

# Comprehensive Plan Update

2014

for the

## City of Hamilton

The  of Harris County



Prepared By

The River Valley Regional Commission

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# Hamilton, GA

Comprehensive Plan for Hamilton, Georgia  
2014 to 2019



## Executive Summary

Key findings for Hamilton in  
the 2014 Comprehensive Plan-  
ning Process

## Hamilton Planning Process

The Hamilton plan is a state requirement to be updated every 5 years. This planning process was done in conjunction with the plan update for Harris County and other municipalities in the county. The River Valley Regional Commission held public hearings, focus groups and individual meetings with stakeholders throughout the county and conducted in-person and online surveys to gather information for the plan. This process to update the existing plan spanned a 6 month period from October, 2013 to March, 2014.

Key findings from the plan are outlined to the right. Full information about the plan, the surveys taken, and the community-identified Needs and Opportunities for Hamilton can be obtained through the Hamilton City Hall or on the River Valley Regional Commission website listed on the next page.

## Build-out New Developments

The new developments in Hamilton have all infrastructure in place to accept the new residents that the area is projected to gain over the next few years.

## Connect Schools to Downtown and walking Trail

Walkability is one of the key attractions to the downtown square and existing walking trail. The plan recommends enhancing walkability, especially from the county schools.



## Top Community Priorities

Hamilton, through the planning process, surveying and community input has identified top work projects to tackle through 2019.

The plan includes a short term work program that the Hamilton City Council will be working on to serve as a road map for their time and energies to make the community a better place to live, work and play for the next 5 years and beyond. This work plan includes work to do anything the city can to help maximize the new developments that have been built in Hamilton in recent years. The existing infrastructure is in place and needs to be used. Help could include a vacant land inventory to assist identifying development parcels.

The desire to create a 'walk first, bike first' community means the city has prioritized creating additions to the sidewalks of the city and promoting and extending connectivity both with the exist-

ing county schools located within the city limits. The addition of the north-south Rails to Trails project make this an exciting time for non-motorized transportation in Hamilton.

Finally, the city has committed to looking at several of their ordinances over the next five years to ensure that they are up-to-date. Hamilton sees the need to do a thorough review to balance development against the need to protect the natural and cultural resources of Hamilton.

## Update City Ordinances

New ordinances and revised ordinances are envisioned that will address land use, subdivision, conservation and the management of the commercial corridors through Hamilton.

## Finish Rails to Trails

Hamilton and Harris County have developed a Rails to Trails link that will run through the heart of Hamilton and the heart of Harris County. This trail will help create the 'walk first, bike first' community attitude the city wants to encourage.

## For More Information

[www.rivervalleyrc.org/harris](http://www.rivervalleyrc.org/harris)



# HAMILTON VISION STATEMENT

Given its history and importance as the Harris County seat, the dedicated leaders of the City of Hamilton shall provide its citizens a well-balanced community consisting of quality residential development. Single family development is the “backbone” of residential growth, with appropriate commercial, institutional, government and recreational facilities to serve its citizens, the residents of Harris County, and visitors. All development shall be connected when feasible by bike and pedestrian facilities protected by open space and green space areas and supported by a well-maintained and efficiently run utility system. Attainments of this vision will be supported by the following planning goals:

- Maintain the desired character of the city through open space preservation, while providing sufficient designated growth areas to accommodate expected demand for business and residential growth by utilizing traditional neighborhood development principles and conservation subdivision design techniques.
- Seek sufficient and desirable growth by attracting businesses that will balance needs for jobs generated by residential development and will provide retail and service offerings to meet the needs of city residents and other residents of Harris County.
- Ensure that a fiscal balance is maintained between residential and commercial development and available public services and facilities to include utilities, recreational areas, and general governmental services needed to accommodate planned growth.
- Encourage residential development that meets the housing needs of city residents as well as providing a range of home site areas and a variety of housing styles. Single-family development is to be the corner stone of residential development.
- Ensure that development is done in a manner that serves to preserve environmentally sensitive features such as floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, streams, view sheds, and natural topography.
- Develop a well-planned, efficient, effective, and safe transportation system that meets local and regional needs. Make Hamilton a pedestrian and bike friendly community.
- Preserve the city’s historic and cultural resources that provide valuable information about the proud history of the city and its residents. Use the history, beauty, charm, and recreational opportunities to attract visitors.
- Promote and maintain a strong, aesthetically pleasing, accessible, pedestrian friendly downtown. Downtown is the “heart” of Hamilton!

# INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a policy guide relating to land use, community infrastructure, housing, and economic development activities. This document should generate local pride and enthusiasm, engage interest in the implementation of the comprehensive plan, and become a handbook to guide daily decision making for the local government officials and community leaders.

The Hamilton Comprehensive Plan includes a list of needs and opportunities upon which the community may want to take action. An analysis of data and information including existing development patterns, areas where development is likely to occur, significant natural and cultural resources, opportunities for in fill, areas of disinvestment, as well as maps of existing land use, future land use, areas requiring special attention and a community work program and report of accomplishments. All of the planning documents included in the Comprehensive Plan should be considered in the evaluation of community policies and activities. Below is the updated demographic information for the City of Hamilton. Detailed demographic information can be reviewed at the RVRC website ([www.rivervalleyrc.org](http://www.rivervalleyrc.org)).

## HAMILTON DEMOGRAPHICS

### POPULATION

The City of Hamilton experienced a population gain of 88 persons or 17 percent from 1980 to 2000, while Harris County experienced a population growth of 53 percent from 1980 to 2000, with the last ten years (1990-2000) posting a population growth rate of 35 percent. Population growth shows a substantial increase in Hamilton from 2000 to 2010 of 55%. This is due in part to an under count of the population in 2000. In comparison, the population of the state of Georgia grew by 19 percent over the same time period. The population estimate for Hamilton in 2020 is 1,055

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; 2020, 2030 RIVER VALLEY RC STAFF

**TABLE1: City of Hamilton: Total Population 1980-2030 Projections**

Category	1980	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010	2013 Estimate	Percent Change 2010-2013	2020	2030
Total Population	506	454	594	1,016	71%	1,031	1.47%	1,055	1,079
Harris County	15,464	17,788	23,695	32,024	35%	33,130	3.45%	35,743	39,853
State of Georgia	5,477,566	6,478,211	8,186,453	9,712,157	19%	9,919,945	2%	10,871,581	11,910,320

**Table 2: Population by Age: 1990 - 2018**

Category	1990	2000	2010	2013	2018
Under 18	118	163	276	241	234
18 & over	341	431	740	790	823
0 - 4	33	31	62	59	60
5 - 14	64	95	161	137	129
15 - 24	73	69	161	143	137
25 - 34	65	72	180	121	132
35 - 44	50	81	177	145	130
45 - 54	42	72	115	152	152
55 - 64	59	62	98	142	154
65+	68	112	62	132	163
<b>Total Population</b>	454	594	1016	1031	1057

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990, 2000\*, 2010; River Valley RC Staff 2014, Population Age By Sex Profile for the City of Hamilton ESRI Community Profile for the City of Hamilton 2013,2018 RVRC, \*2000 RVRC for the City of Hamilton

The population breakdown by age group reflects significant changes in both the 18 and over population and the 18 and under population from 2000 to 2010. The 18 and over population grew by 312 persons while the 18 and under population grew by 110 persons. The largest increase in any age cohort is in the 35-55 age bracket which grew by 128 people from 2000-2010.



**TABLE 3: CITY OF HAMILTON POPULATION BY ETHNICITY AND RACE: 1980 - 2018**

Category	1980	1990	2000	2010	2013	2018
City of Hamilton: Population by Ethnicity and Population By Race						
Hispanic or Latino	0	0	2	24	29	41
Non-Hispanic or Latino	506	454	592	992	1,002	1,016
Population By Race						
White	320	254	403	665	720	712
African American	183	198	178	332	288	318
Asian	1	1	9	2	3	4
American Indian and Alaska Native	1	1	2	1	6	6
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	1	3	4	6
Identified by two or more	0	0	1	13	10	11

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980, 1990, 2000\*, 2010; \*River Valley RC Staff Adjusted, ESRI Community Profile for the City of Hamilton 2013, 2018.

The above table shows the racial make-up of Hamilton. The racial makeup of Hamilton changed from 1980 to 2000. In 1980, 63 percent of Hamilton’s population was white with African Americans accounting for 36 percent of the total population. American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian or Pacific Islander accounted for less than 1 percent of total population. In 2000, whites accounted for 67.75 percent of total population while African Americans comprised 29.96 percent of total population. From 1980 to 2000 the percentages of whites in Hamilton increased by 5 percent while the percentage of African Americans decreased by 6 percent. The percentage of American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander and other increased from .58 percent to 2.27 percent. The percentage of Whites in 2010 in Hamilton was 65 percent, while the percentage of African Americans was 33 percent. Thus the percentage of White population has decreased slightly while the percentage of the African American population increased slightly. Other racial groups grew from less than 1 percent of total population to 2 percent of total population.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The City of Hamilton is the County Seat for Harris County. Hamilton is located in the River Valley Region, located 34 miles north of the City of Columbus and approximately 24 miles south of the City of LaGrange. Both of these communities provide expanded employment opportunities for Harris County residents. Each municipality within the county has its own identity and its own economic potential. The City of Hamilton has capitalized on its status as the county seat and thus provides many jobs in the social, educational public administration and retail services sectors. The city’s equal-distant location between Lagrange and the city of Columbus provides a great opportunity for individuals to have great access to larger employment markets or the advantage of working in Hamilton and also living in a great little city.

In 2013 the City of Hamilton’s percentage of residents above the age of 16 and participating in the labor forces .is 50%. . Since 2000 Hamilton’s labor force participation rate has traditionally been between 44% and 54% with a 54% rate of participation in 2010 and a rate of 44% participation in 2000.

**Table 4: City of Hamilton Civilian Population 16+ in Labor Force 2013**

	2013	% in Labor Force in 2013
City of Hamilton	402	88%
State of Georgia	4,813,601	65%
United States	156,456,694	64%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

**Table 5: City of Hamilton Employment by Industry 2013**

Category	1990	2000	% of Total Civilian Population 2013
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	8.2%	2.0%	0%
Construction	3.5%	19.0%	13.8%
Manufacturing	14.6%	17.0%	10%
Wholesale Trade	0.0%	2.0%	0.3%
Retail Trade	15.2%	6.0%	10.5%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	4.1%	3.0%	1.5%
Information	NA	2.0%	2.3%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	2.9%	4.0%	5.1%
Services Including: Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	1.8%	0.0%	52.7%
Educational, health and social services	19.9%	22.0%	See Above
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	0.0%	15.0%	See Above
Other Services	17.5%	5.0%	See Above
Public Administration	12.3%	3.0%	3.8%
Total Employed by Industry	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990,2000, ESRI Business Analyst 2013

The above table shows the percent of employment by Industry for the City of Hamilton from 1990 to 2013. The manufacturing, construction, retail trade and the service industry in general are the largest employment sectors from a percentage standpoint during that time period. The education, health, and social service sector is the largest service employment sector.

Five (5) Largest Employers in the City of Hamilton

1. Harris County School District
2. Department of Family and Children’s Services
3. Farm Bureau Insurance
4. First Peoples Bank
5. Wells Fargo

Source: Harris County Chamber of Commerce

**HOUSING**

Hamilton added 158 housing units built in the past 20 years, of the occupied units 58% of the units are owner occupied in 2010, while 42 % were renter occupied in 2010 In the year 2000 60% of Hamilton’s occupied housing units were owner occupied while 40% of units were rental occupied . In 2010 the number of vacant units was 12% of total housing. In 2000 the number of vacant units was 10% of total housing. In comparison, the percentage of owner occupied units in Harris County in 2010 is 85.8%, the State of Georgia is 65.7%.The percent of renter occupied housing in 2010 in Harris County is 14.2% and 34.3% in the State of Georgia. The percentage of vacant units in Harris County and Georgia in 2010 is 11.7% and 12.2%.

Table 6: City of Hamilton Occupancy Characteristics 1990 - 2013						
Category	1990 Hamilton	2000 Hamilton	2010 Hamilton	2010 Harris	2010 Georgia	2013
TOTAL Housing Units Built	179	191	337	13,397	9,687,663	348
Housing Units Vacant	19	19	42 / 13%	1,574 / 12%	12%	49
Housing Units Owner Occupied	101	103	171 / 58%	10,147 / 86%	66%	206
Housing Units Renter Occupied	59	69	124 / 42%	1,676 / 14%	34%	92

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990, 2000, 2010; ESRI Business Analyst, 2013

Table 7: City of Hamilton Recorded Housing Units by Type 2000 and 2010		
Category	2000**	2010***
Single Units (detached)	141	218
Single Units (attached)	46	62
Double Units	0	30
3 to 4 Units	0	0
5 to 9 Units	0	24
10 to 19 Units	0	0
20 or more Units	0	0
Mobile Home or Trailer	4	3
All Other (Boat, RV, Van, Etc.)	0	0
Total Housing Units	191	337

Source: Hamilton and RVRC Adjusted Housing 200 and 2014 Census Numbers

In 2010 housing stock in City of Hamilton consists of a mixture of traditional single family stick-built homes, multi-family units, primarily single-family attached or single units attached and two small apartment complexes. Single-family detached and attached units are still the dominant housing type.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL

Hamilton's primary intergovernmental interaction is with Harris County. However, informal working relationships do exist between neighboring city jurisdictions such as Pine Mountain, Shiloh, and Waverly Hall. In order to reduce issues and make the most of the potential opportunities the City of Hamilton should maintain open communication and dialogue with its neighboring jurisdictions in regards to local and regional issues. The city should maintain proper working relationships between local and regional governments in regards to transportation projects and the impact of development on important regional resources and other environmentally sensitive areas. City officials must be stay aware of transportation and water planning activities either directly or thru Harris County with agencies such as the Columbus MPO, Water Resource Councils, or the Georgia Department of Transportation. Lastly the Service Delivery Strategy should be updated regularly. The SDS update will be done in conjunction with the update of the Comprehensive Plan. SDS activities are currently underway.

## LAND USE

An analysis of existing development patterns provides an understanding of how land is used at a specific point in time. An existing land use map is the first step in gaining an understanding of not only what land uses exist and where they are but how they interact. The purpose of this section is to map and review existing land use in the City of Hamilton; look at areas in need of attention, areas in need of protection and areas with development opportunities. The last task is the creation of a character area map which groups areas of similar land use characteristics or land use traits.

The following table illustrates the acreage and percent of county total land dedicated to existing land uses. Acreage totals does not include roads.

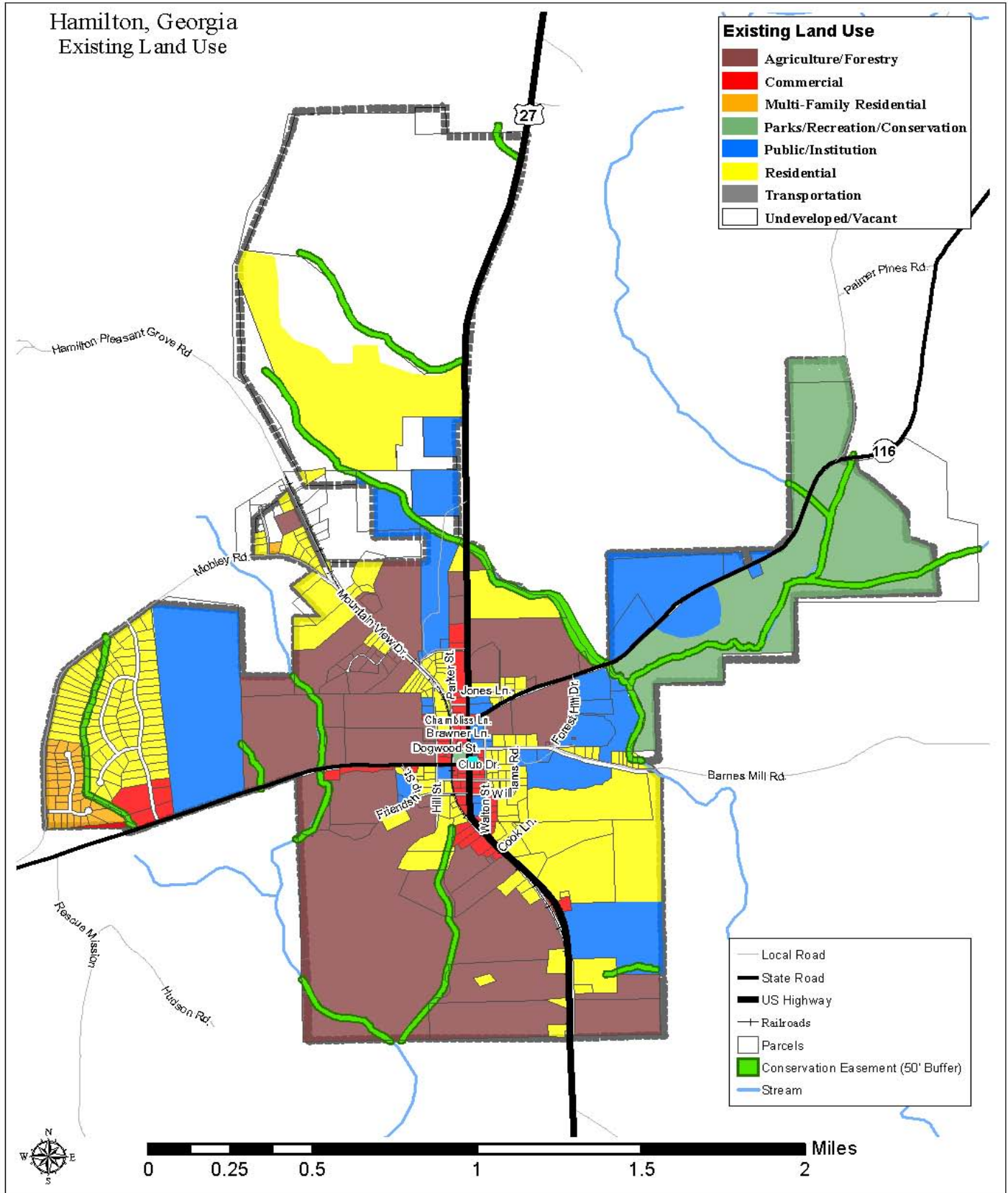
Existing Land Use Classification	Total Acreage	% of Total Acreage
Residential	420	22.29%
Multi-Family Residential	23	1.20%
Commercial	46	2.42%
Industrial	0	0.00%
Transportation/Communication/Utility	0.08	0.004%
Recreation/Parks & Conservation	188	9.95%
Public/Institutional	306	16.22%
Agricultural/Forestry	571	30.27%
Vacant/Undeveloped	333	17.64%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>1,885</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: RVRC 2014

The following table presents the definitions of each of the land use categories.

Existing Land Use	Definition
Residential	Single-family residential uses, multi-family residential uses (apartments and duplexes), and manufactured and mobile home units (all normally located on no less than a one-quarter of an acre lots)
Agriculture/Forestry	Land used for agricultural purposes such as farming and/or livestock production and timber production
Commercial	Commercial uses including office use; retail, restaurants, convenience store, car dealerships, etc.
Industrial	Land dedicated to industrial uses(includes both light and heavy industrial uses)
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	State, Federal and local parks, active and passive recreation activities, and protected land; includes land preserved in land trust
Public/Institutional	Community facilities excluding utilities, government (schools, public safety facilities, courthouse, jail, health facilities, churches, and libraries)
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	Land used transportation, communication or utility facilities (cell towers, power stations, water tower, and water treatment facilities)
Road Right-of-Way	Land dedicated to road use including right of way
Undeveloped/Vacant	Land where no apparent active uses exist; property with dilapidated or abandoned structures or overgrown vacant lots

Hamilton, Georgia  
Existing Land Use



## **AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION**

### **Areas Where Development is Likely to Occur**

Nearly a quarter of the land in Hamilton is considered vacant/undeveloped, constituting 24.2% of the total acreage, while another 29.63% is listed as Agricultural/ Forestry. Together these two land use categories comprise over fifty percent of the land in Hamilton. Both categories have access to US 27/SR1 and SR 116 corridors, Hamilton's major transportation corridors and gateways to the city, as well as city water and sewer, making them likely places for new development. There is one area, Sweet Bay that is currently developing albeit at a slow pace. The roads are in and housing is being constructed. Also homes are being built in the recently developed Foggy Cedars subdivision. Both of these developments are located off U.S. 27. The city needs to adopt overlay districts to control access, signage, parking and landscaping along these critical entry points.



### **Areas Where the Pace of Development Has Outpaced or May Soon Outpace the Availability of Community Facilities and Services Including Transportation**

Hamilton does not anticipate any growth problems that will soon outpace the availability of Community Facilities. Hamilton's water and sewage systems are in good shape and those systems have the capacity to handle existing development as well as future development. Transportation improvements are needed in the downtown area to alleviate traffic congestion however.

### **Areas with Significant In-Fill Development Opportunities**

Opportunities exist for infill development throughout the city. Primary areas include the residential subdivision located north of SR 116 (i.e. Hamilton Village, Mobley Road, etc.), the residential and commercial areas around the Hamilton Town Square and north of town out US 27 (Sweet Bay Subdivision) and south of Town Square (Foggy Cedars Subdivision). There are also infill opportunities out Barnes Mill Road.

### **Brownfields**

There are no known Brownfields in the city of Hamilton.

### **Areas Needing Redevelopment or Improvements to Aesthetics or Attractiveness**

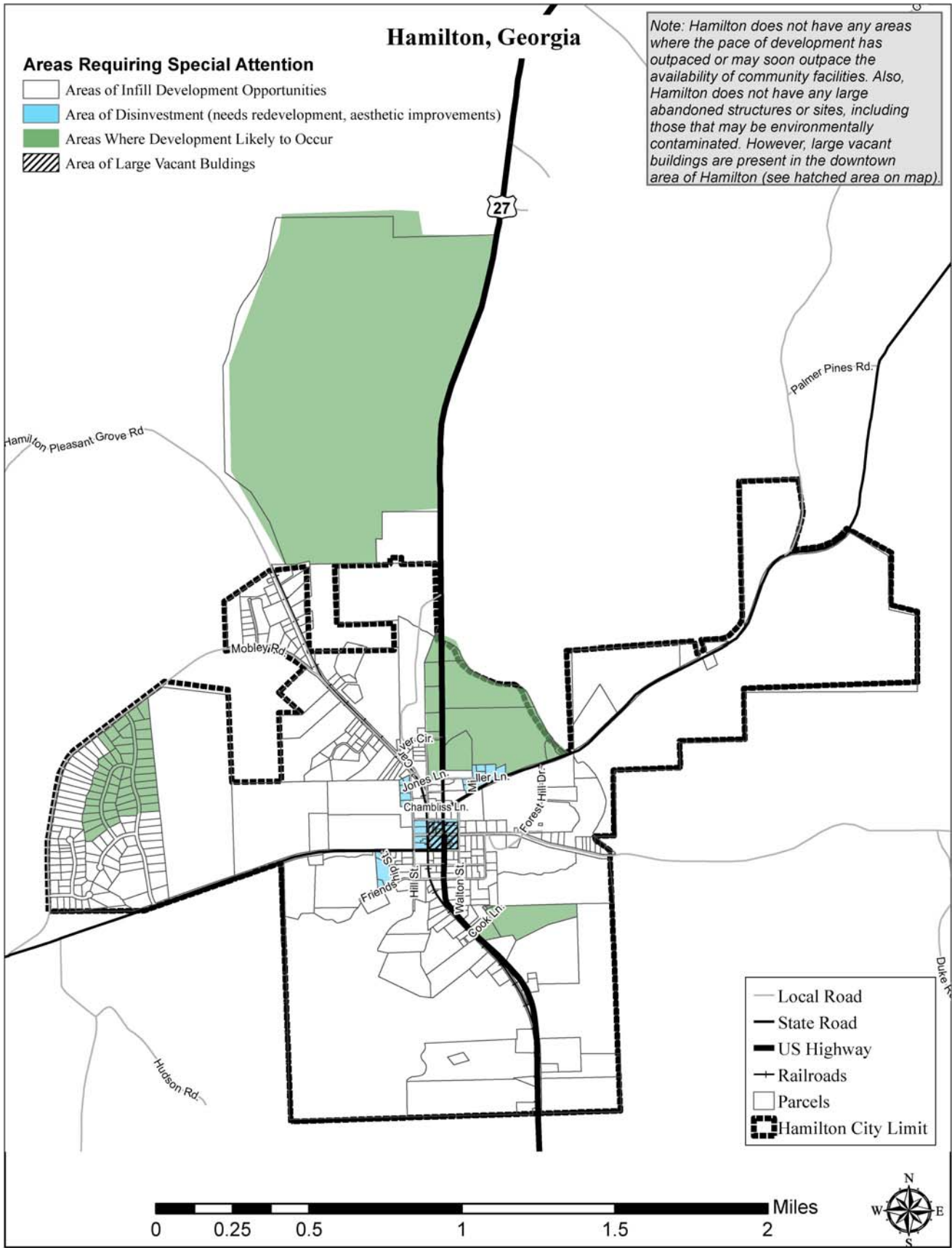
There are four primary areas needing some improvement in Hamilton. The downtown area is overall in good shape. There are a few buildings however that needs minor improvements. There are also two pockets of residential area that have some deteriorating and in some cases dilapidated structures.

# Hamilton, Georgia

## Areas Requiring Special Attention

- Areas of Infill Development Opportunities
- Area of Disinvestment (needs redevelopment, aesthetic improvements)
- Areas Where Development Likely to Occur
- Area of Large Vacant Buildings

*Note: Hamilton does not have any areas where the pace of development has outpaced or may soon outpace the availability of community facilities. Also, Hamilton does not have any large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated. However, large vacant buildings are present in the downtown area of Hamilton (see hatched area on map).*

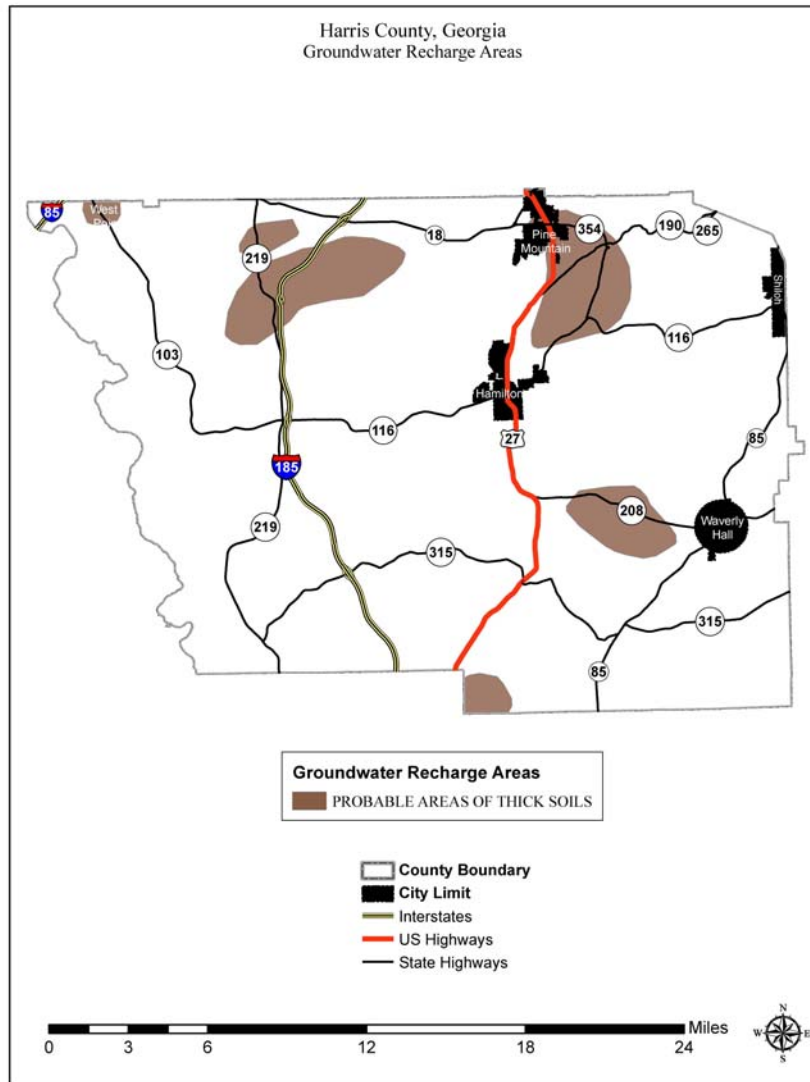


## SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural environment places certain opportunities and constraints on the way land is used. Soil conditions, slopes, flood frequency and wetlands all affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. In Hamilton, areas adjacent to and affecting Palmetto Creek should be reviewed for compliance with state and local ordinances and regulations. There are a series of wetlands and flood zones along Palmetto Creek, most of which are outside the city limits of Hamilton, but none the less need to be maintained and protected. There is also a major wetland area along Little Branch Creek that runs from the southwest corner of Hamilton to Harris County High. Hamilton has many areas throughout the City with sloping land that totals between 15% and 30%. In these areas special design guidelines need to be created and then followed. Development on slopes 30% and greater is not recommended.

## GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREA

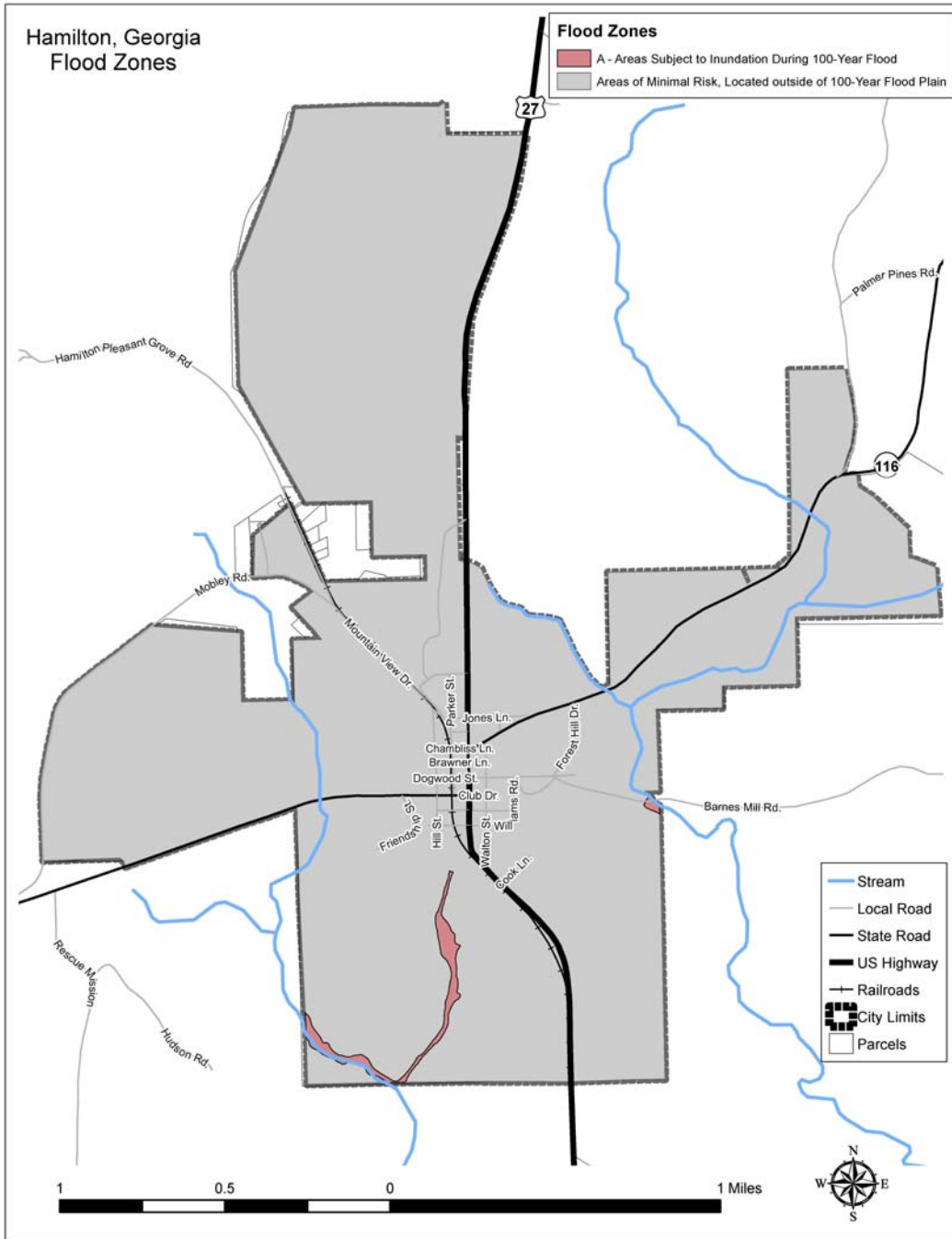
There are six areas that may be considered significant recharge areas in Harris County. These are deep-water recharge areas characterized by thick soils/scapolite, low slopes, and are found in certain sections of the county. There is no groundwater recharge areas located in Hamilton. See Groundwater Recharge Area Map. EPD has not required Hamilton to adopt a Groundwater Recharge Ordinance.





# FLOOD AREA

The City of Hamilton does participate in the FEMA Flood Insurance program and its flood areas are mapped. Flood prone areas occur along the Little Branch and Palmetto/Beaver Creek. Harris County is mapped by FEMA and participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. Thus, any building construction in flood prone areas will have to meet all construction standards as per the FEMA adopted Flood Ordinance.



## SLOPE

Those areas of the city that would be most-to-least conducive to various types of construction including buildings and streets, based on the steepness of slopes, were mapped for use in several analyses. Slopes of 15% - 25% and greater have been mapped for Hamilton. In general, lands with slopes less than 15% are located along existing transportation corridors, streambeds, and developed areas. Slopes greater than 15% can be found scattered throughout the city and are primarily undeveloped properties.

All development in Hamilton is subject to soil erosion and sedimentation control measures. The City of Hamilton has adopted a soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance which is enforced locally. In addition, the subdivision regulations recommend that new streets be planned to conform to existing topographic conditions and establish maximum grades for new streets. Since development in the area of steep slopes has been relatively rare present procedures have been adequate. As the more easily developable land in the city is utilized, the pressure to develop areas of steep slopes will increase.

Land disturbing activities in area of steep slopes are likely to result in soil erosion. Development of these areas also involves a substantial increase in the cost of land preparation and construction. For these reasons, use of these areas should be avoided.



## WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

Water supply watersheds are defined by DNR as the areas of land upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water intake. In a typical situation, the volume of water in a stream is determined by the amount of precipitation and the capacity and speed of absorption into the soil. Land cover, slope, soil type and the intensity and duration of rainfall all affect the rate of water absorption, or infiltration. Water that is not absorbed by the soil, detained on the surface in depressions, ponds, lakes, or intercepted by vegetation, runs off the land as overflow or surface runoff. Water released through the soil adds to the overflow to form total runoff. As runoff flows into lower elevations, it organizes into drainage areas, the boundaries of which form watersheds. The runoff from a watershed accumulates in streams which serve as outlets for water from the watershed.

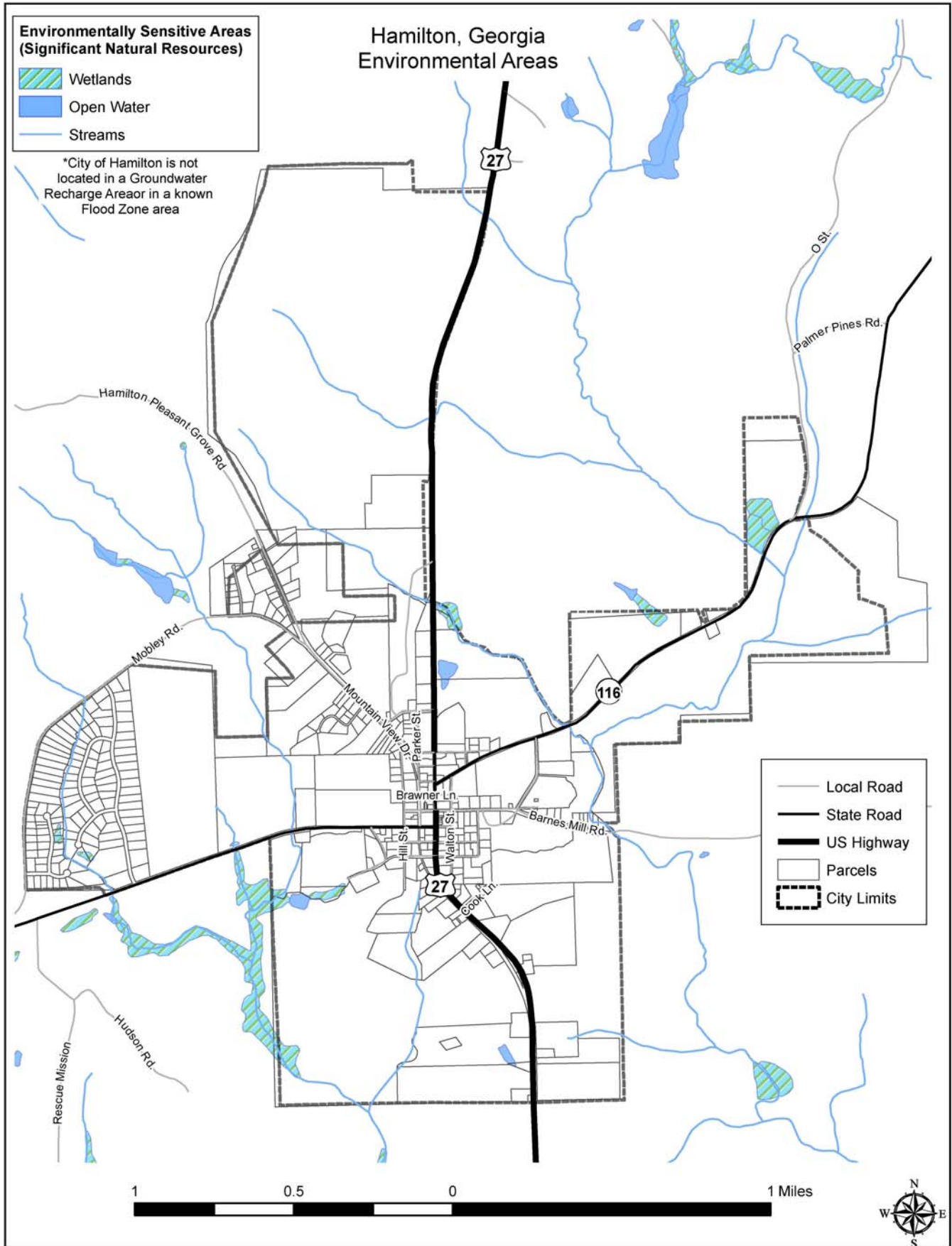
Removing vegetation from the stream channel and paving over the soil increases the volume and rate of surface runoff which, in turn, increases the potential for erosion, flooding and sedimentation (pollution) of the stream. To protect drinking water supplies downstream, DNR has established buffer requirements and impervious surface limitation to be applied to certain watersheds.

Hamilton lies in the Mulberry Creek Watershed but does not rely on the flow of surface water for any portion of its water source. Hamilton uses three granite wells for water. None the less, Hamilton needs to be aware of how future development can negatively impact the Mulberry Creek Watershed. EPD has not required Hamilton to adopt a Watershed Protection Ordinance.

## WETLANDS

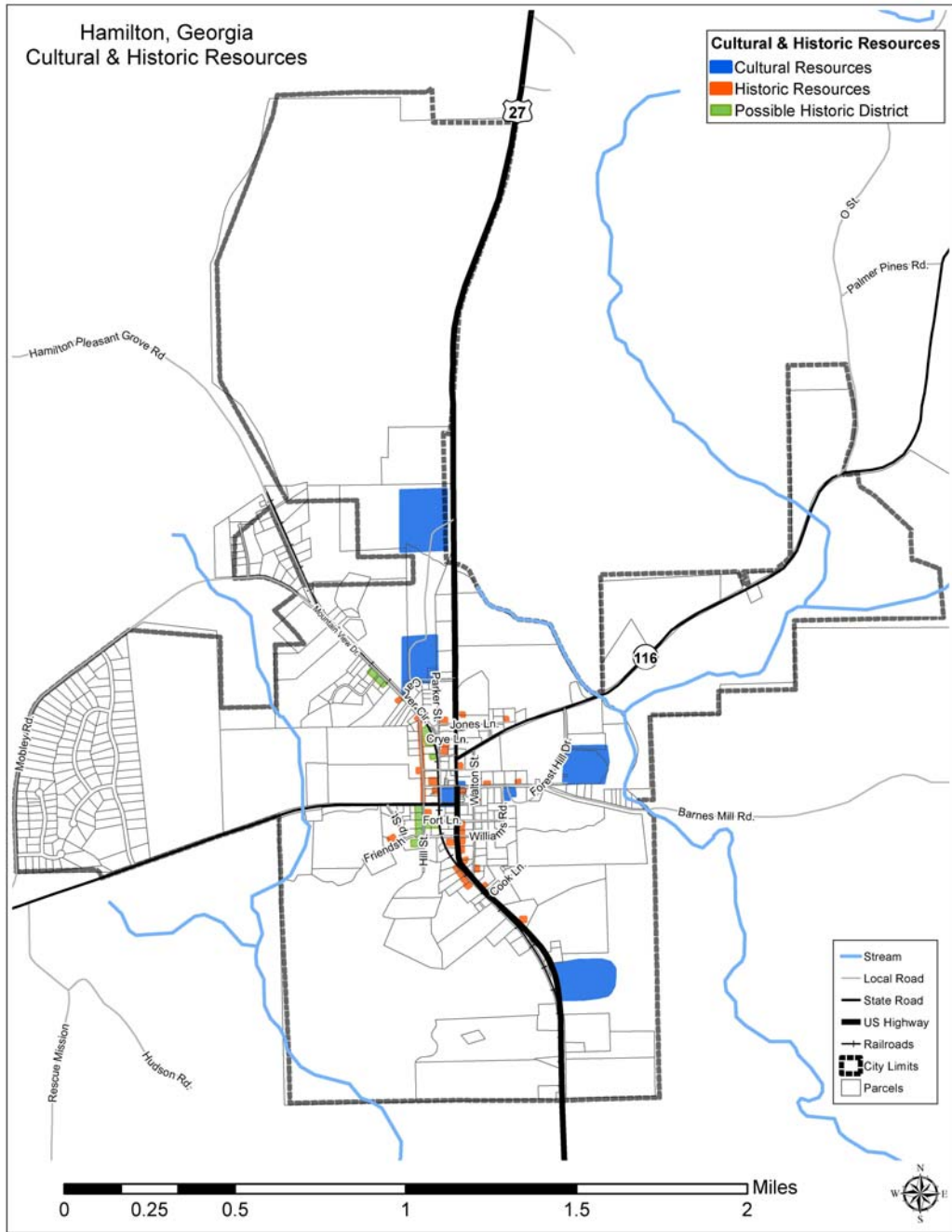
Freshwater wetlands are defined by federal law as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Under natural conditions, wetlands help to maintain and enhance water quality by filtering out sediments and associated non-point source pollutants from adjacent land uses. They also store water, thereby stabilizing dry weather stream flows and flood hazards. In addition, wetlands serve important functions as fish, wildlife, and plant habitats.

To avoid long-term impairment, uses of wetlands should be limited to timber production and harvesting, wildlife and fisheries management, wastewater treatment, recreation, natural water quality treatment or purification and other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act. A small amount of wetland has been identified in the City of Hamilton. In Hamilton, areas adjacent to and affecting Palmetto Creek should be reviewed for compliance with state and local ordinances and regulations. There are a series of wetlands and flood zones along Palmetto Creek, most of which are outside the city limits of Hamilton, but none the less need to be maintained and protected. There is also a major wetland area along Little Branch Creek that runs from the southwest corner of Hamilton to Harris County High. Hamilton is required to follow the standards established by DNR for their protection.



# SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES

In 1994 a comprehensive survey of Harris County historic resources was completed. That survey identified 570 resources 50 years old or older in the county. The 1994 Survey also identified the City of Hamilton as having a large concentration of historic resources that would be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The City of Hamilton enacted a historic preservation ordinance in 2003, but has not appointed a historic preservation commission. Hamilton is the location of the historic Harris County Courthouse and a town square with a few blocks of historic commercial buildings concentrated around it. The City has retrofitted the Town Square for better pedestrian access and improving its appearance by reconstructing the existing sidewalks and doing other minor streetscape improvements. The next step should be façade improvements for town square buildings and the addition of parking. Connecting the town square via pedestrian access to residential areas and developing bike trail are activities that once completed would solidify the town square of Hamilton as the place to be.



# CHARACTER AREA VISION STATEMENTS

## PARKS/ RECREATION/ CONSERVATION

**Vision:** Due to the environmental and cultural significance of Hamilton's parks, natural and cultural resources and the citizenry desire to protect said attributes. The City of Hamilton will protect its natural resources, to include State, Federal and local parks, conservation areas, protected open space (wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, native flora and fauna, natural buffers) and other significant preserves. The vision includes:

1. Limit new development to include only agricultural uses, public utilities (water/sewer lines), bike/ pedestrian paths, or other low impact recreation facilities such as baseball or softball fields.
2. Promote use of conservation easements.
3. Promote areas as passive use tourism and recreational destinations.
4. Construction and widening of roadways should only be done when absolutely necessary with careful designs.
5. Environmentally sensitive areas will be preserved by setting them aside as public parks, trails, or greenbelts.
6. Infrastructure availability will be used to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive areas in an effort to protect native flora and fauna.
7. Protect stream corridors by requiring additional buffer area (fifty feet from each stream bank).



8. Site plans, building design and landscaping that are sensitive to natural features of the site including topography and views.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred** Hamilton prefers agriculture/ forestry, parks/ recreation/ conservation, and limited public/ institutional use i.e. wells, utilities, and bike/ pedestrian trail and low impact recreation facilities. Zoning categories include A-1 (agricultural).

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection, Heritage Preservation and Sense of Place.

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic and cultural resources of the City of Hamilton.
  - a. Encourage maximum use of the county's natural resources while maintaining sound environmental protection practices.
  - b. Encourage and promote land use and development that respects natural limitation of flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.

- c. Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses
  - d. Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads and other facilities to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions.
  - e. Draft a stream buffer overlay district.
  - f. Review subdivision and zoning regulations for best management practices.
2. Conserve, maintain and promote the cultural, historic and natural resources to provide a variety of educational experiences.
- a. Encourage local schools to use these facilities as an outdoor classroom.
  - b. Support the development of additional cultural resources that will aid in the understanding of local heritage.
  - c. Support regional tourism alliances with other counties and other facilities (such as Ossahatchee Indian Festival and Rodeo) to promote existing and future natural, historic and cultural resources to increase the number of visitors.
  - d. Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources in order to keep the City of Hamilton an attractive place in which to live, work and play.
  - e. Discourage the obstruction of scenic views and sites in the county.
3. Promote and Enhance the Outdoor Recreation Industry.
- a. Encourage the development of service facilities to meet the needs of this sector of the economy.
  - b. Establish natural habitats for a variety of wildlife.
  - c. Develop and promote additional competitions and festivals targeted to this market.
  - d. Conduct a simple market analysis in an effort to pinpoint any outdoor recreation business potential.

**LINEAR BIKE/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL**

Vision: Develop abandoned Georgia Southwestern Rail line as a bike/pedestrian/golf cart trail. Once it's developed, link the trail to ecological, cultural and recreational amenities, as well as new residential and commercial development. Utilize existing greenways, roadways, easements, and bike trails in an effort to provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages, while giving users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. The vision also includes:

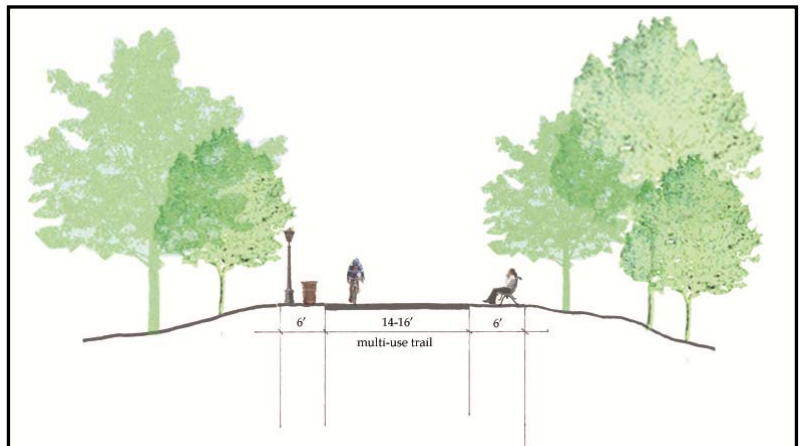
- 1. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails or greenbelts.
- 2. Use infrastructure improvements to control development along the linear bike and pedestrian trail.
- 3. Develop facilities for bicycle storage racks, additional bikeways, bike lanes to connect to developing trail.
- 4. Landscaped buffers between the roadway and bike/pedestrian trails/walkways.
- 5. Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and residential bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas and developing bike trail.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred**

See adjacent Character Areas.

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area**

Open space, Alternative transportation, Intergovernmental cooperation, Sense of Place, Regional Identity, Heritage Preservation



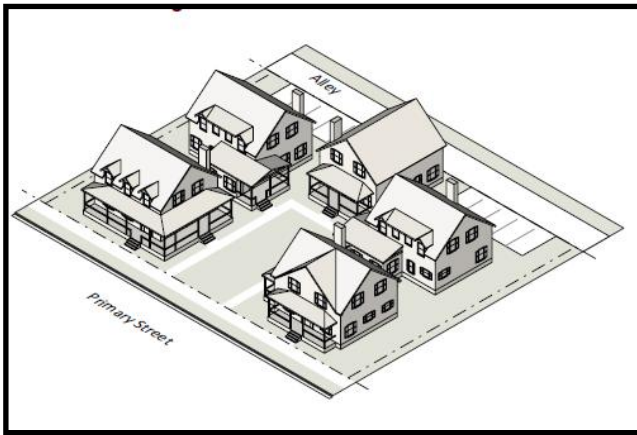
## Implementation Measures/Strategies

Create these linkages by:

1. Linking green spaces into a pleasant network of greenways.
2. Establish other trails and greenways networks to positively impact individuals and improve communities by providing recreation and transportation opportunities.
3. Identify areas of planning coordination with other governments including both Harris County and the Town of Pine Mountain to coordinate and promote trail expansion.
4. Conduct a bike/walkability analysis. Examine the extent and size of the bike trail/sidewalk network, its internal and external connectivity and the attractiveness and security of the bike trail/sidewalks and street crossings.

## ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL

Vision: These are primarily platted and developed residential areas of the City of Hamilton. Maintain existing development pattern/density, but look to improve subdivision/development by:



1. Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform to traditional neighborhood development principles.

a. This includes creating neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable infill locations within walking distance of residents.

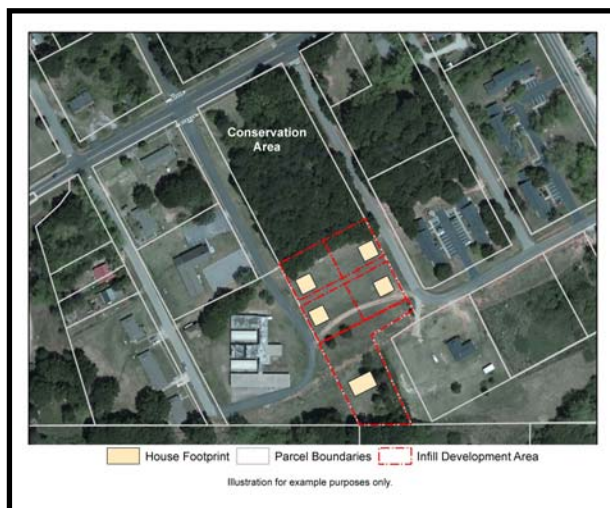
b. Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walk-ability within existing neighborhoods.

c. Permit accessory housing units, or new well-designed, small-

scale infill single-family attached residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred** Land use is single-family detached residential on a one-half acre parcel. In areas where plats are reordered, the existing development pattern will be continued. Single-family attached will be considered as part of a conservation/cluster subdivision or PUD. Preferred zoning categories are: R-1, PUD (Planned Unit Development).

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area** Infill Development, Resource Conservation, Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection and Housing Choices.



## Implementation Measures/Strategies:

1. Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform to traditional neighborhood development and conservation design principles by utilizing existing water/sewer infrastructure.
2. Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walk-ability within existing neighborhoods.
3. Permit accessory housing units such as garage apartments, or new well-designed, infill residences to increase neighborhood density.
4. Promote strong connectivity between developments.
5. Establish good vehicular and pedestrian/ bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity; connectivity to adjacent properties/

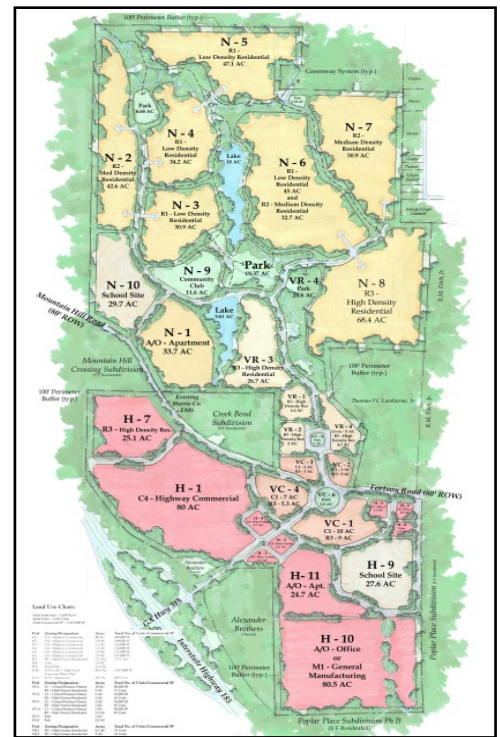


- subdivisions, and multiple site access points.
- 6. Wherever possible, connect to region network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.
- 7. Review existing design guidelines for effectiveness and impact on new development.

**MASTER PLANNED COMMUNITY/ NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**

**Vision:** Promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions. New development should be master-planned with mixed uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision.

- 1. There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development and existing land uses.
- 2. There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points and to encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- 3. Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes. Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- 4. New development should provide facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, storage racks, etc.
- 5. Development should be clustered in nodes to create open space and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- 6. New development should orient houses to the street, with the majority of houses having front porches, provide pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
- 7. The majority of parking should be at the rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street and be landscaped.



**Land Uses Preferred Includes:** Single-family detached, commercial.

**Zoning Categories Include:** R-1, C (commercial), and PUD (Planned Unit Development).

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Resource Conservation, Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection, Housing Choices, Transportation Alternatives, and Traditional Neighborhoods.

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

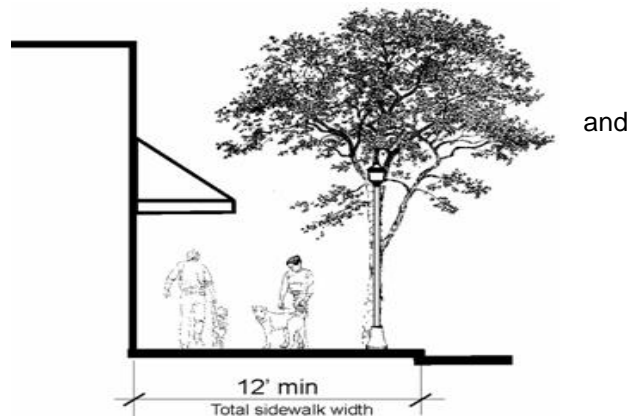
- 1. Landscaping guidelines/ordinance to include requirements for protection of existing trees, planting of trees, establishment of landscaped strips as buffers between developments, etc.
- 2. Practice low impact development measures and planning and design practices and technologies to conserve and protect natural resources systems and reduce infrastructure costs.
- 3. Incorporate sustainable/green design for developments creating environmentally sound and resource-efficient buildings by using an integrated approach to design promoting resource conservation energy efficiency and water conservation.
- 4. Use buffers to help existing neighborhood areas and surrounding agricultural tracts in an effort to provide visual and sound barriers between adjacent or incompatible uses.

5. Use the orderly expansion of water and sewer service to effectively manage growth and governmental expenditures through planned phased expansion of infrastructure guided by community vision.
6. Allow accessory housing units like garage apartments located on same lot as a single family unit.
7. Creative design for higher density developments that encourage the design of higher density developments to blend with the surrounding neighborhoods by masking the high-density aspects of the development through landscaping or architectural details.
8. Consider allowing zoning density increases to private developers in exchange for the provisions of specific amenities such as public improvements, open space or a variety of housing choices.
9. Use the subdivision review and zoning process to analyze master planned development for walkability. Check the extent and size of the sidewalks network, its internal and external connectivity and the attractiveness and security of the sidewalks and street crossings and connectivity to other uses.
10. Utilize flexible parking standards and street design in place of rigid parking and street requirements.
11. Residential development should reinforce non-residential uses locating higher density housing options adjacent to commercial uses and development core area, including multi-family town homes and condominiums.
12. Development should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
13. Include direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks.
14. Review ordinances for best development practices.

## TOWN SQUARE

**Vision:** The City of Hamilton will ensure proper management of all developed and undeveloped land paralleling U. S. 27 from Copeland Lane thru the town center and out to the Brawner Lane intersection. In an effort to improve the usability of the area, including improvements to traffic flow, landscaping (bike/ pedestrian/ golf cart trails, benches, outdoor lighting), signage, façades, parking, and connectivity, Hamilton will have a vibrant and active Town Square that has been fully restored and well maintained. This area will be a focal point for the City of Hamilton and Harris County offering a concentration of activities to include general retail, professional offices, live/work loft housing and appropriate public and open space uses, which will all be easily accessible by pedestrians. The town square will be an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly place where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing and entertainment. The In Town Corridor/Town Square is the key component to maintaining Hamilton's unique sense of place and must be protected from architecturally incompatible development. Hamilton will protect the In-Town Corridor and Town Square by:

1. prohibiting corporate architecture;
2. regulating signage within the town center/ in-town corridor;
3. utilizing existing or available parking in Town Square;
4. requiring buildings in the Town Square to be architecturally integrated with the site and one another and developed at a scale sufficient in size, bulk and height to provide image identification for the square area and surrounding community;



5. new buildings/commercial structures will be located near street front with parking in rear of buildings in an effort to be more pedestrian friendly and keep the Town Square aesthetically pleasing; and
6. given the impending development of the city's new bike/pedestrian trail, the city will identify places for bicycle facilities including bikeways or bike lanes and storage racks.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred**

Single-family detached residential (matching surrounding neighborhood character and density), commercial, public institutional, bike/pedestrian facilities, live/work loft units and traditional neighborhoods. Preferred zoning categories include CD (Commercial Downtown), R-1. Public water and sewer is required for high-density development in this area.

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area**

Traditional Neighborhoods, Infill Development, Sense of Place, Transportation Alternative, Regional Identity, Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection, Appropriate Business and Housing Choices

**Implementation Measures/Strategies**

1. Encourage attractive streets with signage guiding visitors to town square and scenic areas around the community.
  - a. Enhance corridor appearance through streetscaping (streetlights, landscaping), sidewalk improvements and sidewalk construction.
  - b. Expand upon existing design guidelines for new development to include minimal building setback requirements from the street.
  - c. Corridors leading to town square must be attractive, where development is carefully controlled to maintain or improve appearances.
  - d. Reduce the role and impact of vehicles in the community by employing attractive traffic calming measures along major roadways and exploring alternative solutions to parking congestion.
  - e. Provide basic access for pedestrians and bicycles.
  - f. Coordinate land uses and bike/ pedestrian facility connections where applicable.
  - g. Encourage a mix of residential, commercial uses, and community facilities at small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations.
2. Support economic development that is compatible with existing businesses and the tourist industry.
  - a. Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods and services in the Town Square.
  - b. Encourage the rehabilitation of storefronts in the Town Square.
  - c. Support the location and maintenance of desirable and suitable entertainment facilities in the Town Square.
  - d. Encourage cultural events, i.e. art shows, small fairs, and other attractions in the Town Square.
  - e. Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures.
  - f. Preserve historic and cultural buildings and monuments.
  - g. Provide daily clean-up services in the downtown areas.
3. Encourage citizens to shop locally.
  - a. Make business hours more compatible to fit the needs of local shoppers.
4. Create usable spaces by renovating deteriorating structures and tearing down dilapidated structures (those beyond repair or renovation).

5. Perform a local parking study to determine areas that have parking problems including an analysis of where parking is adequate and where it is in short supply, projections of future parking supply/demand and review local policies affecting parking.
6. Sustainable/green design for development; create environmentally-sound and resources-efficient buildings by using an integrated approach to design; promoting resource conservation, energy efficiency, water conservation features.
7. Consider adopting a Historic Preservation Ordinance.
8. Conduct a Downtown Specific Study for the Town Square area and expand community design guidelines.
9. Keep maximum distances for block length and width and/or perimeter to keep the scale of development small and allow for short distances walkable by pedestrians.
10. Look at on-street parking enhancements such as taking advantage of opportunities to add on-street parking in areas where additional parking is most needed; such as changing parallel parking to angle parking, converting underused medians, loading areas, etc.
11. Parking bank/inventory long-term parking areas with street signage so that the most convenient parking areas are left for short-term users including visitors and customers to the Town Square area. Encourage property owners to share parking.
12. Work with Harris County to develop parking solutions.

## AGRICULTURE/CONSERVATION

**Vision:** These are typically large tracts of forested family-owned land both hardwood and pine that are either undeveloped or have a few residential structures. Maintaining rural agriculture and forested property is part of the City of Hamilton's development vision and economy. The goal is to protect forested property while allowing limited residential development.

1. Limited new development.
2. Protect farmland/ forest land and open space.
3. Maintain appropriate size lot.
4. Consider use of conservation easements by land owners.
5. Limit the development of residential subdivision.
6. Require compatible architectural designs that maintain the rural character.
7. Widening roadways only when absolutely necessary and with careful designs.
8. Any residential development should be done on 4+ acre tracts.

### Conservation Subdivision



**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:** Land Uses preferred include agriculture/forestry, low density single family detached residential, conservation /cluster subdivision, transportation/ communication/ utility and limited public institutional use. Preferred zoning categories include A-1 (Agricultural) or a conservation/cluster ordinance.

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Transportation Alternatives, Regional Identity, Traditional Character, Preservation of Open Space, and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Resource Conservation

### **Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. New residential development will be single-family on 4 acre plus tracts.
  - a. Subdivision design incorporates a significant amount of open space.
  - b. Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.
  - c. Require compatible architecture designs that maintain the rural character.
  - d. Require minimum lot sizes of 4 or more acres to limit development density and protect the rural character.
  - e. Require site plans, building designs and landscaping that are sensitive to the natural features of the site, including topography and views.
  - f. Wherever possible, connect to a regional bike/pedestrian network.
  - g. New development (subdivisions) designed with more character, with attractive clustering of buildings leaving open space, green space, and trails available to pedestrians, bicyclists and other recreational users.
2. Draft a landscaping guideline and ordinance to protect existing trees, planting of trees, landscaped strips as buffers between developments, etc.
3. Draft conservation/cluster zoning ordinance.
4. Draft hillside development standards for reasonable hillside use that complements the natural and visual character of Hamilton.
5. Adopt design measure standards or guidelines that ensure that the physical appearance of new developments or improvements to existing properties is compatible with community character.

### **TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD-STABLE**

**Vision:** These are residential areas in older parts of the City of Hamilton typically developed prior to WWII. Characteristics include pedestrian orientation, sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, small regular lots, buildings close to or at the front of property line, low degree of building separation, and businesses well within walking distance. The City of Hamilton Established Residential Neighborhoods will be have a majority of owner-occupied single-family homes, and/or stick-built homes constructed on-site, to serve as a continuing example of well-maintained, stable neighborhoods with sidewalks to encourage pedestrian access, street lighting, and limited vacant properties. For further information and images, please see the Character Area Design Appendix. Maintain existing density and development by:



1. Focus on reinforcing stability by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.
2. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing. Include well-designed new neighborhood activity center at appropriate location, which would provide a focal point for the neighborhood, while also providing a suitable location for a grocery store, hardware store, and similar appropriately-scaled retail establishments serving neighborhood residents.
3. Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided to encourage these residents to walk/bike to work, shopping, or other destinations in the area.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

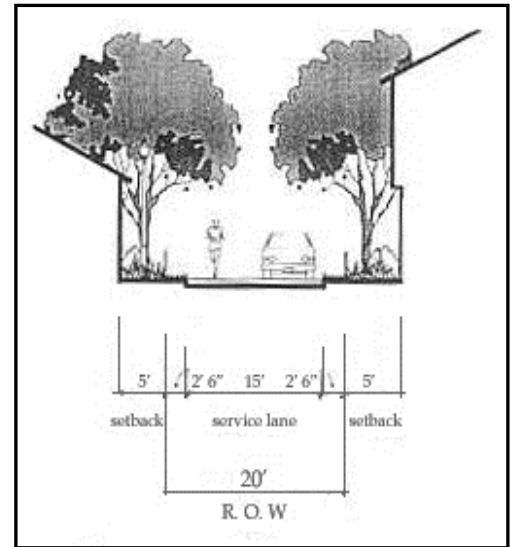
Single-Family detached on a minimum of a one-half acre lot. Development must match existing architectural style and density. Zoning categories preferred include R-1 and C (Commercial). Commercial development will be limited to properties that have commercial zoning. Those properties exist south of Williams Road and north of Barnes Mill Road.

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

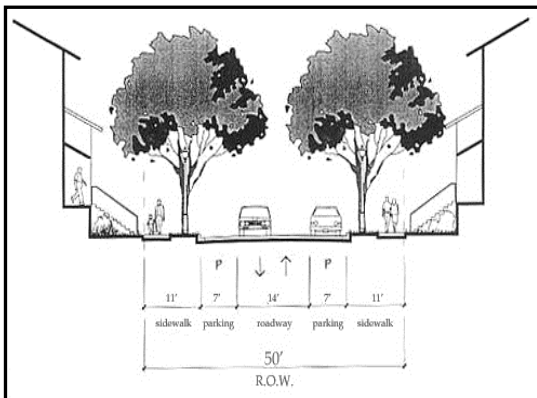
Traditional Neighborhood, Infill Development, Sense of Place, Heritage Preservation, Appropriate Business, Housing Choices

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Protect residential areas and their residents from incompatible land uses and activities.
2. Encourage infill residential development within established neighborhoods that is architecturally compatible with existing housing.
3. Encourage innovative housing city wide that is compatible with city policies.
4. Expand upon design measure standards or guidelines that ensure that the physical appearance of new developments or improvements to existing properties is compatible with community character.
5. Draft developing a landscaping guideline and ordinance to protect existing trees, planting of trees, landscaped strips as buffers between developments, etc.
6. Draft design review guidelines to complement the existing zoning and subdivision regulations.
7. Keep maximum distances for block length and width and/or perimeter to keep the scale of development small and allow for short distances walkable by pedestrians.
8. Review setback requirements to see if they are compatible with the setbacks of existing structures.



**TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPING**



**Vision:** These are vacant lots or underdeveloped lots in traditional neighborhoods or adjacent to traditional neighborhoods that will be developed as traditional neighborhoods. Citizens of Hamilton wish to continue existing traditional neighborhood style development by creating well maintained, stable single-family residential neighborhoods that match the existing lot sizes and architecture of surrounding traditional neighborhoods. The vision includes:

1. Sidewalks with street lighting and landscaping to encourage pedestrian access;
2. Street layouts that match those in the older parts of the community and connect to the existing street network; street and building layout will be site sensitive in order to protect existing natural and cultural resources.
3. Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhood development;



4. Developments with mid-block alleys; and
5. Houses located near the street, with large front porches that encourage interaction with neighbors.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

Single-Family detached on a minimum of a one-half acre lot. Development must match existing architectural style and density. Zoning categories preferred include R-1.

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

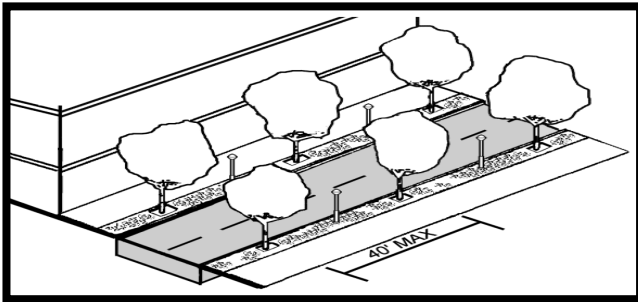
Traditional Neighborhood, Infill Development, Sense of Place, Heritage Preservation, Housing Choices

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Expand upon existing design guidelines, add Design Review to Planning Commission responsibilities.
2. Promote environmentally sensitive site design, draft landscaping guidelines that identify native and drought resistance plants.
3. Maximum Block Length, Width and/or Perimeter, maintain existing block pattern.
4. Review zoning ordinance setback and block length requirements.
5. Develop additional sidewalks as funds are available.

**GATEWAY/ IN-TOWN CORRIDOR**

**Vision:** To develop land adjacent to US Highway 27 and SR 116 in a manner that is visually pleasing to motorist heading in and out of the City of Hamilton by:



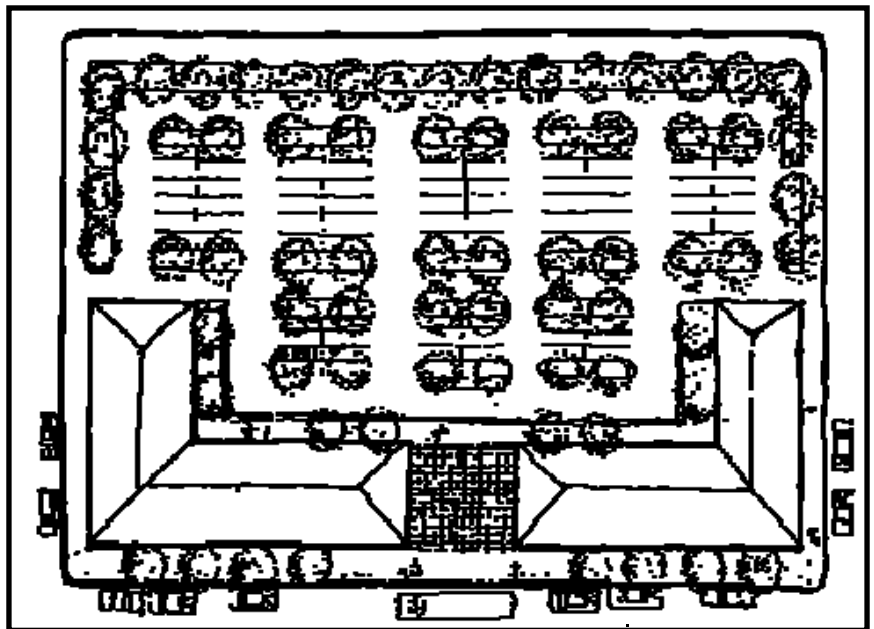
1. Focus on the appearance with the use of appropriate signage, landscaping and other beautification measures.
2. Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments.
3. Retrofit or mask existing strip development or other unsightly features as necessary.

4. Add buffer between development and roadway and place development behind buffer.
5. Provide pedestrian facilities
6. Provide paved shoulders
7. Unacceptable uses new billboards

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

**Land Uses:** Single family detached residential, commercial.

**Zoning:** A-1, R-1, C and DC. Commercial Development is limited to existing commercially zoned areas or as part of the PUD or traditional neighborhood concept.

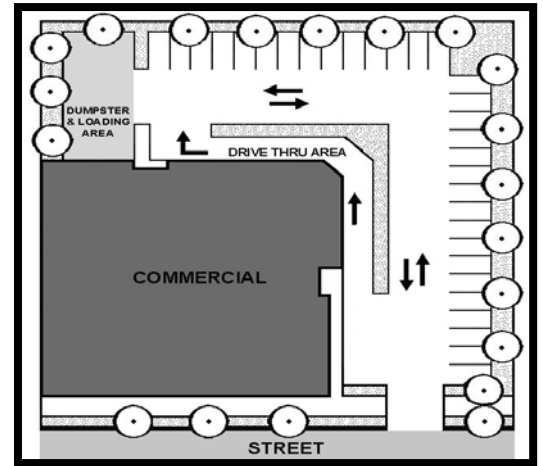


**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

Transportation Alternatives, Infill Development, Appropriate Business, Employment Options

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:** Focus on appearance with appropriate signage, landscaping and other beautification measures.

1. Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to developments and limiting curb cuts.
2. Retrofit or mask existing strip development or other unsightly features as necessary.
3. Provide pedestrian facilities
4. Maintain a natural vegetation buffer along corridors at least 50 feet in width along the corridor.
  - a. Ensure all new developments are setback behind the 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 highways.
5. Encourage landscaping, raised medians to provide vehicular and pedestrian safety, and aesthetics.
6. Provide pedestrian facilities behind drainage ditches or curbs.
7. Provide adequate shoulders for bicycles or emergency breakdown lanes.
  - a. Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to developments.
8. Unacceptable uses: new billboards.
9. Draft corridor management plans for US 27 and SR 116. Overlay districts are used as tools to implement lighting, landscaping, parking, curb cuts, buffers and signs.



**OTHER SPECIAL**

**Vision:** Hamilton will continue to have cemeteries, parks, and other public buildings and recreational facilities to serve its citizens. Hamilton will seek to provide better land use connectivity between city public facilities and adjacent neighborhoods by creating pedestrian/communities, bike/golf cart, bike access, improving visual appearance, scale of facilities and landscaping. These are public land uses and/or outdoor recreation facilities not likely to change in use over the planning period. The vision includes:



1. Landscaped buffers between the roadways and pedestrian walkways will be constructed.
2. Addition of public buildings on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Parks and other recreational facilities will have facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc. will be added.
4. Parking areas will be landscaped to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
5. Cemeteries will have fences and be landscaped.
6. New community facilities will be accommodated by the reuse of existing vacant or under-utilized structures (e.g. commercial centers, office space, and vacant public buildings).



**Land Uses or Zoning Categories to be Allowed:**

Public/Institutional

**Quality Community Objectives:**

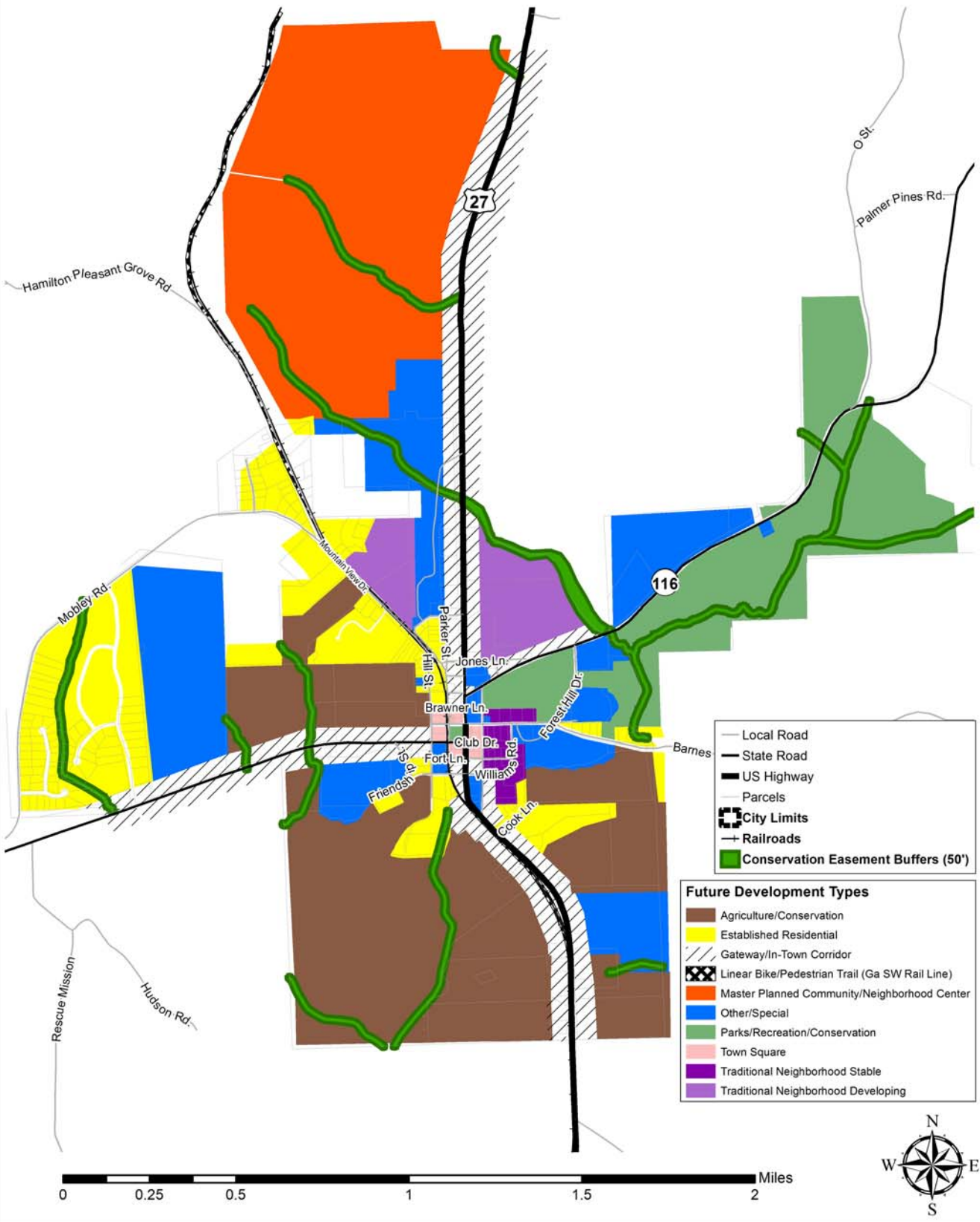
Transportation Alternatives,  
Educational Opportunities, Growth  
Preparedness

**Implementation Measures and  
Strategies:**

1. Conserve, maintain and promote existing recreation areas, while encouraging the use of flood prone areas for additional passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
2. Encourage and support the development of a Harris County and Hamilton Recreational Program that will provide opportunities for both passive and active recreational activities.
3. Encourage maximum use of natural resources, while maintaining sound environmental protection practices by encouraging and promoting land uses and development that respects the natural limitations of flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands and soil types.
4. Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads and other facilities to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions, as well as providing for timely maintenance and improvements.
5. Coordinates between Pine Mountain, Harris County, WestPoint, for the possible improvement expansion of the public sewer system to better serve the current and future population. Any sewer system extensions would support new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents.
6. Improve and extend the street and highway system to promote safe, efficient and well-maintained access to property in the county and the cities and on through routes for local and regional travelers.
7. Support and encourage the addition of bicycle lanes whenever streets are repaved and it is economically feasible.
8. Encourage and support the provision of educational opportunities by supporting the activities of the Harris County School System to educate the children of Harris County, the expansion of Adult Education opportunities in Harris County and Pine Mountain, and the expansion of library services.
9. Support and encourage the provision of recreational and fine arts opportunities for the residents of Hamilton.
10. Use SDS update as a means to address public facility concerns or issues.
11. Draft a Capital Improvement Program.



# Hamilton, Georgia Future Development



# COMMUNITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Needs

- Promote local businesses.
- Encourage commercial development on the north end of town.
- Continue to be mindful of the costs for growth.
- Promote infill in the town square area and rehabilitation of structures.

### Opportunities

- Educational Opportunities – Excellent K-12 school system
- Downtown Revitalization programs such as those offered by the Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Municipal Association.
- Proximity to Callaway Gardens/expanding tourism opportunities.
- Role of Hamilton as county seat of Harris County. Capitalize on the presence of high school and middle school inside the city limits.
- Expand job base.
- Increase in population equals new people, business innovation and creation.

## HOUSING

### Needs

- Lower percentage of owner occupied housing than the county or the State of Georgia.
- Rising housing costs.

### Opportunities

- Construction of additional affordable and adequate housing. Chance to diversify housing mix with quality single-family attached units. (Town home, condominium development)
- Diversify housing mix from predominantly single family site built to quality single family attached (town houses, condominiums).
- Increase home ownership opportunities.
- Maintain ¼ acre plus density.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Needs

- Management planning for significant community resources is needed.
- Make sure the public has adequate access to community resources.
- Hamilton has adopted a historic preservation ordinance, but has not yet appointed a commission.

### Opportunities

- Hamilton has many historic resources located in close proximity to one another that have a high level of historic integrity. These would be appropriate for inclusion in a locally, state, and nationally designated historic district. .
- Use existing buffers to set aside environmentally sensitive areas of the community, such as stream banks, floodplains, or steep hillsides from development.
- Opportunity to expand upon existing development regulations by adding site design guidelines for developing in sensitive areas such as steep slopes.
- Link local trail systems with state designated bike routes and existing trails in neighboring communities.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Needs

- Storm water management.

### Opportunities

- Recently expanded water and sewer systems provide needed infrastructure for meaningful infill development and revenue opportunities.
- Water lines are currently in place in 100% of the city. Growth means adding customers to the existing system which should increase water revenues.
- Adequate highway system.
- County to develop abandoned rail line as connector between residential areas and public uses.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL

### Needs

- Cost of transportation and development of mass transit in areas outside of Columbus/ Muscogee County.

### Opportunities

- With projected growth for area counties and cities an opportunity exists for communities to develop stronger working relationships and to share resources when necessary.
- The Service Delivery Strategy will need to be updated as part of the Comprehensive Plan process.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Needs

- Expanding existing bike/pedestrian trails to encompass most of the city in order to create land use connectivity.
- Controlling development/signage and managing traffic flow along US 27/SR1, and State Route 116.
- Left turn lane to High School at US 27 N and 116 West.
- Make sure we can accommodate increases in traffic. Town square traffic improvements.

### Opportunities

- Creating a Walk/Bike first community
- Creating better pedestrian and vehicular entrances into the city and Downtown.

## LAND USE

### Needs

- Encroachment of non-compatible land use in Historic Areas
- Land use mix is heavily favored towards residential and public use need to diversify land use base with more commercial and light industrial.
- Protecting existing open space and creating open space in new developments

### Opportunities

- Vacant land inside the City limits can be reserved for mixed development including light industrial and commercial growth. Include adequate space for the growth of employment-related uses, within the Future Land Use Plan/ Development Map
- Encourage traditional neighborhood development next to historic areas.
- Protect natural resources within developments. Promote the use of the conservation subdivision ordinance.
- Potential exist to create a very desirable development pattern.

## CITY OF HAMILTON: 2009-2014 REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Community Facilities		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Growth provides an opportunity to look at various fees (Impact fees, Subdivision Review fees, Service Tax Districts and Capital Recovery fees) to compensate for new growth.	Completed	
Assess availability of public space and determine what needs expansion, renovation or closure.	Completed	
Develop abandoned rail line as connector between Hamilton and Pine Mountain, county residential/commercial/ public and natural and cultural areas.	Currently Underway	Harris County owns the trail and is leading project activities. Funding for project is minimal. Thus as local funding becomes available Harris County and Hamilton will work on the section that lies inside the Hamilton City Limits. Completion date not available.
Consider developing a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	Currently Underway	Completion Date 2015
Increase community and program knowledge, cooperation among local leaders and volunteers by utilizing city/ county website, newspaper, civic organizations, health agencies, and neighborhood meetings.	Completed	
Consider developing a sidewalk ordinance that requires all new development to provide user friendly walkways.	Completed	
Consider creating a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to climate.	Not Accomplished	Created ordinance, but lack of public support to pass.

Economic Development		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue expanding tax base and local opportunities with residential, commercial and industrial growth due to Kia and Fort Benning expansion.	Completed	
Work with Harris County and Chamber to expand Entrepreneurial Friendly designation in an effort to create a business and retention program and entrepreneur support program.	Not Accomplished	County and Chamber responsibility. Will not be carried over to new STWP.
Increase local job opportunities which will require less access to transportation by in-filling existing urban areas and creating job opportunities in those areas by continuing the development of Hamilton Business Park.	Completed	One new business located in Hamilton Business Park in last 5 years
Develop a business and retention plan.	Not accomplished	Chamber of Commerce responsibility. Will not be Carried to new STWP.
Continue development of Hamilton Business Park.	Completed	One new business located in Hamilton Business Park in last 5 years. The park is owned by Harris County and thus future development activities will be in their control.
Work with Continue to support primary educational opportunities – excellent K-12 school system.	Completed	
Use ongoing educational opportunities to attract and enhance a diverse and educated workforce in order	Completed	

to diversify the job base and increase job opportunities for those with secondary educations.		
Continue to work with Harris County Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism in Hamilton and Harris County	Completed	
Strive to connect with the surrounding region for economic stability and stimulus by promoting businesses that process local agricultural products	Completed	

Housing		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Consider redevelopment options for small areas (pockets) of deteriorating structures.	Currently Underway	Projected completion date 2018.
Decrease the jobs-housing imbalance by increasing job opportunities in Hamilton and Harris County and by balancing housing cost with housing quality.	Completed	
Utilize existing zoning and subdivision ordinances or develop new ordinances to create housing communities including diverse single-family, detached housing mix in comparisons to housing developments and to retrofit existing housing areas when possible.	Completed	
Continue to implement code enforcement program	Completed	Contracted with county as a part of the intergovernmental agreement
Seek out grant opportunities and support that could provide assistance/aid to households with special needs	Currently Underway	Reviewing housing redevelopment options. Projected completion date 2018.

Land Use		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Inventory potential brownfield sites; connect property owners to the Federal and State incentives for cleaning up brownfields. Educate public on brownfields and greyfields.	Completed	.
Protect historic areas and structures from non-compatible land uses. Evaluate impact on said areas and structures during the zoning/subdivision review process.	Completed	
Consider developing ordinances such as overlay districts to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas such as but not limited to US 27, SR 116	Postponed	Expect to develop ordinance by 2018.
Consider developing traditional neighborhood development/conservation subdivision development ordinances. Use when developing adjacent to or within a historic district, cultural resources or areas with significant natural resources. Use conservation subdivisions or traditional neighborhood type developments to protect open space and create green way connections.	Postponed	Expect to develop ordinance by 2018.
Promote in-fill development opportunities in existing Hamilton subdivisions. Develop a vacant land inventory to aide with infill development for industrial,	Currently Underway	Projected completion date 2017.

residential and commercial properties. Expand and appropriately locate commercial land use in Hamilton.		
Consider developing a guidebook that illustrates the types of new development wanted in Hamilton.	Postponed	Staff time was put towards updating existing zoning ordinance text. Projected completion date 2017.
Consider developing a citizen education program to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our city.	Not Accomplished	Considered but not pursued because of lack of staff time to conduct citizen education programs.
Pursue more effective water conservation and aquaculture techniques, resource conservation and protection in the county. Look to develop landscaping measures that require drought resistant plants, or measures to promote water saving appliances or other water conservation techniques.	Currently Underway	Projected completion date 2017.
Continue to enforce and update zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations	Completed	Contracted with county in Service Delivery Strategy to handle code enforcement

Natural and Historic Resources		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Hamilton has numerous waterways and wetlands. Waterways of importance and their associated wetlands. Waterway and wetland integrity needs to be maintained by limiting development in these areas and maintaining appropriate buffers. Management planning for significant community natural and cultural resources is needed. Continue enforcement of existing state and local regulations. Consider developing a conservation sub. Ordinance to help protect valuable resources and guide development away from important resources.	Currently Underway	Projected completion date 2018.
Hamilton has identified historic resources and does have a Historic Preservation ordinance but does not have a Historic Preservation Commission. Consider creating a Historic Preservation Commission.	Not Completed	Commission has not yet been appointed. Regional Commission has been approached about assisting with the creation of a commission.
City should consider starting an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas.	Completed	
City should consider starting a tree preservation ordinance.	Not Completed	Ordinance written, but lack of public support meant it was not passed.
Continue to enforce best management practices.	Completed	
Work with Harris County to encourage resource management planning in new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect/enhance/promote natural resources, environmentally sensitive access, historic areas, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating an ongoing and active education program about community resource conservation and protection for the public, local elected officials, developers, etc.</li> <li>2. Create a county guideline brochure that outlines development steps or procedures and identifies and promotes community natural and cultural resources. Make brochure available to the public by posting it in public places and on websites, newsletters, etc.</li> </ol>	Not Accomplished  Postponed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Considered but not pursued because of lack of staff time to conduct citizen education programs.</li> <li>2. Staff time was put towards updating existing zoning ordinance text. Hamilton will work on a city development guideline brochure. Projected completed date 2017.</li> </ol>



Identify potential water pollution problems and solutions	Completed	
Look at regulations and/or adopt appropriate site design guidelines that set aside, protect, or minimize environmentally sensitive areas such as stream-banks, steep slopes, wetlands, etc.	Completed	
Continue to enforce soil erosion, stormwater best management practices.	Completed	
Develop a Greenspace Plan and actively work to preserve greenspace.	Not Accomplished	Staff time not available to complete
Develop local land conservation program or work with state and national land programs to preserve environmentally important areas.	Not Accomplished	Staff time not available to complete
Consider developing ordinances and design guidelines to complement our historic areas and match our existing architecture	Not Accomplished	Staff time not available to complete. Will use general guidelines adopted as part of 2009 Plan.
<b>Transportation</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Consider developing a corridor management plan and adopting overlay districts to create pedestrian and vehicular gateways by controlling development/signage and maintaining traffic flow along major arterials, such as US 27 and SR 116	Postponed	To be considered in conjunction with updated design standards for the city and county. Projected completion date is 2017.
Consider creating an ordinance or modify existing ordinances to require new development to connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	Not Completed	Hamilton is too spread out for this to be feasible.
Lack a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations. Consider adding to the existing sidewalks system in the city	Currently Underway	Estimated project completion date 2018 and beyond.
Hamilton should consider a policy requiring that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	Completed	
Create a Walk/Bike First Community attitude by promoting walking and bicycling. Expand existing bike/pedestrian trail routes to create land use connectivity.	Currently Underway	
Develop a bicycle/pedestrian plan to complement the redevelopment of the Georgia Southwestern bike/pedestrian/utility corridor and other Hamilton Bike Routes. Hamilton Bike Plan should complement regional bike plan and connect local trails with State designated bike rails.	Currently Underway	New Rails to Trails being developed along abandoned railway. Estimated project completion date 2018 and beyond.
Consider creating a By-pass Route around the City of Hamilton.	Not Completed	Considered, but public sentiment is that a by-pass route would be damaging to local economy.

# CITY OF HAMILTON: SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM UPDATE 2014-2018

Community Facilities				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Develop a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	2015	City of Hamilton	\$1,000	City of Hamilton
Create a draft street tree ordinance for council to review that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to climate.	2016	City of Hamilton	\$1,000	City of Hamilton

Economic Development				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Strive to connect with the surrounding region for economic stability and stimulus by promoting businesses that process local agricultural products. Do a simple market analysis to identify business opportunities in Hamilton.	2016	City of Hamilton	\$2,500	City of Hamilton, Harris County

Housing				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Identify redevelopment options for small areas (pockets) of deteriorating structures.	2015	City of Hamilton	\$1,000	City of Hamilton, State Grants (CDBG, CHIP)
Seek out CDBG or CHIP grant opportunities or work with Habitat for Humanity to get financial assistance/aid with housing rehabilitative aid.	2015	City of Hamilton	\$200,000	City of Hamilton

Land Use				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Inventory potential brownfield sites; connect property owners to the Federal and State incentives for cleaning up brownfields. Educate public on brownfields and greyfields.	2016	City of Hamilton	\$2,500	City of Hamilton, EPD
Draft for council review a corridor management plan ordinances such as overlay districts to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas such as but no limited to US 27 N, SR 116	2016	City of Hamilton	\$2,500	City of Hamilton, EPD
Draft for council review traditional neighborhood development or conservation subdivision development ordinances and expand upon design guidelines. Use when developing adjacent to or within a historic district, cultural resources or areas with significant natural resources. Use conservation subdivisions or traditional neighborhood type developments to protect open space and create green way connections.	2014, 2015	City of Hamilton	\$2,000	City of Hamilton, State grants

Develop a vacant land inventory to aide with infill development for industrial, residential and commercial properties	2016	City of Hamilton	\$2,500	City of Hamilton, Harris County Chamber of Commerce
Pursue more effective water conservation and aqua-culture techniques, resource conservation and protection in the city. Look to develop landscaping measures or guidelines that suggest drought resistant plants, or measures to promote water saving appliances or other water conservation techniques.	2017	City of Hamilton	\$2,000	City of Hamilton, DNR
Modify existing subdivision review and zoning processes to analyze walkability, connectivity, and environmental sensitivity. Review ordinances for best development practices compatibility.	2018	City of Hamilton	4,500	City of Hamilton

Natural and Historic Resources				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Hamilton has identified historic resources and does have a Historic Preservation ordinance but does not have a Historic Preservation Commission. Approach council about creating a Historic Preservation Commission.	2015	City of Hamilton	\$2,500	City of Hamilton
Draft for council review a tree preservation ordinance.	2016	City of Hamilton	\$2,000	City of Hamilton
Take a proactive approach to natural and cultural resource management planning in new development Create a guideline brochure that outlines development steps or procedures and identifies and promotes community natural and cultural resources. Make brochure available to the public by posting it in public places and on websites, newsletters, etc.	2016	City of Hamilton	\$ 500	City of Hamilton
Draft for council review appropriate site design guidelines that set aside, protect, or minimize environmentally sensitive areas such as stream-banks, steep slopes, wetlands, etc.	2016	City of Hamilton	\$2,500	City of Hamilton
Draft a Green Space Plan and actively work to preserve greenspace.	2017	City of Hamilton	\$10,000	City of Hamilton, DNR
Develop local land conservation program or work with state and national land programs to preserve environmentally important areas.	2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018	City of Hamilton	\$5,000	City of Hamilton

Transportation				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Draft for council review an ordinance or modify existing ordinances to require new development to connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	2014	City of Hamilton	\$1,000	City of Hamilton

Add to the existing sidewalks system in the city	2014	Harris County, Hamilton	\$11,000	Harris County, Hamilton
Create a Walk/Bike First Community attitude by promoting walking and bicycling. Draft a walkability/bike trail study. Expand existing bike/pedestrian trail routes to create land use connectivity. Connect existing bike/walking route with the Harris County Southwestern bike ped / utility corridor when the Hamilton section is finished.	2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018	City of Hamilton, Harris County	\$5,000	City of Hamilton, Harris County

Intergovernmental				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Update SDS	2014	Hamilton, Harris Co.	1,000	Hamilton, Harris Co.

APPENDIX I PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

**APPENDIX I**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

**2014**

Prepared by



**Harris County and Cities  
Comprehensive Plan 2014  
Community Participation Program**

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of a meaningful Comprehensive Plan begins with the insightful input of a community's citizens, government officials and staff addressing the issues of today, the opportunities of tomorrow and the steps necessary to effectuate positive change over the next twenty (20) years. The Harris County Community Participation Program was designed to encourage as much public participation, open dialogue and communication as possible. All in an effort to achieve a Community Plan consensus that translates into better government decisions and greater community agreement with those decisions.

Our Community Participation Program for this plan combined new and old technologies and techniques to ensure we reached a broad constituency. We blended traditional public meetings with outreach, not just to the identified stakeholders for the community, but to a broader population. We found a citizenry who was very well informed, very passionate, and eager to participate in some of the alternative input sources we provided as a part of this plan. Our meeting participation was not remarkable, but overall, we have had almost 200 people participate in our process through our surveys, meetings and hearings for each of the cities and Harris County.

One of the challenges we knew we were going to have in our planning process was a planning fatigue. Harris County has been anticipating rapid growth for several years, and has seen steady increases in their population. We have been working on plans for the county for over 20 years, and as the Planning Commissioner for Harris County said at one of our public meetings, "Haven't we done this before?". We knew and anticipated a limited response from both the stakeholder list as well as at our public meetings, so we worked to create different avenues for the public to participate. Our online and on the street surveys were very informative and provided the level of engagement that the citizens of Harris County needed for the process.

We ensured that all documents were posted on our website as soon as they were ready for public consumption, and used an extensive e-mail network as well as social media tools like Facebook and Linked-In to distribute information that the updates to the plan were ready for review. The County Commissioners, mayors and Chamber of Commerce all sent notices to their e-mail networks, greatly extending our reach beyond the names we collected on the Stakeholder List.

### ***IDENTIFICATION OF HARRIS COUNTY AND CITIES STAKEHOLDERS***

The following is a list of Stakeholders for Harris County, Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh and Waverly Hall. A "stakeholder" is considered to be someone who has a vested interest in the process. It may include an individual, an organization, community, agency, etc. Stakeholders are an integral part of the community planning process, and the Community Participation Program should include tools to identify and engage representatives who have a present or future stake in the community. We used this list as a guide to ensure we were speaking to people who would be impacted by the decisions made on what to include in the Comprehensive Plan. We used this as a guideline, but as noted earlier, we also used social networks to reach the public.

Key stakeholders include: 1. the community residents representing a diverse range of backgrounds and interests; 2. residents, specifically those that have been historically left out of the decision making process, like members of low-income communities, immigrant communities, and ethnic and minority groups; 3. business, industry and civic leaders; 4. the development community including real estate professionals, media representatives; and 5. city and county staff and elected officials. Other key stakeholders include agriculture and forestry interests, banks, churches and church leaders, civic clubs, students, tourism officials and service organizations with a vested interest in the community. Local property owners, local business owners, as well as representatives from Callaway Gardens and the Georgia Conservancy have also been identified as key stakeholders.

Stakeholders are vital to the process, because they create and are affected by change. Participation of these groups can help foster community understanding and support for the Comprehensive Plan document and provide fuel for the implementation of the plan.

The initial list was not inclusive. As more organizations and interested parties were identified throughout the process, names were added to the list. Where elections or appointments overlapped in the process, both names are included.

The following list is a list of identified stakeholders and was reviewed by the County Manager, County Staff, and councilors, mayors and staff from the individual towns and cities.

### **Harris County Board of Commissioners**

J. Harry Lange, Chairman  
Jim Woods, Commissioner  
Becky Langston, Commissioner  
Charles Wyatt, Commissioner  
Joey M. Loudermilk, Commissioner

### **The Harris County Planning Commission**

James Rodgers, Chairman  
Tom Chambless  
Ron Gibson  
Chad Kimbrough  
Chris Lintnet  
John Britt  
Willie Rutledge, Vice Chairman

### **Harris County Staff**

Greg Wood, County Manager  
Nancy McMichael, Assistant County Manager, County Clerk  
Jeff Culpepper, Water Works Director  
Alex Haden, CI Warden  
James York, Public Works Director  
Tracie Hadaway, Planner

### **Harris County Sheriff**

Mike Jolley

### **Harris County Chamber of Commerce**

All members (Jayson Johnston - Contact Person)

### **Harris County School Board**

All Members (Glenda Johnson-Contact Person)

### **Harris County Leadership Class**

All Members (Jayson Johnston – Contact Person)

### **Developers/Builders/Realtors**

Harris County: Craig Greenhaw – Homebuilders Association, WC Bradley Company, Bob Patterson Realty, Tammy Pierce - Waddell Realty,

Waverly Hall: None

Hamilton: Bob Dixon, Greyhawk Homes, Hughston Builders, Bob Paterson

Pine Mountain: Peggy and Spencer Lyda, John and Lisa Scully, Cousins Properties, Pine Mountain Builders

Shiloh: None

### **Developers/Builders/Realtors**

Callaway, Meade-Westvaco, Jeff Foxworthy, Rogers

### **Social Services**

Josephine Bray, Former Director, DFACS

### **Family Connection**

John Winchester, Contact Person

### **Harris County Senior Center**

Bell Walker, Director

### **Harris County Housing Authority**



Josephine Ramsey, Contact Person

**Health Department**

Sandra Wilson, Director Environmental Health  
Christi King

**Agricultural /Forestry**

Pine Mountain Soil Conservation (Jack McClung-Contact Person), Forestry Commission, Plum Tree Timber, MeadWestvaco, Saunder's Family Holdings, F.D. Roosevelt State Park, Harris County 4-H Club (Steve Morgan, Contact Person) etc.

**City of Hamilton Council**

Rebecca Chambers, Mayor  
Cindy Jolley, Councilor  
Roberta Alston, Councilor  
Ann Bacher, Councilor  
Alvin Howard, Councilor

**The City of Hamilton Planning Commission**

Glenda Pilkington – Chairman  
Lee Sallas  
Faith Birkhead  
Joan Kurtz/Keith Hammond  
Claudette Boelter

**City of Hamilton Staff**

Buddy Walker, City Manager  
Diane Geter, City Clerk  
Rick Hood, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Gene Allmond, Police Chief  
Ricky Hood, Fire Chief

**Town of Waverly Hall Council Members**

Thomas (Rusty Bowden) Jr. – Mayor  
Pat Lowman, Councilor  
Daniel Akin/Kenny Taft, Councilor  
Michael Harris, Councilor  
Donna McPherson/Jan Vardeman, Councilor  
Jack Moore, Councilor

**Town of Waverly Hall Staff**

Kim Bussey, Town Clerk  
Robert Isaacs, Utility Superintendent/Public Works Director  
Archie Hand, Police Chief  
Alex Lawski, Fire Chief

**Town of Pine Mountain Council Members**

Joey Teele/James Trott – Mayor  
Warren Aldrich, Councilor  
Jerry Teasley, Councilor  
Bob Frey/Keith Pendergrass, Councilor  
Tammy Pierce, Councilor  
Josephine Bray

### **Town of Pine Mountain Staff**

Brent Bullington, Utility Superintendent/Public Works Director  
Betsy Sivell, Town Clerk  
John W. Bramell, Pine Mountain Police Chief  
Wayne Holloway, Pine Mountain Fire Chief

### **Town of Pine Mountain Chamber of Commerce**

All members (Lee Hale - Contact Person)

### **City of Shiloh Council**

Jesse Lee Ellison, Mayor  
Monty Hale, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Billy McDaniel, Counselor  
Timothy Carlisle, Counselor  
Sheron Cross, Counselor

### **City of Shiloh Staff**

Bertha Mae Haggas, City Clerk, Court Clerk  
Christine Armstrong, Assistant City Clerk  
Rick Herman, Maintenance Supervisor  
Ron Arndt, Police Chief  
John Gilson, Municipal Judge  
Travise Hardgrove, City Attorney

### **Shiloh Volunteer Fire Department**

Steve Ogle, Fire Chief

### *HARRIS COUNTY STEERING COMMITTEE*

To assist with the daily needs for the planning process, a steering committee structure was used to help guide the process, set meeting dates and identify initial issues and concerns within the communities. An overall steering committee was identified to set broad agendas, with the individual plans using internal steering committees to identify specific plan objectives.

### **2014 Overall Steering Committee**

Harry Lange – Harris County Commission Chair  
Greg Wood – Harris County Manager  
Rebecca Chambers – Hamilton Mayor  
Joey Teel/Jim Trott – Pine Mountain Mayor  
Jesse Ellison/Monte Ball – Shiloh Mayor/City Councilor  
Thomas Bowden – Waverly Hall Mayor

### **Harris County Steering Committee**

Greg Wood – Harris County Manager  
Harry Lange – Harris County Commission Chair  
James Rodgers – Harris County Planning Commission  
Tom Chambless – Harris County Planning Commission  
Ron Gibson – Harris County Planning Commission  
Chad Kimbrough – Harris County Planning Commission  
Chris Lintnet – Harris County Planning Commission  
John Britt – Harris County Planning Commission  
Willie Rutledge – Harris County Planning Commission

### **Hamilton Steering Committee**

Rebecca Chambers – Hamilton Mayor  
Faith Birkhead – Hamilton Planning Commission  
Roberta Alston – Hamilton Mayor Pro-Tem  
Bob Patterson – Hamilton Realtor

### **Pine Mountain Steering Committee**

Joey Teele/James Trott – Mayor  
Warren Aldrich, Councilor  
Jerry Teasley, Councilor  
Bob Frey/Keith Pendergrass, Councilor  
Tammy Pierce, Councilor  
Josephine Bray, Councilor

### **Shiloh Steering Committee**

Jesse Lee Ellison – Shiloh Mayor  
Monty Hale – Shiloh Mayor  
Billy McDaniel – Shiloh Councilor Pro-Tem  
Bertha Mae Haggas – Shiloh City Clerk  
Christie Armstrong – Shiloh Asst. City Clerk

### **Waverly Hall Steering Committee**

Thomas (Rusty) Bowden Jr. – Waverly Hall Mayor  
Pat Lowman – Waverly Hall Councilor  
Michael Harris – Waverly Hall Councilor

### **Participation Techniques**

## ***COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT***

Preparation of the plan was undertaken with community involvement in reviewing source documents for the plan, surveys to help determine needs, opportunities and confirm the community vision. Presentations on the plan were made before civic groups and at several public meetings, using existing schedules and meetings rather than require new meetings for an already busy and engaged community in Harris County. Presentations were made to the Harris County Chamber of Commerce and individuals in the county to ensure buy-in and participation in the planning process and that the plan will be followed after adaptation.

### ***Public Hearings***

The State of Georgia rules and regulations for Local Comprehensive Planning require that two (2) public hearings be held in association with the development of a Comprehensive Plan. The public hearings were held jointly for all jurisdictions in Harris County, with sites selected to maximize participation.

The first required public hearing was held at the inception of the planning process. The hearing informed the public that the planning process was underway, the list of stakeholders and steering committee members, and the timeline to complete the plan. The hearing also went over the process to develop the plan and the 2009 plan, including the Community Assessment, Vision Statement and Future Development Map, and Public Participation Program. The public hearing was held on Monday, October 14, 2013 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Hamilton City Hall.

The second required public hearing was held once the plan was drafted and made available to the public for review. The public hearing was held in Waverly Hall on March 17 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. At this hearing, the community was briefed on the contents of all plans, provided an opportunity for residents to make final suggestions, additions, and revisions, and given an update of the schedule to submit the plans for review.

## COMMUNITY GOALS & NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES MEETINGS

A meeting to review the community Vision Statement, draft Future Development Map and to discuss Needs and Opportunities was held in all jurisdictions in Harris County. Each city or community had an opportunity to focus on their individual community needs and opportunities, reaffirm their community vision statement and review and propose changes to the Future Development Map. A full schedule of these meetings can be found on the Schedule of Completion for the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update.

### **SURVEYS**

#### ***-In-Person Surveys***

The in-person surveys were conducted over the course of several weeks from several locations in Harris County. RVRC staff conducted an informal, but extensive interview with 15 people at different retail locations in the county to get open-ended information from the residents on what they saw as the needs and opportunities in Harris County and the individual cities. The responses were then used to serve as a discussion point for our public meetings with elected officials and the public. Many of the responses that were collected as a part of this surveying effort are reflected in the Needs and Opportunities and Community Work Program. For instance, one item that came up in several surveys was a need to find activities for the youth in the county. The Community Work Program suggests building a playground in Shiloh, Pine Mountain, and Waverly Hall to address this need as initially identified in the in-person surveys.

#### ***-Online Visual Preference Survey***

The Online Visual Preference Survey was created to provide the residents of Harris County another opportunity to quickly and easily register their preferences for development patterns by using pictures instead of text to describe what they want types of development they want to see in the future. The survey was administered through Survey Monkey, with the link being distributed through social media and social networks throughout the county. We had over 130 people respond to the survey, with over 50 written comments at the end of the survey to further express their opinions.

The survey was designed to be visual to break out of technical planning jargon and give residents an opportunity to express their preferences visually. Photos were either originals taken by RVRC staff or were local landmarks where possible. Other images were selected because they were representational of the type of development being described.

Participants were asked to select between two appealing and relatively similar images, and then asked to rate their preference for their choice. We selected appealing photos of various land use choices that would not bias the respondent in order to capture an honest representation of what the residents of Harris County want to see.

We also asked the respondents where they were from in the county. This allowed us to see the differences in responses from people in the more rural northern part of the county from the more suburban southern part of the county. The difference in these responses led directly to the short term work program recommendation to explore a revised zoning ordinance that differentiated between different parts of the county.

A fact sheet was created to disseminate the key findings from the different surveying processes to the public. The fact sheet, survey and unedited survey results are shown at the end of this appendix.

#### **Community Work Program Meetings**

Community Work Program Meetings followed the success of the Needs and Opportunities meetings. They were held individually in all communities and coincided with existing council or commission meetings. As such the public was asked to come to fewer meetings and to have greater participation in those meetings. Because the community has met so often to discuss their plans over the past 10 years, and because the public continues to affirm their wishes in these plans, fewer meetings have provided better information to evaluate and make more nuanced and refined Needs and Opportunities which have created a more community-centric Community Work Program. For Pine Mountain, Hamilton, and Harris County, we conducted several individual work sessions with their commissioners, planning commission and councilors.

# SCHEDULE OF COMPLETION

## JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

For Harris County, Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh, Waverly Hall

### FY 2014 Work Session Schedule

	Required Update Elements	Optional Update Elements	Work Session Agenda	Date
1 <sup>st</sup> Public Hearing	✓		Plan Update Process/Meeting Schedule.	<b>October 14, 2013 Hamilton, Georgia</b>
Community Goals	✓		Develop Vision Statement. List Community Goals. Community Policies. Character areas and define narrative.	<b>Harris County – Nov. 20 Hamilton – Nov. 11 Pine Mtn. – Dec. 9 Shiloh – Dec. 3 Waverly Hall – Dec. 2</b>
Needs and Opportunities	✓		Develop this list using a S.W.O.T analysis. Provide supplemental planning recommendations. Analysis of data and information. Analysis of consistency with Quality Community Objectives	<b>Harris County – Nov. 20 Hamilton – Nov. 11 Pine Mtn – Dec. 9 Shiloh – Dec. 3 Waverly Hall – Dec. 2</b>
Community Work Program	✓		Define activities that each city plans to undertake during the next 5 years to address priority Needs and Opportunities.	<b>Harris County – Dec. 17 Hamilton – Feb. 3 Pine Mtn – Jan. 16 Shiloh – Feb. 27 Waverly Hall – Jan.</b>
Economic Development Element		✓	Use CEDS information to develop this section. Tier 1 Job Tax Credit Communities (required).	<b>Not Required</b>
Land Use Element	✓		Character Area Map and defining narrative. Future Land-Use Map and narrative.	<b>As Necessary with communities. Land Use Element discussed at all public meetings.</b>
Transportation Element		✓	Discuss with Planning and Zoning Commission any updates to prior plan. Elements required for local governments in a MPO.	<b>Not Required</b>
Housing Element		✓	Discuss with Planning and Zoning Commission any updates to prior plan. Required for HUD Entitlement Communities.	<b>Not Required</b>
Service Delivery Schedule (SDS)	✓		Harris County and cities, including West point, need to update SDS.	<b>Not Required</b>
Final Public Hearing	✓		Final plan review and comments	<b>March 17, 2014 Waverly Hall, Georgia</b>

**Notes:**

- Plan date of adoption June 30, 2014. Plan is due to DCA 60 days before plan adoption date by DCA rules. Last scheduled Harris County commission meeting is June 17. Need commission approval to submit plan by April 15

- meeting. Cities and towns will need to have their approvals and adoptions on similar timeline.
- 6. Combination of the Mayor/Council and Planning and Zoning Commission members (where applicable) will act as steering committee.
- 7. RVRC will email stakeholder list to the mayor and city staff for update.
- 8. RVRC responsible for scheduling and documenting two (2) public hearings during the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

The graphic below shows the schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

	Oct. 2013	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. 2014	Feb	March	April	May	June
Community Participation									
Public Hearing									
Community Agenda									
Future Development Map/Design Meeting									
Final Review Meeting									
Second/Final Public Hearing									
Hearing to Transmit Agenda to RVRC/DCA									
Submit to DCA									
Adoption									

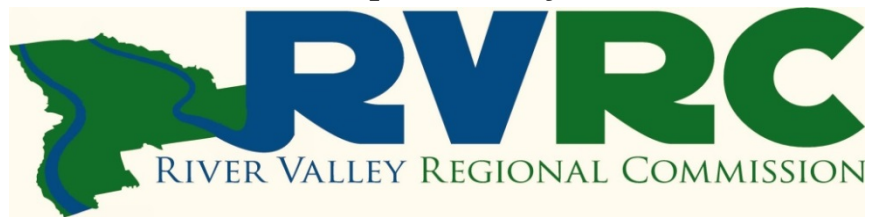
APPENDIX II CHARACTER AREA DESIGN APPENDIX

**APPENDIX II**

**CHARACTER AREA DESIGN APPENDIX**

**2014**

Prepared by



**Harris County and Cities  
Comprehensive Plan 2014**

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## Purpose

The goal of the Character Area Design Appendix is to provide town officials, as well as potential developers and citizens with a visual guide. This guide will aid in ensuring that any future development meets the vision of the community, and aims to create quality development that will meet aesthetic as well as functional considerations.



## Commercial Development Facades

**Description:** The architectural character of new commercial development should mimic the characteristics of the existing architectural fabric of the downtown. Maintaining traditional storefronts promotes walkability within the community by inviting pedestrians to interact with the shops, as well as other pedestrians. The inclusion of awnings as part of the façade allows for variety and signage along the downtown, while providing some protection from the elements. Street trees also protect pedestrians from the elements by providing shade while helping to create a more attractive and comfortable pedestrian environment. The new buildings could be either single or multiple stories, but should include architectural features typical of the turn of the century style and meet the Town of Pine Mountain’s lot coverage and neighborhood requirements.

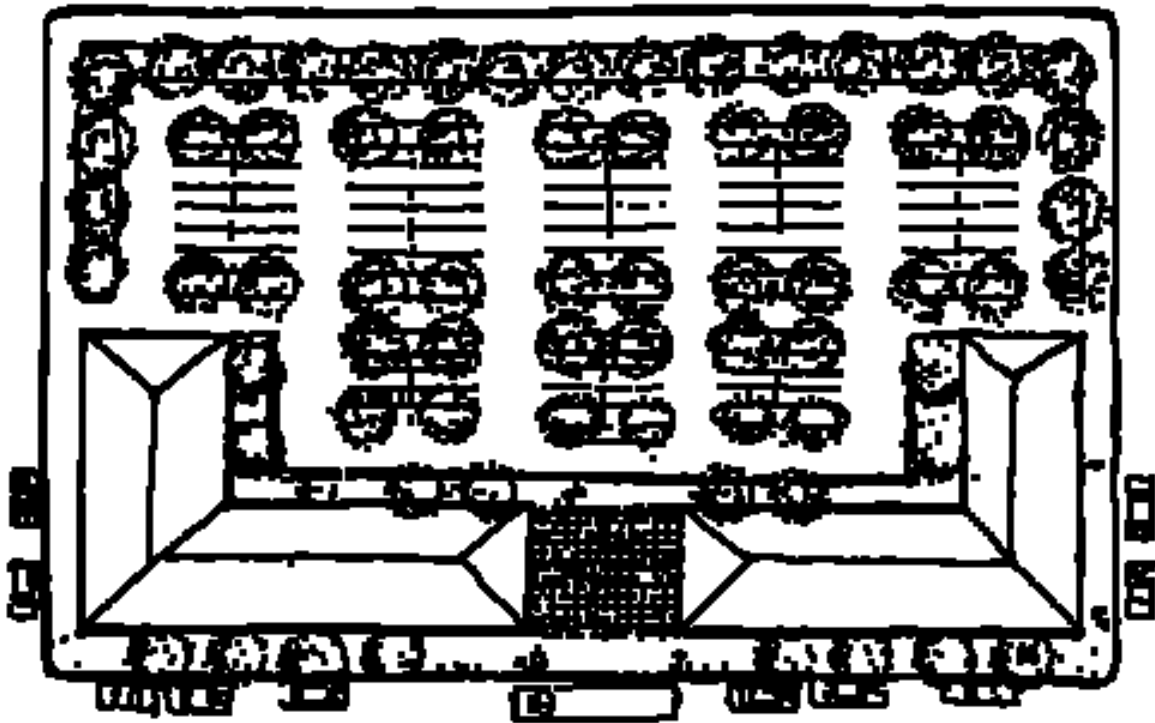
See Figure 1: Façade detail in Additional Images section.

### Implementation Measures:

1. Adopt Design Standards or Guidelines to ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the character of the Town of Pine Mountain, is built to a high standard, and has a pleasant appearance. These standards provide a basis for local planning and zoning boards to evaluate proposals, and also provide guidance to developers, property owners and businesses.
2. Create a Design Review process that reviews architecture, aesthetics, and site characteristics of new development to achieve compatibility with existing development and maintain community character.
3. Perform a Local Parking Study to determine areas that have parking problems, including analysis of where parking is adequate and where it is in short supply, projections of future parking supply/demand, and review of local programs and policies affecting parking.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Town Center, Gateway Corridor, Commercial Corridor

## Commercial Development Site Plan



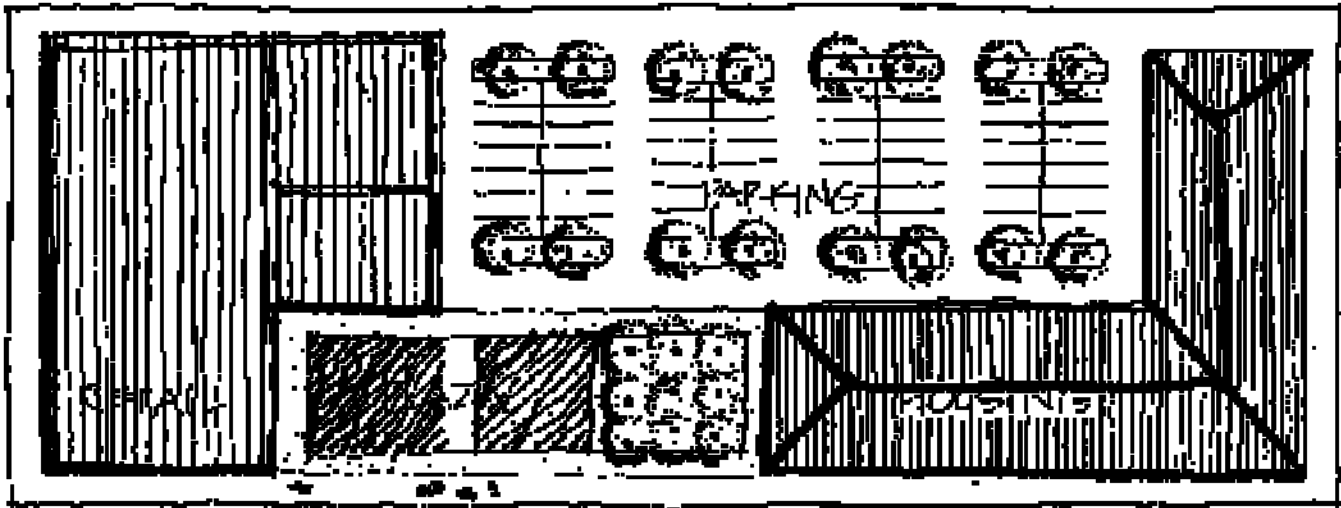
**Description:** In this site plan, the buildings are located close to the street to invite and promote pedestrian interaction. This arrangement allows patrons to choose between vehicular and alternative means of transportation, by making the building, not the parking lot, the focus. The majority of parking is moved to the rear of the building; however some on street parking is maintained along the roadway as a traffic calming measure. Trees are also included along the sidewalk, as well as in the parking lot to provide sun and wind protection. A centralized, open plaza allows for easy access from rear parking to storefronts, and allows for greater pedestrian interaction.

**Implementation Measures:**

1. Consider setting a Maximum Block Length, Width, and/or Perimeter to keep the scale of development small and allow for short distances walkable by pedestrians.
2. Consider performing a Walkability Audit to assess connectivity within the community based on commonly used measurements such as connected street networks, high densities of intersections, few-dead ends, short block lengths, and mixed land uses in close proximity to each other.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Town Center, Gateway Corridor, Commercial Corridor

## Mixed-Use Development Site Plan



**Description:** Like the commercial development on page 4, this mixed-use development arranges the site so that parking is located to the rear of the building. This allows the buildings to sit closer to the street. Building setbacks are fairly close to the sidewalk, creating a stronger relationship between the pedestrian and street. Different functions such as Housing, Office, or Commercial elements could be included as part of the development. A shared plaza area makes the development inviting to pedestrians by providing open space as well as more protected space from tree plantings.

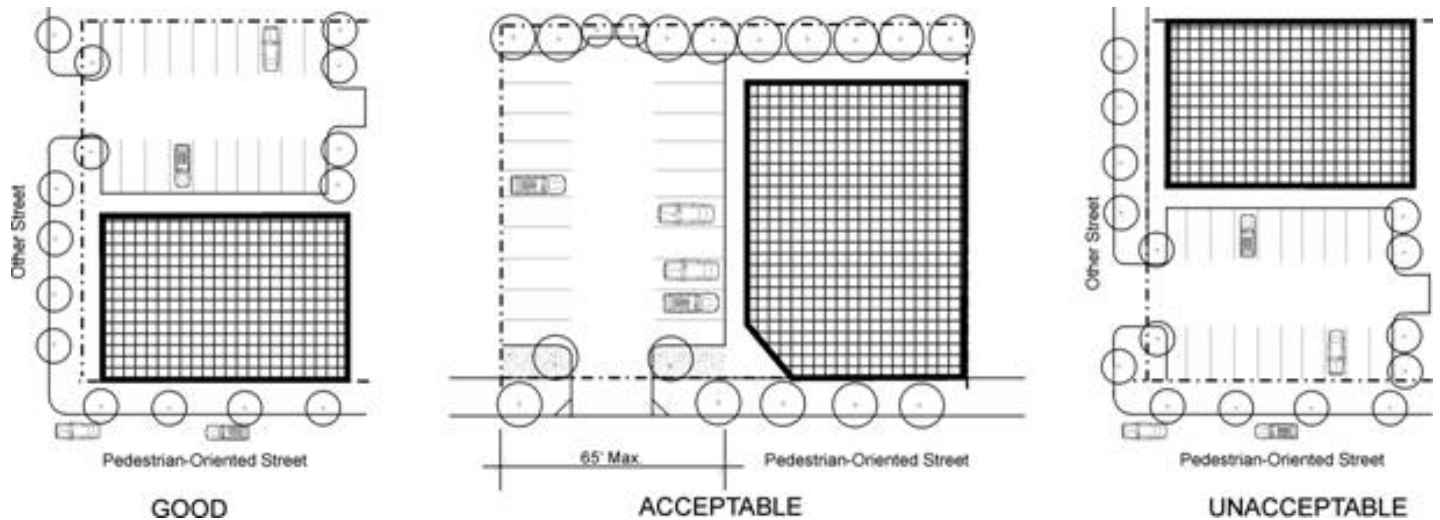
See Figure 3: Mixed-Use Development in Additional Images section for more examples.

### **Implementation Measures:**

1. Adopt Mixed-Use Zoning that allows different types of uses such as housing, retail, and office space to locate within the same district, provided these uses are reasonably related and compatible.
2. Promote Environmentally Sensitive Site Design to protect sensitive areas and prevent mass grading and clear cutting.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Town Center, Commercial Corridor, Gateway Corridor, Conservation/Resort

## Building Frontage Diagram



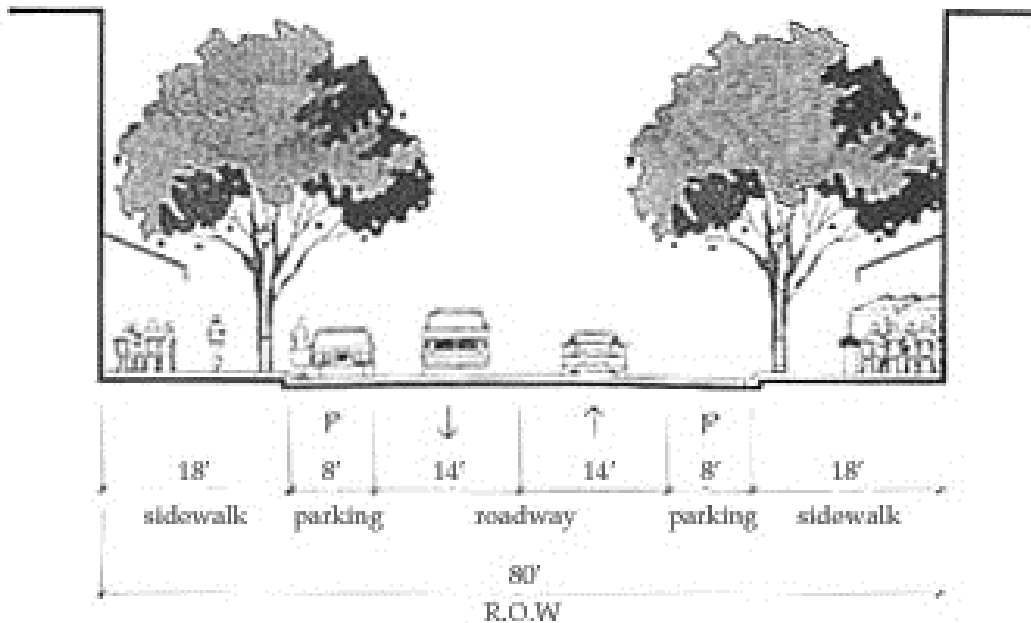
**Description:** These diagrams illustrate possible configurations of buildings and parking lots on a site, to provide a more pedestrian friendly commercial development. Moving commercial buildings to the street provides more visibility, and allows facades to include storefronts to engage passing pedestrians. Rear access for vehicles allows retailers to maintain a necessary amount of parking, without compromising elements needed to maintain pedestrian-friendly streets.

### Implementation Measures:

1. Consider setting a Maximum Setback Requirement that requires that the distance between right-of-way and buildings be at a maximum distance rather than a minimum distance. Setting maximums forces development to come closer to the street for walkability, traffic calming, higher density and a more traditional urban feel.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Town Center, Commercial Corridor

## Commercial Street Cross Sections

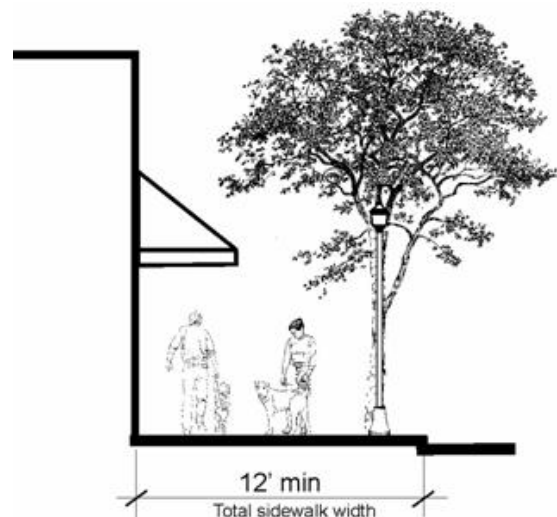


**Description:** These street sections illustrate the relationship between building, pedestrian and automobiles. Close building frontage provides scale for the pedestrian, while a wider sidewalk with street trees and lampposts allows a more interactive pedestrian environment. Lampposts help ensure safety, while the street trees give protection from the sun and elements. On-street parking helps to slow traffic, while providing a buffer between cars and pedestrians.

### Implementation Measures:

1. Adopt a Landscaping Guidelines/ Ordinance that would include requirements for protection of existing trees, planting of trees that will create a certain amount of shade over time, establishment of landscaped strips as buffers between developments, ect. Benefits include creation of safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists, preservation and restoration of natural scenic qualities, mitigation of building and parking lot impact, and addition of aesthetic character.
2. Consider On-Street Parking Enhancement to identify and take advantage of opportunities to add on-street parking in areas where additional parking is needed most. This could include converting parallel parking to angle parking, converting underused medians, loading areas, turn lanes or traffic lanes for parking.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Town Center, Commercial Corridor



## Live/Work Units



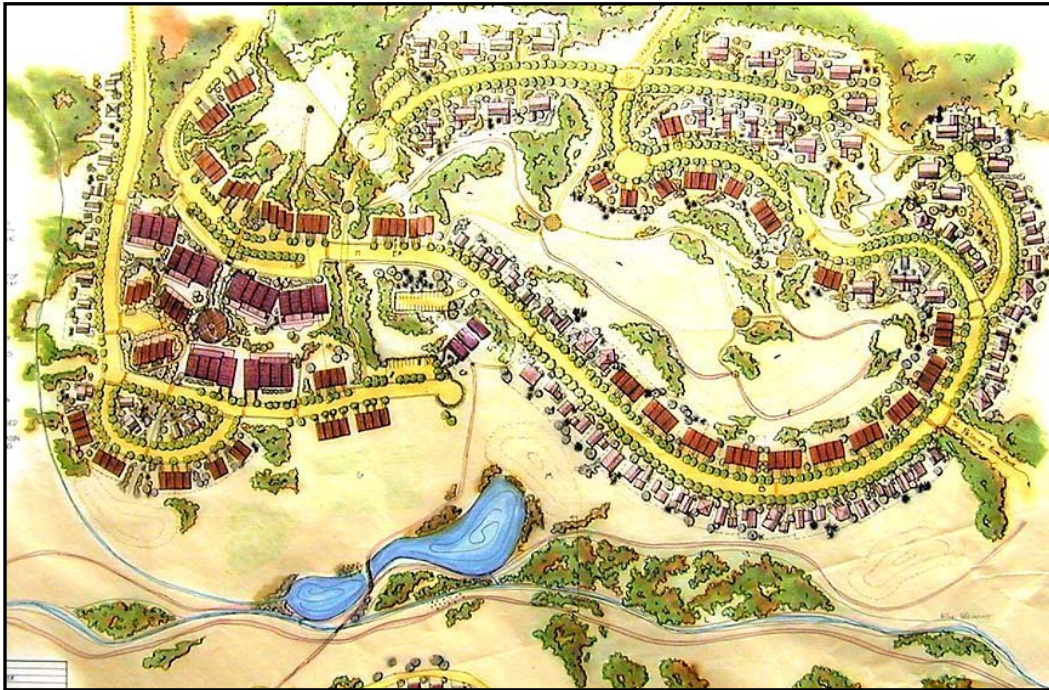
**Description:** Designed using turn of the century architectural features and design, these units can accommodate higher density development that maintains the overall character of the existing downtown. By allowing commercial/retail uses below with residential units above, the live/work units help maintain activity at different times of day, keeping the streets more vibrant and safe.

### **Implementation Measures:**

1. Consider utilizing Overlay Districts as a way to allow for a mixed- use developments that might include units similar to those shown above. The Overlay District would be a mapped area allowing special regulations and development within the area. These districts are often superimposed over conventional zoning districts, but can also be used as stand-alone regulations to manage development in desired areas of the community.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Town Center, Gateway Corridor, Commercial Corridor, Conservation/Resort

## Conservation and Cluster Subdivision



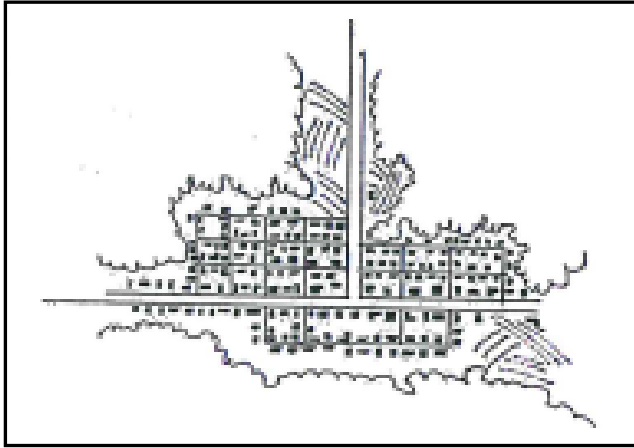
**Description:** Conservation subdivisions are often characterized by common open space and clustered compact lots. The conservation subdivisions aim to identify unique, scenic, or significant natural features of a site and protect them in large contiguous blocks. Lots are then laid out to maximize the residents' visual and physical access to the open space. By clustering homes around the environmental features, residents can enjoy benefit from the open space, while protecting it for the future. Open space within the subdivisions may include agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation areas. The clustering pattern combined with the protected open space results in a density that is found in conventional subdivisions. See Figure 2: Conventional vs. Conservation Subdivision in Additional Images section for a design example.

### Implementation Measures:

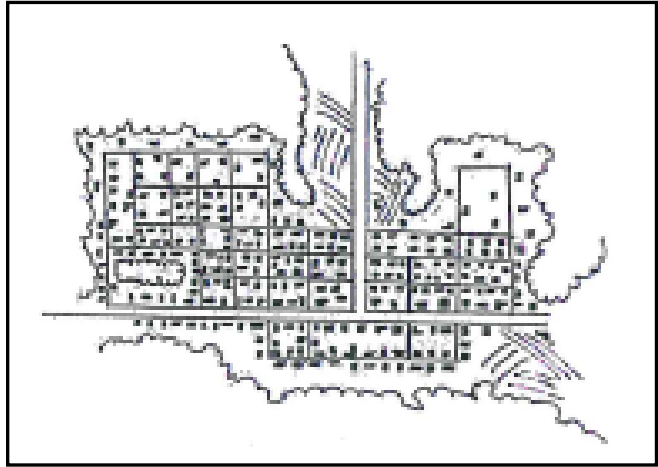
1. Promote Environmentally Sensitive Site Design that will protect environmentally sensitive areas and prevent mass grading and clear cutting.
2. Promote Cluster Development that sets aside a significant portion of the site as undivided, permanently protected open space, while the buildings (residential, office, or retail spaces) are clustered on the remained of the property.
3. Adopt Cluster Zoning as a means of ensuring the type of development described above.
4. Create Conservation Easements as a means of protecting natural resources or open space. Often donated by a private land owner in exchange for income tax, property or estate tax benefits, conservation easements are a legally binding agreement between a property owner and a government body or land trust that limits the type and amount of development and use that may take place on the property.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Conservation/Resort

## Extension of Existing Traditional Neighborhoods



Existing Traditional Neighborhood



Extension of Existing Neighborhood

**Definition:** Expanding and developing the existing neighborhood fabric is a sustainable and economic alternative to creating new subdivisions. By expanding the existing street grid, additional residential units can be incorporated into a neighborhood without destroying the character of the area. Protecting any environmental features in the area, such as wetlands, forested areas, and sensitive native plants will also allow for the addition of a common greenspace or park.

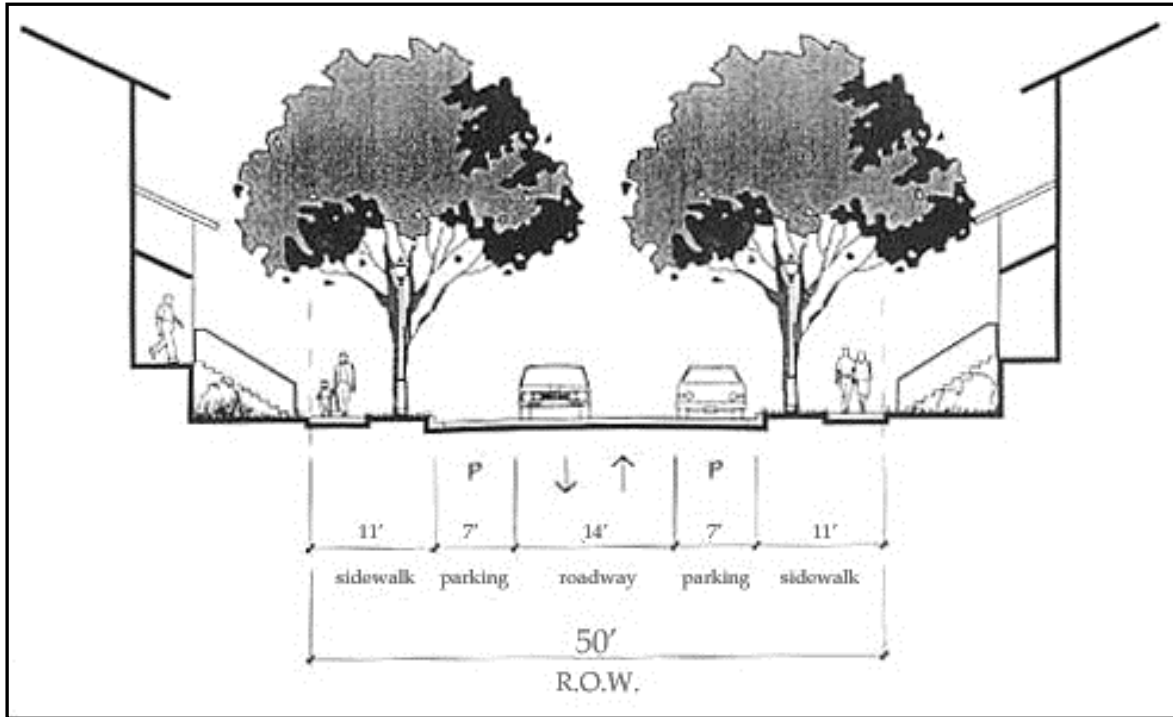
### Implementation Measures:

1. Adopt Design Standards or Guidelines to ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the character of the Town of Pine Mountain, is built to a high standard, and has a pleasant appearance.
2. Adopt a Landscaping Guidelines/ Ordinance that would include requirements for protection of existing trees, planting of trees that will create a certain amount of shade over time, establishment of landscaped strips as buffers between developments.
3. Promote Environmentally Sensitive Site Design to protect sensitive areas and prevent mass grading and clear cutting.
4. Promote Sustainable/Green Design for Development to create environmentally sound and resource efficient buildings.

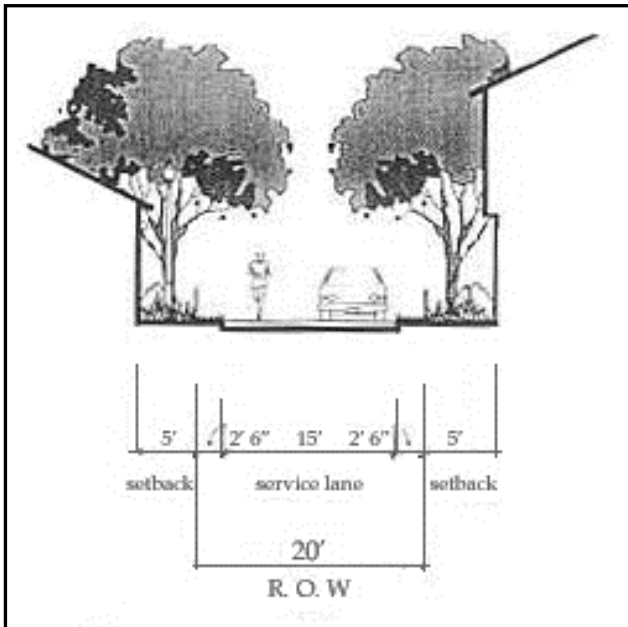
**Appropriate Character Areas:** Traditional Neighborhood Developing



## Residential Street Sections



**Description:** The image above illustrates a cross-section of a neighborhood street. Houses are set slightly further back than commercial buildings to maintain privacy, but close enough to allow interaction with pedestrians. Trees planted along the sidewalk provide shade, and create a buffer between traffic and the pedestrian. On street parking is maintained as a traffic calming measure, while serving as an additional buffer between passing cars and people.

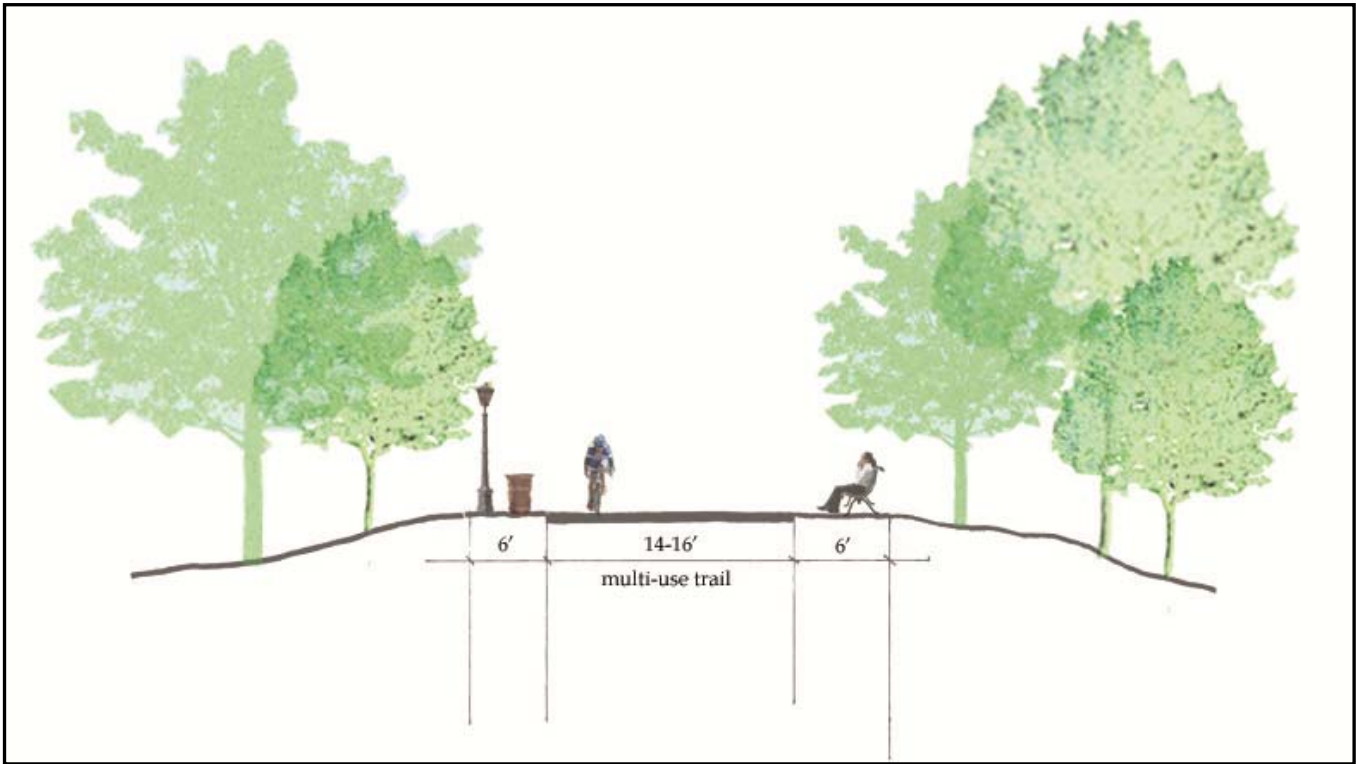


### Implementation Measures:

1. Consider creating a Sidewalk and Pedestrian Network Design to begin linking neighborhoods with schools, downtown, and other community facilities. These networks create more healthy and pedestrian friendly street environments and afford appropriate access for bicyclists.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Traditional Neighborhood Existing, Traditional Neighborhood Developing

## Bike/Pedestrian Path



**Description:** The image illustrates a multi-functional trail to accommodate pedestrian activities such as runners, walkers, and cyclists, as well as provide an trail for those traveling in golf carts. The trail is wider than most rail trails to accommodate the different uses safely. The trail will provide an option for people traveling by alternative means of transportation, and support recreational activities. Buffer areas located along either side of the trail will provide park benches, lampposts, trash cans and water fountains to keep the trail safe and clean.

### **Implementation Measures:**

1. Enact a Bikeway Plan to provide connectivity to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, rails-to-trails, community facilities, and neighborhood-related retail centers and ensuring that bicycling is a convenient, safe and practical means of transportation throughout the community.

**Appropriate Character Areas:** Linear Bike/Pedestrian Trail

# Additional Images

Figure 1: Façade Detail

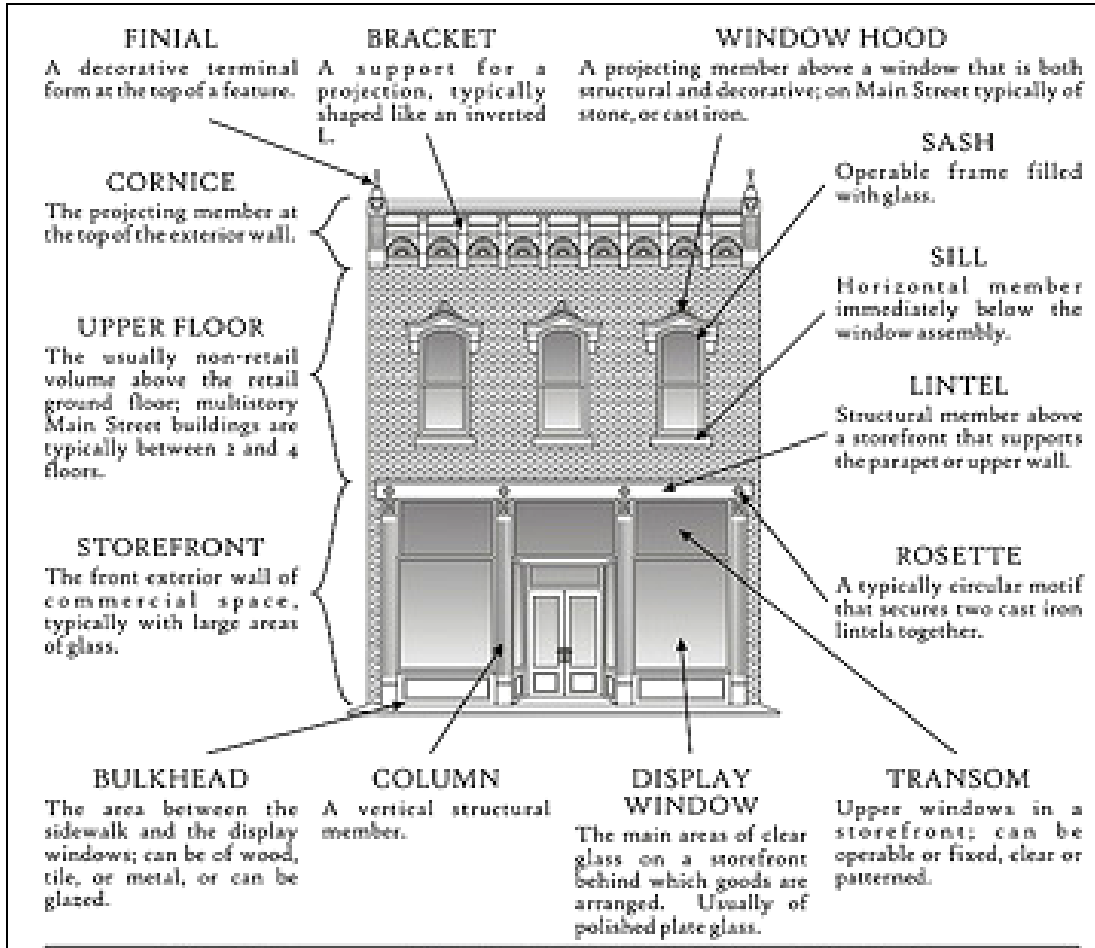


Figure 2: Conventional vs. Conservation Subdivision

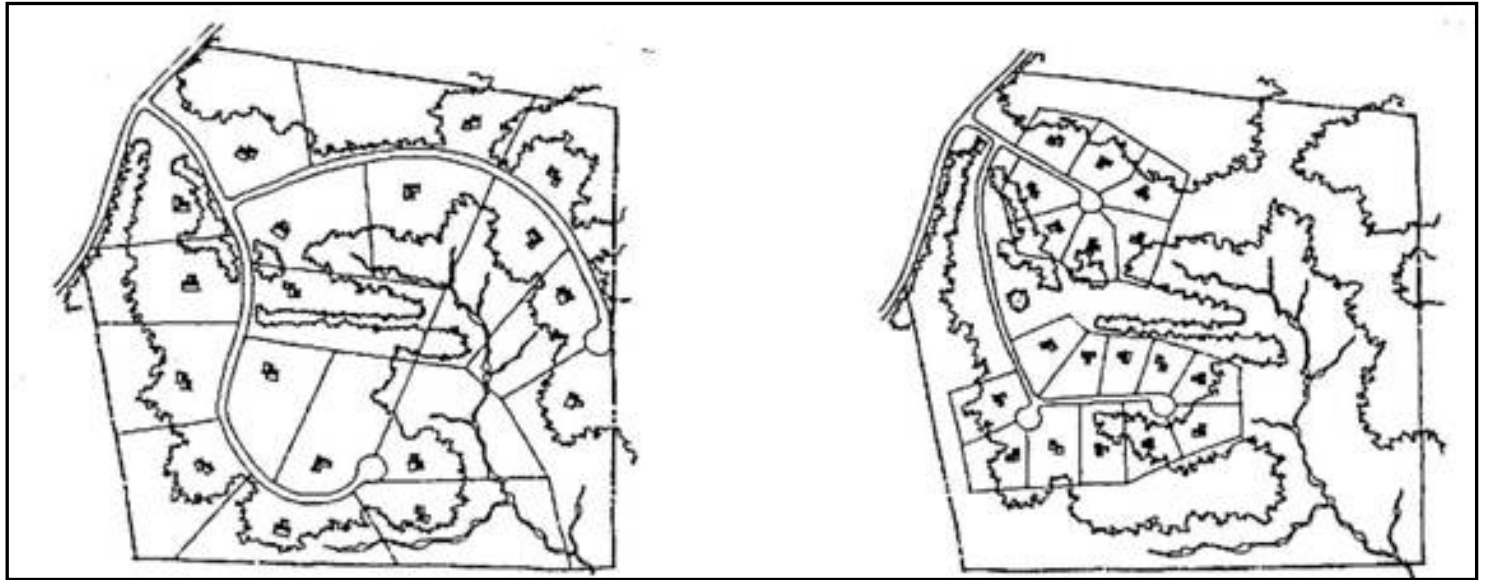
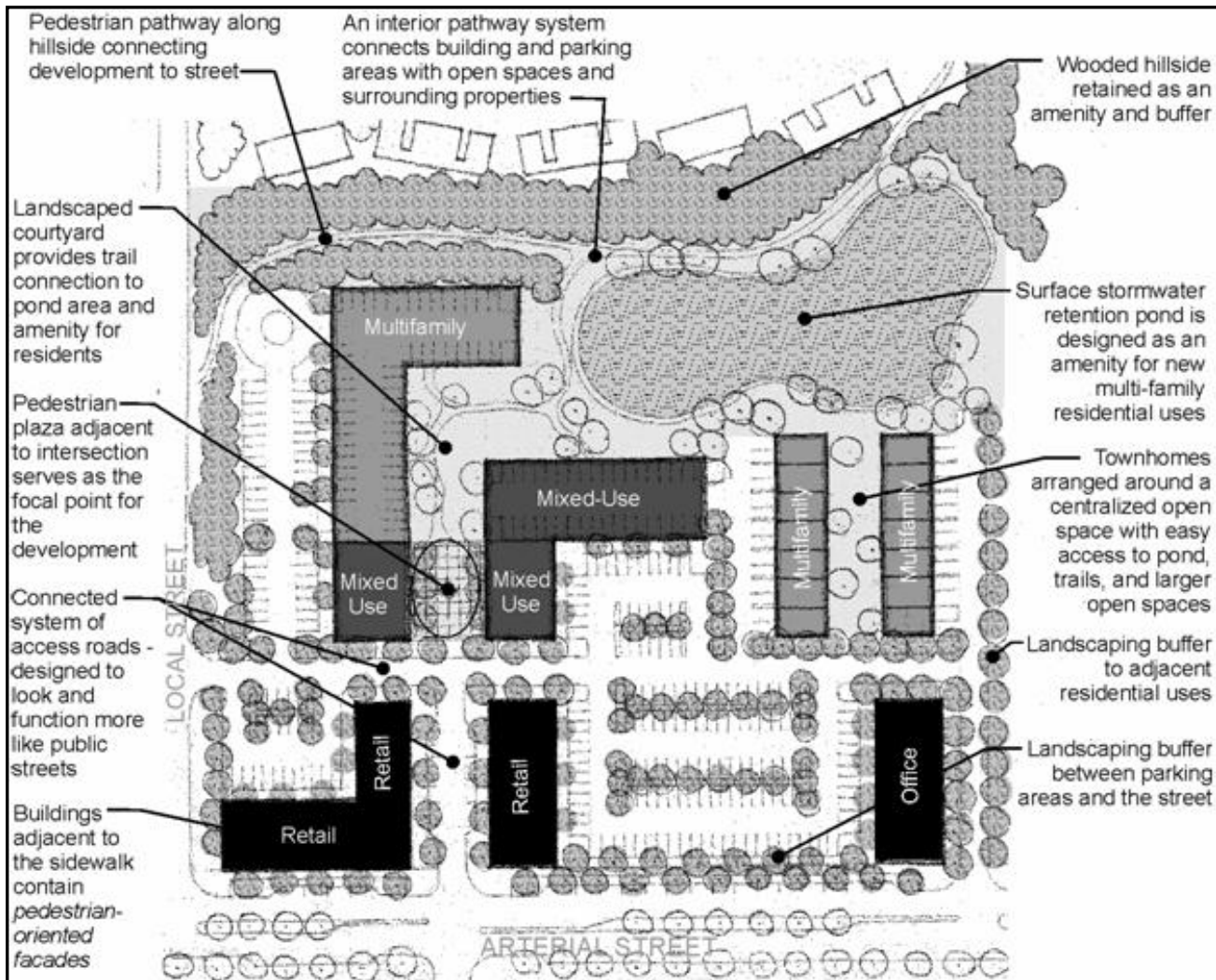


Figure 3: Mixed-Use Development



**APPENDIX III**  
**VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY**

**2014**

Prepared by



**Harris County and Cities  
Comprehensive Plan 2014  
Community Participation Program**

## 1. Where do you live?

- Hamilton
- Waverly Hall
- Pine Mountain
- Shiloh
- Harris County - North of 315 (Hamilton)
- Harris County - South of 315 (Hamilton)

## Rural Farmland vs. Hobby Farm

In the set of photographs below, select which image best represents the type of development or neighborhood you would prefer to see in Harris County.

### Rural Farmland



### Hobby Farm



### 1. Rural Farmland or Hobby Farm

- Rural Farmland
- Hobby Farm

### 2. Rate your preference of the image selected.

- Strongly prefer
- Somewhat prefer
- Little preference



## Rural Neighborhood vs. Cul de sac Subdivision

In the set of photographs below, select which image best represents the type of development or neighborhood you would prefer to see in Harris County.

### Rural Neighborhood



### Cul de sac Subdivision



### 1. Rural Neighborhood or Cul de sac Subdivision

- Rural Neighborhood
- Cul de sac Subdivision

### 2. Rate your preference of the image selected.

- Strongly prefer
- Somewhat prefer
- Little preference

## Cul de sac Subdivision vs. Apartment Complex

In the set of photographs below, select which image best represents the type of development or neighborhood you would prefer to see in Harris County.

### Cul de sac Subdivision



### Apartment Complex



### 1. Cul de sac Subdivision or Apartment Complex

- Cul de sac Subdivision
- Apartment Complex

### 2. Rank your preference of the image you selected.

- Strongly prefer
- Somewhat prefer
- Little preference

## Detached House vs. Cul de sac Subdivision

In the set of photographs below, select which image best represents the type of development or neighborhood you would prefer to see in Harris County.

### Detached House



### Cul de sac Subdivision



### 1. Detached House or Cul de sac Subdivision

- Detached House
- Cul de sac Subdivision

### 2. Rank your preference of the image you selected.

- Strongly prefer
- Somewhat prefer
- Little preference

## Small in-town Apartment vs. Large Apartment Complex

In the set of photographs below, select which image best represents the type of development or neighborhood you would prefer to see in Harris County.

### Small in-town Apartment



### Large Apartment Complex



### 1. Small in-town Apartment or Large Apartment Complex

- Small in-town Apartment
- Large Apartment Complex

### 2. Rank your preference of the image selected.

- Strongly prefer
- Somewhat prefer
- Little preference

## Main Street Commercial vs. Highway Commercial

In the set of photographs below, select the image that best represents the type of development or neighborhood you would prefer to see in Harris County.

### Main Street Commercial



### Highway Commercial



### 1. Main Street Commercial or Highway Commercial

- Main Street Commercial
- Highway Commercial

### 2. Rank your preference of the image selected.

- Strongly prefer
- Somewhat prefer
- Little preference

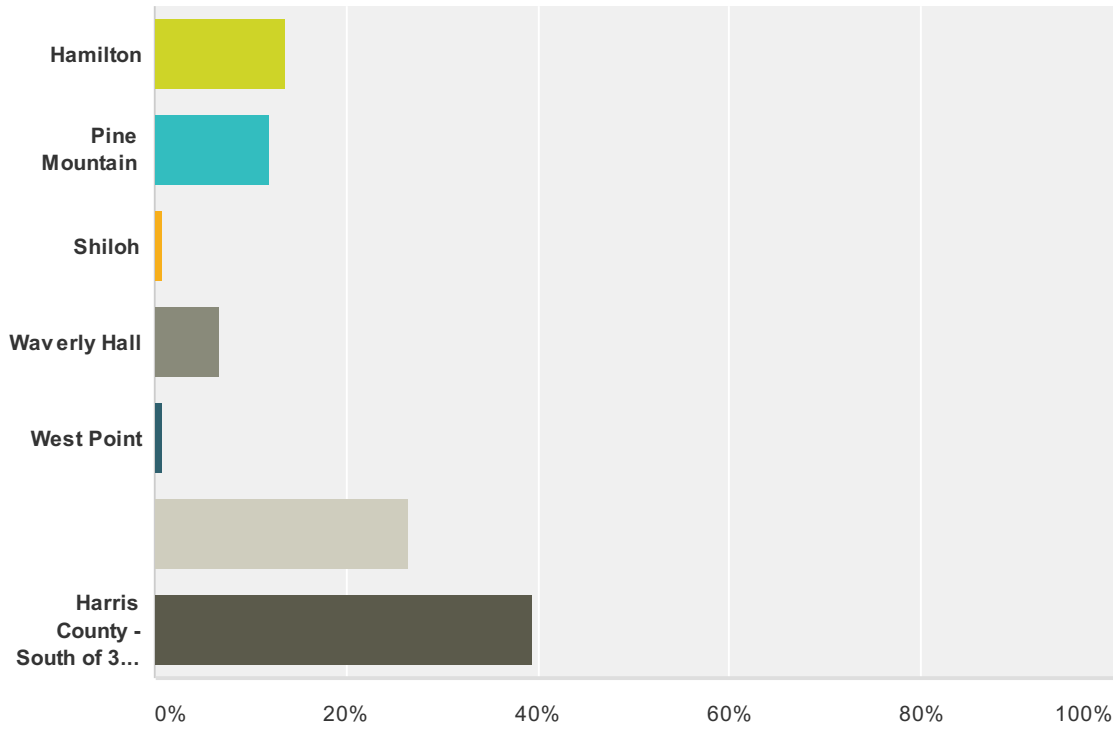
## Comments

### 1. Please enter any comments you have about the Harris County Comprehensive Plan.

The Harris County Comprehensive Plan is available for review on the Downloads section of the River Valley Regional Commission website, [www.rivervalleyrc.org](http://www.rivervalleyrc.org).

### Q1 Where do you live?

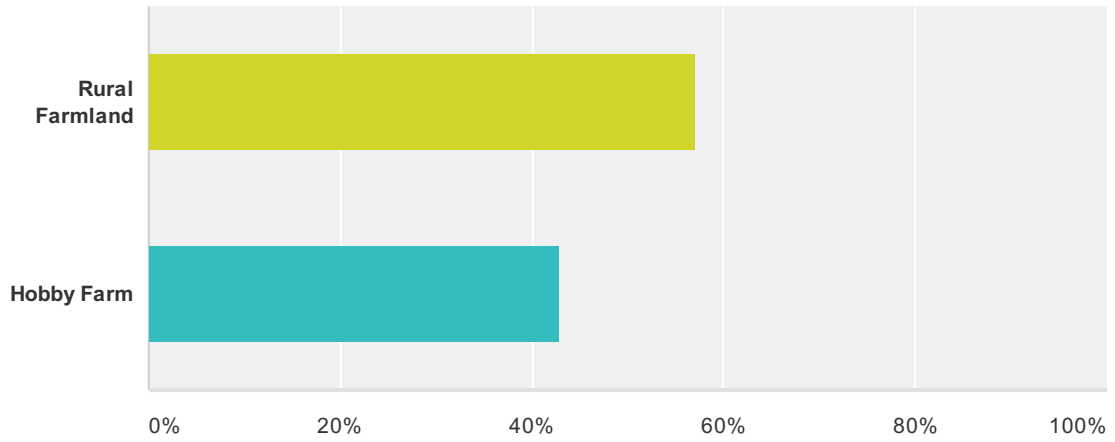
Answered: 132 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
Hamilton	13.64%	18
Pine Mountain	12.12%	16
Shiloh	0.76%	1
Waverly Hall	6.82%	9
West Point	0.76%	1
Harris County - North of 315 (Hamilton)	26.52%	35
Harris County - South of 315 (Hamilton)	39.39%	52
<b>Total</b>		<b>132</b>

### Q2 Rural Farmland or Hobby Farm

Answered: 128 Skipped: 6

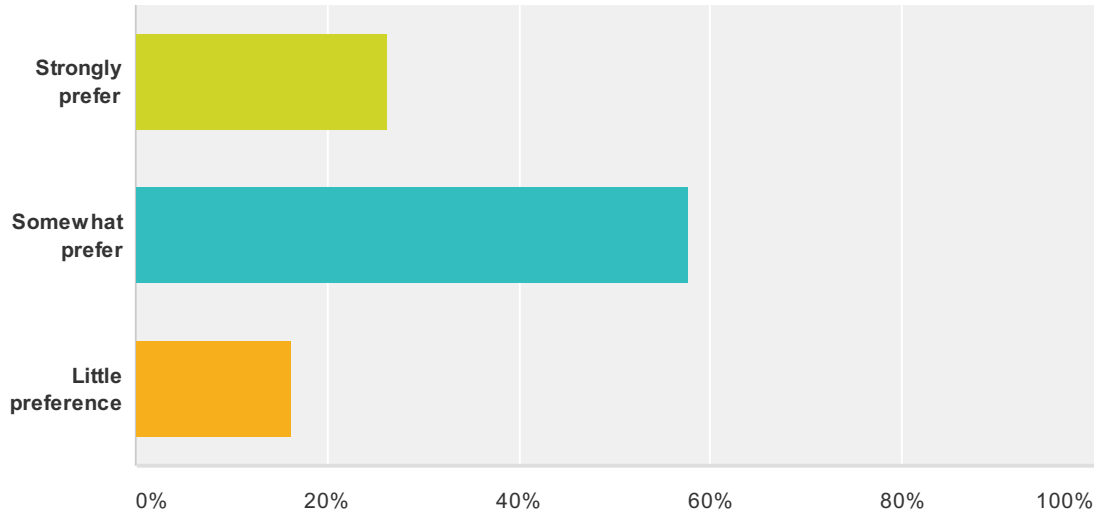


Answer Choices	Responses
Rural Farmland	57.03% 73
Hobby Farm	42.97% 55
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>



### Q3 Rate your preference of the image selected.

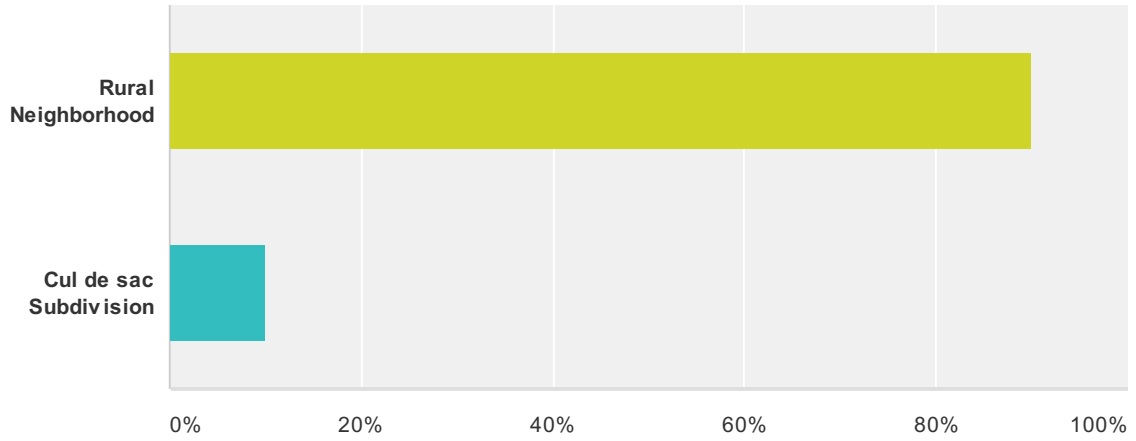
Answered: 130 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly prefer	26.15%	34
Somewhat prefer	57.69%	75
Little preference	16.15%	21
<b>Total</b>		<b>130</b>

### Q4 Rural Neighborhood or Cul de sac Subdivision

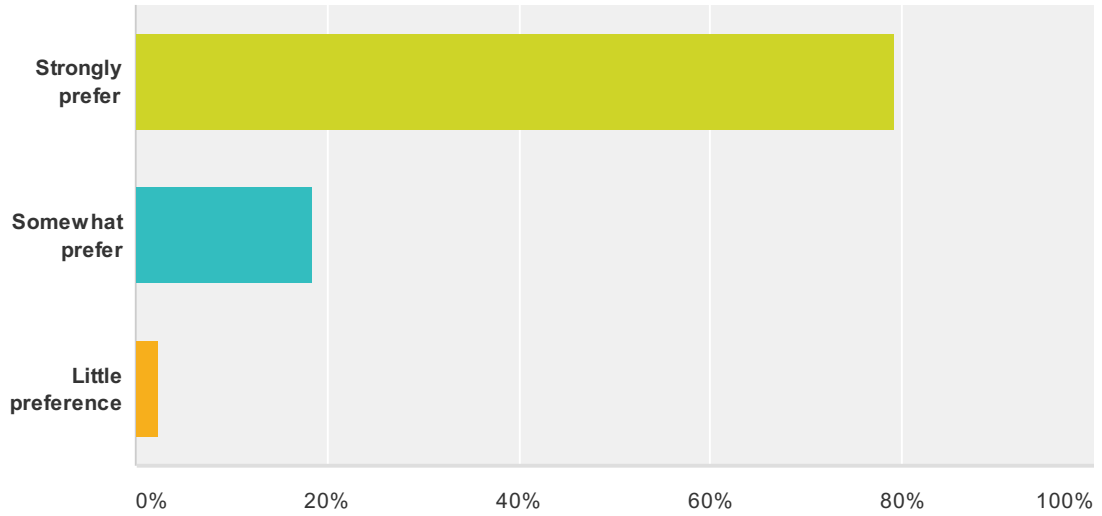
Answered: 130 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses
Rural Neighborhood	90% 117
Cul de sac Subdivision	10% 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>

**Q5 Rate your preference of the image selected.**

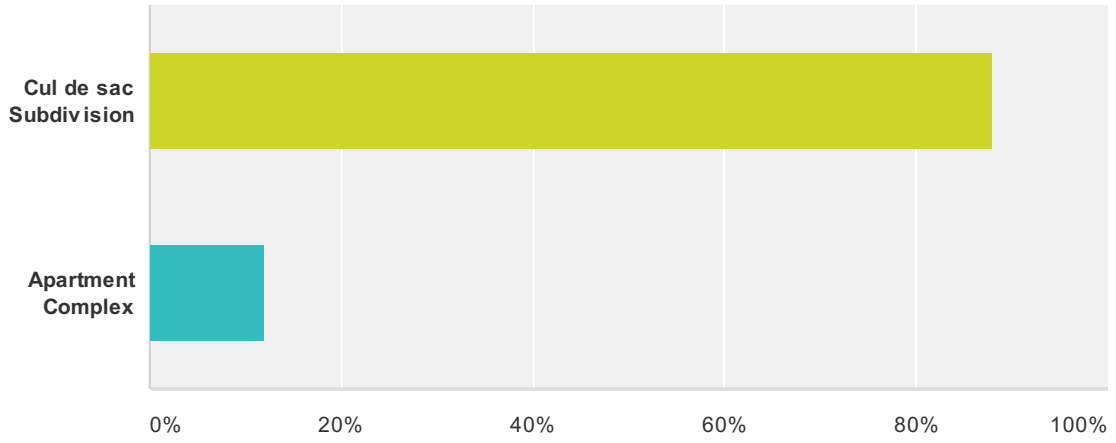
Answered: 130 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly prefer	79.23% 103
Somewhat prefer	18.46% 24
Little preference	2.31% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>

### Q6 Cul de sac Subdivision or Apartment Complex

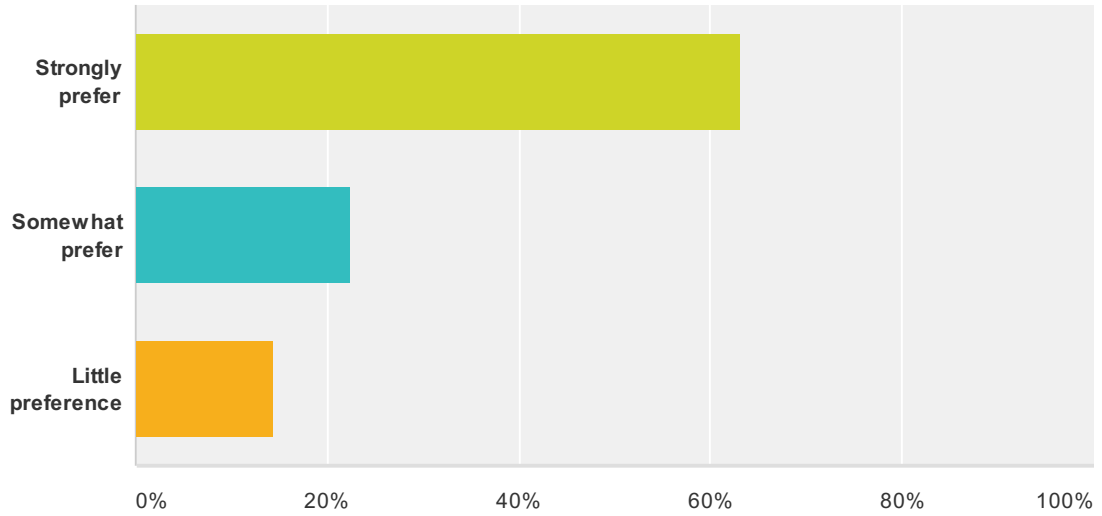
Answered: 124 Skipped: 10



Answer Choices	Responses
Cul de sac Subdivision	87.90% 109
Apartment Complex	12.10% 15
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>

### Q7 Rank your preference of the image you selected.

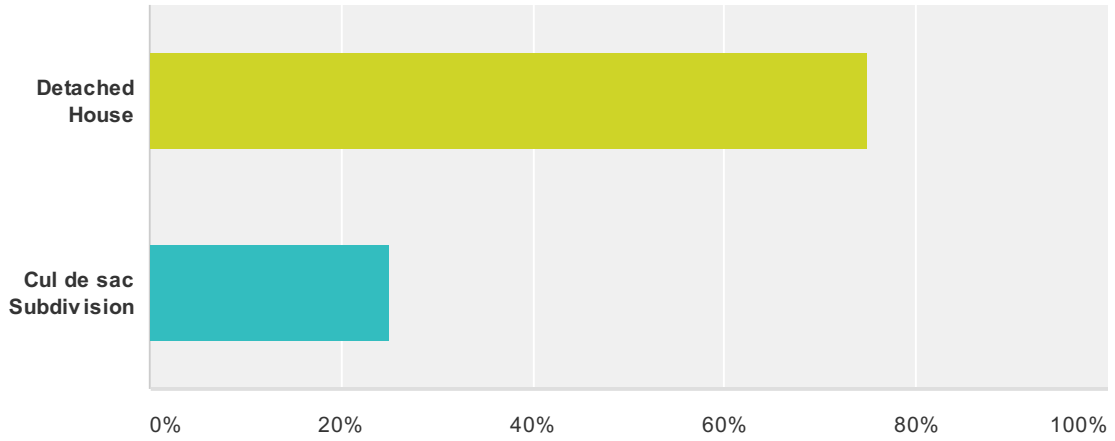
Answered: 125 Skipped: 9



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly prefer	63.20%	79
Somewhat prefer	22.40%	28
Little preference	14.40%	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>

### Q8 Detached House or Cul de sac Subdivision

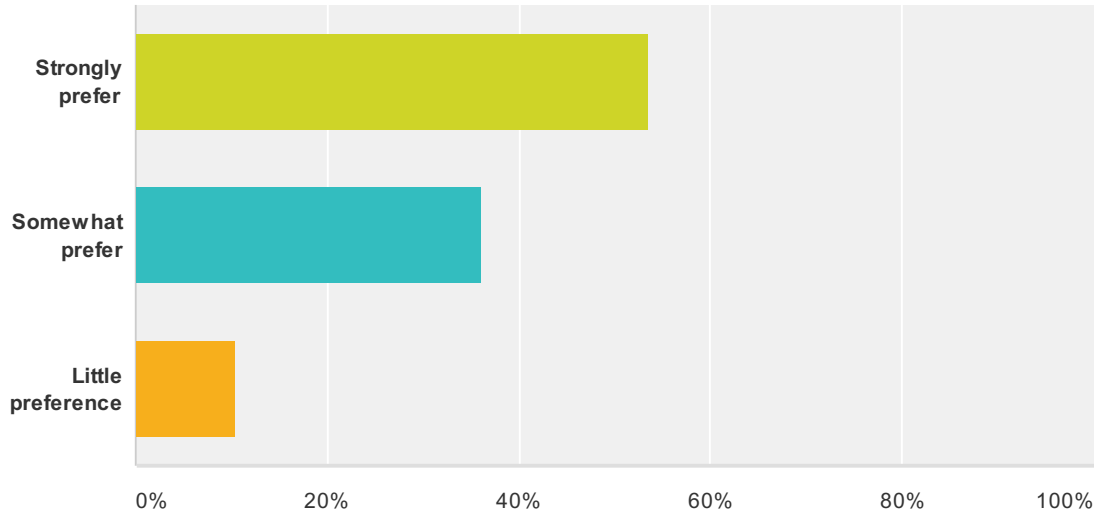
Answered: 124 Skipped: 10



Answer Choices	Responses
Detached House	75% 93
Cul de sac Subdivision	25% 31
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>

### Q9 Rank your preference of the image you selected.

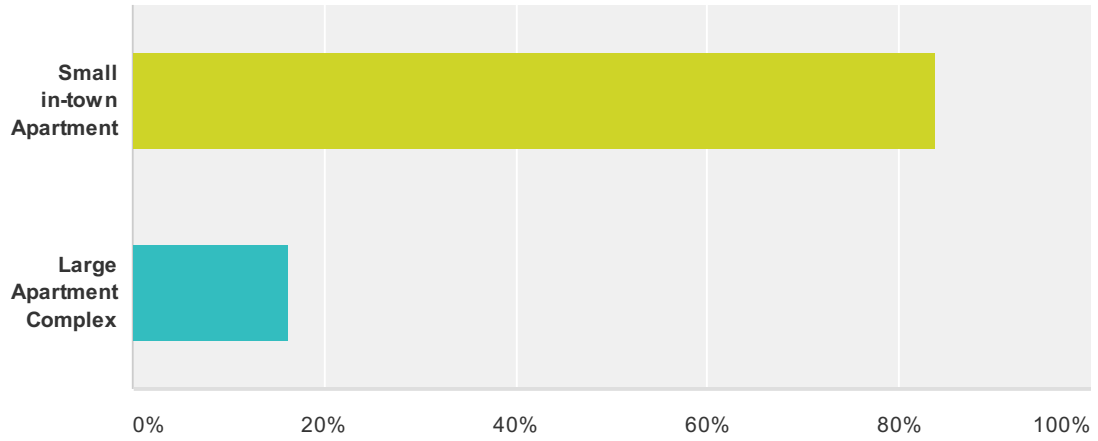
Answered: 125 Skipped: 9



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly prefer	53.60% 67
Somewhat prefer	36% 45
Little preference	10.40% 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>

### Q10 Small in-town Apartment or Large Apartment Complex

Answered: 123 Skipped: 11

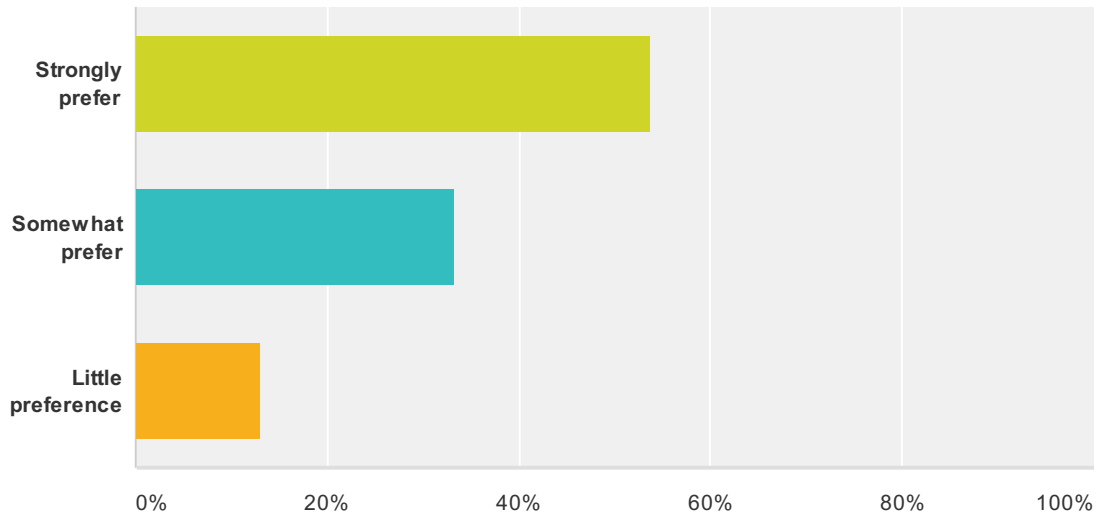


Answer Choices	Responses	
Small in-town Apartment	83.74%	103
Large Apartment Complex	16.26%	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>123</b>



### Q11 Rank your preference of the image selected.

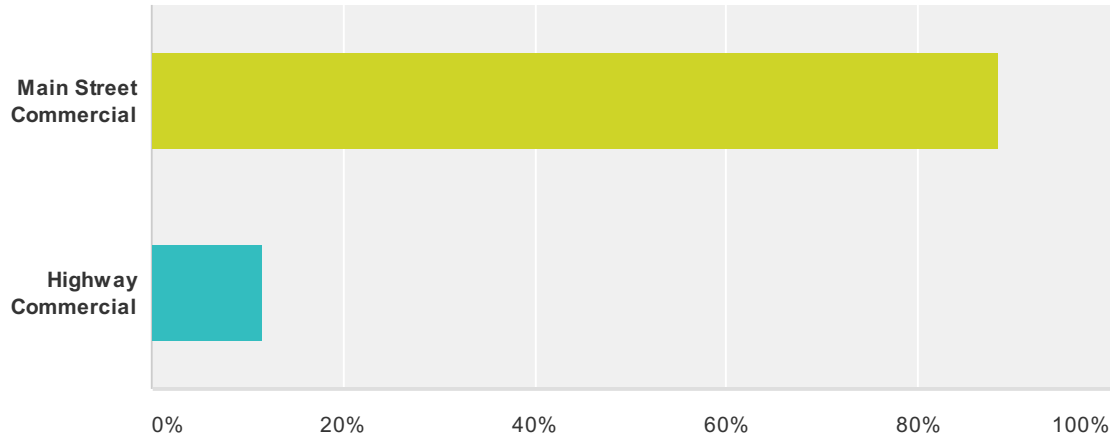
Answered: 123 Skipped: 11



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly prefer	53.66% 66
Somewhat prefer	33.33% 41
Little preference	13.01% 16
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>

### Q12 Main Street Commercial or Highway Commercial

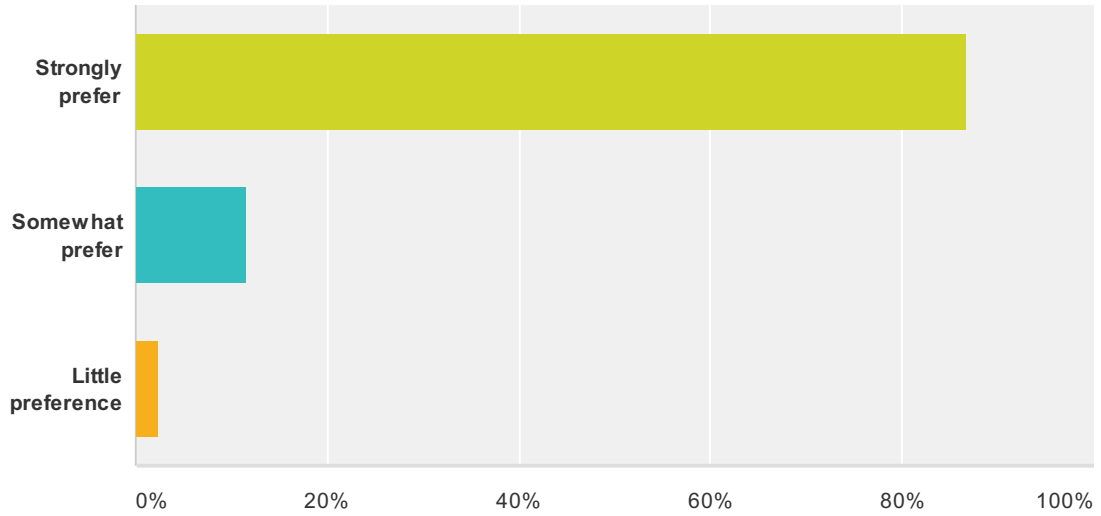
Answered: 128 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	
Main Street Commercial	88.28%	113
Highway Commercial	11.72%	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>128</b>

### Q13 Rank your preference of the image selected.

Answered: 128 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly prefer	86.72% 111
Somewhat prefer	11.72% 15
Little preference	2.34% 3
<b>Total Respondents: 128</b>	

**Q14 Please enter any comments you have about the Harris County Comprehensive Plan.**

Answered: 54 Skipped: 80

# Harris County Comprehensive Plan

## Q14 Please enter any comments you have about the Harris County Comprehensive Plan.

Answered: 54 Skipped: 80

#	Responses	Date
1	Harris County needs commercial development off Exit 19 I-185/Hwy315 and/or Exit 25 I-185/Hwy 116. Anchor Store such as Bass Pro, Cabelas, Academy, with some nicer chain restaurants, and grocery stores, and convenience stores such as Publix, Kroger, etc. Build it and the people will come not only from Harris Co. but surrounding counties. Tax dollars would remain here in Harris County and not go to Muscogee or Troup.	2/11/2014 4:27 PM
2	My husband and I chose to build our home in Harris County because of the quieter, safer environment of being in the country. We enjoy the small community feel and the fabulous school system. Having a little commercialization is okay, but if folks want to have city conveniences, then they should move to the city.	2/7/2014 3:28 PM
3	please don't turn harris county into columbus!!!	2/7/2014 7:45 AM
4	Would like to see more commercial activity in Harris county.	2/6/2014 10:39 PM
5	I DO NOT want cookie-cutter subdivisions like Ivy Park! I also DO NOT want apartment complexes that will end up empty and government subsidized in 5 or 10 years.	2/6/2014 10:32 PM
6	Please keep the trees from being cut down	2/6/2014 8:13 PM
7	Please bring more economic opportunities to our county. This will not only boost the overall economic portrait of our county - it will provide part time jobs to our high school kids - local jobs keeps money local - less guys for them to purchase traveling into Columbus - thus more money for them to spend on non-gasoline purchases.	2/6/2014 4:24 PM
8	Prefer the small town look and feel, with neighborhoods with trees. Don't make it look like a huge parking lot. Keep as much nature/trees as possible.	2/6/2014 4:01 PM
9	I strongly prefer the rural feel of living in Harris County with limited development. We live in Harris County to avoid commercial development, houses right next to another, etc. I strongly prefer rural housing developments versus cul de sac developments. I hope that Harris County will preserve the land and rural feel of living in such an area. I understand some development is good for the community from an economic standpoint, but if the County begins to fill up land with commercial properties, apartment complexes, and cookie cutter homes, then the quality of rural living will begin to decline.	2/6/2014 3:56 PM
10	I did not rate one of the selections offered (cul-de-sac or apartments) because I would prefer not to have either type of development in Harris County. Growth, I realize is inevitable, but I would hate to see apartments thrown up along every major highway. Same goes for commercial development. It has been said that it is rare to visit a unique town any more because of so many of the commercial developments and franchise stores - many of them are all the same stores, restaurants and even the structures look the same. If we want to keep tourism a major industry of Harris County, we will need to maintain the unique qualities and characteristics that make it attractive and different. If it looks the same as other cities, what would be our draw? Every city now has a Starbucks, but not every city has a Rose Garden Tea Room. It would be difficult to put a Butts Mill Farm in Columbus, but we have that in Harris County. I want the quality of life in Harris County to remain at the high standard it is today, and restricting dense housing and sprawling commercial growth will ensure that for us and future generations.	2/6/2014 3:40 PM
11	My husband nor I care to see any apartment complexes or major subdivisions in our county. The reason we live in Harris County is quality of life, our beautiful rural spread, and property taxes.	2/1/2014 5:30 PM
12	Harris County has become a preferred market by focusing on schools and not trying to be all things to all people. It would be unfair to current residents to be burdened with costs of building infrastructure for high density housing which many residents moved here to avoid.	1/26/2014 9:13 PM

## Harris County Comprehensive Plan

13	I hear a lot of people, young and old, asking why we can't have a major restaurant or major grocery stores, or apartments in the county. They just don't understand that the county will need a sewer system for any of these projects. It is amazing how many people don't understand the infrastructure needed for these things to be built in the county.	1/26/2014 4:13 PM
14	Need more public facilities west of 185	1/25/2014 7:35 PM
15	The plan represent the much needed modernization/improvement in the county.	1/25/2014 1:17 PM
16	Get the rails to trails going	1/23/2014 10:08 AM
17	Exit 19 has room to grow we really need a Large Grocery store Publics, Kroger, etc... Also need more Restaurants we continue to give all the revenue to Columbus and Lagrange. Lets bring it back to Fortson...	1/18/2014 1:04 PM
18	The Harris County plan seems to be manipulated by the larger River Valley RC....This cannot be good for the citizens of Harris County.	1/13/2014 9:13 PM
19	Complete the rails to trails throughout Harris County. Encourage national retail and restaurants to open locations in our county. Continue to seek clean industry and other job opportunities that are not just seasonal or tourist-related.	1/13/2014 11:50 AM
20	We need to keep a small home town atmosphere for Harris County. Most people who reside in Harris County do so to get away from the big cities, commercial traffic, and high crime rates of larger cities such as Columbus, GA. Harris County is our "Mayberry" of sorts -- and keeping it small attracts residents who don't want to live in a big city. Small towns are safer and a better place to raise and educate children	1/13/2014 10:19 AM
21	Cul de sac development option was not a good choice...dense development similar to Longleaf can be done well in Harris County to avoid sprawl chopping up the wooded vistas (rather than only farmland options) and to consider Harris County as one unit is too simplistic. There are locations in southern and eastern Harris County in towns and interstate exits where more urban development is reasonable, as opposed to many of the rural roadway sections where forests and field viewscapes in northern and central areas should be protected as Harris County's attractiveness	1/10/2014 2:43 PM
22	Include all foreseeable residents and industry. Plan, plan, plan.	1/7/2014 10:25 AM
23	So far so good. Keep the traffic under control...	1/5/2014 7:24 PM
24	High density neighborhoods or high density apartments are not preferred. Neighborhoods should be not less than 1 acre if on sewers, 2 acres if no sewers. Commercial property is important, but must be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods and older buildings. Taxes on commercial property must be keep low. Harris County needs an industrial park on the south side towards Columbus and on the north side towards LaGrange/West Point.	12/31/2013 3:35 PM
25	Increase acres required to build a house.	12/31/2013 11:08 AM
26	I'd like to see areas of EACH type of housing, including apartment complexes, cul de sac neighborhoods and other high-density developments, as long as they are planned and placed in a sensible way. I'd also like to see the development of white-collar business parks and complexes that mix multi-family housing with commercial and light industrial/office/call center-type businesses within designated areas. In my opinion, Harris County is big enough to accomodate several different types of developments, as long as they are planned and placed in a way that compliments the terrain, the surrounding developments and the wishes of forward-thinking and informed citizens.	12/30/2013 7:53 AM
27	If you really want constructive feedback, you should package this plan in an executive summary covering all areas briefly, with a "bottom line" conclusion for each. Most residents don't have the time to read all this or the knowledge base to full understand all aspects.	12/30/2013 7:46 AM
28	Keep the commercial to a minimum - prefer the small town atmosphere	12/29/2013 8:48 PM
29	Want to keep small town, neighborly environment.	12/29/2013 4:54 PM
30	We have lived in Harris County for 10 years (as of 2014) and would love to see it maintained as we have found it. This, of course, is not possible, so the comprehensive plan appears on initial reading as a viable means of keeping "the dream" of a rural living and working area alive.	12/29/2013 9:48 AM
31	harris county is a rural community, always will be. We would prefer that it stay that way, otherwise we will move back to muscogee county.	12/28/2013 8:27 PM

## Harris County Comprehensive Plan

32	I am very concerned about the pending development of The Grove. The commission needs to ensure the developers don't destroy the "county" setting home owner near this development move to Harris County to enjoy. If we wanted a Walmart in our backyard we would live in Columbus.	12/28/2013 7:32 PM
33	We moved to Harris County to get away from the city life of Columbus, however, I would like to see our dirt roads get paved.	12/28/2013 12:38 PM
34	I moved to a rural area because I was trying to leave the city. I don't want the city to follow me or I will have to look for another rural area. Thanks for asking.	12/28/2013 12:37 PM
35	Building and Zoning coeds need to be updated and changed and they need to be most of all clearly defined as in specific's on what type structures can be located on a person's property, especially in a subdivision so that Property Values aren't hurt by an owners LACK of VALUES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	12/28/2013 11:28 AM
36	If Harris County is to grow it must become more senior friendly, i.e. more affordable.	12/28/2013 10:39 AM
37	I wish for reduced school tax for seniors 65 and over.	12/28/2013 9:56 AM
38	Harris county is starting to look and feel like Columbus. More stringent building code ENFORCEMENT would benefit the county more than anything. Builders in Harris County can do anything they wish without fear, you know that and I know that-everyone knows that.	12/28/2013 9:29 AM
39	Provide county water and sewer throughout county.	12/28/2013 8:45 AM
40	get water and sewer to all first that are in housing developments and put thru tax paying concerns--shopping(food and Drug)property owners pay taxes apartment renters don't	12/28/2013 7:33 AM
41	Need fire protection for area south of 315. This is a critical issue for a comprehensive plan.	12/28/2013 7:13 AM
42	I believe the survey presented was rather deceptive. I am sure most people surveyed felt as though they had to answer each category presented to them. It would seem that had you opted on either of the first two choices, ( rural or mini fam) that any of the choices beyond that such as congested neighborhoods, apartments, condos, etc., would even enter the picture for further consideration. The ambiguity of the options for answers is inane. If you want to know the truth than ask a question that requires a yes or no answer. I do agree with you on thing. Only a Survey Monkey could have come up with such a stupid survey.	12/27/2013 11:45 PM
43	More efforts should be made to protect the environment while developing parts of the county. Exceptions to zoning are too often made - this needs to stop. While more apartment housing is needed, it should be confined to city limits who have resources (water, sewage etc.) to deal with it.	12/27/2013 11:01 PM
44	Preference is for the rural subdivision only, and definitely no apartment complexes. Absolutely 'main street' style for shopping!	12/27/2013 10:51 PM
45	We moved to Harris County to get away from the city. We welcome small businesses and neighborhoods like what we have now. Two acres per lot seems about right for neighborhoods. We do live on a gravel road that we have been told for 10 years would be paved, but it hasn't. That's frustrating, especially when we have small children who frequently ride a bus down slippery, muddy roads. Thank you all for taking this survey and for all your hard work.	12/27/2013 10:36 PM
46	Emphasis on environmental issues.	12/27/2013 10:08 PM
47	Fortson wasn't included as an option for indicating residency.	12/27/2013 9:41 PM
48	I moved to Harris County because I love the rural neighborhoods and the wide open spaces. Please do not over develop the county like they have done in Columbus.	12/27/2013 8:01 PM
49	I would like to see Harris County remain a rural setting with only low or medium density housing. Commercial development should be highly restricted.	12/27/2013 7:56 PM
50	Harris County would do well to offer its residents reasons not to do all of their shopping in Columbus or LaGrange. A mainstream supermarket and a couple of known places to eat would be a welcome addition to the area.	12/27/2013 7:43 PM
51	I live west of Ga HWY 315. Survey is way to general. Pictures should be Harris County pictures.	12/27/2013 7:35 PM

## Harris County Comprehensive Plan

52	I would like to see more focus on recycling, walking trails, bicycle trails, dog parks. I want to see more economic development and a focus on recruiting businesses. We have to stop depending on tourism , we need more business to come to our county. We need to attract more technical companies. We need to develop better paying jobs in the county. People need to earn a living wage. The county jobs available are not market comparable . They are extremely low paying-why is that? Our county offices need an HR person...our county govt. seems unorganized and inefficient and very "good old boy" oriented.	12/27/2013 6:58 PM
53	Harris County really needs some commercial development, as well as residential, to continue to grow and prosper. We need jobs and housing to accommodate!	12/26/2013 1:36 PM
54	Controlled growth is necessary for our community.	12/20/2013 9:58 PM



City of Hamilton  
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210 Walton Street  
Hamilton, GA 31811  
706-628-5321 fax 706-628-9520  
Rebecca Chambers, Mayor

June 24, 2014

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
CITY OF HAMILTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2014-2018

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly did enact, and subsequently amend, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 to institute local comprehensive planning in communities throughout the state, and

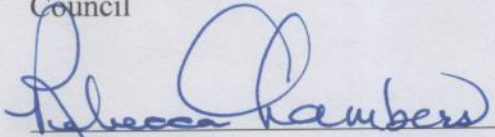
WHEREAS, said Act requires local governments to prepare, maintain and periodically update a state-approved local comprehensive plan to be eligible for certain state-issued grants, loans and permits, and

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has been notified by cognizant authority that the City's most recent effort to update the local comprehensive plan does adequately address the minimum standards and procedures promulgated by the state to ensure compliance with said Act.

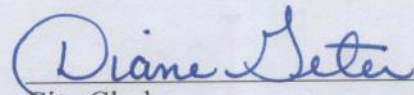
NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, and it is hereby resolved by the City of Hamilton Council that the Hamilton Comprehensive Plan 2014-2018 be adopted.

Duly considered and approved by the City of Hamilton Council in session this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2014.

City of Hamilton  
Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk