historic resources.
5. **Historic Resources Survey.** Maintain and update the city's survey of historic resources at regular intervals (no less than 10 years).
6. **National Register Listings.** Encourage property owners to add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
7. **Historic Districts and Landmarks.** Establish locally designated historic districts and landmarks as appropriate.
8. **Reuse of Historic Buildings.** The reuse of historic buildings is encouraged, provided the architectural character of the building is retained.
9. **Relation to Economic Development.** Ensure that historic preservation and heritage tourism become components of the city's overall economic development strategies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **Appropriate Businesses.** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in Commerce should be suitable in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the county or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities (Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business).
2. **Range of Jobs Available.** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce (Quality Community Objective, Employment Options).
3. **Education and Training.** Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in the city to permit residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions (Quality Community Objective,

Educational Opportunities). Increase skill levels of the resident labor force, in order to attract higher paying employers.

4. **Economic Development Generally.** Expand the economic base and increase employment opportunities while protecting environmental, historic, and community character.
5. **Diversity of Economic Development Approaches.** Prepare economic development strategies and plans that are comprehensive in nature, such that all economic activities are addressed, including but not limited to tourism, heritage tourism, health care, retail, services, material moving and warehousing, biotechnology, industrial and manufacturing, research and development, and small business/home occupations.
6. **Infrastructure.** Provide and maintain sanitary sewer capacity and road capacity in order to attract new industry and manufacturing and commercial activities. Reserve such capacity for the types of industries and businesses that need the infrastructure.
7. **Positive Business Climate.** Create and maintain a positive climate for business in the city.
8. **Promotion and Recruitment.** The Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Development Authority should actively and deliberately promote the city to business interests worldwide.
9. **Relation to Land Use Plan.** Designate and reserve sufficient land for industrial and commercial development on the future land use plan map.
10. **Home Occupations.** Home occupations, when compatible with the neighborhood, are recognized as part of the overall city's economic development strategy and are encouraged, subject to compliance with applicable zoning laws.
11. **Balanced Regulation.** Balance the need to regulate the design and appearance of commercial and other properties with a positive regulatory environment that is sensitive to the need for businesses to be competitive in the marketplace.

HOUSING

1. **Housing Opportunities.** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in the city (Quality Community Objective, Housing Opportunities).
2. **Housing Variety.** Encourage a variety of home styles, densities and price ranges in locations that are accessible to jobs and services to ensure housing for individuals and families of all incomes and age groups.
3. **Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities.** Encourage "life cycle" or "mixed generation" communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.
4. **Housing for Persons with Disabilities.** Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.

5. **Design and Location of Senior and Disabled Housing.** Houses should be made available for seniors and disabled persons that contain a single-level with no-step entrances and wide doorways. Senior housing should be located in close proximity or with appropriate access to health care services.
6. **Avoid Regulatory Barriers.** In amending zoning and development regulations, the city should consider the potential impact of such amendments on housing affordability, in order to possibly avoid creating or sustaining “regulatory barriers.”
7. **Nonprofit Housing Organizations.** Encourage the creation of, and cooperate with, community-based housing organizations in the pursuit of more affordable workforce housing.
8. **Substandard Housing.** Require that substandard or dilapidated housing be brought up to applicable codes or demolished if code compliance is not feasible.
9. **Housing and Property Standards Codes.** Allocate appropriate resources to enforce housing and property maintenance codes.
10. **State and Federal Housing and Community Development Programs.** Pursue federal and state financial assistance programs to improve areas of substandard housing and improve neighborhoods and communities.

LAND USE GENERALLY

1. **Efficient Development Patterns.** Use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with rural, suburban, and urban sprawl.
2. **Property Rights.** In applying land use plans and regulations, all property owners must be afforded some reasonable economic use of their properties, but not necessarily the “highest and best” use as that term is understood in the real estate appraisal profession. The fact that a property would be valued more highly if rezoned is not in itself a sufficient reason for rezoning. However, a showing that property cannot be reasonably used in accordance with the existing regulations may be considered among other reasons for changing the zoning district applicable to a given property.
3. **Balance.** In land use planning and individual decisions about land use, Commerce strives to balance non-residential and residential development in order to reduce the burden of taxes on residents. This means that the city will strive to protect parcels designated for commercial and industrial uses rather than rezoning such parcels to uses that do not support sustained economic health and higher wage jobs in the city.
4. **Compatibility.** Rezoning if approved should result in land development that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property. Development should not adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.
5. **Public Facility and Service Impacts.** Development should not occur or be approved which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, schools, or other publicly-provided facilities and services. As a condition of approval, major subdivisions (6 or more lots) and major land developments should be

required to demonstrate availability of public water, fire protection, law enforcement, roads, stormwater management, parks and recreation, and public school facilities. Major subdivisions and major land developments that cannot demonstrate all such facilities are available or planned at the time of development or within a reasonable period of time thereafter may gain approval only if they mitigate the lack of such facilities, through the dedication of land in the subdivision or off-site, on-site and/or off-site improvements, payment of impact fees if imposed by the city, or payment of in-lieu fees or other acceptable arrangements via development agreements.

6. **Buffers and Screening.** Screen negative views through site planning, architectural, and landscape devices. Utilize buffers to separate potentially conflicting or incompatible land uses.
7. **Transitions.** Avoid harsh or abrupt changes of land use, by encouraging a logical and compatible relationship of land use and character, transitioning from one property development to another. In terms of land use, the ideal progression of land use compatibility is from low-density residential, to higher density residential, to public-institutional, to commercial, then to industrial. If harsh or abrupt changes in land use cannot be avoided, the transition should be better facilitated with special design techniques, step downs in intensity or density, and/or conditions of approval relating to building height, building setbacks, buffers, and limitations on incompatible operating characteristics.
8. **Prevailing Land Use Patterns.** Respect and maintain prevailing land use patterns, unless the future land use plan clearly suggests changes are appropriate.
9. **Spot Zoning.** Decisions about amendments to the official zoning map should not result in the creation of an isolated zoning district unrelated to adjacent and nearby land use or zoning districts.
10. **Land Use-Transportation Connections.** Coordinate land use and transportation decisions.
11. **Creativity and Flexibility.** Encourage creativity in development design and provide for design flexibility. Commerce is open to considering land planning and development concepts that may be new to the city but have been implemented successfully in other places.
12. **Redevelopment.** Encourage redevelopment of obsolete or deteriorating buildings, properties, and areas.
13. **Development Approval Process.** Continually monitor the time frames required to review development proposals and shorten them or make them more efficient where possible.
14. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** Coordinate land use decisions between the city and county. Land use decisions made by Commerce at the time of annexation should respect and be consistent with the character and future land use plans previously approved by Jackson County.

15. **Sustainable Development Practices.** Communities and individual land developments which are developed consistent with generally accepted principles of sustainable development should receive priority consideration over developments relying on conventional designs and features. Any available incentives should be used to reward development which meets generally accepted sustainable development principles.

LAND USE: RESIDENTIAL

1. **Protect Residences from Incompatible Land Uses and Nuisances.** Where designated residential on the future land use plan map, maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of residences at current densities. Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods. Protect residential areas (whether rural, suburban, or urban) from nuisances (e.g., excessive noise, odor, traffic and lighting) and from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
2. **Preservation of Residential Neighborhoods.** The consideration of the preservation of the integrity of residential neighborhoods shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.
3. **Transitional Properties and their Impacts on Residential Neighborhoods.** In those instances in which property proposed for rezoning from residential to nonresidential use fronts on a major thoroughfare and also adjoins an established residential neighborhood, the factor of preservation of the residential area shall be considered to carry great weight in all rezoning decisions.
4. **Natural Areas, Open Space and Recreation.** New residential development should preserve the natural amenities of the land through maintenance of conservation areas and open spaces. When new major residential subdivisions or any multi-family complexes are developed, there should be a minimum of 20 percent of the total development area set aside for green space, open space, and active or passive recreational opportunities.
5. **Densities.** The density of residential development should be guided by the future land use plan map.
6. **Neighborhood Interconnectivity.** Encourage intra- and inter-connectivity within, between, and among residential neighborhoods. Roads ending in cul-de-sacs are discouraged but where provided should be limited to suburban residential future land use designations.

LAND USE: PUBLIC-INSTITUTIONAL

1. **Reservation for Certain Uses.** Certain properties, particularly those at key road intersections with sufficient acreage, are suggested to be reserved for institutional uses such as churches, other places of worship, private schools, non-profit clubs and lodges, institutional residential facilities such as nursing homes and care centers, and public or other semi-public uses. Priority should be given to these uses prior to establishing other uses permitted in the public-institutional future land use category.

2. **Site Plan Review.** All public-institutional developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, and signage.
3. **Parking.** Adequate parking will be provided within public-institutional areas. Parking should be situated so that the parking is located at the rear or side of the building. If circumstances require front parking areas, proper screening from the roadway needs to be provided.

LAND USE: COMMERCIAL

1. **Patterns.** Discourage patterns of “strip” commercial development. Encourage building designs which do locate all of the off-street parking provided on the commercial lot between the road and the building.
2. **Efficient Use.** Encourage the re-occupancy of existing retail space prior to the construction of new retail spaces.
3. **Site Plan Review.** All commercial developments should be reviewed with respect to the following which should not be considered limiting: access, site design, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, lighting, and signage.
4. **Highway Commercial Overlays.** Develop overlay zones for U.S. Highway 441 and SR 98 in the Commerce area to be jointly adopted by Jackson County and the City of Commerce, to include quality development standards.
5. **Highway Commercial Uses.** The fact that an existing lot has frontage on a state or federal highway is one consideration but is not in itself prima facie evidence that such property should be or will be allowed to be used commercially. The creation of new highway commercial districts without frontage on a state highway is strongly discouraged. Great scrutiny will be given to any requests for rezoning to extend highway commercial zoning districts beyond those areas designated on the future land use plan map. Substantially compelling evidence of the need for additional highway business uses in the city must be presented to support such a change.
6. **Architectural Harmony among Phases and Outparcels.** When commercial development occurs in phases, and for commercial development with outlots reserved for future commercial development, the property owner or developer should ensure that the designs of building forms are interrelated and architecturally harmonious.
7. **Neighborhood Commercial.** For areas designated as neighborhood scale commercial or mixed-use development, the commercial land uses within such neighborhood-serving commercial nodes or areas should not contain highway-oriented commercial developments such as but not limited to lodging, auto sales, auto service, and open air business establishments. With the exception of convenience stores with gasoline pumps, neighborhood commercial areas do not permit or accommodate automotive uses or other types of more intensive highway business activities, or those uses that generate excessive traffic, noise, odors, pollution, safety hazards, or other adverse impacts which would detract from the desirability of adjacent properties for residential use. Commercial development within neighborhood commercial nodes should be small-scale commercial uses of a convenience nature serving nearby residential neighborhoods as opposed to a regional

market. Uses within neighborhood commercial areas generally occur within enclosed buildings with no outside storage and limited (if any) outdoor display of goods and merchandise.

8. **Interstate 85 Frontage.** Commercial developments with frontage on Interstate 85 should maintain trees immediately adjacent to the interstate right of way, to buffer noise emanating from the interstate highway and reduce impacts noise will have on nearby properties. A natural, undisturbed buffer of 50 feet in width should be maintained along the property's frontage on Interstate 85. Such a buffer may allow for a significant view corridor into the site, while mitigating some of the noise impacts compared with commercial sites that are clearcut all the way to the Interstate right of way.
9. **Parking.** Adequate parking will be provided within commercial areas. Parking should be situated so that the parking is located at the rear or side of the building. If circumstances require front parking areas, proper screening from the roadway needs to be provided.

LAND USE: MASTER PLANNED MIXED USE

1. **Densities and Intensities.** Within a master planned mixed use development, densities and intensities should be greatest at road intersections and/or along major road corridors and the least at the fringe along property lines abutting less intensive development.
2. **Housing Variety.** Encourage a variety of home styles, housing types, densities and price ranges, including mixed-income housing, within mixed-use developments.
3. **Attached and Group Quarters Housing.** Attached housing and group quarters housing are encouraged to be located within mixed-use developments.
4. **Life Cycle and Mixed Generation Communities.** Within mixed use developments, encourage "life cycle" or "mixed generation" communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.
5. **Vertical Mixed Use.** Within master-planned mixed use developments, the vertical mixing of residential with office and commercial land uses is desirable.
6. **Pedestrian Retail.** A pedestrian-oriented retail district should be planned and provided for mixed use developments large enough to support such a district.
7. **Jobs-Housing Balance.** Having 1.5 jobs for each housing unit is considered a good balance of residential and nonresidential development. This policy should be used as a guide in planning development in this category, but it is non-binding.

LAND USE: INDUSTRIAL

1. **Appropriate Locations.** All industrial land uses should be limited to areas with relatively level topography, adequate water and sewerage facilities, and access to arterial streets.
2. **Light versus Heavy Industry.** New industrial operations in "light" industrial areas designated on the future land use plan map should be limited to those that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable

conditions. In areas designated for “heavy” industry which are clearly removed from residential areas, heavy manufacturing and heavy industrial uses, including those creating objectionable conditions, are considered appropriate.

3. **Industrial Park and Campus Designs.** Future industrial developments serving more than one industry are strongly encouraged to be developed within planned industrial parks which are designed with campus-style layouts including generous building setbacks from exterior roads and landscaping.
4. **Interstate 85 Frontage.** Industrial developments with frontage on Interstate 85 should maintain trees immediately adjacent to the interstate right of way, to buffer noise emanating from the interstate highway and reduce impacts noise will have on nearby properties. A natural, undisturbed buffer of 50 feet in width should be maintained along the property’s frontage on Interstate 85. Such a buffer may allow for a significant view corridor into the site while mitigating some of the noise impacts compared with industrial sites that are clearcut all the way to the Interstate right of way.

URBAN DESIGN

1. **Generally.** Enhance the City of Commerce’s image as a unique community and retain that image in attractive and orderly development that preserves existing character of a historic railroad community. Cultivate distinctiveness so that the City of Commerce remains unique among Jackson County and communities in the northeast Georgia region.
2. **Gateways.** Improve community identity. Create civic gateways to the City that produce a sense of arrival. These entryways may incorporate streetscape elements, signage, landscaping, architectural features, and combinations of land uses that enhance the image and function of the City. Encourage the provision of public green spaces in gateway areas as private development occurs. Commerce supports and encourages private, community, and public efforts to install signage and unique gateway features that identify the city, particularly its focal point(s).
3. **Architectural Requirements.** Promote the highest quality of development. Establish and maintain architectural and site design standards as appropriate to encourage increased quality of site development, architectural detailing and materials.
4. **Compatibility and Small Town Character.** Require new development to respect the scale and character of nearby structures and minimize or mitigate abrupt and excessive differences.
5. **Signage and Wayfinding.** A signage system should be developed and applied citywide, to contribute to the city’s urban design and economic development objectives. Signage should be installed at gateway locations and along major corridors that directs visitors to key destinations, such as downtown and local attractions, as well as to public parking and municipal buildings.
6. **Beautification.** Support ongoing community-based streetscape beautification partnerships.

7. **Landscaping.** Encourage the greening of Commerce's major corridors through the continued planting and maintenance of street yards, and the provision of street trees along major corridors. Landscape materials should consist of drought resistant plant varieties complementary to the area.
8. **Streetscape Improvement Standards.** Pedestrian lighting and street furniture shall be consistent throughout the City, unless varied to be consistent with character. Street furnishings and landscape elements should possess long-lasting quality and be well-maintained.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. **Departmental Mission Statements.** Prepare and adopt, and revise periodically as may be needed, mission statements for each individual department of city government (and divisions, as appropriate).
2. **Level of Service Standards.** Establish and maintain level-of-service and/or performance standards for all community facilities and services provided by the City.
3. **Police Protection.** Ensure that the police department has adequate personnel, equipment, and training. Maintain a target officer to population ratio as may be established by national professional organizations.
4. **Parks and Recreation.** Maintain a park/recreation department. Designate lands for future parks, recreation, open space, and conservation. Update as appropriate and implement the city's parks and recreation master plan. Cooperate and share park and recreation facilities with Commerce City Schools.
5. **Sewer Generally.** Manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment. Convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant or site without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.
6. **Sewer Availability and Connection.** Land development and land subdivisions in urban areas with public sanitary sewer available in reasonably close proximity should be connected to public sanitary sewer as a condition or prerequisite of development approval. If the immediate connection of land development or land subdivisions to public sanitary sewer is not practical, the installation of "dry" sanitary sewers for purposes of later connection to the public system is required.
7. **Long-term Water Supplies.** Continue to investigate the feasibility of additional long-term sources of water supplies.
8. **Water System Contingencies.** Contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding.
9. **Standard Construction Details and Specifications.** Maintain and periodically update standard construction specifications and standard drawings for water and sewer systems.

10. **Water and Sewer Financial Considerations.** The revenue produced by water and sewer systems should be sufficient to pay for all necessary capital expenditures, operation and maintenance costs, debt service, administrative costs, and provide a contingency fund for emergencies.
11. **Fire Hydrants.** Install fire hydrants at minimum of 1,000 feet intervals where public water lines exist, and at 750 foot intervals in suburban and urban areas.
12. **ISO Ratings.** Continue to reduce Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings where possible.
13. **Emergency Preparedness.** Periodically conduct community hazard vulnerability analyses to identify the types of environmental extremes (e.g., floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes), technological accidents (e.g., toxic chemical releases,) and deliberate incidents (e.g., sabotage or terrorist attack involving chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, or explosive/flammable materials) to which their communities may be exposed. Periodically review and revise the disaster preparedness and emergency management plans for the city (in coordination with the county) based on such vulnerability analyses and update them as appropriate.
14. **Solid Waste Management.** Implement the city's (in participation with the county's and the regional) comprehensive solid waste management plan. Pursue waste diversion, composting, and recycling strategies.
15. **Capital Facilities Plans and Capital Improvement Programs.** Maintain a five-year capital facilities plan and capital improvement program, updated annually.
16. **Location Policy.** While abiding by principles of efficiency in terms of optimal geographic locations for City facilities and services, the City should use its investment in civic buildings to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in redevelopment areas.
17. **Facility and Substantive Master Plans.** When facility plans such as water and sewer, parks and recreation, and economic development strategic plans are prepared, they should be adopted by reference as a part of the comprehensive plan. At the time of integration into the comprehensive plan, the content of this Community Agenda should be amended as appropriate to ensure consistency.
18. **Public-Private Co-Delivery.** Identify, and capitalize on, opportunities for innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various City facilities and services.

TRANSPORTATION

1. **Pedestrian Facilities.** Major subdivisions are strongly encouraged, if not required, to provide sidewalks within the subdivision and linking to public sidewalks planned for or provided outside the subdivision and connecting to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on all abutting properties. Land developments are strongly encouraged, if not required to provide pedestrian facilities interior to the development and linking to public sidewalks planned for or provided outside the land

development and connecting to public open spaces and/or publicly designated conservation lands on abutting properties.

2. **Improvement of the Existing Pedestrian System.** Improve the network of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks) in the city. Create a safe and accessible pedestrian network throughout the City of Commerce, subject to funding limitations. Sidewalks of required widths, well-marked crosswalks and approved pedestrian-scaled lighting should be installed to create an inviting and well used pedestrian system. All new construction and redevelopment within the City should include a combination of these facilities. All new facilities must meet current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Additional funding will be sought to create and improve pedestrian facilities within existing areas of the City, but when development occurs it will be the responsibility of developers to improve facilities along their public street frontages and internal to the development. The city should identify ways to retrofit older suburban subdivisions with sidewalks. Propose that Georgia Department of Transportation install crosswalks across state highways for pedestrians, where warranted.
3. **Bike Paths and Bikeways.** Provide bike paths and bikeways in appropriate locations in the city. Direct bicycle and pedestrian investments toward those corridors and areas best suited for foot and bicycle traffic and which have the greatest potential to provide convenient and safe mobility alternatives. Develop and adopt protocol for roadway re-striping to better accommodate bicyclists on roadway segments where excess pavement width is available. Adopt guidelines or standards that recommend appropriate crossing facilities and treatments for pathways as they cross at uncontrolled locations.
4. **Multi-use Trails.** Continue pursuing opportunities to construct multi-use trails or greenways throughout the city, but especially within mixed-use, master planned developments. Require connections to existing and planned greenways, where feasible, in new developments.
5. **Public Transportation.** Continue to work with Jackson County to improve transit access to, from, and within the city.
6. **Railroad and Road Grade Separation.** Maintain safe railroad crossings for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and consider opportunities and where feasible implement projects that separate at-grade road and railroad intersections, subject to funding limitations.
7. **Local Street Improvements.** Improve geometrics of local street intersections where they pose traffic safety problems, subject to budget limitations.
8. **Protection of Future Rights-of-ways.** Protect future road rights-of-way from building encroachment.
9. **No Truck Routes.** Designate routes for truck prohibition where needed.
10. **Access Management.** Adopt adequate access management standards to control the connections and access points of driveways and roads to other roadways. Develop overlay zones for U.S. Highway 441 and SR 98 in the Commerce area to be jointly adopted by Jackson County and the City of Commerce, to include such standards.

11. **Inter-parcel Access.** Minimize unnecessary vehicular trips on roadways by implementing techniques such as requiring non-residential uses to provide cross-access (inter-parcel) easements during the site plan review and approval process to ensure that drivers can directly access abutting non-residential uses without having to use the abutting road or street.
12. **Context-Sensitive Street Standards and Design.** Consider alternative street standards for areas of varying character. Provide for street designs that pay appropriate attention to concepts of compatibility, livability, sense of place, and urban design, in addition to conventional traffic engineering considerations. Utilize context-sensitive roadway design to promote streets that are built appropriately to fit the land uses surrounding them. For example, a downtown main street should be built with narrower lanes, wider sidewalks, and streetscape elements in its design, in order to encourage lower speeds and accommodate pedestrians.
13. **Traffic Impact Study Requirements.** Assess transportation impact study requirements and modify as appropriate. In lieu of more specific policy or regulation, when a development proposal would be expected to generate 1,000 vehicle trips or more, or 100 or more vehicle trips during any a.m. or p.m. peak hour, a traffic impact study should be required. In other cases at the discretion of the City Engineer a traffic impact study may be required where warranted by professional considerations.
14. **Downtown Public Parking.** Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities downtown, including public parking. Monitor use characteristics of public parking lots. Improve the aesthetics of existing public parking lots.
15. **Traffic Calming.** Consider future needs for traffic calming (raised speed humps, raised tables, etc) to slow speeding and/or discourage cut-through traffic.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

1. **Regional Cooperation.** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources (Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation).
2. **Regional Solutions.** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer (Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions).
3. **Support for Regional Policies.** Coordinate local policies and regulations to support regional policies. Ensure that goals and implementation programs of the city's comprehensive plan are consistent with adopted coordination mechanisms and consistent with applicable regional and state programs.
4. **Intergovernmental Agreements.** Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate.
5. **Information Sharing.** Share resources and information with all government entities.

6. **Conflict Resolution.** Resolve conflicts with other local governments through established mediation processes or other informal or formal means.

CHAPTER 12 IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter describes the techniques that are most likely to be used by Commerce to implement its comprehensive plan. This chapter is a useful reference source for identifying additional ways to implement the comprehensive plan, but which may not be used in the short-term. Discussion of these implementation techniques does not necessarily suggest that Commerce will utilize each and every one of these techniques, whether in the short-term or during the twenty-year planning horizon. However, the Short-term Work Program provides specificity with regard to what Commerce intends to achieve during the next five years to implement its plan.

NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

Environmental Planning Criteria

These rules of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources call for protection of water supply watersheds, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, protected river corridors, and protected mountains. In Commerce, the water supply watershed and wetland provisions apply. Commerce has complied with these criteria by adopting appropriate ordinances. Even so, the short-term work program calls for Commerce to review and strengthen its wetlands protection regulations during the rewrite of the city's zoning ordinance.

Other Environmental Regulations

Soil erosion and flood damage prevention ordinances have been adopted and enforced by the city of Commerce. At the time of this writing, Commerce was pursuing amendments to these ordinances to be in compliance with the requirements of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Tree City USA

The Tree City USA program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs. Tree City USA recognition can contribute to a community's pride. Tree City USA can serve as a blueprint for planting and maintaining the community's trees. The Tree City USA signs installed at community entrances can signal to visitors that the city cares about its environment. Preference is sometimes given to Tree City USA communities over other communities when allocations of grant money are made for trees or forestry programs. To qualify as a Tree City USA community, a city must meet four standards: designate a tree board or department; adopt a tree care ordinance; adopt a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita; and observe Arbor Day with a proclamation. Commerce has initiated efforts to become a Tree City USA participant.

Green Roofs

A green roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil. Green roofs can be used on industrial facilities, residences, offices, and commercial buildings. They provide an alternative to traditional, heat absorbing roofing materials, such as

dark-colored rubber, asphalt, and tar, which contribute to increased energy use, air pollution, and temperatures in urban areas. Green roofs provide a number of environmental, ecological, and social functions. As a stormwater management device, green roofs act as a sponge during rainstorms, absorbing much of the water that would otherwise run off. Green roofs are encouraged by Commerce's policies.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic Resources Inventory

Commerce has an abundance of historic resources and has had inventories of its resources conducted in the past. Commerce should participate in any opportunities to update inventories of historic resources, since some historic properties experience changes and some historic structures get demolished or are lost to disrepair over time. The community agenda supports participation in future countywide historic resources surveys and/or the funding of an updated inventory of historic resources in Commerce.

National Register of Historic Places

This is the federal government's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation, documented and evaluated according to uniform standards established by the National Park Service, which administers the program. Commerce has some properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and this plan calls for additional National Register nominations.

Local Historic Preservation Ordinance

This is an ordinance that identifies procedures for creating local historic districts and administering the review of building renovations or alterations to properties located within the district. It typically establishes a historic preservation commission that is charged with the review of development proposals within historic districts. This comprehensive plan recommends that Commerce adopt a local historic preservation ordinance and designate several local historic districts. Also, the designation of historic landmarks is also recommended in this community agenda.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Public Housing Program

The City of Commerce has a public housing authority that owns and operates a public housing program. As the authority is quasi-independent of city government, this comprehensive plan is not specific as to the future role of the housing authority.

Residential Property Maintenance and Housing Code Enforcement

City officials should monitor housing conditions to ensure there is no increase in the levels of substandard housing conditions. Where existing housing units or residential neighborhoods have visible signs of disrepair or initial signs of neighborhood instability due to housing conditions, Commerce should pursue the enforcement of housing codes and property maintenance standards. This is a routine function of city code enforcement, but the city's adopted housing policies suggest that the city should provide adequate resources for such code enforcement activities.

Code Enforcement Board

Cities and counties in Georgia are authorized to establish code enforcement boards pursuant to Chapter 74 of Title 36, the “Local Government Code Enforcement Boards Act (O.C.G.A. 36-74-1 et seq.). Such boards, if established, have the power to conduct hearings, and issue orders having the force of law to command whatever steps are needed to bring code violators into compliance. Presently, there does not appear to be a need for a separate code enforcement board, and so the community agenda does not call for establishment of such a board.

Community Development Block Grant

The nation’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the state Department of Community Affairs for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development. There is much discretion on how CDBG funds can be used (within some constraints), as long as they benefit low- and moderate-income households. For instance, funds can be targeted to provide infrastructure or be directed at upgrading and expanding the affordable housing stock. Evidence from practice indicates that CDBG funds are most effective when they are targeted in small areas and combined with other resources (Accordino 2005).¹ Commerce has sought and received CDBG funds in the past, and the comprehensive plan establishes a targeted area for community development funds.

Housing Trust Funds

A housing trust fund is an account established by a State or local government, financed from an alternative, non-general revenue source, targeted to provide funds for the provision of affordable housing. A housing trust fund is not specifically called for in the short-term work program, but Commerce could consider establishing a housing trust fund as a part of a larger community development and housing assistance program.

Community Development Corporations

Local governments can form community development corporations to gather resources from public and private sectors to build affordable housing. Or, community development corporations can be formed entirely by the non-profit sector. A community development corporation is not specifically called for in the short-term work program, but Commerce should encourage a non-profit, community-based housing corporation be established as a part of a larger, city-sponsored community development and housing assistance program.

Mixed-Income Housing

Most housing developments are currently built with a single type of “product” for a specific target market. This separates people not only by income and race, but also by age. Mixed-income housing refers to the provision of housing within the same development or immediate neighborhood for households with a broad range of incomes. Mixed-income housing refers to a

¹ Accordino, John. 2005. “Planning for Impact: Richmond Takes an Aggressive Approach to Targeting Neighborhood Revitalization Resources.” *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

host of housing strategies that provide a broader range of housing types and price ranges. Commerce's plan encourages the provision of mixed-income housing within large-scale, master planned mixed use developments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Countywide Economic Development Master Plan

Jackson County's comprehensive plan calls for a countywide strategic economic development master plan. Commerce should continue in that effort and contribute a pro-rated share of funding so that municipal considerations can be fully integrated into that effort. The work program calls for Commerce to participate in that upcoming planning effort.

Downtown Development Authority

A municipality may establish a downtown development authority pursuant to the Downtown Development Authorities Law (O.C.G.A. Title 36, Chapter 42, O.C.G.A. 36-42-1 et seq.), to revitalize and redevelop central business districts. Such authorities have a number of powers that can aid in their objectives, including the acquisition of real property, issuance of revenue bonds, and to serve as an urban redevelopment agency pursuant to Chapter 61 of Title 36 of the Georgia Code. Commerce has established a DDA and it is active on several fronts to further the economic development and redevelopment of Commerce's downtown.

This comprehensive plan calls for the DDA to consider the merits of including additional lands with redevelopment potential but also scale back its jurisdiction to exclude some residential and some institutional areas that are unlikely to require redevelopment. Amendment of the DDA boundary is included in the city's short-term work program.

Façade Improvement Program

A façade improvement program exists in the downtown for commercial businesses via the city's Downtown Development Authority. As an existing program, no additional measures are called for in the work program other than to continue providing opportunities for façade improvement assistance from the city.

Redevelopment Opportunities

There are significant opportunities for redevelopment in Commerce. The Downtown Development Authority should identify, prioritize and pursue redevelopment prospects, and this community agenda urges increased attention to redevelopment prospects.

Revitalization of "Brownfield" Sites

Commerce has some older commercial land uses that probably qualify as "brownfields." One particular example is junkyards along U.S. Highway 441; these may be brownfields in that gas, oil, and anti-freeze may leach into the groundwater from these sites. There are federal and state funds that may be available to assist with the cleanup of brownfields, and Commerce should assist in the pursuit of those funding opportunities in conjunction with property owners.

LAND USE

Zoning Ordinance

Commerce has adopted a zoning ordinance. This plan calls for the city to comprehensively modernize and rewrite the zoning ordinance to implement the character areas and future land use plan adopted as a part of this comprehensive plan.

Subdivision and Land Development Regulations

Commerce administers and enforces subdivision and land development regulations. This plan also calls for a revisiting and probably amendment of the city's subdivision and land development regulations to implement various aspects of this comprehensive plan.

Overlay Districts

An overlay district is a defined geographic area that encompasses one or more underlying zoning districts and that imposes additional requirements above those required by the underlying zoning district. An overlay district can be coterminous with existing zoning districts or contain only parts of one or more such districts. This comprehensive plan calls for Commerce to establish, jointly with Jackson County, overlay districts for the U.S. Highway 441 and SR 98 corridors, in order to manage access and ensure quality development.

Jobs-Housing Balance

This involves an examination of the relationship between jobs and housing, and between where jobs are or will be located and where housing is or will be available. Jobs/housing balance is often expressed in terms of a ratio between jobs and the number of housing units. The higher the jobs/housing ratio, the more jobs the area has relative to housing. A high ratio may indicate to a community that it is not meeting the housing needs (in terms of either affordability or actual physical units) of people working in the community. Commerce's comprehensive plan suggests that jobs-housing balance should be an objective within large-scale, master planned, mixed use projects which are recommended on the city's character and future land use plan maps.

New Urbanism

New urbanism is a set of principles or school of thought that suggest neighborhoods should be built like those that existed before the advent of the automobile. Characteristics of new urbanism or new urban developments include a street network that forms a connected grid, houses built close to the street (i.e., little or no setback) with front porches, alleys (where appropriate) and garages located at the rear of the lot, and on-street parking, among others. Commerce embraces these principles in the traditional neighborhood development designations on its character area map and future land use plan map.

Specific, Small Area, or Refinement Plans

Specific plans describe in more detail the type of development planned for a particular area than found in the comprehensive plan, combining the planning objectives for an area and the implementation techniques to achieve them. Specific area plans typically focus on some unique feature of the geographic area that they encompass, and can relate to local conditions that cannot be fully addressed by conventional zoning. Although particularly suited to application for

large, undeveloped land areas, the specific plan may be used to guide the buildout of partially developed areas with potential for infill and redevelopment. Commerce's comprehensive plan does not call for preparation of any small area plans; however, there are areas identified as "special concern," such as the existing hospital area and a community development target area, which may deserve more detailed planning efforts in the near future.

URBAN DESIGN

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are statements and illustrations that are intended to convey the preferred quality for a place. Commerce has adopted design guidelines for the downtown area. This comprehensive plan calls for additional design guidance be provided for commercial developments in the U.S. Highway 441 and SR 98 corridors, as part of an overlay district (see description above) to be jointly adopted by the City of Commerce and Jackson County.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), is a voluntary, consensus-based, national standard for developing high performance, environmentally sustainable buildings and communities. The Rating System addresses six major areas, which include: Sustainable sites; Water efficiency; Energy and atmosphere; Materials and resources; Indoor environmental quality; and Innovation and design process. LEED certification is granted solely by the U.S. Green Building Council. To earn certification, a building project must meet certain prerequisites and performance benchmarks ("credits") within various categories. Projects are awarded Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification depending on the number of credits they achieve. Commerce's policies in this comprehensive plan encourage LEED certifications for buildings.

Wayfinding Systems

Wayfinding systems assist motorists and pedestrians to major destination points within an urban area. They consist of a wide variety of vehicular and pedestrian signs, maps, gateways, banners, and informational kiosks. An appropriately designed wayfinding system will: 1) improve access, identification, and connectivity to major areas and destinations in a downtown; 2) provide clear direction to both first time visitors and residents and reduce misdirected travel; 3) reflect the community's image, structure, and vision and make the area more user-friendly through helpful, distinctive graphics; 4) improve vehicular, pedestrian, and cycling safety with appropriately placed information; and 5) create a memorable experience. Commerce has initiated efforts to provide better wayfinding in the downtown, and the comprehensive plan supports additional efforts with regard to signage, gateways, beautification, and wayfinding.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Commerce prepared and adopted a parks and recreation master plan in 2008. That plan is considered a current expression of policy and intent of the Commerce City Council with regard to future improvements to future parks and recreation facilities and provides greater specificity than is provided here in this comprehensive plan.

Water and Sewer Master Planning

Commerce operates water and sewer systems. Though it has planned and continues to identify necessary improvements, Commerce has not formalized its long-range planning efforts when it comes to its water and sewer systems. The short-term work program calls for Commerce to formalize long-range water and sewer master plans.

Commerce Library Expansion

The Commerce library is planning for a 5,000 square foot addition which once constructed will be considered adequate at least for the city in the short term. Again, however, if Commerce library is expected by the county to serve the needs of unincorporated residents, then additional space beyond that programmed improvement will most likely be needed. The improvement of the existing library is included in the city's short-term work program.

Capital Improvement Programming

Commerce should consider whether it can formally implement a capital improvement program. Without one, decisions about capital facilities funding are made on a year-to-year, ad hoc basis. Commerce should recognize potential funding shortfalls in terms of maintaining existing facilities, and it needs to anticipate major capital improvements to address growth pressures. This community agenda calls for the city to maintain and routinely update a capital improvement program.

Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)

SPLOST has been used in Jackson County as a major source of capital funding. At the time of this writing, Jackson County is planning with municipalities to seek an extension of the SPLOST. Commerce has identified various projects that would be funded if the citizenry passes another SPLOST referendum.

Development Impact Fees

Cities and counties in Georgia are authorized to prepare and adopt development impact fee programs pursuant to O.C.G.A. 36-71-1 et seq., the Development Impact Fee Act, which can be used to fund system improvements (roads, water and sewer, parks and recreation, public safety, and libraries) needed to serve new development. Commerce's comprehensive plan does not call for adoption of development impact fees.

Capital Improvements Element

This implementation technique is a component of a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. which sets out projected needs for system improvements during a planning horizon established in the comprehensive plan, a schedule of capital improvements that will meet the anticipated need for system improvements, and a description of anticipated funding sources for each required improvement. It is a prerequisite of adopting an impact fee program. Commerce's plan does not call for development of a CIE since it does not intend to adopt an impact fee program.

ISO Rating

ISO (Insurance Services Office) Ratings are used for insurance companies to set premiums within a geographic area for fire insurance. This rating system has been used since 1995. The ratings are from the 1 (best) to 10 (worst). A higher ISO rating results in higher insurance premiums. Commerce seeks to reduce its ISO ratings where possible and will continue to do so.

Drought Preparedness and Water Conservation

Some communities have responded to the threat of drought with drought preparedness programs. A drought preparedness program can and should address the receipt, storage, and distribution of emergency water supplies, general water demand management, restrictions on outdoor water use for landscaping and swimming pools, watering lawns, and washing vehicles, and water conservation education programs. Commerce has been active in the past in terms of addressing drought conditions by interconnecting its water system with the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority, and this plan supports drought contingency planning and water conservation programs.

Solid Waste Management

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 requires local governments to develop a plan for reducing the amount of solid waste going into landfills and other disposal facilities. Such reductions may be accomplished by many techniques, including recycling materials such as plastic, aluminum, and newspaper and the diversion of yard waste from disposal facilities into backyard and other composting operations. The City is currently in compliance with that mandate.

Emergency Management and Emergency Preparedness

The likelihood is good that disaster will strike any community within the 20-year planning horizon of a comprehensive plan. Disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery long have been parts of local government planning, though not very often that emergency management is integrated into the local government's comprehensive plan. Policies in this comprehensive plan support active participation by Commerce in countywide emergency management and emergency preparedness plans and programs.

TRANSPORTATION

Roadway and Other Improvements

The various improvement recommendations of the Countywide Roadways Plan as they pertain to the Commerce area are excerpted and shown on a map in this Community Agenda. Those improvements are also summarized in Table 9.2. Commerce will pursue these road improvements in conjunction with Jackson County and the Georgia Department of Transportation, as funding is available.

Public Parking Lot Improvements

Better lighting, signage and landscaping need to be installed at City/DDA off-street parking lots/locations. These are included in the short-term work program of the city. Also, the DDA will pursue completion of a comprehensive parking management plan.

Sidewalk and Streetscape Extension and Improvements

There is a need to provide a sidewalk extension and improvement plan, and in general to provide much better service for pedestrians. That need is reflected in the city's short-term work program. Also the short-term work program calls for extension of the streetscape of downtown.

Safe Routes to School Program

The Safe Routes to Schools Program is a Federal-Aid program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Program was created by Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act (SAFETEA-LU). The SRTS Program is administered by State Departments of Transportation (DOTs). The Program provides funds to the States to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely. This funding program, assuming it is continued, should be pursued as appropriate by Commerce.

Public Transportation

A public transportation plan is being developed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission for Jackson County as a whole. Commerce should strive to cooperate in that planning effort and to implement that plan as it relates to the city.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is concerned with reducing vehicle speeds, vehicle noise, visual impacts, and sometimes traffic volumes. Techniques consist of a series of raised speed humps, raised tables, or other devices along with appropriate traffic control signage to slow speeding and/or discourage cut-through traffic. Traffic calming techniques use various means to influence the behavior of motorists: physical, psychological, visual, social, and legal (regulatory and enforcement). Although traffic management and calming techniques are often used in areas other than residential neighborhoods, most programs are focused in residential areas, where traffic problems are more prevalent and have the most influence on the day-to-day livability of the community. Although a policy on traffic calming is included in this comprehensive plan, there are not any areas specifically identified in the plan that require installation of traffic calming measures.

Traffic Impact Study Requirements

A traffic impact study is an analysis and assessment, conducted by a qualified professional, that assesses the effects that a discretionary development proposal's traffic will have on the transportation network in a community or portion thereof. Traffic impact studies vary in their range of detail and complexity depending on the type, size and location of the proposed development. This comprehensive plan establishes a policy for when traffic impact studies should be required of development applicants.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Annexation of Unincorporated Islands

Table 10.1 of this community agenda provides a list of unincorporated islands that appear to meet the definition of unincorporated islands in state annexation statutes. Commerce should, after appropriate legal review and legal counsel, initiate applications to annex these unincorporated islands if they were lawfully created prior to 1991.

Intergovernmental Agreements

There is an opportunity to formalize many of the service arrangements with formal agreements that will avoid potential conflicts later. This Community Agenda calls for formal approval of various intergovernmental agreements.

SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM

The City of Commerce's short-term work program covers the fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 and is presented in Table 12.1. The city has included the projects listed in the work program because they were (a) identified by department heads; (b) called for in the previous work program but deferred; and/or (c) suggested by the city's planning consultant based on a variety of professional planning standards and considerations.

Implementation Responsibilities

The Commerce Department Planning and Development is the primary administrative agency responsible for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda. However, other municipal departments and agencies have important responsibilities in their respective service areas, especially the Commerce Downtown Development Authority. Also, the city manager must propose and approve funding levels appropriate to carry out the many programs suggested here. The Commerce Planning Commission provides overall support for plan implementation and should periodically investigate the progress of plan implementation.

Work Program Funding Limitations

This is a time of great uncertainty with regard to city revenues for capital projects and new program initiatives. Commerce has had to institute employee furloughs in response to budget limitations. Some of the work program initiatives may only be feasible if outside funding is obtained, such as a grant. The lingering economic recession significantly limits, and will most likely continue to constrain, the city's spending with regard to funding capital improvements and initiating new projects as suggested in the work program. Therefore, *implementation of the short-term work program is not guaranteed*. Department heads, the general public, and others must keep these points in mind and cannot cite this suggested work program as a financial commitment by the Commerce City Council.

Accordingly, projects and activities listed in the short-term work program may be: (a) deferred for one or more years; (b) moved to long-range; (c) reduced in scope if possible; and/or (d) deleted from the work program altogether. The city manager will evaluate capital improvements and program needs each year during the budgeting process and will use the short-term work program as a guide in recommending priorities to the City Council.

**Table 12.1
Short-term Work Program, FY 2011-2012 to 2015-2016
City of Commerce**

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
NATURAL RESOURCES				
Adopt revisions to soil erosion and flood plain management ordinances	2010-2011	Underway	Planning & Development; Consultant	Comprehensive Plan contract
Attain "Tree City USA" status	2011-2012	Staff Function	Planning & Development	
Strengthen wetlands protection as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite	2012-2013	See zoning rewrite	Planning & Development; Consultant	General Fund
Monitor environmental conditions at "brownfield" (environmentally contaminated) sites, and encourage/apply for remediation grants	2011-2015	Staff Function	Planning & Development	Possible federal grant
Actively participate in regional habitat protection plan once initiated	Long Range	Unknown	Planning & Development	NEGRC
HISTORIC RESOURCES				
Conduct a detailed survey of historic resources (participate in countywide survey)	2011-2012	\$10,000	Downtown Development Authority	General Fund; Grant from DNR
Add eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places	2012-2013	\$2,500 per nomination	Preservation Consultant	General Fund
Prepare and adopt local historic preservation ordinance establishing local historic districts	2012-2013	\$10,000	Planning & Development; DDA	General Fund
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEV.				
Residential Property Maintenance and Housing Code Enforcement	2011-2016	Staff Function	Building Inspections	
Pursue additional Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) funding, especially for targeted area	2012-2015	Staff Function	Planning & Development	
Encourage non-profit sector to establish community based housing organization to rehabilitate substandard housing	2012-2015	Staff Function	Planning & Development	
ECONOMIC DEV./ REDEVELOPMENT				
Reconsider and revise boundary of Downtown Development Authority (DDA)	2011	Staff function	DDA; City Council	DDA Budget
Maintain an inventory of vacant industrial lands, vacant industrial buildings, and vacant commercial building spaces; market vacant sites and spaces to new users	2011-2016	Chamber staff function	Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce; General Fund
Participate in development of a countywide comprehensive economic development strategic master plan; including industry needs analysis and municipal components at the option of individual cities	2011-2014	\$20,000 (city share)	DDA	General Fund
Continue façade improvement program for downtown buildings	2011-2016	Staff function	DDA	DDA Budget
Prioritize and pursue redevelopment opportunities in the DDA boundary	2012-2016	Staff function	DDA	DDA Budget
LAND USE				
Adopt overlay districts for U.S. 441 and SR 98 in conjunction with Jackson County	2011-2012	\$7,500	Planning & Development	General Fund

Chapter 12, Implementation, City of Commerce, Community Agenda, June 29, 2010

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Revise and readopt zoning ordinance to implement comprehensive plan	2012-2013	\$20,000	Planning & Development	General Fund
Revise and readopt subdivision and land development regulations to implement comprehensive plan	2012-2013	\$10,000	Planning & Development	General Fund
URBAN DESIGN				
Beautification projects	2011-2016	\$10,000 annually	DDA; Public Works	General Fund; possible grants
Develop citywide wayfinding program and install gateway features and improvements	2012-2015	\$50,000	DDA; Public Works	General Fund; possible grants
PARKS AND RECREATION				
Provide property and concrete for new Skateboard Park	2012-2013	\$30,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST
Replace gazebo and renovate restroom building at Willoughby Park	2012-2013	\$25,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
New picnic and playground area at American Veterans Memorial Park	2012-2013	\$30,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
Construct a "Spray and Play" area at the swimming pool	2014-2015	\$20,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
Purchase and/or nominate three acres of land for the city's greenspace program	2014-2015	\$7,500	Parks and Recreation	General Fund
Revise parks and recreation plan at five-year intervals	2014-2015	\$10,000	Parks and Recreation; Consultant	General Fund
Pave parking lot at Richard Ridling Park	2015-2016	\$42,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
Renovate athletic field with new lighting system, new bleachers, new dugouts, and construct batting cage at American Veterans Memorial Park	2015-2016	\$27,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
New playground and construct a restroom facility at Richard Ridling Park	2015-2016	\$48,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
Provide new lighting and spectator bleachers on field one and two at Richard Ridling Park	2015-2016	\$190,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
Convert swimming pool into an indoor facility	Long Range	\$1,500,000	Parks and Recreation	Grants; General Fund
New park at Waterworks Road, including purchase of 40 acres adjacent to city site	Long Range	\$2,670,000	Parks and Recreation	SPLOST; General Fund
UTILITIES – WATER AND SEWER				
Prepare master plans for water and sewer facilities	2013-2015	\$100,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Funds
Upgrade all GIS to include all Water, Sewer, Electric, Gas lines, and Storm Drains	Annual Ongoing	\$345,000	Utilities	General Fund
Upgrade water mains in Downtown Area	2011-2012	\$525,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Upgrade sewer lines	2011-2012	\$600,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Inflow and Infiltration Study	2011-2012	\$85,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Maysville Road water extension	2012-2013	\$150,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund
Edwards Creek II sewer extension	2012-2013	\$725,000	Utilities	Developer
Allen Road sewer extension	2012-2013	\$75,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Clyde Short water replacement	2013-2014	\$70,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund
W. Ridgeway water replacement	2013-2014	\$60,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund
Waterworks Rd sewer line upgrade	2013-2014	\$100,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund

Chapter 12, Implementation, City of Commerce, Community Agenda, June 29, 2010

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Davis Bros. pond upgrade	2013-2014	\$250,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Holiday Inn pond upgrade	2013-2014	\$100,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Sewer Jetter/Vac Truck	2013-2014	\$100,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund
Lift station SCADA	2014-2015	\$45,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund
South Broad St. water upgrade/relocation	2014-2015	\$80,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Sheep Pasture Road water extension	2014-2015	\$225,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Yarbrough Ridgeway water extension	2014-2015	\$125,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Develop a land survey monument system for City	2014-2015	\$25,000	Utilities	General Fund; Grant
Emergency power Lift Stations	2014-2015	\$240,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Hwy 326/Dan Waters Rd water extension	2015-2016	\$320,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Ridgeway/Hwy 98 water and sewer extension	2015-2016	\$400,000	Utilities	SPLOST; Developer
On site CL2 generation and chemical feeders	2015-2016	\$360,000	Utilities	Water and Sewer Fund; Grant
Waterworks Road sewer line extension	2015-2016	\$300,000	Utilities	SPLOST; Developer
Woods Bridge Road water extension	2015-2016	\$180,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Install a 1,000,000 Gallon elevated storage tank on south end of water system	Long Range	\$800,000	Utilities	SPLOST
Centrifuge solids separator	Long Range	\$500,000	Utilities	Grant
Automatic Meter Reading	Long Range	\$600,000	Utilities	General Fund
UTILITIES -- GAS				
Continue replacement of older gas mains and services	2011-2016 (Annually)	\$200,000	Utilities	Gas Operating Budget
Install new gas mains in Steve Reynolds Industrial Park	2012-2013	\$165,000	Utilities	Gas Operating Budget
Install new gas mains in Chatham Commercial Area	Long Range	\$45,000	Utilities	Gas Operating Budget
Install new gas mains in North Concord Rd Industrial Park	Long Range	\$175,000	Utilities	Gas Operating Budget
Install gas mains for Bouchard Dev. (Medical Complex)	Long Range	\$200,000	Utilities	Gas Operating Budget
UTILITIES -- ELECTRIC				
Repair and replace Electric Lines	Annually	\$300,000	Utilities	Electric Operating Budget
Electric Line Extension to Steve Reynolds Boulevard	2011-2012	\$250,000	Utilities	Electric Operating Budget
Two new material handlers -Bucket Trucks	2012-2013	\$350,000	Utilities	Electric Operating Budget
Electric Line Extension to Bouchard Dev. (Medical Complex)	Long Range	\$225,000	Utilities	Electric Operating Budget
Fiber Optic Back Bone / Wireless Internet	Long Range	\$750,000	Utilities	One Georgia Wireless Cities; General Fund
LIBRARY				
Expand Commerce library by 5,000 square feet	2011-2013	\$3,000,000	Library Director	SPLOST; General Fund
ADMINISTRATION				
City Hall Repair/Paint	2011-2012	\$20,000	City Manager	General Fund

Chapter 12, Implementation, City of Commerce, Community Agenda, June 29, 2010

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Party	Possible Funding Sources
Document Imaging System	2012-2013	\$42,500	City Manager	General Fund
PUBLIC SAFETY				
New police vehicles	Annually	\$30,000	Police	General Fund
Improve Insurance Services Organization (ISO) fire insurance rating in city	2012-2016	Per ISO report	E. Jackson Fire District	Fire District; City General Fund
Develop new fire station in Steve Reynolds Industrial Park	Long Range	\$600,000	E. Jackson Fire District	Fire District;
New Police Department Headquarters	Long Range	\$5,000,000	Police	General Fund
PUBLIC WORKS				
Implement the regional comprehensive solid waste management plan short-term work program	Annual tasks per plan	Per plan	Public Works	Staff Function; General Fund
Participate in efforts to begin a countywide stormwater planning program and utility	Ongoing	TBD	Public Works	General Fund
New Backhoe and Brush Truck	2011-2012	\$194,000	Public Works	General Fund
TRANSPORTATION				
Participate in countywide public transportation plan; expand rural public transit program	2011-2012	Funded	County Public Works	NEGRC; county general fund with GDOT
Complete road repairs and short-range road improvements (see Table 9.2)	2011-2016	See Table 9.2	Public Works; Jackson County, GDOT	Various sources per Table 9.2
Parking lot construction in front of Civic Center	Ongoing	\$40,000	DDA	General Fund
Improve aesthetics and function of city and DDA public parking	2011-2014	\$100,000 annually	DDA	DDA; General Fund; possible grant
Improve and extend existing sidewalk network	2011-2016	TBD	Public Works; GDOT	Capital Program; possible grants
Extend downtown streetscape	2015-2016	\$1,000,000	Public Works; DDA	Federal grant
Widen roads and extend new roads per Table 9.2	Long Range	See Table 9.2	Public Works; Jackson County, GDOT	Various sources per Table 9.2
Park and ride lot at SR 98 and I-85	Long Range	See Table 9.2	GDOT	GDOT
Establish regional bicycle loop route from Nicholson via SR 334 to the Commerce area then southbound via Waterworks Road, to SR 335 and returning eastbound back to Nicholson	Long Range	Unknown	Intergovernmental Partnership	County capital funds; state funds; federal funds
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION				
Participate in annual intergovernmental coordination summits with county and other major service providers including school districts; host at least one year	2011-2016	\$5,000 (hosting cost – one time fee)	City Manager	General Fund
Annex unincorporated islands	2012-2013	\$5,000 (legal)	City Manager; Planning & Development	General Fund
Renegotiate existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as recommended in this plan or as otherwise needed or required	2011-2016	Staff function	City Manager; Various Departments	

Appendix A
Summary List of Issues and Opportunities
City of Commerce

POPULATION

Addressing the Needs of an Increasingly Elderly Population (changes to housing, facilities)
Capitalizing on the Advantages of Having Seniors in the Community (volunteerism, retirement)
Lower-Income Households and Implications (special service needs)

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Balanced Housing (from higher end to low-moderate income workforce)
Public Housing (future role for housing authority)
Special Needs Housing (housing for disabled, group homes, etc.)
Accessory Housing Units (conversion or addition of 2nd unit to existing home)
Housing for Seniors (special housing needs for seniors)
Manufactured Housing (appropriate level of regulation)
Apartments and Higher Density Housing Options (how much to provide; receptiveness)
Inclusionary Zoning and Mixed Income Housing Strategies (require mix of high and low income)
Minimum House Sizes (regulation of size of housing built by zoning district; appropriateness)
Community Development (whether city should engage in neighborhood improvement activities)

ECONOMY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Growth of Health Care Industries (should health care industries grow; if so how to facilitate?)
Transportation and Warehousing (relative priority of attracting these types of industries)
Industrial Development along Interstate 85 (opportunities – existing land zoned but vacant)
Racing: Auto Enthusiasts and Weekend Warriors (racing as economic development opportunity)
Downtown Infill Development (competition to downtown business from outlying shopping centers)
Two Redevelopment Opportunities: IFI (furniture) and “Oxford Property (support/appropriateness)
Cultural Center and Other DDA Ownerships (maintain/expand; role in economic development)
Civic Center (opportunities to capitalize on this facility for economic development)
Boundary of Downtown Development Authority (expansion – too small, or contraction – too large)
Festivals (capacity to maintain and expand events)
Annual DDA Work Plan (integrate into comprehensive plan short-term work program)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1993 Historic Resources Inventory (adequacy for purposes of preservation program)
Demolition Ordinance (delays but does not prevent demolition; adequacy of this regulation)
Prospects for Historic Preservation Regulation (whether to regulate in the name of preservation)
Expansion of National Register Commercial Historic District (include south side of RR tracks)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Tree City USA (maintain designation; beautification programs)
Open Space Preservation (adequacy; objectives for purchasing additional open space)

LAND USE

SR 98 (Maysville Road) Corridor Aesthetic Enhancement (how to improve the look; gateways)
Commercial Pattern – Nodes and/or Corridors (allow linear commercial or contain at intersections)
Quality Commercial Development Standards (whether to hold new development to higher standard)
Amount of Growth Desired (Population Target) (specify a desired population level or target)
Transitional Areas (expectations for what is appropriate in these areas)

Opportunities for Live-Work-Play and Mixed Use Communities (places combining functions)
Incentives for Residential Infill Development (compatibility issues; whether to encourage and how)
Permitted Uses in Downtown (limit allowed uses to reserve spaces for a “retail” downtown)
Commercial Intrusions and Nonconforming Uses in Neighborhoods (allow expansion?)
Over-subdivision and Lack of Market Need for Areas Designated Residential (public safety issues)
Anticipating Large Institutional Needs (reserve best sites for new hospital, college, etc.)
“Consistency” Requirements (whether zoning should be required to be consistent with plan)
Zoning Code Review and Rewrite (issues and needs with regard to land use regulation)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Equitable Library Funding (city library used by unincorporated residents without paying)
Capital Improvement Programming (formalized five-year program; how to pay for facilities)
Water Conservation and Reuse (conservation programs; possible water reuse/greywater system)
Long-term Water and Sewer Needs (future water supplies; where to extend sewer; how to pay)
Update of Parks and Recreation Master Plan (new facilities or parks to provide; e.g., swimming)
New Public Safety Facilities (new police annex and/or new fire station, outlying areas)
City Hall and Administrative Spaces (will city hall be adequate in 20 years?)

TRANSPORTATION

Need for Sidewalks (connections and extensions; where?)
Extension of Streetscape (downtown sidewalk improvements)
Downtown Parking (sufficiency; adequacy; location, etc.)
Parking Lot Improvements (connections, lighting, signage, landscaping, etc.)
Comprehensive Parking Management Plan (metering, staff enforcement, improvements, etc.)
Railroad Rights of Ways and Crossings (at grade crossings; eliminate? Safety concerns?)
Access Management along Major Roads (are current regulations sufficient to control curb cuts?)
Narrow or Substandard Roads (upgrade or preserve “skinny” streets)
Alternative Street Standards for Areas of Varying Character (one size fits everything, or not)
Improving Transit Service (adequacy of existing county rural transit; options for city)
Requirements and Guidelines for Traffic Impact Studies (whether and when to require study)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Anticipating Future Annexations (should city anticipate and plan for more annexation?)
Water and Sewer Service Areas (need to formalize new boundaries in light of annexations)
Other Intergovernmental Issues and Intergovernmental Agreements (Maysville, Banks/Jackson)



Resolution

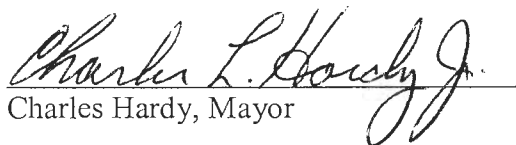
WHEREAS, the 1989 Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 215, the Georgia Planning Act, requiring all local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Community Agenda for the City of Commerce's Comprehensive Plan, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the city of Commerce that the Community Agenda for the City of Commerce, Georgia dated June 2010, as approved by the Georgia Department Community Affairs is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

Adopted this 13th day of September, 2010.

City of Commerce


Charles Hardy, Mayor


City Clerk