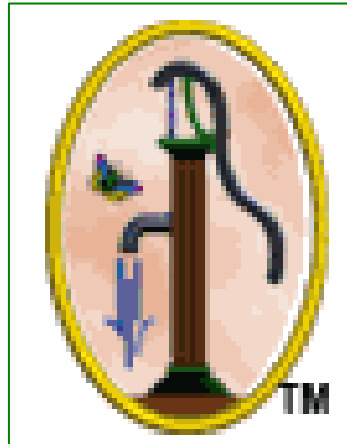


City of Powder Springs Community Assessment



Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 - 2025





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Introduction

The Community Assessment is the first phase in Powder Springs' 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update. The comprehensive plan is a statement of the city's long-range (twenty-year) vision for development (and redevelopment). By addressing the entire physical environment of the city and the multitude of functions, policies, and programs that comprise the day to day workings of the city, the plan seeks to guide the what, when, where, why and how of future physical changes to the city's landscape.

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to provide a guide for local government officials and other community leaders making everyday decisions, which are supportive of the community's stated vision for its future. The plan should serve as the local government's guide for assessing development proposals, including rezoning applications and redevelopment plans. For residents, business owners and members of the development community, the plan provides insight into what types of land uses and development are appropriate at various locations throughout the municipality. Finally, by evaluating various city functions and services, the plan is a point of reference for city staff in preparing capital improvement programs and associated budgets.

The city's Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1996 and has been subsequently amended at various times. The most recent update was completed in May 2004 and included an updated Short Term Work Program. In addition to its comprehensive planning efforts, the city also participated in the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study process. The Town Center Planning Study LCI was completed in 2002. This plan addressed the city's desire to revitalize its core and create a vibrant town center with a mixed-use atmosphere and quality aesthetic environment.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) oversees and provides guidance for local comprehensive planning in Georgia. The department's Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, as updated in May 2005, outline three key components of a comprehensive plan: the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan and Community Agenda.

This "Assessment" document is the foundation from which the community's vision and strategies for implementing the vision over time will be developed during subsequent planning phases. This document is an objective summary of the city's current conditions based upon an extensive review of the city's current demographic and economic environment, land use patterns, infrastructure conditions and policies.

As required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Rules for Local Planning, this assessment was prepared without direct public participation. This document, along with the Community Participation Plan (CPP) will be submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission and Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review following a public hearing and "resolution to submit" voted upon by Powder Springs' Mayor and City Council. Following the ARC and DCA's review and acceptance of the Assessment and CPP, development of the Community Agenda will commence. This will be accompanied by extensive opportunities for the Powder Springs community to provide input into the plan. The Community Agenda is the most important component of the comprehensive plan, as it includes the statement of the community's vision, the issues and opportunities that will be addressed during the twenty-year time period of the plan, and the strategy for achieving the vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities.

The city's complete Comprehensive Plan Update will be submitted to the ARC and DCA in December 2006, well ahead of the city's deadline for adopting the plan on June 30, 2007, to provide ample time for review.

The Community Assessment has four key sections:

- ❑ Issues and Opportunities
- ❑ Analysis of Existing Development Patterns and Areas Requiring Special Attention
- ❑ Identification of Character Areas within the City
- ❑ Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

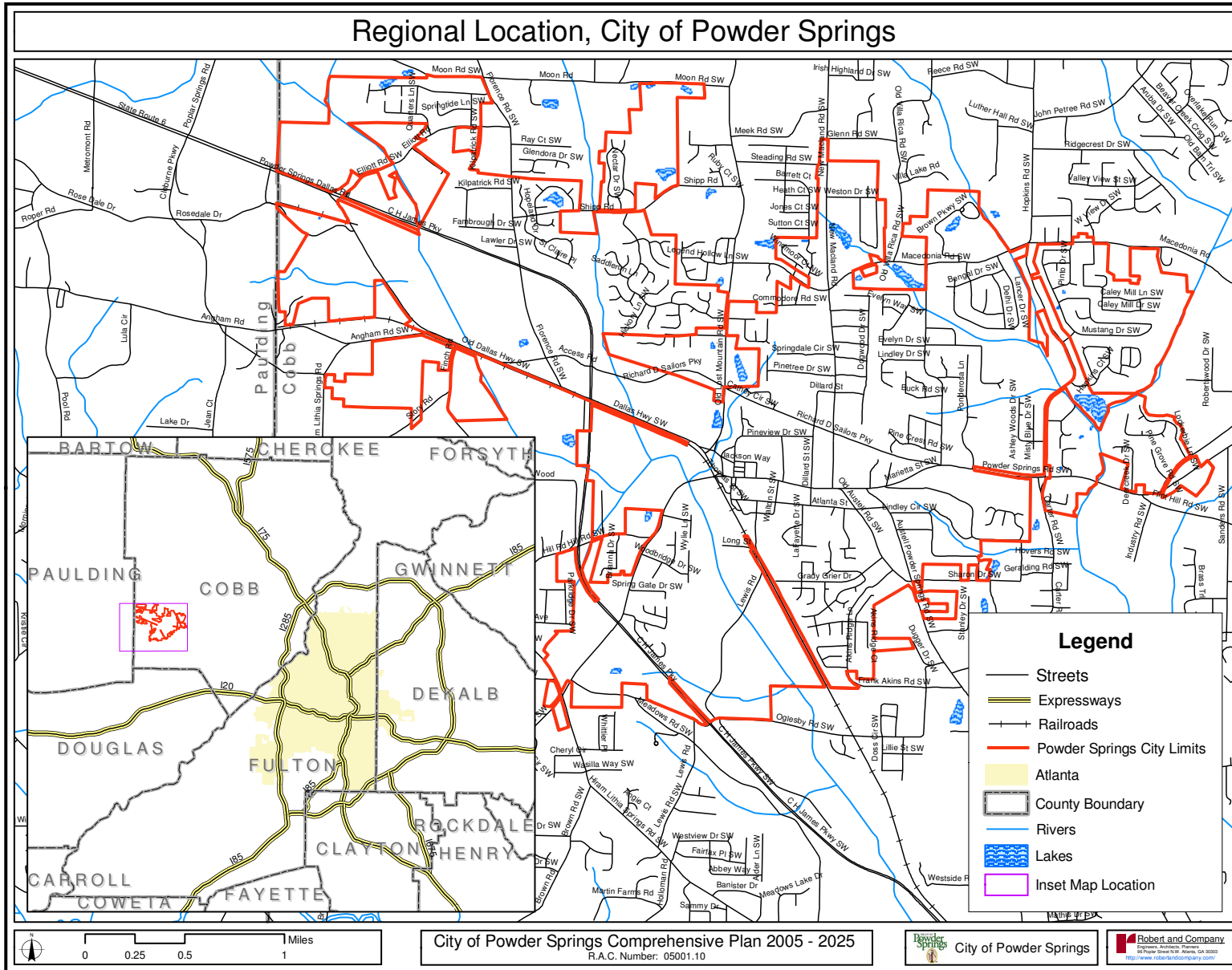
The document is presented in an "executive summary" format to be attractive and accessible to all community members and serve as a quick reference for city officials and staff. The majority of the findings included in this report are supported by extensive data and analysis provided in the attached Technical Addendum.

Community Profile

The City of Powder Springs is located in southwest Cobb County and is a member of the ten-county Atlanta Regional Commission. The city is located approximately twenty-two miles west of Atlanta and approximately twelve miles southwest of Marietta, the county seat (Figure 1). Powder Springs encompasses approximately 4580 acres (approximately 7 square miles). The city's 2000 population of 12,481 as reported by the U.S. Census ranks it fifth amongst Cobb County's six municipalities. The 2005 Census Bureau estimate for the city's population shows an increase to 14,507.



Figure 1: Location of Powder Springs, GA



Issues and Opportunities

In order to be effective, the comprehensive plan must identify and provide workable strategies for addressing the issues and opportunities facing the community. The technical addendum of this document was the first step taken towards identifying the issues and opportunities facing Powder Springs. The data and current conditions detailed in the addendum are summarized in this section into a series of succinct issue and opportunity statements. The list provided here is only a potential list of the issues that may warrant further study during the planning process. It is anticipated that the list will be modified and revised through the public participation sessions, which will occur during subsequent planning phases. A final, locally agreed upon list of issues and opportunities the city intends to address during the 2005 – 2025 planning period will be included in the Community Agenda produced at the conclusion of the planning process.

The following issues and opportunities list is organized according to various areas or “elements” identified within the comprehensive plan: population, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, land use and intergovernmental coordination. Transportation, another element of comprehensive planning, will be addressed through the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) being developed by Cobb County and its municipalities. The major trends related to each element are listed followed by the issues and opportunities resulting from the trends.

The statements included here will be discussed at length with a citizen steering committee formed to guide the development of the Community Agenda. These statements will also be provided for public feedback during the community participation phase of the planning process. Through these discussions and public response, a series of strategies and implementation programs will be developed to address the final list of issues and opportunities included in the plan. These strategies and implementation programs will also form the Short Term Work Program component of the plan.

Preliminary List of Issues and Opportunities Facing Powder Springs

Population

Trend: The city's population has increased significantly and is anticipated to continue growing at a rapid rate. Like most areas of the region, the city's population is aging. However, projections show that the city will continue to have a large population of young families throughout the planning period.

Issues:

- ❑ The growing population will necessitate additional housing, which can lead to development pressure.
- ❑ Family households and corresponding single-family housing development are among the most costly development types for the city in terms of requirements for infrastructure and services.
- ❑ The needs and desires of young family and older "empty-nester" households vary and may compete for resources in city budgets and among city programs.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The city can proactively manage development pressures through thoughtful planning. Recent planning efforts such as the development of the Unified Development Code and the 2002 LCI study are examples of proactive planning.
- ❑ The city may be able to implement an impact fee program, which could be used to offset some of the costs to the city associated with development.
- ❑ The growth of households headed by seniors and "empty-nesters" may create a market for housing alternatives to the single-family subdivisions that are currently the dominant land use in the city.

Housing

Trend: Housing development is focused on typical suburban subdivisions consisting of single-family detached units.

Issues:

- ❑ There are not many neighborhoods with a mix of housing types in the City.
- ❑ The City of Powder Springs' median household income is markedly higher than the national and regional medians, but the average home value is lower than the national and regional values. Additionally, there are few up-scale developments within the City.
- ❑ Most neighborhoods in the city lack a healthy mix of uses, like corner groceries, barbershops, or drugstores within easy walking distance of residences.
- ❑ Continued residential development, similar to existing types of development, will continue to burden the infrastructure of local schools.
- ❑ Single-family residential developments continue to outpace commercial, retail, office and industrial growth.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The city's unified development code provides provisions for mixed-use development in which a wide variety of housing types and additional uses are permitted. The city should continue to work with developers of mixed-use projects to include a substantial diversity of uses in their projects.
- ❑ The city could benefit from additional upscale housing not currently available. The downtown area market study could be used as support to attract developers to build upscale, mixed-use developments. Establishing parity between price points and costs to service would help the city to continue providing services that could be jeopardized by future residential development.
- ❑ Population projections show that the percentage of older "empty-nester" households in the city will continue to grow, providing the opportunity to develop alternative housing types, to include a mix of uses serving the needs of this growing population. Population projections also present an opportunity to review

& revise the future land use map to permit a variety of retail/commercial/office activities adjacent to residential areas.

- ❑ Consideration of school district boundaries and future location of schools when planning for residential development would help to better balance social and economic diversity.
- ❑ Establishing parity between residential development and commercial, retail, office and industrial development would help to ensure a jobs/housing balance.

Trend: The city has a high rate of home ownership

Issue:

- ❑ Although home-ownership rates are high and cost burdened households are low, there is evidence of overcrowding in a small percentage of the existing rental units within the city.

Opportunity:

Establishing an affordable housing strategy such as specified percentage goals for permanently affordable units in new residential developments could help lessen some overcrowding. Affordable housing may be provided as a component of larger upscale housing developments, provided that reduced rate units are designed in a manner compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Economic Development

Trend: The city's residential growth continues to outpace growth in commercial and service sector employment opportunities.

Issues:

- ❑ There is an imbalance between available jobs and the education and training of the resident workforce.
- ❑ There is a lack of office/professional employment opportunities in the city.
- ❑ Industrial and office growth have not kept pace with residential development; these uses are necessary to provide a balanced tax base.

Opportunity:

- ❑ A quantitative and qualitative workforce to jobs ratio standard could be established to help manage future commercial/retail/office development in comparison to residential development. Establishing a jobs/housing standard could help to provide guidance in planning for future residential and business developments.
- ❑ The addition of economic development staff within the Community Development Department at the City of Powder Springs may be able to coordinate workforce development programs of job training providers with the needs of employers and job seekers and promote the role of businesses in workforce development programs.
- ❑ Developing a business park could also attract higher skilled job opportunities within the City.
- ❑ Town center redevelopment plans may facilitate new office/professional development within Downtown Powder Springs.
- ❑ The city has conducted a number of planning studies to help devise strategies for attracting additional types of businesses and industries to Powder Springs. A series of incentives for attracting new development could be packaged for use by developers.

Trend: The city's downtown activity center / town center area is not currently the focal point of activity in the community.

Issue:

- ❑ The city does not have an active business recruitment and retention program, specifically one targeted at the town center area.
- ❑ Local streets in the downtown area are in need of improvements and lack adequate parking space and pedestrian friendly amenities.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The skills and occupations of the city's residents provide the opportunity for the development of small businesses within the community, many of which could fill empty space in the downtown area. The City's economic development office and the local business groups or organizations could assist each other in attracting new businesses that complement existing businesses so as to continually improve the vitality of downtown Powder Springs. Future mixed-use developments would create a larger population base and provide for greater diversity among the types of businesses in the downtown area.
- ❑ Economic development staff within the Community Development Department could develop a resource awareness center to effectively market downtown Powder Springs as "the" destination for small business
- ❑ The city has recently completed streetscape improvements on the main corridor through downtown to make the area safer more inviting to pedestrians. Additional transportation, streetscape and parking improvements throughout the area could help establish the town center areas a focal point of activity.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Trend: The city has established a strong reputation for providing excellent access to natural resources (for active and passive recreation).

Issues:

- ❑ Continued public education is necessary to protect the city's natural resources. Education is specifically valuable in the areas of wetlands and floodplain protection, storm water management, and erosion and sedimentation control.
- ❑ Much of the once rural land within and on the fringe of the city is disappearing.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The city should continue its strong commitment to green-space preservation through the implementation of its conservation subdivision/open space development ordinance adopted in 2002 and strengthened in 2005. Continued development of recreational trails and passive park areas should be pursued.
- ❑ Efforts should be made to ensure that scenic view-sheds are preserved and problems that may arise from higher density development abutting rural areas are mitigated.

Trend: The city has shown a commitment to preserving its cultural resources through regulation and improvement projects.

Issues:

- ❑ To the extent feasible, efforts should be made to preserve historic resources.
- ❑ Additional support and efforts are needed to realize the city's goal of revitalizing the downtown core.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The streetscape improvements to Marietta Street provide safer pedestrian access and enhanced aesthetics to this major corridor in the city's historic core. These improvements should encourage the redevelopment of private properties in the area. Local business groups, the Downtown Development Association, and the South Cobb Chamber of Commerce could be major participants in retaining and attracting new developments and businesses needed to preserve the city's historic central business district.
- ❑ Future planning efforts could be focused on transportation enhancements throughout the downtown corridor. Enhancements could include improved street and sidewalk connectivity, allocation of additional parking areas, additional street trees, lighting and other landscape improvements compatible with the area's historic character. The city has also adopted policies requiring development in the city's downtown district to conform to design guidelines to help preserve the unique characteristics of the area.

Community Facilities & Services

Trend: Continued growth in the community has resulted in an increased need for infrastructure, public services and programs.

Issues:

- ❑ New residential development places increasing burdens on existing infrastructure and government services and most often does not pay for itself through increased property tax revenue; therefore other types of development are necessary to provide a balanced tax base for the city.
- ❑ The amount of city office space is inadequate and due to space restrictions, city government offices are spread out.
- ❑ There are some unincorporated islands within the city. These areas pose problems for efficient delivery of community services such as police protection.
- ❑ Residential development has increased the need for expanded public service facilities and programs.
- ❑ Some older neighborhoods are in need of greater code enforcement to prevent decline.
- ❑ Cobb County schools serving Powder Springs have begun to decline in performance.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The city is pursuing the use of impact fees to help support additional community services necessitated by new development without placing a fiscal burden on the existing tax base of the city.
- ❑ Establishing parity between price points and costs to service would help the city to continue providing services that could be jeopardized by future residential development. Additionally, the city has been very successful in obtaining federal and state funds to support community improvements.

- ❑ The city has developed a concept plan for mixed-use redevelopment within the town square area and provision of additional/new spaces for city offices. An enlarged government center would provide for better communication and coordination among various city departments.
- ❑ The City's unincorporated islands may warrant consideration for annexation. However, there is some concern about the ability to complete the annexation as they were created prior to 1991.
- ❑ The successful rehabilitation of the historic Powder Springs Elementary School cafeteria into the Coach George E. Ford Community Center Reception Hall has provided a first-class community-gathering place and source of civic pride. Future construction plans at the Ford Center campus include a new library, a cultural arts area and renovations to the senior citizen building. These improvements enhance and increase the availability of cultural resources. Additionally, the renovation and expansion of the Ron Anderson Recreational Center provides opportunities for both organized and un-organized recreational activities. The Ron Anderson Recreational Center includes basketball courts, game rooms, meeting and activity rooms to complement the ball fields, trails and a BMX bike track in the adjoining Wild Horse Creek Park.
- ❑ The City is currently examining methods to restructure and provide assistance for Code Enforcement.
- ❑ Economic development staff within the Department of Community Development could compliment existing retention strategies in critical educational areas such as science and math to meet the needs of area employers. Coordination could include the development of summer work and internship programs.

Transportation Issues

- ❑ The City of Powder Springs understands the reliance to automobile oriented travel contributes to the region's air and water pollution problems.
- ❑ Current development trends appear to be facilitating the shifting of businesses away from town centers and activity centers towards strip retail developments along arterial road networks.

- ❑ Increased regional traffic and peak period congestion are reducing the level of service on many of the City's arterial roadways and the neighboring Interstate system.
- ❑ Many of our major arterial corridors are experiencing increased peak period vehicular congestion, unappealing commercial signage clutter, and a heightened level of sprawling development patterns with a general lack of inter-parcel access.
- ❑ High traffic volumes increase the safety risks for pedestrians crossing the City's major arterials, particularly C.H. James Parkway and Sailors Parkway.
- ❑ Large amounts of through traffic undermine the City's efforts to make Marietta Street more pedestrian-friendly and, thus, a more viable Town Center.
- ❑ Lack of parking serves as a limitation to future development in the Town Center.

Opportunities

- ❑ The County and regional public transportation systems need to be expanded where they are both cost efficient and accessible to a larger residential population.
- ❑ Greater connectivity and operational effectiveness can be achieved by mixing travel modes with respect to pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular transportation options.
- ❑ Roadway designs should be contemplated in a Context Sensitive Design manner, where the roadway design factors the existing community conditions in the final design of the corridor. Context Sensitive Design is a program developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in an effort to ensure that new transportation facilities are being developed and implemented in a way that provides positive results for connectivity, capacity, and the aesthetics of the local area.
- ❑ There are areas of the City that should look at improvements related to the relationship between the location of existing transportation facilities and public transit service with the growing populations that are in need of transportation options to access local area jobs, services, goods, health care, and recreation opportunities.

- ❑ The City should continue to work with the Cobb County Department of Transportation to develop a comprehensive transportation system that takes into account the concern traffic congestion, regional transit service integration, regional/local parking demands, new roadway improvement initiatives, and alternative transportation modes.
- ❑ Inter-parcel connections between individual development uses where compatible, should continue to be encouraged, if not strengthened, in new development scenarios.
- ❑ Support transportation alternatives which reduce the need of the private automobile to get to places, thereby reducing traffic congestion.
- ❑ Continue to coordinate with CCT and GRTA with the intent of transit service options that adequately serve the residents of Powder Springs – including those with special and/or paratransit needs.
- ❑ Maintain an effective balance between auto-dependent transportation initiatives and alternative modes of transportation (e.g. bicycle, pedestrian, transit, carpooling, etc).
- ❑ Continue to further the Town Center development initiatives as set forth in the City's Livable Communities Initiative in order to increase the viability of alternative modes of travel and the connectivity to the Silver Comet Trail.
- ❑ The benefits of the Silver Comet Trail can be realized by adding sidewalks and multi-use trails that would eventually establish an interconnected alternative transportation system by increasing the connectivity of the facility to various areas of the City.
- ❑ Streetscaping and other LCI initiatives along Marietta Street could serve as an effective measure to reduce both speeds and traffic volumes within downtown.
- ❑ Continued coordination with GDOT and the Cobb DOT to improve pedestrian visibility and signalization – and thereby reducing speeds - along the City's major arterials.

- ❑ Development patterns that blend uses incorporating housing, jobs, and recreation should be promoted for mixed-use opportunities in the future.
- ❑ Additional parking facilities in the Town Center can help promote desired redevelopment plans.

Land Use

Trend: Powder Springs is growing and is committed to fulfilling its vision of fostering a high quality of life for all community members.

Issues:

- ❑ Some areas of the city have experienced decline and are in need of targeted revitalization efforts.
- ❑ There is a lack of mixed-use development in the city, such as offices and lofts over Main Street retail.
- ❑ Mixed-use developments have not fulfilled the city's vision for traditional neighborhoods and there are no associated retail and office developments supportive of residential uses.

Opportunities:

- ❑ Pedestrian connectivity to commercial, retail, government, recreational and civic facilities has a synergistic effect on neighborhood stability. The city should continue to expand its trail system and actively pursue ways to promote and improve connectivity between residential areas and other types of land uses.
- ❑ The city can actively pursue plans for redevelopment within and near the city's core by providing necessary transportation and parking improvements.
- ❑ The city could establish percentage goals to govern the development of residential units in comparison to construction of the office/retail components of mixed-use developments.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Trend: The city and county have a strong relationship and the city benefits from this relationship especially in the areas of public facilities and community services. The city's most recent Service Delivery Strategy with Cobb County is dated July 2004.

Issues:

- ❑ Development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- ❑ The city's intergovernmental agreements need to be up-to-date and meet the projected service needs of the community. The city should be an active participant in updating its Service Delivery Strategy as it relates to Cobb County.
- ❑ The city should ensure that land use planning is consistent across jurisdictions. City and county land use plans should be coordinated in order to eliminate land use conflicts.
- ❑ Based on past trends and due to projected growth, it is anticipated that the city will continue to annex adjacent land.
- ❑ Residential development within and around the City necessitates communication between the activities of the city, school board and Cobb County.

Opportunities:

- ❑ The city has joined with Cobb County in the development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). City officials must remain proactive through the process to ensure that this area-wide plan is responsive to the needs of the local community.
- ❑ The city should continue to work with Cobb County in order to ensure maintenance of roads, utilities and community services.

- ❑ The city will need to continue to foster strong relationships with the surrounding county and regional agencies to ensure that infrastructure improvements within the city's potential annexation area are supportive of local needs and compatible with the city's future development plans.
- ❑ The city should work collaboratively with Cobb County and the Cobb County School Board in order to improve local schools. Collaboration could include the exchange of information between school population profiles and the demographics of surrounding neighborhoods.

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

In order to adequately develop the community's vision for future development, an understanding of its historic development and existing land use patterns are necessary. For a future vision to be achievable it must be grounded in the reality of the current environment. This section provides a brief synopsis of the historic development of the City of Powder Springs, an analysis of current land uses, and a discussion of development patterns including the character areas of the city and areas which may require special attention during the planning process.

Historic Development Factors

The City of Powder Springs was incorporated as Springville in 1838 in the lands of two Cherokee Indian chiefs, Chief Nose and Chief Ana Kanasta (Sweetwater). Gold had been discovered in Georgia ten years earlier, and the first area settlers came to find gold. They found little in the mines at Lost Mountain and off Brownsville Road. However the fertile land in the city's vicinity led to the development of cotton farming. The name Springville was changed to Powder Springs in 1859. This name was derived from the seven springs in the City Limits. Powder Springs developed as a commercial center for the surrounding cotton farming communities.

Powder Springs grew steadily during the latter part of the 19th Century, reaching an 1888 population of 350. Additional development was spurred at the turn of the 20th Century when the Seaboard Coastline Railroad connected the town with the larger cities of Atlanta and Birmingham. This rail line is still bringing development to the city as the converted Silver Comet Trail, a regional trail for cyclists and pedestrians that is attracting new residential development adjacent to trail heads.

In the mid to late 20th Century as the cities of Marietta and Atlanta attracted national businesses, Powder Springs began to transition from a farming enclave into a bedroom community for nearby employment centers. As the 21st Century continues to bring development to the Atlanta region, Powder Springs is once again growing. The city is accessible to regional transportation routes I-20, I-75 and I-285, and has developable land available at reasonable prices, a factor that continues to attract new residential development to the area and which the city is using to help target other types of development as well.

Existing Land Use

Figure 2 is an existing land use map for the City of Powder Springs. This map provides a snapshot of the city's development at a single point in time, in this case Spring 2005. The city's existing land use was accounted on a parcel level basis through a multi-faceted process. The city's current land use GIS database was compared with aerial photos to provide a base line analysis. The validity of this analysis was then checked through windshield and walking surveys of the city. Figure 2 provides an illustration of the city's current (Spring 2005) land use.

The uses represented in Figure 2 are categorized using a system classification based on land use categories defined in the DCA's Local Planning Standards*. The definitions of the uses found in each category are provided in the table below. Figure 3 shows the amount of land categorized under each land use.

Low Density Residential	Single family detached residential
Medium Density Residential	Single family residential uses (including attached uses such as townhouses and condos)
High Density Residential	Multi-family residential uses (apartments) and mobile home parks
Commercial	Retail and entertainment oriented uses which may be grouped into a shopping center or stand alone outlets
Office/Professional	Office buildings
Public/Institutional	Community facilities, general government and institutional uses. This category includes uses such as schools, cemeteries, churches, city hall, police and fire stations, and libraries
Industrial	This category includes land dedicated to manufacturing, processing, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, or similar activities and uses
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	Areas dedicated to active and passive recreation such as parks and any protected lands. The category can include both publicly and privately held parcels
Undeveloped/Vacant	Areas with no visible active uses or vacant buildings at the time of survey

*** There were no parcels containing Agriculture/Forestry uses as defined by DCA observed in the City during land use survey efforts.**

Figure 2: Current Land Use in Powder Springs, GA

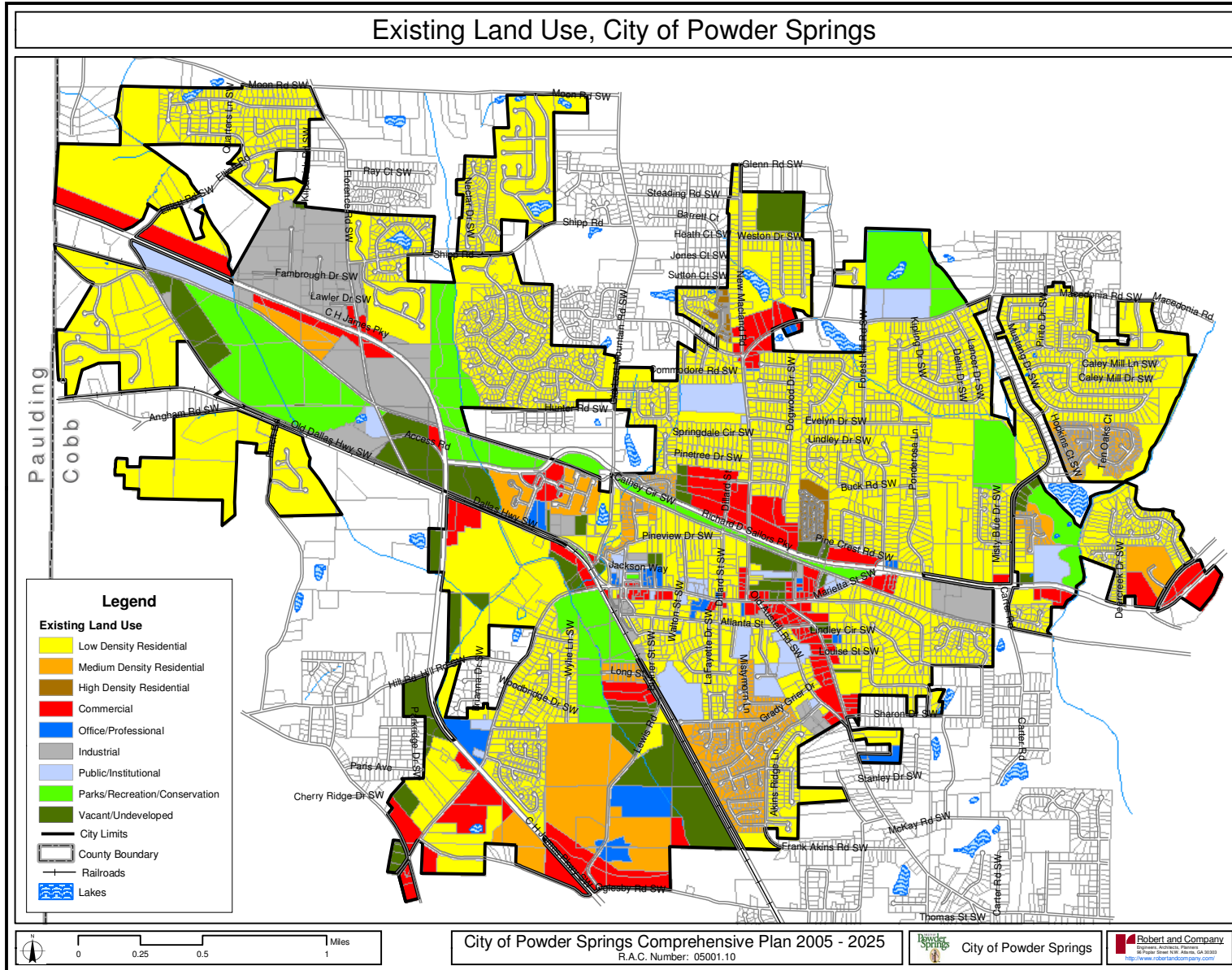


Figure 3: Existing Land Use, Powder Springs, GA Spring 2005

Existing Land Use, City of Powder Springs		
Land Use	Acres	%
Low Density Residential	2,392.8	51.9%
Medium Density Residential	338.8	7.4%
High Density Residential	20.4	0.4%
Commercial	345.8	7.5%
Office/Professional	59.9	1.3%
Industrial	216.6	4.7%
Public/Institutional	136.5	3.0%
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	361.7	7.9%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities (Road Right-of-Way)	493.5	10.7%
Vacant/Undeveloped	240.1	5.2%
TOTAL	4,606.1	100.0%

Current Development Patterns Narrative

Overall, the current development pattern of the City of Powder Springs may be described as a historic town center, with newer areas of typical suburban corridor commercial uses and large tract subdivisions radiating from the historic core. The following sections provide a brief narrative describing the current development patterns in various geographic areas of the city.

Central

The city center is defined as the area bordered by Pineview Drive, the Norfolk Southern railway line, Atlanta Street and New Macland Road. The development pattern is typical of historic town centers including a mix of commercial, civic and institutional uses located on the area's major transportation routes surrounded by residential neighborhoods. This area experienced some decline during the later quarter of the 20th Century, as retail activities moved from city center locations to highway corridor orientations. However, through ongoing city driven redevelopment efforts, the historic core of Powder Springs is experiencing renewed interest.

Northwest

This area of Powder Springs is located west of Old Lost Mountain Road and north of U.S. Highway 278. The area is characterized by newer (1990's) single-family subdivisions. The other active land use in this area is industrial, with a node of light industrial/warehouse uses clustered along Florence Road north of C. H. James Parkway. There is also a limited commercial node at the intersection of Florence and C. H. James Parkway. A number of tracts of residential land in this area have been annexed into the city during the past decade and a small portion of land in this area remains undeveloped.

North Central

New Macland Road bisects this section of the city located between Old Lost Mountain Road to the west, Forest Hill Road to the east, Richard D. Sailors Parkway to the south, and Moon Road to the north. Like most of the city, this area is dominated by residential land use. Housing in this area is predominantly in the form of 1960's era ranch style homes on ½ acre lots.

There are two commercial nodes that serve the neighborhoods in this section of the city; an older area is located at the intersection of New Macland and Macedonia Roads, while a new section of commercial/retail has developed along the north side of Richard D. Sailors Parkway on each side of the intersection with New Macland Road.

There are also two public/institutional uses in this area: Cobb County Fire Station #23 and Thomas Newton Compton Elementary School. Both are located on the west side of New Macland Road between Macedonia Road and Springdale Circle.

Northeast

The northeastern section of the city is bordered by Forest Hills Road to the west and the Silver Comet Trail/Sailors Parkway to the south. The city's limits make the northern and eastern borders. Housing in this area has grown with the city's population and neighborhoods date from the 1960's through 1990's. There is also a large skilled nursing facility located along Powder Springs Rd.

In the section's northwest corner, Wild Horse Park is located on Macedonia Road. This 75-acre Cobb County park includes ball fields, tennis courts, a BMX bike track, and the Ron Anderson Community Recreation Center located adjacent to Tapp Middle School. The trailhead for the city's Wild Horse Creek trail is also located here; this trail connects Wild Horse Park with the Silver Comet Trail at Carter Road 1.5 miles to the south.

This area includes some light industrial uses on the south side of Sailors Parkway near the city's border and Carter Road.

Southeast

The southeastern area of the city is located south of Marietta Street and east of the Norfolk Southern rail line extending to the city's eastern border. This is an older section of the city with most development occurring in the 1950s and 60s. However there has been some recent higher density residential development.

Development in the area includes an older strip commercial node along Austell – Powder Springs Road consisting of a small shopping center, a bank, restaurants, and other commercial uses. This shopping center was originally constructed in the 1960s.

In addition to residential subdivisions, public uses are a dominant land use in this sector of the city. Public institutional uses here include two cemeteries and the newly established Ford Center Reception Hall. Planned improvements to the “Coach” George E. Ford Center include the construction of a new library and cultural arts area and renovation of the senior citizens center.

There is a small amount of industrial land use in the area including a node abutting the city's boundary along Sharon Drive and some light industry located along the Norfolk Southern rail line near Atlanta Street.

Southwest

Southwest Powder Springs is the area of the city located between Brownsville Road south of the Silver Comet Trail and generally bordered by C.H. Parkway. This area serves as the western gateway to the city's center via C. H. James Parkway, and Brownsville and Lewis Roads. Development in this area contains a mix of uses. Residential subdivisions line the east side of Brownsville Road approaching downtown, and a single family residential development is under construction near the city's edge on the southwest side of C. H. James Parkway. There is also an undeveloped area straddling Lewis Road that has been designated for development as a mixed-use center including residential, retail, office, and business park components. The intersection of C. H. James Parkway and Brownsville Road is a center of commercial and office uses in the area. The southwest corner of this intersection is anchored by an older strip-style shopping center containing an abandoned super market and a myriad of neighborhood serving commercial uses. Medical offices anchor the northeast corner of this intersection.

Powder Springs Elementary School and Powder Springs Park is also located in this section of the city. The park includes some of the original springs for which the city is named, as well as a pool, baseball fields, and walking/nature trail.

Character Areas

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the differences between neighborhoods within a community and provides more intentional guidance of development and redevelopment through specific planning and implementation initiatives. Recommended character areas can define places that 1) have unique or special characteristics that should be preserved; 2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or 3) require special attention related to development issues. The following sections provide a discussion of the preliminary character areas defined for the City of Powder Springs. The character areas in the City of Powder Springs are mapped in Figure 3.

When reviewing this character area discussion, it is important to recognize that the designated character may not be accurate for every property or parcel within the specified area. Rather the designation is a reflection of the defining character of the entire area. It is anticipated that the delineation and description of these areas will be further developed and refined through work with a citizen steering committee and public input workshops. The Community Agenda will include a revised version of the Character Areas Map and the Future Development Map, which will be accompanied by a description of the appropriate future land uses in each character area as well as short-term activities and long term policies for achieving the community's stated vision for the area.

Developing Suburban Areas

Developing suburban areas in Powder Springs are characterized by existing or impending pressure that will lead to the development of typical types of suburban residential subdivisions. Currently, sections of developing suburban areas are located in the north and northwest sections of the city. These areas have typically evolved with low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit access, few preserved open spaces, high to moderate degrees of building separation, and predominantly residential land use with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. Such street design often serves to isolate individual neighborhoods or subdivisions from those neighboring as well as from adjacent land uses.

Built Out Suburban Areas

In these neighborhoods of Powder Springs, typical suburban residential subdivision development has already occurred; there is no undeveloped land remaining. These areas represent the end result of the progression of developing suburban areas where there was no effort to thwart the predominant pattern of development that has low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, high to moderate degree of building separation, and largely residential land use located on varied street patterns, often curvilinear.

Many residential neighborhoods in Powder Springs fall into this category, specifically neighborhoods in the north central and south central sections of the city.

Stable Neighborhoods

A stable neighborhood is marked by housing stock that is relatively well maintained and the environs possess a distinct identity through architectural style, street design, and higher rates of home-ownership. In Powder Springs, the stable neighborhoods are proximate to the center of town and are a mixture of older and newer developments. Some of the stable neighborhoods are located adjacent to declining neighborhoods that could negatively impact the stable neighborhoods over time if action is not taken to protect the stable areas from encroaching decline. Such actions include reinforcing stability by encouraging more homeownership and placing emphasis on maintaining or upgrading existing properties.

Declining Neighborhoods

Declining neighborhoods are characterized by less desirable housing conditions when compared to stable neighborhoods. This may be due to low rates of homeownership and/or neglect of property maintenance on the existing housing stock. There may be a lack of neighborhood identity and gradual invasion of different types and intensities of land use that may not be compatible with neighborhood residential use.

In Powder Springs, there are three areas that are currently considered to be declining neighborhoods. The first is located in the northeast portion of the city, abutting the city limits. This area is comprised of two neighborhoods and also includes a school and a park. The second declining neighborhood is directly south of the Town Center along Butner and Long Streets. The third area is located along the southeastern edge of the city limit on Frank Aiken Rd. Public assistance and investment should be focused where needed to ensure that these neighborhoods become more stable, mixed-income communities with a larger percentage of owner-occupied housing. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing.

Neighborhood Redevelopment Areas

Once a neighborhood has declined sufficiently such that housing conditions have substantially deteriorated, vacant land and unoccupied structures may become common. These neighborhoods are the basis for the designation of neighborhood redevelopment areas. Emphasis in these areas should be placed on preserving, maintaining and

renovating any viable existing housing stock as well as building a new and attractive community following the principles of traditional neighborhood development.

Downtown

The traditional central business district and the immediately surrounding commercial, industrial, and mixed-use areas help shape the character of downtown. Residential developments in the downtown core reinforce the traditional town center by adding to the mix of uses in this area. The City is encouraging development trends to include the renovation and adaptive re-use of historic buildings for office and/or retail space as well as encouraging compatible new infill developments designed to compliment and enhance the mix of uses in the downtown core. This area is currently the most pedestrian-oriented portion of Powder Springs. Recent streetscape improvements create walkable connections between different uses; and planned improvements along Pineview, Oakview, Lynn, Lewis, Atlanta, Walton and Dillard Streets will further improve pedestrian connectivity throughout the downtown core.

Commercial Redevelopment Areas

Powder Springs has several commercial areas that are declining. Comprised primarily of unattractive, vacant, or under-utilized strip shopping centers, these areas are characterized by auto-oriented design that creates a high degree of access for vehicular traffic but few alternatives. Typically, these physical environs include superfluous on-site parking, vehicle circulation lanes, large storm-water detention facilities, poor landscaping, little to no preserved open spaces, moderate floor-area-ratios, and large tracts of land.

Current commercial areas in decline or facing future uncertainty include the following:

- New Macland Road at Macedonia Road
- Austell-Powder Springs Road
- Powder Springs Road (Sirloin Junction)
- C.H. James Parkway at Brownsville Road

These areas are all located in heavily traveled portions of the city, but have met limited success due to a variety of factors (including traffic congestion, difficulty of turning movements, design, over competition, etc.) To increase the viability of commercial redevelopment in these areas, the City will need to encourage building upgrades, aesthetic improvements, and improvements to the surrounding transportation network.

Light Industrial

Areas used for low intensity manufacturing, wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance are often classified as light industrial. In Powder Springs, these areas are concentrated largely in a western section of the city adjacent to neighborhoods and conservation areas. A key component of future changes to this light industrial area must be the creation of appropriate buffers to protect the neighboring properties. Incorporating landscaping and site design will serve to soften or shield views of buildings and parking lots, loading docks, etc.

Conservation Areas

In Powder Springs, the most extensive conservation areas are located on natural lands with significant natural features including steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, watersheds, and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for most kinds of developments. Due to their limited developmental value, many of these areas have been developed for passive recreation. The largest single conservation area is located southwest of C.H. James Parkway in a floodplain area. Future development plans for the properties surrounding all local conservation areas should be mindful of the impact on the natural environment. All existing conservation areas should remain permanently protected.

Major Highway Corridor

Major highway corridors are distinguished by developed or undeveloped land on both sides of designated high-volume transportation facilities, such as arterial roads and highways. These corridors benefit from maintenance of a natural or vegetation buffer (up to 50 feet or more in width) on either side. All new development should be setback behind this buffer, with access roads, shared driveways or inter-parcel road connections providing alternate access to these developments and reducing curb cuts and traffic on the main highway. The City currently has one major Highway Corridor, which is CH James Parkway (US 278, SR 6).

In-Town Corridor

An in-town street or highway that is bordered by land paralleling the route and that has already or is likely to experience uncontrolled strip development if growth is not properly managed characterizes an In-Town Corridor. In-town corridors will have the goal of being gradually converted into attractive boulevards with signage guiding visitors to downtown and other areas of interest around Powder Springs. The appearance of the corridor can be immediately improved through streetscape enhancements (street lights, landscaping, etc.). In the longer term, design guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street, will ensure that the corridors become more attractive as properties develop or redevelop.

There are currently three in-town corridors in Powder Springs, Richard D. Sailors Parkway, Austell-Powder Springs Road and Marietta Street. Richard D. Sailors Parkway passes close to the center of the city and has a moderate amount of existing development. It is anticipated that this corridor will experience new development in the near future. Austell-Powder Springs Road connects Powder Springs with the neighboring city of Austell. Deteriorating retail, commercial and office developments in need of revitalization/redevelopment and pedestrian friendly streetscape improvements characterize this corridor. Marietta Street is the main arterial passing through the heart of downtown. This corridor has recently benefited from streetlight, landscape, sidewalk and roadway improvements.

Gateways

Gateways consist of developed or undeveloped land along the route of a major thoroughfare that serves as or provides the opportunity to become an important entrance or means of access to the community. As the areas upon which the first impression of the city is based, these gateways should be the focus of future efforts to improve Powder Springs' appearance through new streetscapes, landscaping, and other beautification measures. The city currently maintains several attractive gateway signage areas, which enhance the city's sense of identity and serve as a means of directing regional traffic toward points of interest.

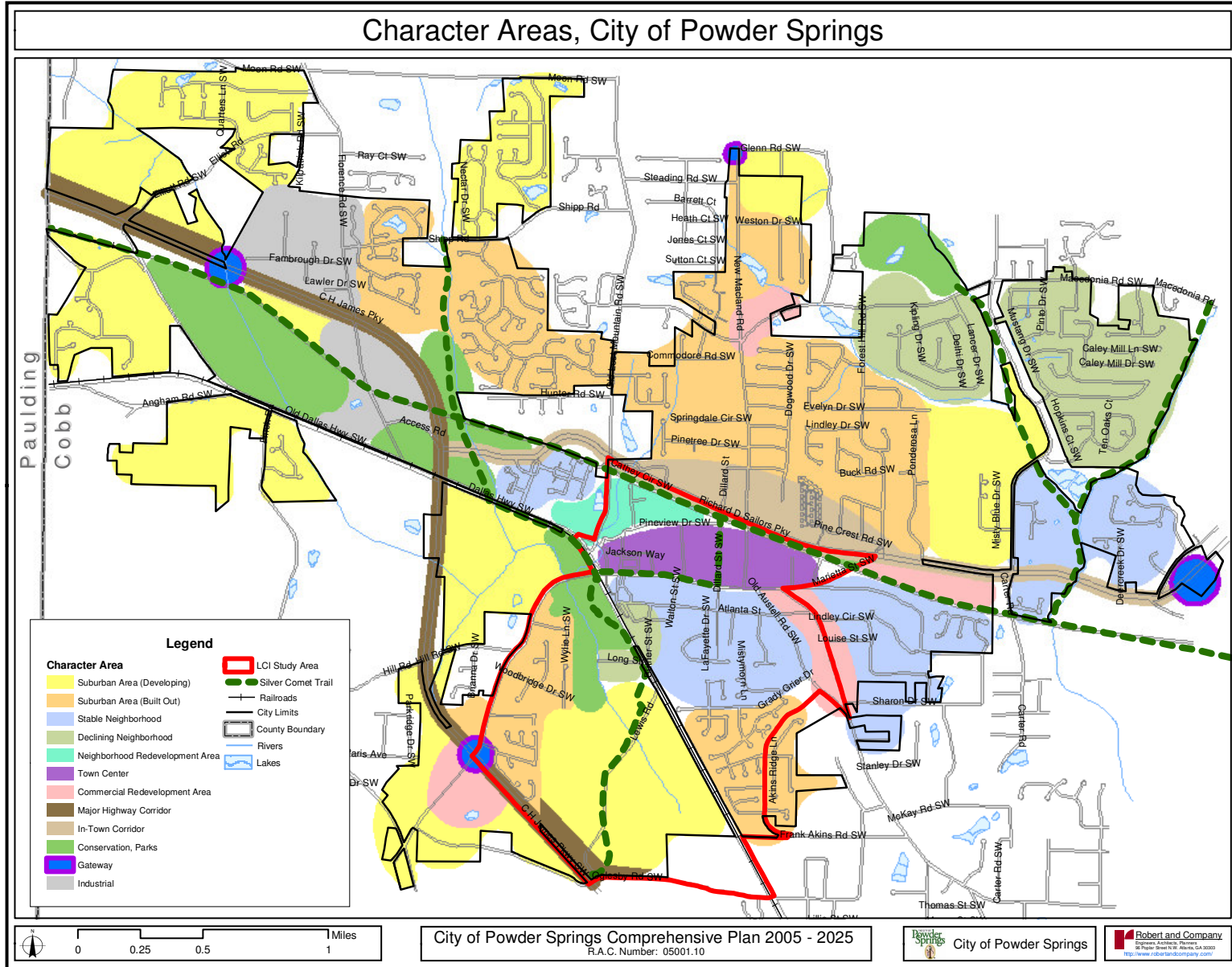
There are four areas designated as existing gateways that should be the focus of future aesthetic upgrades:

- C.H. James Parkway and Brownsville Road
- New Macland Road at the City limit
- Richard D. Sailors Parkway at the City limit (east)
- C.H. James Parkway at the City limit (west)
- Lewis Road at C.H. James Parkway

The Lewis Road Project will include the realignment of Lewis Road at the intersection of Oglesby Road and C.H. James Parkway. This realignment will create the new intersection of Lewis Road and C.H. James Parkway and will serve as new southern gateway into Powder Springs. Improvements at this intersection will include traffic lights, turning lanes, landscaping, street lighting and signage.

In these gateway areas it may be necessary to redevelop, retrofit, or mask existing strip development or other unsightly features.

Figure 4: Recommended Character Areas, Powder Springs, GA



Areas Requiring Special Consideration

This section provides an assessment of likely issues/impacts that may be encountered with the continued growth and development of Powder Springs. The areas of consideration covered in this section comply with specific items required by the DCA's Local Planning Standards. Consideration of these topics is presented to help frame future community discussions of where new development and redevelopment efforts should be encouraged and limited within the city, and ultimately reflected in the Future Development Map included in the Community Agenda.

Area of Consideration	Relevance in Powder Springs
Areas where rapid development or change of land use is likely to occur	Due to the pockets of undeveloped land in the city and large tracts of developable land abutting many of its boundaries, there may be some concern about rapid development. Large-scale land use changes due to new projects and redevelopment should be anticipated during the 2005 – 2025 planning period. Additionally, in the past decade the city has consistently annexed adjacent land for residential development. Should this pattern continue, it would perpetuate a change in the nature of SW Cobb County from a rural, exurban landscape to an area with suburban development patterns.
Areas where the pace of development may outpace the availability of community facilities and services	Many key facilities and services provided by the city, such as water, sewer, parks and recreation and public safety are currently adequate to provide a quality level of service to the city's growing population. However, if the city continues to experience heavy residential growth, additional support for these services (such as impact fees) may be warranted to make sure that the existing tax base is not unduly burdened by the costs of providing infrastructure for new development.
Areas where development is likely to intrude upon or otherwise impact significant cultural resources	There is the potential for new (infill) development to negatively impact the city's historic core area if it is of incompatible design, materials or scale. However, recently developed design guidelines will help to alleviate negative impacts by ensuring that new development compliments the existing community.

Area of Consideration	Relevance in Powder Springs
<p>Areas where development is likely to intrude upon or otherwise impact significant natural resources</p>	<p>Natural conditions such as wetlands and floodplains present limitations on growth within Powder Springs, particularly the floodplain surrounding Noses Creek. The city has actively pursued a program of developing passive recreation areas in floodplains and wetlands, a course of action that helps preserve these natural areas for the enjoyment of all citizens. Recent hurricane-induced flooding illustrates the need for additional management of floodplain areas.</p>
<p>Declining or unattractive areas, possibly in need of redevelopment</p>	<p>The Downtown Activity Center consists of some vacant commercial structures. In order to prevent this pattern from continuing, the City will need to undertake economic development and revitalization efforts and infrastructure improvements or additions to recruit appropriate businesses to this area. Additionally, the apartment/duplex community adjacent to City Hall is in need of revitalization.</p>

Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

The Quality Community Objectives (QCO) are a series of guiding statements adopted by the Board of the Department of Community Affairs to further elaborate statewide planning goals, which have been developed based on growth and development issues identified by the Department as existing in numerous communities and regions throughout the state. The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the consistency of the city's current policies, activities and development patterns with these objectives, and to highlight areas where improvements can be made. Potential strategies for improvement will be explored during the Community Participation phase of the planning process and will help form the final "locally agreed upon" implementation program for the Comprehensive Plan included in the Community Agenda. As the assessment shows, the city is already addressing most of the QCO's and will continue to do so through the continuation of many current initiatives into the 2005 – 2025 planning period.

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>HERITAGE PRESERVATION 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.</p>	<p>The City of Powder Springs has a strong commitment to preserving its heritage to the extent feasibly possible. The city has promoted the preservation of its historic core through the adoption of design guidelines for development in the area. The city's Downtown Development Authority has explored the use of the National Main Street Center's approach to achieve their mission of preserving and adding to the unique beauty and small town charm of Powder Springs. However, the City has not formally adopted the Main Street approach.</p>



Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>SENSE OF PLACE Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing and entertainment.</p>	<p>The city is working diligently to maintain and improve the aesthetic appeal of its historic commercial district and nearby residential neighborhoods in order to promote a strong sense of place and create a focal point for Powder Springs. Additionally, the continued development of neighborhood and linear parks and links to the Silver Comet Trail has helped to promote a sense of community within the city's residential areas. However, there are areas of the city, such as Sailors Parkway, being developed as typical strip commercial centers. These do little to create community activity nodes or a unique sense of place.</p> <p>The Town Center project includes a consolidation of various government offices into a single municipal complex. The vision is for a new public realm that combines open space framed by offices, mixed residential and retail components. These improvements will create a setting that enhances the use of the downtown area as a central gathering place.</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</p>	<p>The city has taken steps to preserve the environmentally sensitive areas within its borders. The city's Unified Development Code includes restrictions on development and specific land uses designed to protect flood plains and wetlands. Additionally, the city has a tree ordinance that requires tree conservation for activities requiring a land disturbance permit and has specific measures for the preservation of specimen trees and restrictions on clear cutting. The city also has adopted rules for site grading, erosion and sedimentation control, and storm-water drainage that support the preservation of natural terrain and drainage patterns. Some of these tree protection and grading restrictions might be appropriate to strengthen.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>GROWTH PREPAREDNESS Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.</p>	<p>Over the past decade Powder Springs conducted numerous planning activities with a goal of preparing for its future. This planning began with the Community Enhancement Master Plan (CEMP) in 1996. This plan has focused on ways to strengthen the relationship between the city's core and other areas of the community. The city's 2002 LCI Study furthered the city's vision of its future. Through the LCI study's implementation plan, Short Term Work Programs associated with the CEMP, and the Unified Development Code adopted in late 2002, Powder Springs has laid the road map for accommodating growth in the area and achieving its vision of the future.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>INFILL DEVELOPMENT Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.</p>	<p>A major infill development initiative, called the Town Center project, is being pursued by the city. This project arose in response to the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan to improve downtown Powder Springs. The conceptual plan envisions private development of townhouses and mixed-use units for living and working; approximately 200 new units are anticipated. The plan also calls for an expanded and renovated city hall and police station, roadway and parking improvements.</p> <p>Other private sector infill efforts include twelve approved developments that will add a total of 1,267 new housing units to the city of Powder Springs within the next 10 years.</p> <p>In addition, two publicly sponsored infill development efforts are also underway. The George E. Ford Center involves the development of a new cultural arts area and library. The Wild Horse Community and Recreation Center involves the renovation of the Ron Anderson building to provide more activity and meeting rooms, along with various programs and several basketball courts.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>LOCAL SELF-DETERMINATION Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.</p>	<p>Through its continued planning work, the City of Powder Springs has formed and is assiduously working towards implementing its vision of the future as articulated in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan and 2002 LCI Study. This vision calls for a dynamic community with a variety of housing and employment options, a number of recreational amenities and a diversified and stable tax base. This comprehensive plan update will further support these efforts by providing an updated short term work program for these projects as well as a comprehensive long-range strategy for carrying the vision forward.</p>
<p>EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions</p>	<p>There are ample and varied educational opportunities available in or within close proximity to the City of Powder Springs. Eight Cobb County Schools and a branch of the Cobb County public library serve the City. There are numerous technical, community and four year colleges and universities located within reasonable commuting distance from the city.</p>



Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.</p>	<p>Due to Powder Springs' location and development as a bedroom community with a very small business sector, the percentage of residents employed in the city is not high. Many residents commute to jobs elsewhere in the metropolitan Atlanta region. A small employer base provides few opportunities for residents and others just outside of the city to work in Powder Springs. The city's primary focus in addressing its jobs/housing balance is in building an employment base of higher paying jobs for the local workforce. For the past several years, the city has experienced more growth in residential development than in office/commercial/retail developments. Establishing a balanced jobs/housing ratio is essential to managing future growth as is balancing a jobs/workforce ratio by establishing an employer base seeking the skills of the resident workforce. Housing in Powder Springs is plentiful but jobs are scarce. Currently, the jobs/housing ratio is .68:1, but over the 20-year planning period, the ratio improves to 1.8:1 thereby achieving parity with the number of workers per household. To achieve this parity, the city will need to focus development in CAC, NAC and Industrial Compatible land use areas being sure to match salary levels with housing prices.</p> <p>The median home price in the city in 2000 was \$115,000 compared to Cobb County's median of \$147,600. The vast majority of housing (86.3%) was valued under \$150,000 and 1/3 of the housing stock, in 2000, was valued under \$100,000. Low home values and a limited commercial base places an economic hardship to provide basic services. Overcoming these obstacles is essential for the city to continue providing services and facilities that enhance the quality of life in Powder Springs. Lower end, single family residential construction combined with homogenous employment in the city exacerbates a jobs/housing imbalance. The city is working to address this issue through a number of approaches: new mixed-use ordinance and redevelopment plans provide opportunities for a variety of housing and employment opportunities. Future residential developments should contain a mixed-use component providing employment opportunities for target buyers. Establishing percentage goals for residential vs. office/retail construction and developing an affordable housing strategy such as specified percentage goals for affordable housing in new developments could be essential to ensuring the desired effect of mixed-use developments.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>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.</p>	<p>The City of Powder Springs is an active participant in a variety of regional forums and works with other local governments to achieve regional objectives. The city also works effectively with Cobb County through intergovernmental agreements. Current coordination efforts include the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, which the city is participating in, and the multi jurisdictional CH James/SR 6 Study.</p>
<p>SHARED 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.</p>	<p>The City of Powder Springs has diligently worked with regional authorities and Cobb County to support shared solutions to regional issues. Some of the most notable shared solutions include infrastructure (roadway, water and wastewater) and emergency service provisions. The parks and recreation sites within the city and County are also shared resources, which benefit the citizens and the governments.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.</p>	<p>The City of Powder Springs has maintained a traditional neighborhood pattern within its historic core. Most of the development in areas of the city surrounding the core have not traditionally followed this pattern, but rather developed as typical suburban cul-de-sac development, cutoff from other developments and land use types. In order to combat this predominant development pattern, the city has undertaken planning studies and initiatives, and adopted various ordinances that shift its commitment to promoting traditional development in appropriate areas of the city. The city's mixed use zoning category has provided and continues to provide opportunities for Traditional Neighborhood Development patterns through working in a collaborative manner with developers to ensure proper design. To date the issues facing the city with mixed-use developments have been the failure of the developer to develop the retail and office components of a proposed mixed-use development.</p>
<p>OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.</p>	<p>The city's current development regulations do not require open space set-asides with all new development. However, the city's provision for clustered lot subdivisions requires a minimum community open space set-aside of 20% and the city's new Conservation Subdivision and Open Space Development Ordinance requires the preservation of 40% of the gross tract area be preserved as open space. Powder Springs has a history of providing public parks and has continued its commitment to open space preservation by creating interconnected greenways and corridors by linking existing and new parks. It has also protected over 100 acres of green-space through the State's former green-space program.</p>



Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</p>	<p>Several transportation alternatives to automobile usage exist in Powder Springs. The Cobb Community Transit System managed by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) operates the 470 route from a park-n-ride lot located along the Silver Comet Trail at Florence Road. This route offers service to downtown Atlanta after making three stops along Thornton Road. The 470 route returns from downtown Atlanta in the evening.</p> <p>There are linkages provided by the City's extensive trails system that connects neighborhoods, existing parks, commercial and employment centers, public facilities, the historic downtown area and the regional Silver Comet Trail. The first in this system, the Wild Horse Trail, opened for public use in June 2000. Another major trail initiative, the Lucille Trail, opened Phase I in October 2001. Lucille Trail Phase II opened in 2005. Powder Springs Creek Trail is planned for construction within the next few years. The 59-mile regional Silver Comet Trail runs from east to west through the heart of Powder Springs; following the alignment of the abandoned CSX rail line and passing just a few blocks to the north of the Town Square.</p> <p>Finally, the City is working on approval of funding for key traffic and railroad overpass improvements along Lewis Road south of Marietta Street. These transportation improvements were the result of the aforementioned LCI plan and involve \$14M of road improvements that will greatly improve access through the southern portion of the city while relieving traffic delays.</p>

Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</p>	<p>There are relatively few jobs available among the businesses located in Powder Springs, and there is little variety in the limited jobs available. Of the approximately 1200 jobs available in the city, 70% are in retail trade and accommodations and food services. However, the city has a diverse workforce providing potential employers with a qualified labor pool. Providing suitable employment options for the resident workforce will need to be managed successfully considering the trend that most new jobs created in suburban areas have primarily been service oriented professions. Currently, the jobs/workforce ratio is .43:1. However, employment projections based on identified land uses show improvement over the twenty-year planning period from .43:1 to 1.1:1. To achieve the improved ratio, the city will need to both quantitatively and qualitatively assess the resident workforce and attract commercial development suited to the skills of the workforce. Additionally, development of job opportunities will need to exceed the pace of residential development. Future residential developments could contain a mixed-use component providing employment opportunities for target buyers. Establishing percentage goals for residential vs. office/retail construction and developing an affordable housing strategy such as specified percentage goals for affordable housing in new developments could be essential to ensuring the desired effect of mixed-use developments.</p>
<p>REGIONAL IDENTITY Regions should promote and preserve an “identity”, defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.</p>	<p>The City of Powder Springs is part of the Atlanta metropolitan area and shares common history, development patterns and architectural styles with many other regional communities that developed along the major rail lines that traverse the region. By promoting and actively working to preserve its small town character, the city is helping promote the regional identity as well as its own. Additionally, the city has embraced the Silver Comet Trail, a major regional recreation amenity that runs through the city, and is working to promote linkages between the city and the trail.</p>



Quality Community Objective	Local Consistency with the Objective
<p>APPROPRIATE BUSINESSES The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.</p>	<p>The city's goals as expressed in its 2002 LCI plan are to expand the economic base by attracting entertainment, recreational, and high-end retail businesses to the city in order to encourage the establishment of desired businesses in downtown. To realize this goal, it may be necessary for the city to commit additional resources and staff to developing business development strategies and marketing the city as a business location, especially for small businesses that are not dependant upon collocation with major transportation routes for employee or patron access. Additionally, there is the potential for 8,807 new job opportunities that could be created within the city over the next 20 years. This projection is based on existing, developable acreage within CAC, NAC and Industrial Compatible land uses. Consideration of appropriate types of development on these sites should include a discussion regarding the number of jobs being created, desired skill set of employees and salary earnings.</p>