



FINAL

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Community Assessment is composed of four elements: (1) Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities, (2) Analysis of Existing Development Patterns, (3) Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives and (4) Supporting Analysis of Data and Information.

The City of Norcross Community Assessment was prepared in accordance with guidelines established in the Rule of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Standards and Procedures for Local Government Planning of the State Code, effective May 1, 2005 and Section 110-12-1-.07(1) Data and Mapping Specifications.

This Executive Summary includes information from the Gwinnett joint County-Cities Community Assessment as well as additional information that will be beneficial to Norcross in using the Comprehensive Plan as a policy and decision making document.

The Community Assessment serves the Comprehensive Plan process as a technical resource that community members can draw from as they develop their vision and policy objectives for the Community Agenda.



FINAL

2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section is a roster of key concerns, felt needs, current assets and desired benefits to which the final Comprehensive Plan document will respond. These questions, concerns and perceived strengths will help establish the basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The list of Issues and Opportunities presented here is an *initial list* that will evolve during the community participation component of the comprehensive planning process. The evaluation of future development goals and objectives will likely yield additional issues or opportunities to be included.

Population & Demography

- Our increasingly diverse population must be recognized, planned for, and given a voice in the planning process.
- Norcross expects to continue to grow at a rate of approximately 3% increase per year.
- As a County, Gwinnett is nearly ½ minority and Norcross will experience a changing political environment because of current and future expected population shifts.

Land Use and Development Patterns

- The City does have Character Areas that are unique unto themselves. The historic downtown is revitalizing with new retail and restaurant uses, and the creating of a downtown development authority will add to that momentum. The other commercial areas of the City along state roads are less unique and are in need of revitalization.
- The City should seek ways to address the need for mixed use development.

Economic Development

- The Downtown Development Authority should continue to make strides toward encouraging a mix of long term vibrant retail tenants for the downtown area.
- The City should take advantage of the CID involvement and interest in redevelopment potential of the area- especially along Buford Highway.
- Unemployment rate in Norcross is nearly 2 times greater than that of Gwinnett County as a whole.

Transportation

- Congestion along our major corridors can and should be improved at the local, state, and federal level.

Housing & Social Services

- Some neighborhoods are in need of revitalization.
- There is some opposition to higher density development in the community.
- The City should seek out more ways to improve the housing to job balance by creating a greater mix of housing options.
- Housing affordability should be re-evaluated as the population grows and changes to ensure that affordability is not a problem.



FINAL

Natural & Cultural Resources

- The southern portion of the County is underserved with park land and park facilities.
- Norcross sits in two water supply watersheds: the Chattahoochee and the Ocmulgee (see Water Supply Watersheds map in Gwinnett County Community Assessment)

Facilities & Services

- Working with the County to enhance the stormwater management systems must be a priority over the coming decade.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Gwinnett County and Norcross need to better coordinate their land use, economic, housing, annexation, and environmental priorities and actions.

Gwinnett County's Joint Assessment identifies the following other issues:

- Livable Community Initiative Areas- These areas of the County or Cities currently have active Livable Community Initiative projects under way.
- Portions of the county are identified as sewerable, where installation of sewer to correct existing problems with aging septic systems is supported by the local communities.
- Underserved by Parks- These are sections of the county, predominately located along the County's southwest border that the Department of Recreation and Parks has identified as having insufficient access to park and recreation facilities.
- Passenger Rail Opportunities- Gwinnett County has two rail lines running through it- offers the potential for interstate rail connections and commuter serviced connections to Atlanta for Norcross, Duluth, Sugar Hill, and Buford – the Gwinnett Cities that straddle this line.

FINAL**3. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

This section includes three components.

- a. Existing land use map
- b. Maps identifying “Areas of Special Attention”
- c. Map identifying “Recommended Character Areas”

Existing Land Use

The Existing Land Use map (Figure 1) depicts the distribution of various land use categories in the City. This map shows an updated GIS map of existing land uses as of April 2007. An accompanying table presents the City of Norcross’ total acreage and the percentage of land in the city that each of these categories occupies.

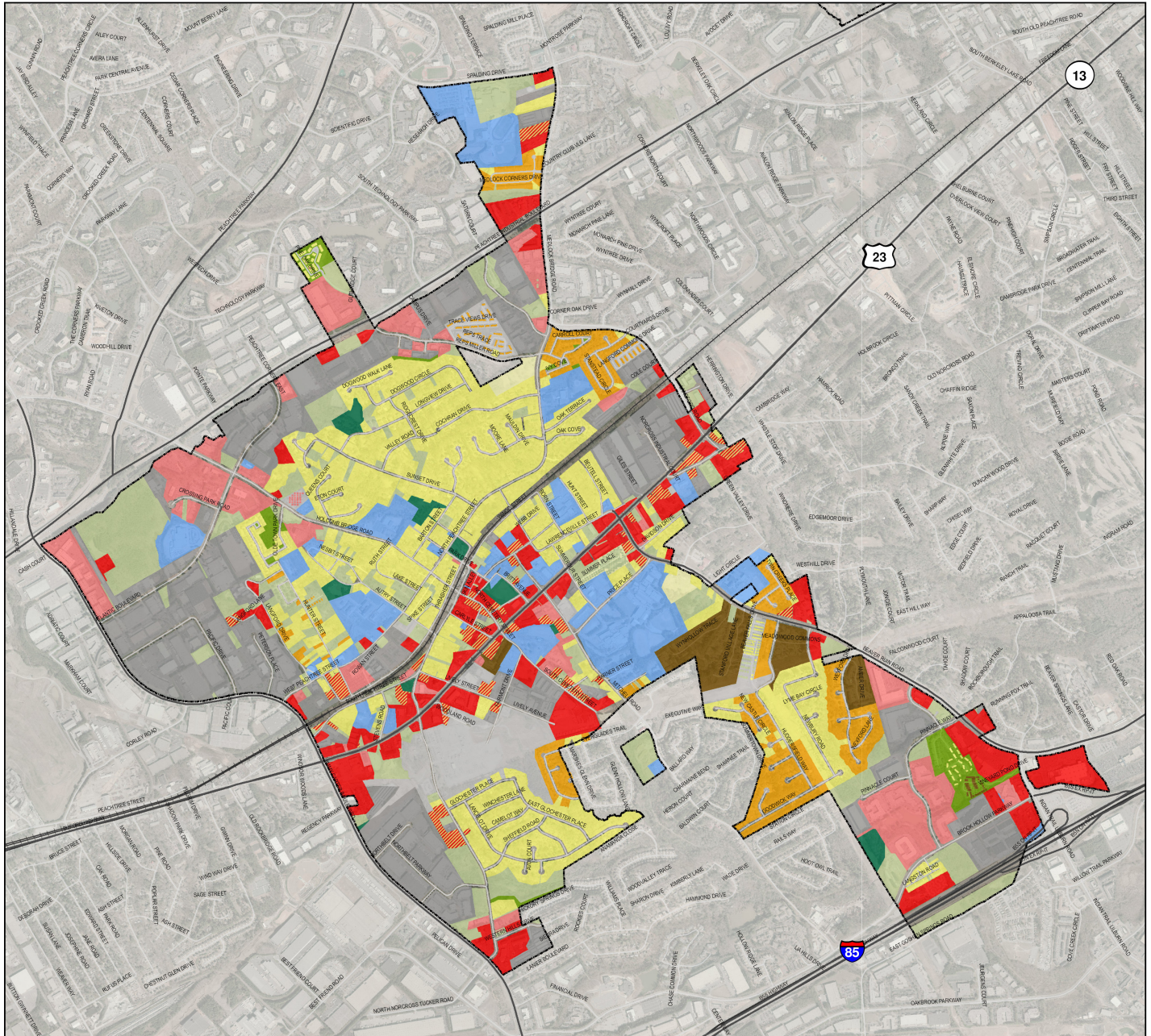
Approximate distribution of land uses by type is as follows: The dominant single land use in Norcross is Low Density Residential (20% of the city). This is similar to Gwinnett County, where low density residential accounts for more than one third of the County’s total acreage.

Although it dominates the landscape along many of Gwinnett’s arterial roads, commercial/retail and office land uses only occupy some 4.4% of the County and industrial only slightly more land at 5.1%. However, in Norcross, Commercial uses account for approximately ¼ of the land in the City and industrial/commercial complexes make up over approximately one-fifth of the City. Thus, commercial and industrial uses have a healthy presence in the City of Norcross. One issue the Community Agenda will need to address is how much industrial and commercial land should be maintained as important for the tax-base versus promoted for redevelopment into new uses or mixed-use. Norcross also has just less than 10% of land occupied by multi-family or attached housing; indicating a wide variety of housing choice and affordability is present in Norcross compared to other areas of the County.

Existing Land Use	Percent
Commercial/Retail	8.2%
Estates	0.5%
High Density Residential	2.2%
Institutional/Public	8.6%
Low Density Residential	19.8%
Light Industrial	18.2%
Medium Density Residential	4.7%
Mixed Use	1.6%
Office/Professional	7.0%
Park (Public)	0.9%
Recreation/Conservation/Private Parks	1.2%
Transportation/Communications	4.6%
Undeveloped	10.9%
Right of Way	11.6%
TOTAL	100.0%

FINAL

FIGURE 1. NORCROSS EXISTING LAND USE



Existing Land Use

City of Norcross, Georgia

Map Produced Sept 12, 2007

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Estates | Right of Way | Park (Public) |
| Low Density Residential | Transportation/Communications | Recreation/Conservation/Private Parks |
| Medium Density Residential | Light Industrial | Agriculture |
| High Density Residential | Heavy Industrial | Undeveloped |
| Commercial/Retail | Mixed Use | Water |
| Office/Professional | Institutional/Public | |



POND
 Architects • Engineers • Planners
 3000 Parkway Lane, Suite 100 | Norcross, GA 30092
 www.pondco.com | p 678.226.7740 | f 678.226.7744

FINAL**Character Areas**

The following character areas shown on Figure 2 on the following page have been identified for Norcross:

*Environmentally Sensitive Areas*

These areas are an amalgamation of areas with sensitive natural resources such as wetlands, flood plains and steep slopes, and specially designated areas such as the 2000-foot Chattahoochee River corridor.

*Community Activity Center*

The Community Activity Center designation applies to large areas with a variety of different land uses but that have a higher proportion of residential uses and more locally oriented commercial areas than the Major Activity Centers. As is characteristic of Major Activity Centers, although such uses today tend to be accommodated in separate zoning districts, the evolution into more authentic mixed use centers is foreseen. Community Activity Centers have been identified in Norcross in two general areas; The Beaver Ruin corridor which culminates at Indian Trail and the Jimmy Carter Boulevard/Buford Highway area.

*Downtowns/City Centers*

This designation applies to the area of Norcross that is the historic downtown, encompassing such landmarks as the city hall and other municipal entities, the original main street environment, older historic neighborhoods or other community focuses such as the community center, schools, and parks.

*Existing Employment Center*

Existing Employment Centers are important concentrations of office or industrial land uses that are less intensive and less regionally significant Major Employment Centers in the County. Many of the commercial service businesses within these areas are relatively small scale and often oriented to surrounding neighborhoods. Several of these areas are likely to redevelop significantly during the life of the updated Comprehensive Plan and may see a transition toward more office and technology oriented business and away from their current manufacturing or light industrial uses. The character areas map identifies an existing employment center along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard at the city's periphery where there is a concentration of offices in both low-rise and mid-rise complexes.

*Commercial Centers*

These areas are concentrations of commercial stores and services largely oriented to the neighborhoods within convenient access to them. Some residential development such as apartments may also be part of the land use mix of these centers. Downtown Norcross is the original commercial center for the city and still thrives today. The commercial offerings of the city have been greatly diversified with commercial centers along Buford Highway and Beaver Ruin at Indian Trail.

*Established Residential*

Established Residential areas are largely built out areas of residential land uses that have been developed according to suburban models of single family and multifamily site planning. Such areas may contain pockets of locally serving commercial uses but are



FINAL

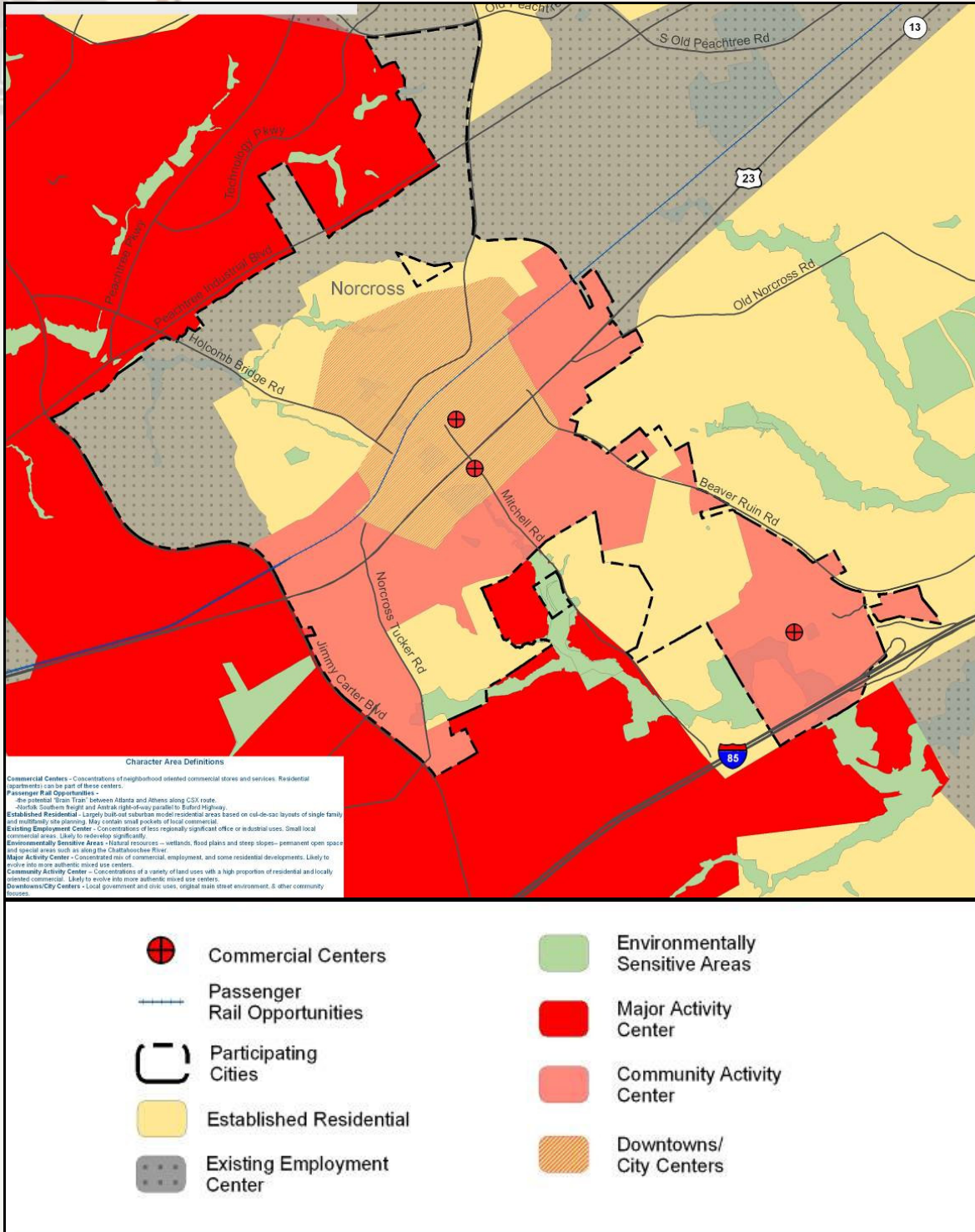
otherwise composites of generally homogenous residential subdivisions based on cul-de-sac layouts. In Norcross, the established residential areas are concentrated to the northwest of downtown and in several areas southeast of downtown, but generally more towards the center of the city rather than clustered at the edges.

Passenger Rail Opportunities

+++ Norcross has a heavy rail presence in its downtown area; a Norfolk Southern freight and Amtrak right-of-way runs through the middle of downtown. This line parallels Buford Highway and I-85 and offers the potential for interstate rail connections and commuter serviced connections to Atlanta and beyond for Norcross. Gwinnett County is also the location of another existing rail line that could, at some point in the future, accommodate the potential “Brain Train” between Atlanta and Athens.

FINAL

FIGURE 2. NORCROSS CHARACTER AREAS



FINAL**Areas Requiring Special Attention**

Areas of Special Attention are locations within the City of Norcross with current or expected future conditions that warrant special planning interventions or targeting of incentives and resources. These areas include sections of the City with such characteristics as redevelopment potential, specific service deficiencies such as too few parks and recreation facilities, and areas of special resource value such as historic sites or local landmarks. Areas requiring special attention within the City of Norcross have been broken down into two categories:

A. Cultural Resource Management and Community Development Issues (See Figure 3).

Community Investment Priority Areas

These areas indicate those parts of Gwinnett County and the Cities that meet certain qualification standards established by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for Federal grants and assistance for community facilities/infrastructure. More than half of the City of Norcross is designated as a community investment priority area.

Livable Community Initiative Areas

The City of Norcross has participated in two Livable Centers Initiative studies; including one in 2001 for the downtown, which the City sponsored. The second LCI in which the City was involved was recently completed for the Indian Trail-Lilburn area; the city served as a jurisdictional partner since only a small portion of the study area is located within the city limits.

Community Improvement Districts

This character area encompasses the County's three Community Improvement Districts. They are the Gwinnett Place CID, Highway 78 CID, and Southwest Gwinnett Village CID. A portion of the City of Norcross is located within the Gwinnett Village CID. Within each of the CIDs, local property owners agree to a commercial property tax increase so that money can be raised for improvement projects within the borders of the CID.

Local Historic District and County Recognized Historic Sites

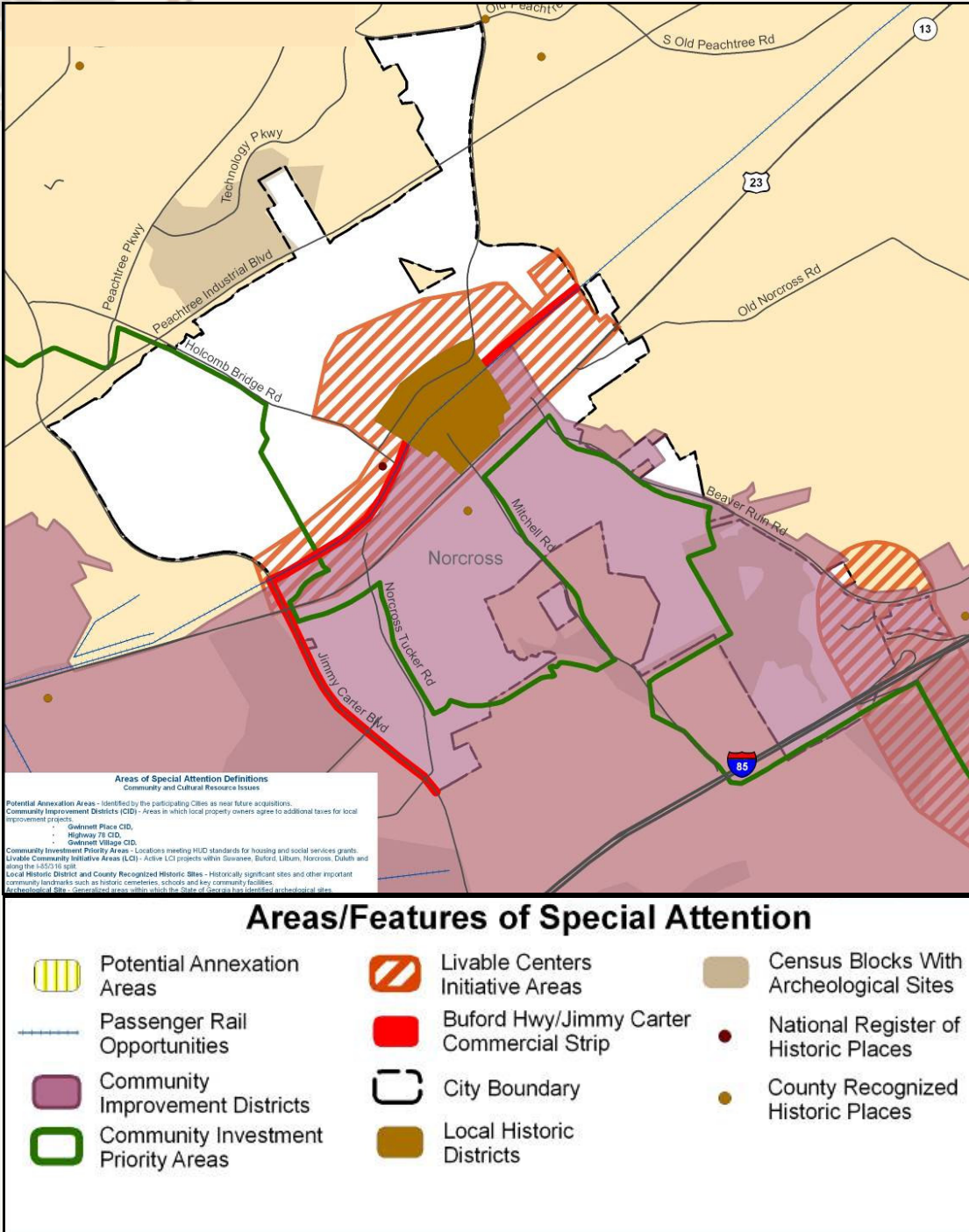
This category includes listed or other historically significant sites as well as other important community landmarks and community assets such as historic cemeteries and graveyards, schools and key community facilities. In Norcross, the historically significant areas center mostly around the downtown, including the Downtown Historic District as listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Redevelopment Opportunities

These areas have been identified by the County and participating Cities as locations within their borders where there is potential for focused redevelopment to occur. Though not shown on the figure on the following page, the Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway areas have been and remain areas of interest for redevelopment studies and initiatives.

FINAL

FIGURE 3. AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



**FINAL**

- B. Infrastructure and Service Capacity Issues.** The following areas requiring special attention are included within this category for the City of Norcross (See Figure 4):

I-85 Study Area

This band along much of I-85 and part of GA 316 is the impact area of the current planning effort to deal with upgrading needs and congestion relief along these key highways.

Interchange Impact Areas and Planned I-85 Road Crossings

These are locations along Interstate 85 where significant planned redesign of the access ramps and approaches (as part of the I-85 widening and other improvements) and other improvements such as new road crossings over the Interstate will have significant impacts on existing and future land uses. One such road crossing borders the City of Norcross at Indian Trail Road.

Interchange Impact Areas also include those areas anticipated to be affected by major improvements; there is an Interchange Impact Area identified at Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway. Interchange locations are generally known for the first phase of the project.

Sewerable- Community Support

These are currently un-sewered areas of the County. In and near Norcross, the sewerable area is on the west/southwest side of the City. In these areas installation of sewer to correct existing problems with aging septic systems is supported by the local communities.

Water Distribution Limitations

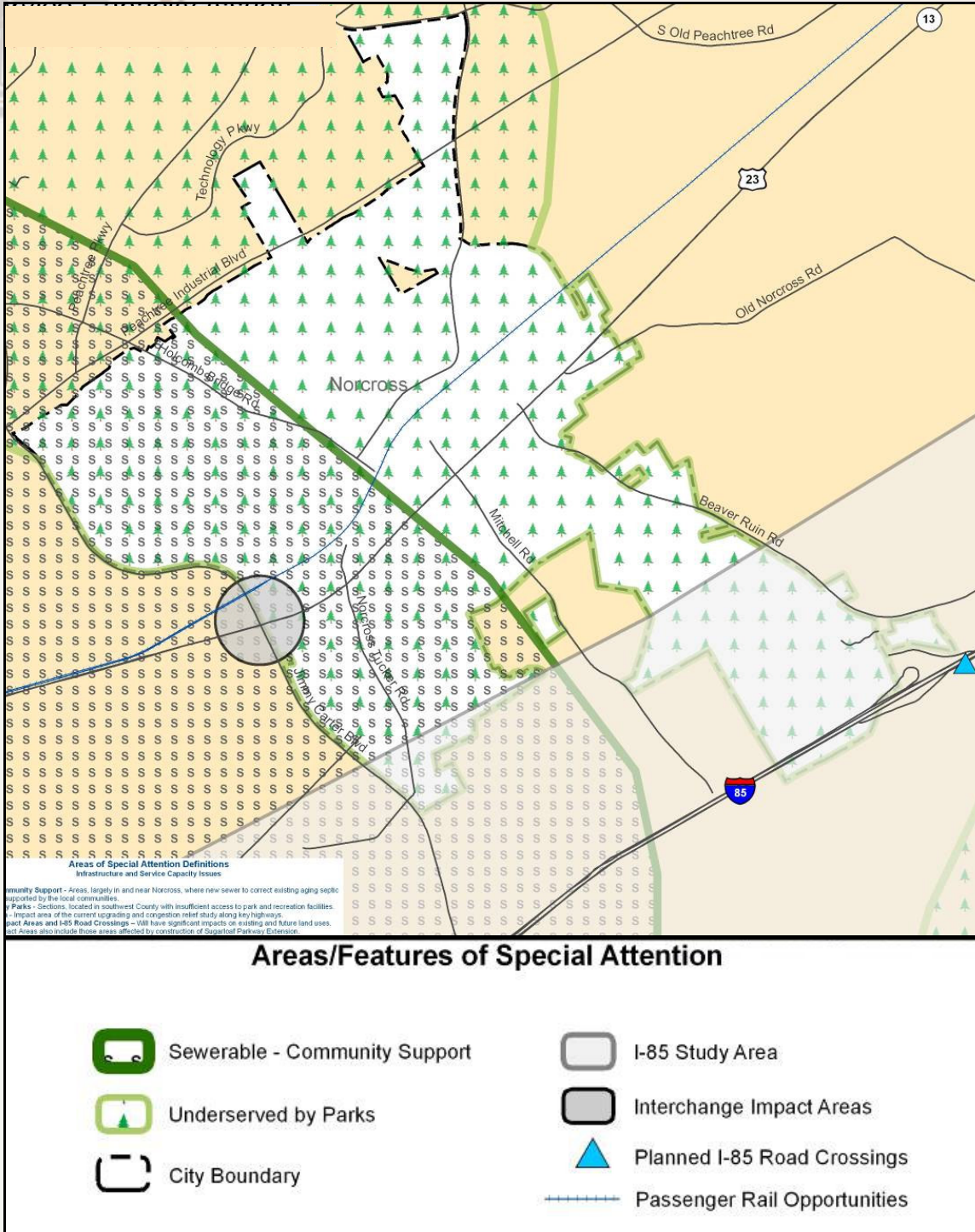
This area in the eastern part of the County currently has small diameter water distribution lines. These lines are adequate to serve the current development in that area. Nevertheless, should development continue to expand and densify, it is likely that major water distribution lines will have to be constructed. Norcross is not included in the area with Water Distribution Limitations.

Underserved by Parks

These are sections of the county, predominately located along the County's southwest border that the Department of Recreation and Parks has identified as having insufficient access to park and recreation facilities. The entire City of Norcross is identified as underserved by parks.

FINAL

FIGURE 4. AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION: INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES





FINAL

4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUMMARY

Population

- The estimated 2005 population is 9,887; a 258% increase since 1970.
- The population is expected to increase to 12,337 by 2030, an approximate 25% increase from 2005.

Historic and Projected Population

1970	1980	1990	2000	2005 (est.)	2010	2020	2030
2,755	3,317	5,947	8,410	9,887	10,469	11,540	12,337

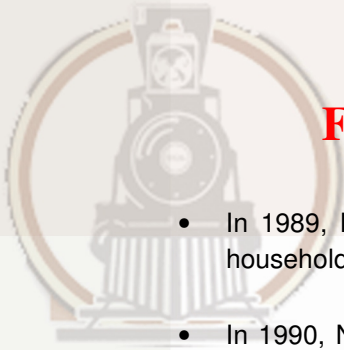
Sources: US Census, (Dr. Thomas Hammer Projections for Gwinnett County)

- The most recent Census estimate released for Norcross in 2007 reflects the 2006 population at 10,111 persons.
- Norcross, with 25% of its population in the twenties cohort, is different from the County and the State, which has 15% of the population in the twenties cohort.
- Norcross is unique in its ability to attract and retain 21-24 year olds. The percentage share for this cohort remains stable or declines slightly in every Gwinnett jurisdiction except Norcross, which is home to the Lincoln College of Technology (formerly the Career Education Institute) and the Georgia Medical Institute – two community institutions that attract more college-age individuals.
- Norcross is projected to have a smaller proportion of the total school age population than it has today. However, the number of school aged children will continue to grow.
- Norcross, similar to the rest of the County, is becoming more diverse. The Asian population comprised 6% of the Norcross community in 2000.
- Much of the increase in diversity is coming from people who are of Hispanic heritage (almost 41% of the population in Norcross).

Hispanic Population, 1980, 1990, & 2000

1980 Total	1980 Percentage	1990 Total	1990 Percentage	2000 Total	2000 Percentage
22	0.60%	292	4.90%	3,442	40.90%

Source: US Census



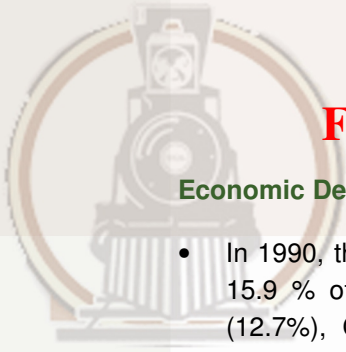
FINAL

- In 1989, Norcross had a median household income of \$33,367. In 1999, the median household income adjusted to 1989 dollars was \$33,970. This is 1.81% increase.
- In 1990, Norcross had a per capita income of \$14,410. In 2000, the per capita income adjusted to 1990 dollars was \$14,106; a 2% decrease.
- In general, the income distribution of Norcross' population shows that there are more households earning more money in 2000 than in 1990.

Income Distribution, 1990 & 2000

	1990	2000
Less than \$9,999	5.2%	6.3%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	6.2%	4.7%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	10.0%	6.5%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	20.1%	13.1%
\$30,000 - \$34,999	10.3%	5.0%
\$35,000 - \$39,999	6.9%	6.7%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	15.9%	14.8%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	11.6%	14.3%
\$60,000 - \$74,999	10.1%	8.0%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	2.4%	10.5%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	1.1%	4.1%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	0.0%	2.8%
\$150,000 and above	0.2%	3.1%

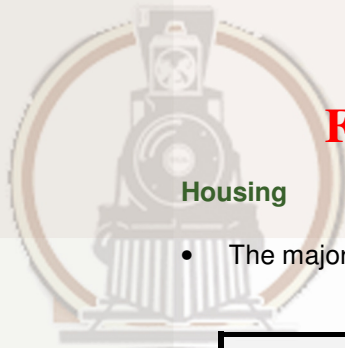
- In 1990, 6.92 % of Norcross' population was living below the poverty level. In 2000, the percentage of residents living below poverty level increased to 17.9%. This increase in residents living below poverty level should be listed as an issue and addressed within the Community Agenda.
- About 1/3 of the city population in 2000 earned between \$40,000 and \$60,000.



FINAL

Economic Development

- In 1990, the dominant employment industry for Norcross' residents was retail trade with 15.9 % of people working in that industry. Manufacturing (12.7%), Wholesale Trade (12.7%), Construction (9.9%), and Other Services (9.8%) rounded out the top five industries.
- In 2000, retail trade dropped to fifth place with 9.3 % of Norcross' residents working in that industry. Construction became the dominant industry with 20.2 % of residents working in this field. Professional Services (15.7%), Manufacturing (13%), and Arts and Entertainment (11.1%) round out the top five industries in 2000. The percentages for Construction and Arts and Entertainment are higher in Norcross than in any of the other Gwinnett Cities. Norcross was also the city not to lose ground in the manufacturing sector.
- In 1990, Norcross had an unemployment rate of 2.1%. The number increased to 6.27% in 2000. This is much higher than Gwinnett's unemployment rate of 3.26%, the state average of 3.5%, and the national rate of 4.0%.
- In 1999, the median earning for a man living in Norcross was \$21,410. The median earning for a woman was \$21,960. Of the Gwinnett Cities, Gwinnett County, the Atlanta MSA, and the State of Georgia, Norcross is the only jurisdiction where a woman's median earning is higher, albeit slightly, than a man's. Typically there is a \$6,000 to \$10,000 difference between the two.
- Norcross has a greater share of people who carpool, use transit, walk, and bicycle to work than the County as a whole.



FINAL

Housing

- The majority of Norcross' housing (47.4 % in 2000) is single family detached.

Housing Type and Mix, 1990 & 2000

	Number of Units		Percent of Total	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Detached Single Family	1,184	1,319	42.9%	47.4%
Attached Single Family	72	459	2.6%	16.5%
Multifamily	1,470	996	53.3%	35.8%
Mobile Homes, Boats, etc.	31	10	1.1%	0.4%
Total Units	2,757	2,784	100%	100%

Source: US Census

- Between 2000 and 2006, 72% of the total housing units permitted (723) were for single family houses (which includes detached and attached houses).

Age of Housing

Year Built	Norcross	%
Total	3,507	100%
Built 2000-2006	723	21%
Built 1999 to March 2000	79	2%
Built 1995 to 1998	364	10%
Built 1990 to 1994	76	2%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,142	33%
Built 1970 to 1979	485	14%
Built 1960 to 1969	333	9%
Built 1950 to 1959	126	4%
Built 1940 to 1949	49	1%
Built 1939 or earlier	130	4%

Source: US Census + City data

- More of Norcross' housing (41%) was constructed between 1980 and 1989 than during any other period. Gwinnett County had more of its housing (42%) constructed between 1990 and 2000 than during any other period.
- Between 1990 and 2000, Norcross experienced an increase in owner-occupied households (from 45% to 49%).
- Norcross' median contract rent in 2000 was \$724, a 57% increase over a median rent of \$460 in 1990. 2000's median rent is slightly higher than those for Gwinnett County, which had a median rent of \$719 in 2000
- Approximately 33% of Norcross' 2,690 households experience housing problems such as cost-burdened or special needs; this is slightly higher than the rate for Gwinnett County (28%).



FINAL

Transportation

Traffic Safety and Operations

The Atlanta region's Congestion Management System (CMS) extends into Gwinnett County and includes the City of Norcross' expressways and arterial roads which are listed in the table below. This system evaluates congestion levels on the affected roadways and attempts to mitigate the congestion. Mitigation efforts may include minor modifications to the roadway, encouragement of alternative modes, or capacity enhancement among other strategies. ARC is responsible for creating the region's Congestion Management Process (CMP), which identifies and attempts to mitigate roadway congestion by increasing the system's efficiency and providing alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips. As a component of the CMP, ARC maintains the CMS database of congested roadways. The following is a list of the 2005 CMS roadways in and directly adjacent to the City of Norcross:

- Peachtree Industrial Blvd
- Medlock Bridge Rd
- Spalding Rd
- GA 13 (Buford Hwy)
- GA 140 (Jimmy Carter Blvd/Holcomb Bridge Rd)
- GA 141 (Peachtree Industrial Blvd/Peachtree Pkwy)
- Jimmy Carter Blvd
- GA 378 (Beaver Ruin Rd)
- I 85 NE

Local Bus Service

Gwinnett County provides local bus service through Gwinnett County Transit to much of the southern portion of the I-85 corridor including service to Norcross. Service throughout the County is along five routes having headways varying from 15 minutes to 30 minutes in the peak period except for route 50 to Buford with a headway of one hour and thirty minutes. A transit center is located adjacent to Gwinnett Place Mall where transfers can be made between four of the five routes. Local service is also provided to the Doraville MARTA station in northern DeKalb County.

Commuter Bus Service

In addition to local service, Gwinnett County along with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) provide commuter bus service in the County. Gwinnett County Transit offers three commuter bus routes. GRTA also offers three routes. One of the three routes originates from the John's Creek area near the Fulton County and Forsyth County boundary and extends through Gwinnett County to terminate service at the Doraville MARTA station; connections to local bus and heavy rail service are available at Doraville station. This route runs through the western corner of the City of Norcross, making it somewhat accessible to Norcross riders and providing links to other services. Headways on the Express routes vary between 30 minutes and 45 minutes.



FINAL

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

The County currently has an *Open Space and Greenway Master Plan*. The plan is a comprehensive document intended to inform and guide the County's ongoing greenspace preservation program. As bicycle and pedestrian planning are components of the plan, the Department of Parks and Recreation coordinates with the County DOT on elements affecting transportation. There are sixteen pedestrian and multi-use path projects in Gwinnett County that are included in the 2006-2011 TIP. All are scheduled for completion between 2007 and 2010.

Areas with potential for alternative modes

Areas with mixed use, residential densities above certain thresholds and infrastructure that supports alternative modes create an opportunity for residents of Gwinnett County and Norcross to travel without driving. Sidewalks, trails, paths, and transit service are all infrastructure that could support the use of alternative modes.

Truck routes

Both the commissioner of GDOT and the Federal Highway Administration designate truck routes on non-interstate facilities in Gwinnett County to serve oversized single and twin trailer trucks. These routes focus on access to interstate highways, major through highways, and industrial areas. Georgia SR 141 corridor along with industrial connections in the Norcross area is a designated truck route by GDOT or is a Federally Designated National Network Truck Route.

Rail

Rail freight service in Gwinnett County is provided by two Class I railroads, Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation through separate corridors in the western and central portions of the County. The western corridor served by Norfolk Southern provides Norcross with regular freight routes.

Intermodal Facilities

Though the Norfolk Southern railroad does not have a major intermodal rail yard in the City of Norcross or in Gwinnett County, there is a significant level of intermodal service through rail sidings that connect to area businesses. The largest collection of these rail sidings in the County is located in the Norcross area along the Norfolk Southern line providing service to a large area of industrial and manufacturing facilities.



FINAL

Natural and Cultural Resources

Norcross is in compliance with the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria and has adopted locally enforceable ordinances in support of these rules. The City has adopted ordinances related to the following environmental criteria including:

- Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control
- Chattahoochee River Tributary Protection
- Groundwater Recharge Area Protection
- Wetland Protection
- Chattahoochee River Water Supply Watershed Protection

The Chattahoochee River

The Chattahoochee River and its tributaries are the only protected river system in Gwinnett County. Protection of the Chattahoochee and its adjacent lands is provided by the Metropolitan River Protection Act, a state law passed in 1973 which created a 2000 foot Corridor that runs along both banks of the river between Buford Dam and the downstream boundaries of Fulton and Douglas Counties, including Gwinnett and its riverfront jurisdictions. Though Norcross is not a riverfront jurisdiction, it is important to note that this is a county and regional resource that must be protected as widely as possible. Additionally, individual city buffer ordinances were adopted locally for tributaries to the Chattahoochee outside the Corridor.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Groundwater recharge areas are geologic formations where water is taken into the ground to replenish aquifers, the underground holding tanks of groundwater. These areas are especially sensitive to hazardous substances, as their pollution could contaminate local drinking water. Norcross is in the center of one of nine groundwater recharge areas within the county; these areas cover almost one fifth of the County. All of Gwinnett's groundwater recharge areas have low pollution susceptibility and are protected by various restrictions enforced by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The City of Norcross protects the groundwater recharge area through various ordinances listed above as well as through its Illicit Discharge and Connection Ordinance, Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, and its Tree Preservation Ordinance. A figure of the location of the groundwater recharge areas is included in the Technical Addendum.

Wetlands

Wetlands in Norcross are protected by local, state and federal regulations.

Water Supply Watersheds

Within Gwinnett County there are three large water supply watersheds for which development restrictions and buffer requirements are enforced to protect water quality; the Chattahoochee, the Oconee, and the Ocmulgee basins. These large basins are subjected to Part 5 criteria when land is within 7 miles of an intake or reservoir. No part of Gwinnett County is within 7 miles of a reservoir and Part 5 criteria are not applicable within these large watersheds. Smaller watersheds have more stringent criteria; there are, however, not small watersheds of which Norcross is a part. A number of ordinances protect the County's watersheds, including



FINAL

local ordinances such as the City of Norcross' Stream Buffer Protection and Sedimentation ordinances. Additionally, the County and several cities, including Norcross, are working toward establishing a stormwater utility that will provide joint resources for the purpose of overall watershed protection.

Parks

The current amount of parkland in Gwinnett County is lower than desired to accommodate for the County's rapidly growing population. The Master Plan targets providing needed parkland for areas of the County that have parkland service gaps- those that are beyond a 2 mile radius from larger parks (more than 20 acres) or farther than a 1 mile radius from smaller parks (under 20 acres). The Areas Requiring Special Attention: Infrastructure and Services (Figure 4) designates Norcross as an area currently underserved by parks, with the following 7 areas serving as the only publicly accessible greenspace within the city.

City Parks maintained by Public Works include:

- Rossie Brundage Park
- Thrasher Park
- South Point Park
- Barton Street Greenspace
- Fickling Property Greenspace

Two greenspace areas in Norcross are maintained by Gwinnett County Maintenance:

- Cemetery Field
- Lillian Webb Ball Field

Cultural Resources

There are seventeen (17) sites within Gwinnett County listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). One of these, the Norcross Historic District, comprises the bulk of downtown Norcross.

Although the sites listed above represent those properties that have been nominated and accepted for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, many other sites, properties, and objects within the city may also be eligible for potential listing. NRHP properties and those not eligible for federal NRHP listing may warrant special local protections to ensure their preservation. The City of Norcross is currently updating its historic buildings inventory, and continues to pursue historic preservation efforts, including the recent establishment of the Historic Preservation Committee.

FINAL**Community Facilities and Services/Intergovernmental Coordination***Fire and Police*

The Gwinnett Fire Department provides fire and rescue service to unincorporated Gwinnett and all of the fifteen (15) Cities within the County, and it is the largest fire service district in Georgia.

The City of Norcross has a city police department along with a co-located city jail. The West Gwinnett County Police precinct encompasses Norcross, and is the smallest of five precincts but busiest by volume of calls handled.

Health Services

The Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services is a public/private partnership that focuses on improving the health of Gwinnett residents, providing positive child and youth development programs, and strengthening families and communities. In addition to county-wide health services, Norcross has a human services center.

Education

The Gwinnett County Board of Education provides public education to all Cities (except Buford) and the unincorporated areas of the County. The Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is the largest school system in Georgia. The GCPS system currently has 63 Elementary (K-5), 20 Middle (6-8), and 16 High (9-12) school facilities for a total of 99 schools. To accommodate projected increases in enrollment and programs, the GCPS has embarked on an extensive building program.

School attendance zones are organized by geographic boundaries called clusters. The City of Norcross and its close surroundings make up the “Norcross” cluster. There are 8 school facilities within the Norcross cluster. Of those 8 facilities, three are located within the City limits of Norcross, along with one additional facility devoted to another program.

- Norcross Elementary School
- Norcross High School
- Summerour Middle School
- Buchanan High School of Technology (other program)

Libraries

Located on Buford Highway just north of the intersection with Jimmy Carter Boulevard, the Norcross branch of the Gwinnett County Public Library System was nominated for “Library of the Year” in 2007.

Regional Agencies

The City of Norcross works with the Atlanta Regional Commission as the regional development center providing information and services for the Atlanta region. Norcross has been involved in two (2) LCI studies administered by the ARC. Norcross has also worked with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) as the body charged with all water issues in the Atlanta region. In 2003 the MNGWPD adopted three comprehensive plans to ensure adequate supplies of drinking water, to protect water quality

**FINAL**

and to minimize the impacts of development on the District's watersheds and downstream water quality. Norcross will coordinate with the district and other local governments in implementing the Plans.

City-County Coordination within Gwinnett

Integrating the comprehensive plans of the Cities follows the intent of the Local Government Service Delivery Strategy Act (House Bill 489), enacted in 1997 by the Georgia General Assembly. A principal goal of the Service Delivery Strategy Act adopted by the State Legislature in 1997 is to increase cooperation between local governments in developing compatible land use plans and resolving potential land use disputes.

Largely in response to this legislation, the Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development has implemented additional procedures to promote land use compatibility between unincorporated areas and Gwinnett Cities.

The Gwinnett Planning Committee (GPC) meets monthly to share information, discuss issues of mutual concern, and provide technical assistance related to comprehensive planning activities in the county and individual Cities within the county. These efforts include maintaining a database of municipal annexations and showing changes in municipal land use plans on the county's Land Use Plan Map. These procedures are intended to resolve potential land use disputes that result from annexations, re-zonings, or land use plan updates.



FINAL

While the County provides many services to the various Cities within Gwinnett, Norcross offers a range of services to its citizens as shown below.

City-Provided Services in Norcross														
	Public Utilities						Sanitation/Solid Waste Management	Parks & Recreation ¹	Schools	Transportation/Public Works ²	Sheriff's Department	Police Department ³	Fire	Planning & Development/Inspections/ Permitting/Zoning/Code Enforcement Land Use Compatibility
	Electrical	Gas	Water Distribution	Water Treatment	Wastewater Treatment	Wastewater Collection								
Norcross	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓

- ✓ – City provides service.
- 1 – Gwinnett County provides recreation county-wide funded by a special tax district. The checked cities provide an additional higher level of service.
- 2 – Gwinnett County maintains county roads that run into city limits and cities listed maintain city streets/roads.
- 3 – Gwinnett County provides this service in the unincorporated areas and in those cities that chose not to directly provide the service. The checked cities provide service within the incorporated limits at a higher level of service.



FINAL

5. CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

“Quality Community Objectives” are a set of Statewide planning criteria (listed in Ch. 110-12-1-.06 of the State Code). DCA adopted the Quality Community Objectives as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential. The State requires each jurisdiction to evaluate how consistent their current plans and development patterns are with these 15 objectives. This analysis may result in additional Issues and Opportunities to add to the original list developed as part of the joint Community Assessment.

As a planning tool, the Quality Community Objectives Assessment delineates a series of indicators organized into the form of a checklist meant to help conduct the analysis for the Community Assessment. For the Joint Community Assessment, the County and the participating Cities each submitted raw responses to the checklist as the basis for an evaluation of their consistency with these State Planning Goals.

While generating the Community Assessment summary, including Issues and Opportunities, each indicator of these objectives was reviewed. Norcross’ consistency with these Quality Community Objectives is discussed in detail below along with the policy statement in italics. In general, Norcross is somewhat consistent with all 15 objectives. Given the somewhat limited resources of city level governments, and the location of Norcross in relation to a Gwinnett County and the Atlanta regional economy, some of the QCOs are more appropriately addressed through other levels of government involvement or are not feasible for the community to address entirely on its own. For those objectives, the Community Agenda will address how the City plans to work toward more fully accomplishing consistency with the Quality Community Objectives. For a full copy of the Quality Community Objectives assessment tool as provided by the DCA, see: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/downloads/PQGAassessment.pdf>.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVE	ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS
<p>1. Development Patterns. <i>Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of on each other, and facilitating pedestrian activity.</i></p>	<p>The City of Norcross has a Zoning Code that supports mixed use; in 2005 the City adopted a mixed-use DCD District. This district would support more traditional development patterns but may require a re-zoning. Another component of the traditional development patterns is the preservation of trees- Norcross has a Tree Ordinance that requires new development to plant trees as well as an active Tree Board that works in support of the Ordinance. The City also has programs to keep public areas clean and actively maintains sidewalks and vegetation in public areas to make walking a viable and enjoyable option for many residents. It is also true that some errands can be made on foot in the downtown and in some highway commercial areas due to connectivity provided via sidewalks. Some children can and do either walk or bicycle to school safely where schools are located in or near residential neighborhoods.</p>

FINAL

<p>QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS</p>
<p>3. Sense of Place. <i>Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.</i></p>	<p>Within the Atlanta region, Norcross is known as a city with a unique identity and sense of place. The historic downtown is distinct and is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The downtown is actively promoted and preserved through the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Additionally, the city established supplemental guidelines and policies for the downtown through its 2001 LCI study. Since the downtown LCI was completed, the City has also undertaken streetscape improvements around the downtown that include updating sidewalks and installing unique wayfinding signage with a Norcross specific theme. Norcross also employs a carefully crafted sign ordinance to maintain attractive aesthetics throughout the City. Much of the city outside of downtown Norcross is known for its strip commercial development.</p>
<p>4. Transportation Alternatives. <i>Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</i></p>	<p>Transportation connectivity and alternatives vary throughout Norcross; the City is served by regional (GRTA) and local (Gwinnett County) bus services but there are no transit stops within the City. New development is not required presently to connect to existing development, which in many cases exacerbates the problems created by uncontrolled curb cuts on highways that are commercial strips. However, the City has made and continues to make progress toward greater sidewalk and bicycle connectivity, which do provide a wider variety of transportation modes. Additionally, shared parking is allowed and encouraged wherever possible in order to cut down on the amount of impervious surface dedicated to automobile parking in the City.</p>
<p>5. Regional Identity. <i>Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.</i></p>	<p>Norcross contributes to the identity of the region and supports regional initiatives; the City is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage. The unique history of Norcross as a resort town in the 19th Century cemented its place in the regional history of Atlanta.</p>



FINAL

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVE	ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS
<p>6. Heritage Preservation. <i>The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that define the community's character.</i></p>	<p>Within the Atlanta region, Norcross is known as a city with a unique identity. The historic downtown is distinct and is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The downtown is actively promoted and preserved through the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. The city also created a historic preservation commission in 2006 in order to further the City's attentive program in preserving its character. There are new developments being built in Norcross which complement the underlying historic character but also blend new elements and amenities into the fabric of the City- additional ordinances supporting compatible and context sensitive development are under development.</p>
<p>7. Open Space Preservation. <i>New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.</i></p>	<p>The City of Norcross does not have a greenspace plan nor an active preservation of greenspace through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development. Given that there are few, if any, large areas of undeveloped greenspace within the City of Norcross, it is highly recommended that a minimum amount of open space or greenspace be required in all new developments within Norcross. The City does have a conservation subdivision ordinance that is in effect and available but has not been widely used.</p>
<p>8. Environmental Protection: <i>Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</i></p>	<p>Environmental resources are protected in Norcross through current ordinances and regulations. Norcross has passed and actively enforces the required Part V environmental ordinances including wetlands, floodplains, stream buffers, etc. Norcross also actively enforces its tree preservation ordinance which includes tree replacement criteria and requirements. The City does not have a comprehensive inventory of natural resources. Stormwater best management practices are being implemented in Norcross for all new development; the City is also working with Gwinnett County to establish a stormwater utility (currently under development).</p>



FINAL

<p>QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS</p>
<p>9. Social and Economic Development: Growth Preparedness. <i>Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.</i></p>	<p>Norcross has regulations and policies in place that address growth issues- elected official understand the importance of effective policy guides and associated tools. The City believes that its current ordinances will help to achieve many of these Quality Community Objectives; however, the City also plans to continually review and update its regulatory tools based on recent planning studies and recommendations so that regulatory tools support all policies. Norcross does not have a Capital Improvement Program. The City has also designated parts of the community where growth or redevelopment is desired, and has guidelines to support such efforts.</p>
<p>10.Social and Economic Development: Business Appropriateness. <i>The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Norcross has a wide variety of industry and employment; however, the City has not created a business development strategy based on its strengths. In addition, the City also does not actively recruit companies that provide or create sustainable products. The city does have several economic development entities related to downtown businesses, but there appears to be a lack of economic development oversight for the City as a whole. There are initiatives being undertaken, such as redevelopment plans and studies that will help to create new policies and economic development goals that are related to attracting appropriate businesses.</p>
<p>11. Social and Economic Development: Employment Options. <i>A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</i></p>	<p>The City of Norcross has more jobs than residents due to large industrial areas couple with large commercial areas that attract a wide variety of businesses from professional to service and retail. There are professional and managerial jobs in an array of professions in Norcross. The number of Norcross residents who work in the city is small- approximately 8% of the residents also work here.</p>

FINAL

<p>QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS</p>
<p>12. Social and Economic Development: Education Opportunities. <i>Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.</i></p>	<p>Though the City of Norcross does not have a workforce training program, there are regional and state opportunities for such in close proximity to the City. The City also has higher education opportunities; there are several institutions of higher learning located nearby, including Ashworth University, several technical schools, Georgia Perimeter College and Georgia Gwinnett College. The wide variety of jobs available in Norcross do provide job opportunities to college graduates so that younger generations may go to school, live, and work in Norcross.</p>
<p>13. Social and Economic Development: Housing Choice. <i>A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.</i></p>	<p>There is a range of housing options within the City of Norcross- from single family and modern townhomes to garden style apartments and flats, there are housing options for many income levels. The City allows accessory housing units such as mother-in-law suites and garage apartments. New development is encouraged to follow the patterns of the original town, including small setbacks and well-connected street patterns. Though there are some exceptions to this that are evident in existing development, the City overall has a traditional town layout that becomes more spread and less-connected further from the center. The City allows multi-family housing to be built and there is still developable land within the community for new housing as well as areas prime for housing related or mixed-use redevelopment. While the City does not have programs that focus on special needs housing or have community development corporations that build lower income housing, it has sustained over time a stable balance of housing variety.</p>
<p>14. Governmental Relations: Regional Solutions. <i>Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.</i></p>	<p>Regionally, Norcross has not historically sought initiatives in which to be included. However, that has changed somewhat in the recent past due to some regional requirements as well as the desire to seek information and ideas from other municipalities within the region. The City does work with Gwinnett County to provide some services, and also is coordinating with the County on the steps necessary to start a stormwater utility, which is certainly a step to take towards a regional problem. The City also participates in regional economic development initiatives. Recent land use studies and the Comprehensive plan are helping the City look beyond its own borders.</p>

FINAL



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVE	ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS
<p>15. Governmental Relations: Regional Cooperation. <i>Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.</i></p>	<p>Though Norcross has not historically initiated work with adjacent local governments and institutions in the region, the City plans to begin meeting with neighboring jurisdictions to establish contacts and to build a group of people that are interested and active in regional policy making; this is the group with whom the City representatives could/would discuss issues of regional concern. Norcross is satisfied with its current Service Delivery Strategy with Gwinnett County.</p>