

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT – MAIN TEXT  
for the  
City of Pine Lake, Georgia

Rev. March, 2006

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The following Comprehensive Plan provides our vision of the future of Pine Lake. The Plan was developed in coordination with County, Regional and State long-term planning goals and was formulated based on an assessment of current and future needs of the city including the desires of Pine Lake residents.

This plan addresses both short and long-term needs; sets clear and measurable goals and objectives; and identifies strategies for achieving them in an effective and fiscally responsible manner. We examine the city's existing land use patterns and identify the areas where commercial, residential and greenspace development issues will require special attention during the planning process. We have had an ongoing series of quarterly Town Hall Meetings where city leaders have conducted structured information presentation and feedback sessions.

Based on the results from these meetings and our ongoing effort to produce our new Community Agenda, the City Of Pine Lake is committed to these key planning factors:

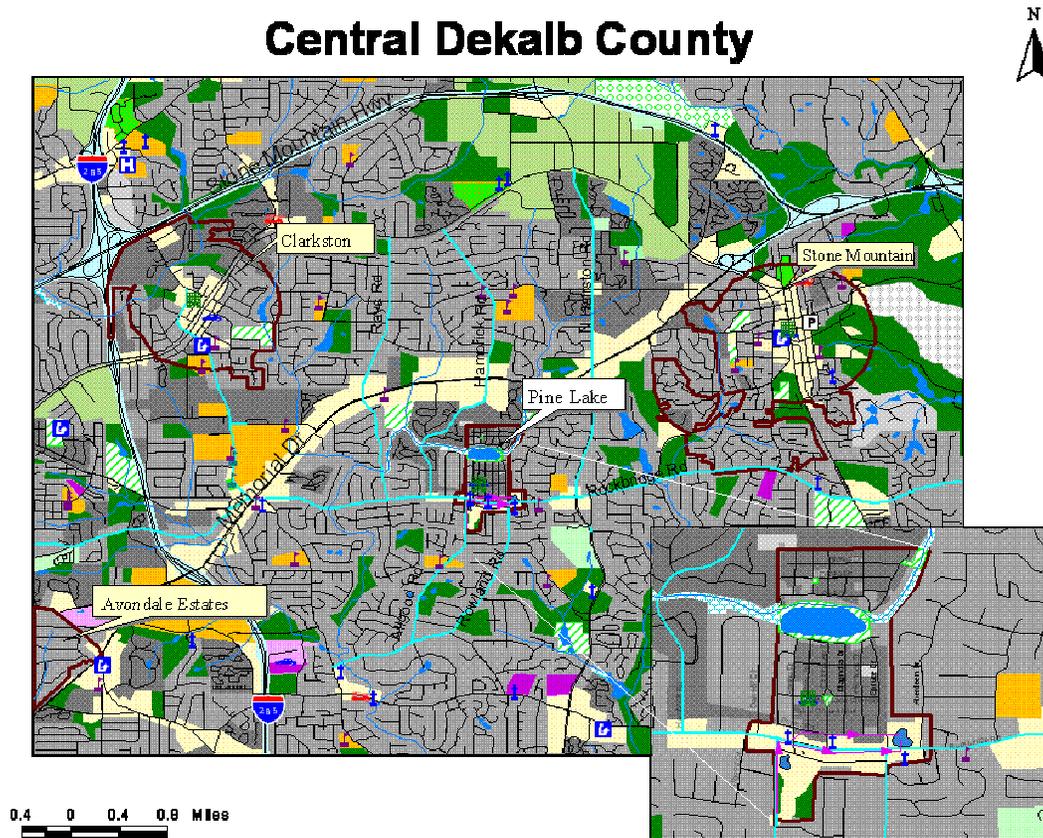
- Enhance economic vitality and diversity;
- Promote effective opportunities for all citizens in Pine Lake and the adjacent communities to have meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect their community;
- Promote desirable land use strategies employing smart growth, context-sensitive traffic design and other techniques;
- Increase accessibility and mobility options to local and regional activity and town centers;
- Increase connectivity utilizing multi-modal transportation modes (e.g. regional bike/pedestrian and transit facilities);
- Plan and develop infrastructure to meet existing and anticipated future growth;
- Establish and preserve open/green space;
- Conserve and manage natural resources including management of storm water;
- Recover, recycle, and reclaim resources;
- Identify, acquire and protect environmentally sensitive lands;
- Conserve cultural heritage, diversity and historic resources;
- Ensure neighborhood safety; and
- Preserve, protect and enhance neighborhood aesthetics and identity.

The current potential for meaningful population growth is dependent primarily on the possibility of annexation. Recently, interest in annexation has increased and the building of new houses on the city's remaining lots continues. A sharp increase in population is highly unlikely before 2008. However, due to the City's small size, these variations could have a significant impact, and comparison to State of Georgia figures or other regional data may be misleading.

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Pine Lake is situated between the cities of Decatur and Stone Mountain. The City is approximately 12 miles east of downtown Atlanta and is 3 miles outside the I-295 Perimeter Highway. The City is 1.1 square miles, situated around an approximately 12-acre man-made lake that was constructed before the City was incorporated in 1937.

Figure 1: Map - Area Map – Pine Lake



The City of Pine Lake is a community of in excess of 850 people. The 2000 Census lists the City as having 621 people; however, due to mail delivery policies in the Pine Lake Post Office, many people did not receive a census packet.

The City of Pine Lake was established as a resort community for Atlanta during the early 1930's, and incorporated on December 27, 1937. At that time, this area of DeKalb County was largely rural and land was sold in lots as small as 20 feet by 100 feet. Many of the lots were used for little more than the placement of tents. The closely placed small cottages that were initially constructed were vacation homes for Atlanta residents who would come out to swim, fish, and socialize. As the area became more suburban after World War II, conventional homes were constructed for full-time use, but Pine Lake maintained a resort character despite the development of larger homes and landscaped lawns. The community is neighborly with significant public green spaces that allow residents to enjoy a walkable community. The Lake is a landmark and focal point for many community events including the annual Octoberlakefest, held each October.

The city's few entrances, the lack of US Postal home delivery service and soliciting limitations have resulted in instances of misinformation that have resulted in significant demographic misrepresentations. One example is with the ARC definition of land use. According to ARC standards, if all factors were correctly identified, Pine Lake should be

categorized as high density, but because of its size and inaccurate reporting of demographic data, Pine Lake is listed as low density on maps and reports.

## **POPULATION**

The population of the City of Pine Lake has remained constant for several years due to the scarcity of undeveloped land. Pine Lake will continue to see only a slight increase in population during the next year or two. As yet, we do not have projections for the number of commercial and residential units to be built in the Rockbridge Road corridor, so we will not provide any data for that expected growth. However, given Pine Lake's current average property density, the annexed properties could add housing for approximately 300 new residents. The city will be developing an overlay district that may allow for other population densities.

With only a slight increase in population expected before 2008, services will only increase to the extent necessary for legal compliance and as the citizen's demand. Long-term effects will be felt as we respond to growth along the business corridor. It is anticipated that the continued renovation of existing properties and new home construction will result in enhanced property values.

People who want affordable, safe housing continue to buy property in the city. These people generally fit into three population groups - young couples who are beginning a family, single professionals and empty nesters. Many in our population, old and new, are artists of various sorts, so the area is gaining a reputation as an artists' community.

Significantly, many of the new residents have expressed a desire to age in their homes. Planning for the long-term goals of this population will include services and policies that support aging in place.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND GOALS**

The current inability to quantify population projections causes no major concerns for the City. New housing will bring new residents, but because there are a limited number of buildable lots available in the current residential district and any development in the annexed properties will phase in over time as a planned development, we will not see a significant spike in population that will stress the city's ability to deliver services to the residents. The City is currently funding several infrastructure enhancements that will only help to improve the level of service already provided to existing residents.

Our police services will continue as before, but will see an increase as our business district grows and activity begins to occur on the annexed properties.

Our goals are to maintain and improve upon public safety, improve environmental quality, enhance property values and establish a business corridor on Rockbridge Road with full accommodation for multi-modal transportations providing connectivity to DeKalb County and regional transportation systems.

The City is in the process of seeking funds to renovate City buildings, improve police services, and enhance recreational opportunities. In preparation for an overlay study for the commercial corridor, the City is conducting a cost/benefit analysis for consolidating all its courts, police, and administrative assets in one building along the commercial corridor. The City has a very active neighborhood association that continually helps to stretch our resources. This association has already painted and renovated two City buildings, repaired a fence in the commercial area, landscaped public areas, contributed to the police department equipment inventory, raised money for the family of a fallen police officer, and many more things than can be listed here.

Our needs and goals are described in context in the following sections:

- Current Conditions
- Potentials for Growth
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Policing
- Stormwater Management
- Educational Facilities
- Intergovernmental Coordination

### **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

This Comprehensive Plan assesses what we have now, what we want and need and how we are going to achieve our goals. The City Council - in conjunction with city committees and neighborhood organizations - have hosted numerous town hall and round table meetings to list those things that our community treasures most as well as identify those things they most desire for the future.

In our 2003 plan we included objectives for business growth because our district is underserved in both commercial business and office space. The current condition is not meeting the needs of the residents in our Rockbridge Road corridor.

Because our business district development will impact the local region and because the county and the region are currently developing several major regional plans – including the DeKalb Comprehensive Traffic Plan and the Memorial Drive Revitalization Project - we want to ensure that our long-range goals complement all regional initiatives.

Pine Lake is a safe community with a lot of park space that has attracted many artists and environmentally sensitive residents. The City has retained a residential village atmosphere and many homes have been renovated in recent years. The population is not expected to grow significantly in the foreseeable future. Most of the City is zoned for residential use only, with a small commercial district along Rockbridge Road at the City's southern border.

The city administration has a clear understanding of its operational costs and its cyclical capital costs. In 2004, the city operated within its means as well as below its budget and managed to increase capitol assets by 84%. The required Municipal Audit for 2004 was accepted without amendment and in 2005 we are informed that Pine Lake may receive a standing of "Excellence in Financial Reporting" from the Department of Audits and Accounts.

We continue to operate within our budget while securing the capitol equipment needed to ensure future operations. The city administration recently optimized its departments by:

- outsourcing appropriate services, e.g. some public works,
- upgrading auditing software for court operations,
- implementing a ticket receipt check-out schedule
- implementing a vehicle fleet check-out procedure
- implementing a maintenance schedule for all city equipment,
- reviewing and requesting competitive bids for contract services, e.g. judge services,
- implementing a code enforcement tracking policy,
- reviewing and replacing staff support services, e.g. payroll, insurance, retirement, and
- retiring the old pension program with a modern, cost-effective solution.

Little more optimization can be achieved as the staff has been decreased to include only a few full time employees and some part time employees must remain to ensure continuity of services in the event of a loss of a key employee.

The city has diversified its revenue streams to include:

- 26% residential property tax (52% in 2001, 38% in 2003)
- 25% local fees and fines (29% in 2001, 19% in 2003)
- 19% grants (5% in 2001, 3% in 2003)
- 9% business related taxes and fees (9% in 2001, 21% in 2003)

- 9% sanitation fees (10% in 2001 and 2003)
- 7.5% franchise fees (5% in 2001 and 2003)
- 5% from all other sources (0% in 2001 and 5% in 2003)

## **POTENTIALS FOR GROWTH**

Until recently, the City has had very little undeveloped land. Recent annexations will have minimal impact on population figures and tax revenues during the next year or two; however, once mixed-use developments currently in a plan review process begin to become available, we anticipate a rapid increase and plateau in our population totals and tax base. Additionally, although we are not courting residential annexation, there have been calls from nearby areas, which have been more susceptible to crime, to be under the protection of the Pine Lake Police.

However, our small size and the currently undefined opportunities for growth make it virtually impossible to assess how the process of growth will affect our material and human resources. Comparisons to other small, localized district are potentially misleading, so none are presented

## **HOUSING**

The city has 317 homes, 145 housing units comprised of apartments and duplexes, and 66 businesses. The City has approximately 70 buildable residential lots left and new home construction is expected to continue at a steady pace. In addition, many of the older homes are being renovated and enlarged. The new and renovated homes have created a noticeable impact, both good and bad, namely:

- increased property values,
- increased tax base,
- increased storm water production,
- increased potential for sewer stress,
- increased road resurfacing needs and
- decreased trees.

Some of the multi-family rental properties in the city have the potential to convert to condominiums to further promote home ownership and community investment

## **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

An investigation in 2003 discovered that the primary source of lake contamination came from Snapfinger Creek, which feeds the lake. Public Works was directed to divert the creek from entering the flume that feeds the lake. The lake has been clean since the diversion, leaving rainfall and natural springs to maintain the lake water levels. Options to secure a permanent solution for the health and optimal functions of this valuable watershed include stopping the source of coliform contamination outside the city, filtration of Snapfinger Creek waters, dredging the lake to increase recharge capabilities, fortifying streambank retention and adding detention ponds along the creeks path.

Pine Lake has been recently recognized as being successful with coordinating development and environmental issues. We are receiving awards for recent

accomplishments and there has been flattering coverage by magazines and newspapers. Additionally, national conferences and symposia have solicited publications, presentations, and lectures. Furthermore, the city is committed to assisting the neighboring communities with their environmental problems and does so by assisting with regional clean ups, by informing neighboring communities about easily accomplished solutions to reduce pollution and how they can access professional services.

The city recently received grants to rehabilitate Snapfinger Creek, an impaired stream under 319, section (h) of the US EPA's clean water act. We have also received US DOT grants to provide trails to access the rehabilitated areas and are seeking grants for educational items along the paths. In 2005, the city received an Urban Forestry Council grant to establish a commercial development ordinance similar to our well-regarded residential ordinance that has resulted in the retention of larger trees.

## **FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Pine Lake has several venues for public and cultural events:

- The Beach House and beach area,
- the Gazebo and park,
- the Club House, and
- the Courthouse.

These facilities are available for rent to the public. Pine Lake residents enjoy a reduced rental rate. City committees and organizations routinely use these facilities for cultural arts events, meetings and other civic purposes. Over the course of the past several years, we have made minor improvements to these facilities with a combination of public and private contributions. All of these facilities need significant renovations.

The Pine Lake city services include:

- Street leaf pickup,
- Maintenance of the parks and lake,
- Maintenance of the city buildings,
- Policing,
- Zoning and local ordinance development,
- Stormwater management,
- Accessible representation,
- Localized assistance for accessing other administrations,
- Ability to bring state tax to the local level,
- Four different trash pick up services:
  - Household waste,
  - Recyclable waste,
  - Yard waste,
  - Construction debris and large appliance waste.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Pine Lake is in the geographic center of DeKalb county, Georgia and is located within one mile of five roads that all have measured traffic counts of over 15,000 cars per day that have direct access to Rockbridge Road. Rockbridge Road is the primary corridor within Pine Lake's incorporated district and handles over 20,000 cars per day (traffic runs primarily west bound in the morning and eastbound in the evening). It is served by MARTA Bus service and is within 2 miles of MARTA rail at the Indian Creek station.

Alteration to Rockbridge Road will be assessed in the context of an overlay district. Starting with the TE sidewalk grants, we will design a context-sensitive traffic district that will allow for two lanes of unobstructed traffic, pedestrian islands and crosswalks, location-specific ingress/egress points and traffic signal improvements. In addition, stormwater from the commercial district will be detained and treated at locations with direct access to the roadway. Pine Lake will also implement traffic-calming infrastructure and utilize this opportunity to create identifiable, aesthetically pleasing gateways at the city boundaries.

Residents have expressed an interest in coordinating our current upstream and downstream improvements to Snapfinger Creek with a hike-and-bike connection with the PATH trail that connects Stone Mountain to downtown Atlanta. Providing connectivity to the existing and any other proposed PATH trails would provide local residents an alternative transportation choice and enhance recreational opportunities.

## **POLICING**

The City of Pine Lake has its own Police Department. At the end of 2005, the Police Department consisted of 16 State Certified Police Officers including 2 full-time, 3 part-time and 11 reserve Officers.

The mission of the Pine Lake Police Department is to provide effective and efficient professional police services, in partnership with the citizens we serve, encouraging mutual respect and innovative problem solving, thereby improving the quality of life in the Pine Lake community

Pine Lake currently does not have round-the-clock police protection, and must rely on DeKalb County to fill the time when Pine Lake officers are not on duty. In the past Pine Lake Police Dept has operated with 2-5 Police Officers and 16 hours of coverage. The Department has responded to recent growth with an increase in both staff and coverage. We have implemented a reserve unit, and now offer 20 hours of Police Coverage each day. A 24-hour police force is a near-term goal.

The city works in cooperation with the county on police services. The DeKalb Sheriff's office also performs other functions, such as serving arrest warrants and civil papers. DeKalb also provides jail services and animal control services. No problems are anticipated with this arrangement. The City/County agreement is documented in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy Act.

## **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

Pine Lake established a Municipal Stormwater Authority in 2005. The City adopted all required municipal ordinances. The City has chosen to develop stormwater policies based upon both the empirical standards as defined by the guideline in the Georgia Stormwater Handbook and bio-retention practices that directly affect water quality and treatment.

Pine Lake has invested heavily in environmental restoration. Approximately 25% of the budget is earmarked to environmental issues that are affected by stormwater. In 2003, we initiated a stormwater utility. We developed an asset inventory with a geographically related database, established a property-based fee-for service schedule, established a needs list, and developed three watershed protection policies.

Pine Lake's Stormwater Utility has a mission to improve the environment. This mission is met by three main goals: prevention, maintenance, and improvement. Prevention was established by enacting ordinances that prevent new developments from adversely impacting the quality or quantity of water. Maintenance includes an inventory and assessment of all stormwater assets and developing a schedule to ensure effective use of the current system and providing for small structural improvements before any of the existing structure is taken off line. Improvements include structural improvements as well as the development of an overall stormwater management plan. The current and future assets that will be needed to meet the anticipated built-out expanse of the city will require improvement on an ongoing basis as well as the need to retrofit those areas that were developed without consideration for run off.

Planning for all improvements is linked with the fee schedules that include:

- General fee schedules for single family residences;
- Impervious surface based fee schedules for commercial or multi-family residential;
- Fractional development credits for developers who contribute to a regional detention feature instead of a property specific detention feature.

Current examples of retrofitting improvements include:

- The development of small regional detention ponds in areas that receives repeated flooding due to unplanned infill;
- The development of water quality features that contribute to regional detention features specific to property owners who pave property and have little property left for detention;
- The development of a wetlands plan for regional water quality improvements.

The final program includes the development of law enforcement procedures to be coordinated jointly by Pine Lake Stormwater Utility, Pine Lake PD, GA EPD, and DeKalb County Stormwater Utility. The city has submitted all appropriate ordinances to the GA EPD and is in compliance with their NPDES permit.

The utility program received recognition from the National Science Foundation and the Georgia Water Pollution and Control Association (GAWP&CA). In 2004, we began a

maintenance schedule and a long and a short-term restoration plan with the placement of a few enhanced natural water detention features. In that year, the city administration received utility management education and developed friendships with experts at the US Army Corps of Engineers, GA Department of Community Affairs (DCA), GA Environmental Protection Division (EPD), GAWP&CA, DeKalb County, Snapfinger Watershed Alliance, GA Soil Erosion Prevention Program (SEPP) and others. Also in 2004, Pine Lake began purchased properties upstream and downstream for our watershed assets, and developed a watershed rehabilitation program. Work completed in the past several years has resulted in dramatic increases in water quality and a decrease in peak flows. Pine Lake, supported with a 319h grant, is engineering infrastructure improvements to Snapfinger Creek. The program helped Pine Lake become recognized as a GA DCA “Waterfirst Community” and we subsequently received the GAWP&CA “Water Utility of the Year.”

## **EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

The City currently offers no schools of any kind and children who do not participate in home schooling or private school attend DeKalb County schools. Recently, however, the community has expressed concern with the local education options. Many young couples have moved into Pine Lake since the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and they now have young children. As a result of this new need, the mayor became involved in supporting a county charter school that provides an international baccalaureate education and encourages diversity and encouraging community to seek “the dream” of the “beloved community.” He is now a board director leading the efforts to find permanent facilities. The school has successfully operated 3.5 years in rented facilities and now provides grades K-6 - including several students from Pine Lake. The student base includes refugee and American children and focuses on languages and cultures. It successfully meets Georgia requirements as well as International requirements.

Pine Lake is prepared to pursue a goal to coordinate an international development with the school so that the businesses can help pay for the property for the school. Several candidate sites are being reviewed. One site also would provide greenspace for the children and also coordinate with current stormwater infrastructure development plans to provide a regional detention of stormwater, thus contributing to plans for improving one of DeKalb County’s impaired watersheds.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Pine Lake has not yet made adequate use of the numerous county and regional economic development agencies and resources that are available to the city. However, we have been doing well coordinating our stormwater efforts with the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the United States Environmental Agency - Water quality Division, the Army Corps of Engineers and DeKalb County Stormwater Utility. In addition, we are working effectively with GDOT and Pine Lake is an active participant in the DeKalb Municipal Association.

We are actively seeking any and all avenues of communication and relationship with state, regional and county agencies.



Figure 3: Map - Current Borders of Pine Lake After Annexations - 2006

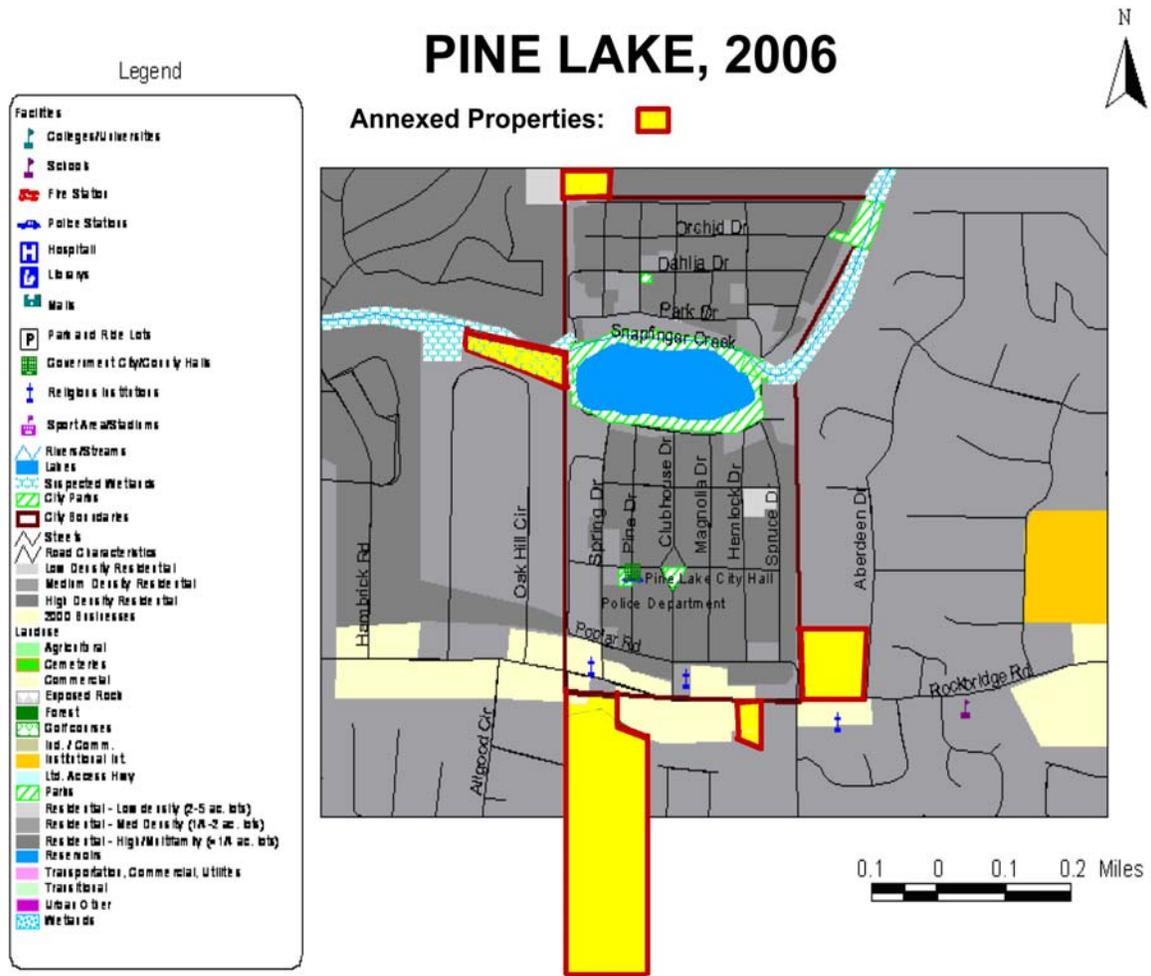
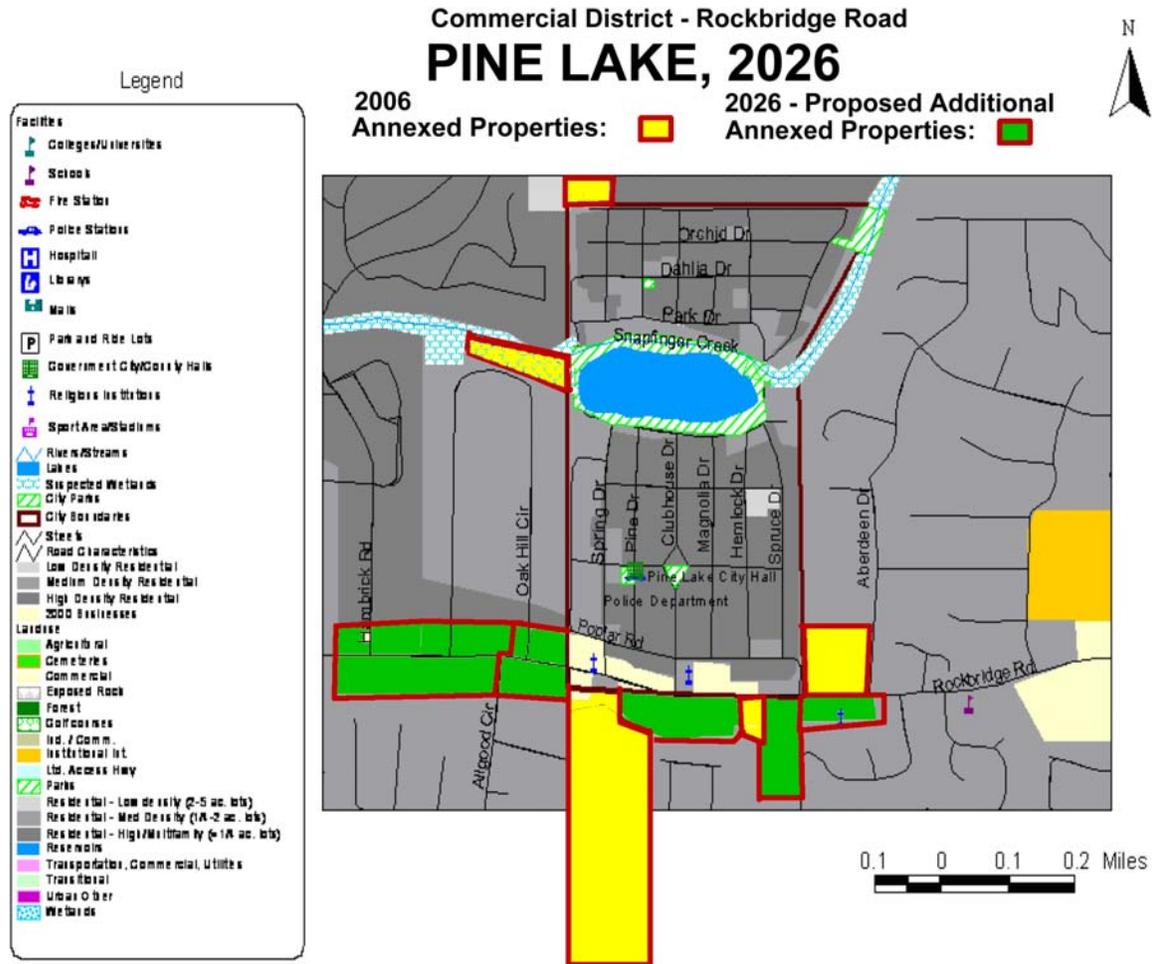


Figure 4: Map - Proposed Borders of Pine, Commercial District – 2026



The city has instituted – and is instituting – bio-retention stormwater policies for residential and commercial districts, mixed-use zoning and shared parking commercial zones intended to retain and pre-treat storm water, retain and replace trees, and to seek ways to interconnect green spaces, parking areas and walking trails with neighboring properties.

The city is reviewing all planned development to best utilize the available localized depressions as lakes and water features in the annexed properties in the business district. While specific development plans are not yet available, the intent is that the district surrounding the lakes will allow a specific drainage system to divert the water into the lakes for pretreatment. The pre-treated water would be discharged into swales and pipes through the residential section and then into the primary watershed collector at Snapfinger Creek.

The lakes can become the cornerstone features for the business district around which more businesses and residences will locate. We have also received commitments from the Department of Community Affairs, the Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia

Department of Transportation, and Departments with DeKalb County. We also have received commitments from a few property owners and potential developers.

There are, at a minimum, six distinct needs to ensure that the business lakes are feasible. The steps needed for optimal design of the business district include:

1. Acceptance of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Cooperation with DeKalb county leadership.
3. Continued meetings with neighboring property owners.
4. Grants and other assistance from regional authorities, e.g. LCI for the business district.
5. Continued and persistent commitment on the part of Pine Lake to require developers to include the lakes for stormwater management and attractive commercial district greenspace.
6. Continued success in partnering with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

## RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS

Character areas are currently being developed in conjunction with the city efforts to unify the commercial district, consolidate our watershed management goals and establish an overlay district to coordinate future development.

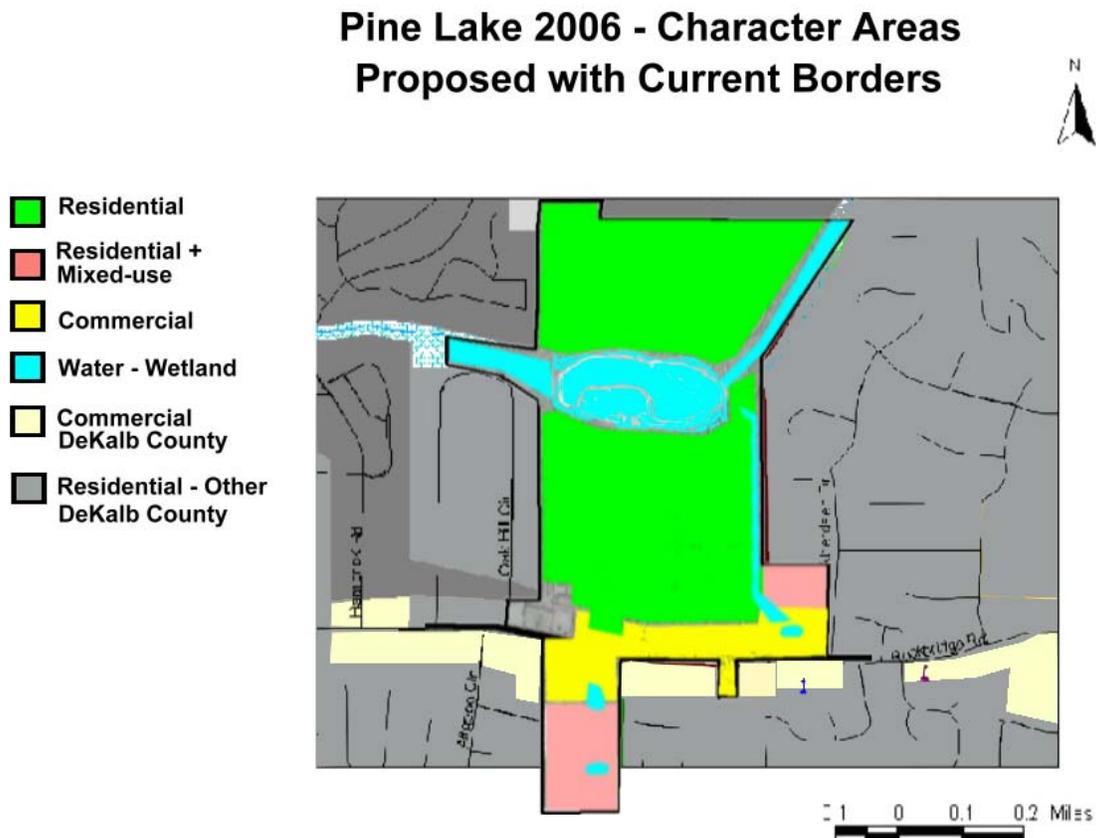
Residential – The residential district will not change and no significant changes are anticipated.

Residential + Mixed-Use – A mix of traditional residential housing and conventional mixed-use development is projected for these properties.

Commercial – The Rockbridge Road district does not have a cohesive character. There are numerous vacant buildings and underutilized properties in this corridor. Additionally the mix of uses does not promote business vitality. However, this area provides a great opportunity for the development of village center with commercial establishments,

Water-Wetland – These areas include our current district and proposed areas. The proposed added areas will be defined during the plan review process for development and through engineering studies conducted with state and federal agencies.

Figure 5: Map - Character Areas in Current Borders

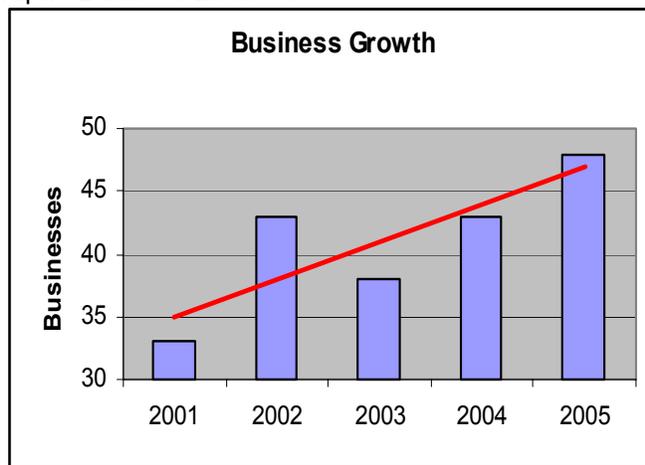


## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Pine Lake recently enacted a Downtown Development Authority. Plans and goals are currently being developed to allow Pine Lake developers and businesses to take advantage of the programs and opportunities available. Additionally, the DDA seeks to take every available opportunity to increase city revenues in order to provide better services to the community.

The City is actively encouraging business development. We are currently annexing properties in our business corridor consistent with the aspirations described in our earlier Comprehensive Plan. Pine Lake recently authorized a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to manage the planning and development in this district. The Community Development Committee, prior to the DDA, managed oversight of business infill prior to annexation. Business growth for these years is illustrated by the number of business licenses.

Figure 6: Graph - Business Licenses



Over the course of the past 2 years, Pine Lake has been awarded Traffic Enhancement grants to engineer and construct sidewalks on both the north and south sides of Rockbridge Road. We are designing to meet the needs of a developing commercial district and engineering to address stormwater and related infrastructure requirements.

The Downtown Development Authority, in cooperative effort with the city government and committees, will undertake to involve the current business community, recruit new retail and assist in the associated coordination of commercial development, work with Pine Lake residents and the surrounding communities to identify community visions for office, professional and retail space, and create an overlay development plan to guide a phased development process. To this end, we are currently exploring an opportunity to create an artist's district in the residential area that will have a retail and performance venue in the business district. The intent is to utilize art and an environment that supports artists in order to produce an invitingly diverse and unique renaissance in the local area.

Pine Lake desires to improve access to public transportation, establish opportunities for local employment, and create pedestrian-friendly commercial village accessible from the residential district in and around Pine Lake. Neighboring residents desire uninterrupted

vehicular travel through the business district and better access to ingress and egress to the businesses. In the process of designing the sidewalks and configuring right-of-ways along the Rockbridge Road corridor, we will work with context-sensitive road design principles to assure pedestrian safety, the uninterrupted flow of pass-through traffic, and logical ingress/egress for vehicles accessing the commercial district.

## **ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES**

### **DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

#### **TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.

Yes, our zoning does not adequately address the needs of the various districts. We are currently reviewing all the special-needs districts in Pine Lake and will be rezoning areas appropriately on a case-by-case basis.

2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.

No. Our plan review, permitting and variance procedures are currently under review.

3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to our climate.

A conditional yes. We have a bio-retention requirement for construction and development that requires tree-saving and the planting of new trees.

4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.

Yes. The Pine Lake Environmental and Stewardship Committee is heavily involved in the health and development of the city’s tree canopy.

5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.

Yes. Public Works cleans and maintains these areas on a daily basis.

6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.

Yes. Pine Lake’s residential district is very walkable. The commercial district is currently very dangerous for pedestrians. We are working on Traffic Enhancement grants for sidewalks and related features in those areas.

7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.

No. Pine Lake is underserved in the commercial district. Events in the city are easily accessible by pedestrians.

8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.

No statistics are available for this query. Only one elementary school is within a safe walkable distance from Pine Lake.

9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.

No statistics are available for this query. Only one elementary school is within a safe walkable distance from Pine Lake.

10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.

Yes. Two elementary schools are nearby, although only one is within walking distance. A middle school is approximately one mile from Pine Lake

### **INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.

Yes. We currently have approximately 70 home site locations. Currently, including recent annexations, we have approximately 25 acres of undeveloped land suitable for single-family-housing, mixed-use and commercial development – primarily located in, or adjacent to, the commercial district.

2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.

Not currently applicable. We anticipate site reviews in several locations.

3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.

Not currently applicable. We anticipate site reviews in several locations.

4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).

Not currently applicable. We are currently developing an overlay district plan to address land use and zoning, road design and traffic control, and stormwater management.

5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.

Our current minimum lot size for residential development is 6,000 square feet.

### **SENSE OF PLACE**

1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.

Our residential district has a distinct look and feel. We are taking all possible measures to maintain and enhance all sustainable features.

2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.

We have taken aggressive actions to protect and secure the health of our lake, the watershed surrounding our city and our parkland. We

3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.

We have ordinances designed to provide guidance to developers during the permitting phase and promote the saving of trees.

4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.

We have a commercial sign ordinance modeled from features in the DCA model ordinance and the DeKalb County statute.

5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.

A guidebook and Architectural Review Board are currently in development.

6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.

Not applicable.

## **TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES**

1. We have public transportation in our community.

MARTA bus runs down Rockbridge Road and travels to the Kensington rail station. Pine Lake is closer to the Indian Creek station.

2. We require that new development connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.

Not applicable.

3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.

We do not have sidewalks in our residential district. Despite that, our residential district is very pedestrian friendly. We do not have sidewalks in our commercial district and that area is very dangerous for pedestrians. We have secured grants to construct sidewalks along the length of that district.

4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.

Not applicable.

5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.

Not applicable.

6 We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.

Not currently applicable. We anticipate substantive planning for multi-modal transportation from our commercial district and watershed to begin before 2007.

7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.

Not currently applicable. We are incorporating all opportunities for shared parking in our overlay planning.

## **REGIONAL IDENTITY**

1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.

No. Pine Lake is a unique district with a distinct look and feel and a unique history.

2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.

Not applicable.

3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).

Not currently applicable. We are exploring opportunities to incorporate businesses that will reflect our local populations and histories.

4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.

Not currently applicable.

5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.

Not currently applicable.

6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.

Yes. Pine Lake is an active arts venue. Pine Lake committees, organizations and individuals hold many successful events primarily featuring local artists and friends of local artists. We support a wide range of art related events including concerts, visual arts exhibitions, an annual Octoberlakefest, movies on the beach and arts education programs.

## **RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

### **HERITAGE PRESERVATION**

1. We have designated historic districts in our community.

Not currently applicable.

2. We have an active historic preservation commission.

Not currently applicable.

3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.

Not currently applicable.

### **OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION**

1. Our community has a greenspace plan.

Yes. We have an award winning WaterFirst Plan. We have acquired greenspace through purchase and annexation. We are actively pursuing and working on grants to secure those areas as healthy greenspace.

2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.

In addition to acquiring sustainable greenspace, we have a modified conservation subdivision ordinance intended to establish a series of small greenspaces throughout the residential district.

3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.

Not currently applicable.

4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.

The ordinance has not yet been used.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.

Yes.

2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.

Not currently applicable.

3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.

Yes. We are actively working to ensure the long-term health of our lake and local watershed.

4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.

Yes. We have passed all necessary ordinances, are reviewing additional recommended ordinances and are reviewing modifications to better fit our local conditions. We actively enforce these ordinances.

5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance that is actively enforced.

We have a residential development/redevelopment ordinance with a bio-retention standard that requires the saving and/or planting of trees.

6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.

In addition to the residential ordinance, we are developing language and procedures for a commercial ordinance that will actively incorporate similar bio-retention characteristics.

7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.

Yes.

8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).

Yes.

## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **GROWTH PREPAREDNESS**

1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.

Not currently applicable.

2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.

Not currently applicable.

3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.

Yes. All elected officials have received all required state training, are long time residents of the community and have participated in zoning hearings.

4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.

We are currently reviewing our development regulations and zoning codes.

5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.

Not currently applicable. We have a recently enacted Downtown Development Authority to help enable our ability to engage in these types of programs.

6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.

Yes.

7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.

Our guidelines are currently under development.

8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.

Yes. We have quarterly Town Hall meetings to educate and engage our residents on the topics of development, greenspace and our watershed district.

9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.

Yes. We have several websites devoted to public information on a variety of topics – including land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development. Our community newsletter has current information on these subjects on a monthly basis. We place signs at regular, prominent and all required locations to alert residents to any and all important events.

10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.

Yes. We have a series of scheduled meetings and will use all currently available public information resources. In addition, we will extend invitations to all meetings regarding the commercial district to residents and business owners in our adjacent districts.

## **APPROPRIATE BUSINESSES**

1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.

Our guidelines are currently under development.

2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.

Our guidelines are currently under development.

3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.

Our guidelines are currently under development.

4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.

Not applicable.

## **EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS**

1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.

Not currently applicable. Our guidelines are currently under development.

2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.

Not currently applicable.

3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.

Not currently applicable.

4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.

Not currently applicable.

## **HOUSING CHOICES**

1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.

Our guidelines are currently under review and development.

2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.

Yes. Pine Lake – and the surrounding area – has a strong mixed-income population and appropriate affordable housing for the different groups.

3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).

Yes. In addition, we desire to encourage development patterns that will retain current housing and create new housing for a broad range of income levels.

4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.

Our guidelines are currently under review and development.

5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neotraditional” development.

Our guidelines are currently under review and development.

6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.

Not applicable..

7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.

Our guidelines are currently under review and development.

8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.

Our guidelines are currently under review and development.

9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.

Our guidelines are currently under review and development.

10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.

No. Our minimum house size is 1,250 square feet and the lot size is 6,000 square feet.

## **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Our community provides workforce-training options for its citizens.

Not applicable.

2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.

Not applicable.

3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.

We are located less than two miles from Georgia Perimeter College and the DeKalb Technical College. Both schools are located on North Indian Creek Drive in unincorporated DeKalb County.

4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.

Not currently applicable.

## **GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

### **REGIONAL SOLUTIONS**

1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.

Yes. Pine Lake is in the process of establishing these relationships. The City of Pine Lake recently set up a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and will soon coordinate with the DCA's Office of Downtown Development (ODD) Main Street Program and associated agencies. Pine Lake is an active member of the DeKalb Municipal Association (DMA) in order to share ideas with Stone Mountain, Clarkston, Avondale Estates, Decatur and the other local jurisdictions. We are actively building substantive relationships between our communities and investigating ways to optimize economic resources. Starting in 2006, Pine Lake is working with the DeKalb County Economic Development Department to participate jointly in the Community Development Block Grant program.

2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.

The City of Pine Lake has developed a good working relationship with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In November of 2005, The City submitted its first Stormwater Management Plan. This plan was accepted and approved by the EPD in December of 2005. We have adopted the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's (MNGWPD) model stormwater management ordinances. We have also received a Clean Act of 1972, 319h grant in the amount of \$217,000 to clean up the pollution in our neighborhood stream, Snapfinger Creek.

During the execution of our grant project, we will be working closely with the EPD, the Army Corp of Engineers and Manhard Consulting, a private engineering firm who also works with DeKalb County. We hope to work jointly with DeKalb County and Manhard Consulting to reduce the Total Maximum Daily Loads of pollution and the excessive flood surge that comes down Snapfinger Creek after significant rain events. We also participate in the Department of Community Affairs "WaterFirst" program.

3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.

The City of Pine Lake, through the DMA, meets monthly with the other cities in DeKalb County. We share ideas on a variety of mutual interests - how to get MARTA to install a loop route to run between each of the DeKalb Cities, how to afford and share libraries, ways to assess our communities strengths and weaknesses, how to be attractive to, and welcome, visitors, and many more.

The City of Pine Lake, and Mayor Greg Zarus, is in negotiations with the DeKalb Board of Education to bring an International Charter School to Pine Lake. The ICS would also benefit Clarkston and Stone Mountain. We have met with representatives from Georgia Perimeter College to see how we could make the Pine Lake/GPC area more connective and attractive to foreign college students.

4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.

Pine Lake recognizes that to flourish and be a viable long-term community, we must form links with neighboring communities. We are especially interested in developing strategies to coordinate the traffic on Rockbridge Road – 22,000 daily commuters – with the needs and aspirations of the people who live in and near Pine Lake. We are investigating ways to conduct a traffic study that will enable us to custom build our business district to be an attractive destination that will reduce the trip frequency and trip distances of commuters and nearby residents.

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION**

1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.

Yes. We are actively working with DeKalb County and the DeKalb municipal governments on a Service Delivery Strategy. In addition, we have both formal and informal arrangements with other local and regional planning professionals.

2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.

We are partially satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy. The quality of the services delivered is, for the most part, very good. The basis for calculating the cost of the services is confusing and seems to have no discernible basis for negotiation. Special Tax District legislation has separated the issues of services delivered from the cost of these services.

One source of confusion stems from the fact that a few services are redundancies provided both by the County and the Cities of DeKalb. Municipal taxpayers pay for both services. This issue regarding “double taxation” has a long history and affects all the Cities in DeKalb County. Legislation to resolve this matter has been introduced in the State General Assembly.

3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region wide strategies.

Yes, we communicate with our neighboring communities when a problem surfaces, work through a problem solving process and mutually develop potential solutions. We routinely share our work with all parties who could potentially benefit from these efforts.

4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.

Yes. We meet regularly at organized events. Pine Lake officials routinely contact officials in local, regional and state offices on matters affecting Pine Lake and the region at large.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

During the next ten years, managed development in the commercial district and our ongoing effort to optimize the services delivered to residents should keep this a peaceful and quaint community for years to come.

At the same time, we anticipate that during this ten-year plus period the city will face the challenges of growth so many other local communities have dealt with as we add staff, administrative functions, increase our service and public works capacities, and alter our city governance to deal appropriately with the needs of our citizens, employees and business community.

Pine Lake is committed to preserving and enhancing the traditional character of the community. Our goal is to preserve and revitalize historic areas, encourage new development that is compatible with the community, and protect the scenic and natural features that define this community's character.

Pine Lake does not currently have a traditional downtown area. We recognize the value and necessity of a downtown district as a focal point for the community. Our efforts are to develop an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly place where our residents and neighboring communities can gather for shopping, dining, socializing and entertainment. The city, through the DDA, will work with the Department of Community Affairs Office of Downtown Development to establish an effective program for Rockbridge Road.

Pine Lake firmly believes that cooperation with local, regional and federal agencies should be tantamount when setting priorities, identifying common needs, and seeking out collaborative solutions. In general, we are committed to making sure that all stakeholder parties are on board with planning and implementation, as we believe this is critical to the success of our venture.

Pine Lake is an active participant in a variety of regional forums and works with other local governments to achieve regional objectives. We work with a variety of regional authorities, association and DeKalb County to identify and support shared solutions to regional issues.