



**Comprehensive Plan for
Mansfield, GA
2011 – 2021
As Adopted June 13, 2011**



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Introduction

Mansfield, located in southeastern Newton County, had a 2010 population of 371. The city has steadily lost population since 1980 and that trend is projected to continue through 2030 when the community will have a population of 328.

Because of the city's total population and growth trend, Mansfield is required to develop a comprehensive plan that meets the Minimal Planning Level of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, May 2005. This Plan therefore includes the following required elements:

- A Community Vision
 - A vision statement;
 - A future development map that represents the city's desired development pattern; and,
 - A defining narrative, a description of the community's character areas.
- A Short-term Work Program outlining the actions the community will undertake over the next five years to achieve its vision.

Community Vision

The community vision element reflects the City's long-term goals, paints a picture of what the community desires to become, and describes preferred development types and patterns.

Vision Statement

Mansfield's vision is to remain a rural community with an increased tree canopy while preserving and rehabilitating its central business district, and maintaining existing residential development patterns that define the community.

Community Character Areas

Community character areas address the development patterns within the city rather than focusing on the specific use of individual parcels. Character areas are defined in terms of desired development characteristics and appropriate land uses. The purpose of the community character area is to:

- Link the Town's vision, goals, policies, and regulations;
- Define the mixing and integration of appropriate and complimentary uses;
- Provide guidance to developers and policymakers regarding the qualitative aspects of desired development patterns;
- Provide land use compatibility and transition standards; and,
- Coordinate the city's vision with land use decisions.

The Future Development Map outlines the general intent for accommodating development while maintaining a positive relationship between the natural and built environments, past, present, and future. As a whole, the map illustrates the relationship of land use to special attention areas, supportive infrastructure, and community facilities.



The Future Development Map was created by first identifying the city's Character Areas. A Character Area is a specific geographic area within the community that:

- has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced;
- has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development; or
- requires special attention due to unique development issues

The growth of many of the towns in Newton County focused on the development of transportation links. Typically, plats for these towns were drawn and the land surveyed by the railroad. The streets were laid out on both sides of the railroad and lined with trees and street lights. Many railroad towns were originally old rural crossroad communities and were later laid out in linear grid lots around the railroad tracks. Mansfield is a good example of this type of development pattern.

Mansfield encompasses 1.1 square miles. The central business district is adjacent to the railroad and is anchored on its western end by Beaver Manufacturing. The remainder of the town is residential and has little opportunity for in-fill development. The few remaining larger tracts are on the fringe of the residential development and are primarily devoted to active agricultural practices that include crops, livestock, or woodlands. There is the occasional run-down property but, there are no blighted areas or areas of disinvestment within the city. While the city has a number of historic properties, there is no historic preservation district or individually designated properties in the city.

There are isolated, scattered wetlands within the city and a portion of the city is in the proposed Bear Creek Reservoir watershed. The City adopted a water supply watershed ordinance that requires vegetated buffers, silvicultural and agricultural best management practices, restrictions on locations of septic tank grainfields and soil erosion and sedimentation control. However, city-wide water and sewer are available and the city reports only a handful of structures remain on individual septic systems.

The city has five zoning districts; Conservation Residential, Performance Residential, Business, Light Manufacturing, and Agriculture. The districts are well-suited for the city's historical and future growth patterns. The Conservation Residential requirements a minimum lot size of one acre, Performance Zoning and Business, a minimum of 20,000 square feet, and Light Manufacturing and Agriculture, a minimum of 2 acres.

Four character areas were identified in Mansfield; Rural Residential, Existing Traditional Neighborhood, Agricultural, and Downtown. The following table provides an overview of each of the character areas. Important to note is that entries in the Zoning Compatibility column are based on a broad range of land types and locations, and that not all zoning classifications will necessarily be appropriate in all places within a character area.



Character Area	Description of Character Area	Zoning Compatibility	Appropriate Land Use
Rural Residential	Large lot (one acre or greater), single-family residential development with open space, pastoral views, and high degree of building separation. Serves as transitional zone between Agricultural and Existing Traditional Neighborhood.	CR	Single-family residential, accessory structures, agricultural, and institutional.
Existing Traditional Neighborhood	Smaller lots, predominantly single-family residential, generally older housing stock, many of streets serving the homes are single lane and/or unpaved.	PR	Single-family residential, two-family residential, multi-family residential, accessory structures, professional offices, parks, and institutional.
Downtown	The traditional central business district and immediately surrounding commercial, anchored on its western edge by the city's sole industry, Beaver Manufacturing, and adjacent to the railroad.	B, M	Small Retail establishments (no big box), professional offices, institutional, personal services, restaurants, and small scale light manufacturing.
Agricultural	Lands in open or cultivated state, including woodlands, cultivated agriculture, and livestock. Single-family residential structures are found but only in association with a farm and the farm is the primary land use.	A	Single-family residential, accessory structures, agriculture, and woodlands.
Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities	Land in road and railroad rights-of-way. These lands are not unique parcels, rather, the rights-of-way are included in adjacent parcels. There is therefore no unique description associated with this character area.	CR, PR, B, M, A	The area included in the rights-of-way will remain undeveloped. The land use associated with the parcel is associated with the right-of-way included with the parcel.



Rural Residential



Description of Character

Preserving rural character through lower densities while accommodating limited residential growth and serving as a transition between agriculture and denser residential development is the predominant theme of this area. While public water and sewer is available, this area primarily features large residential lots with a minimum one-acre zoning though, most lots are larger. Most homes are of modest size and of traditional architectural style. Building setbacks for homes vary but, most homes are well set back from the road.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Residential - low densities
- Limited agricultural operations
- Institutional

Compatible Zoning Categories

- CR - Conservation Residential
- PR - Performance Residential

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Rural Residential area:

- Heritage Preservation: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- Environmental Protection. Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Implementation Strategies

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Protect Bear Creek watershed by enforcing buffers, limiting total impervious surface coverage to 25% of the land area in the watershed.
- Protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses by directing all new development to appropriate areas as defined on the Future Development Map.
- Conserve and expand tree canopy.



Land Use

- Design developments to be context-sensitive.
- Concentrate growth in suitable locations while preserving sensitive or other critical areas.
- Design streets to maximize efficiency (minimize pavement width) and safety, and to accommodate users.

Existing Traditional Neighborhood



Description of Character

The overall character of the area can be classified as moderate residential densities, pedestrian orientation, and street connectivity. There is a mixture of home styles, construction materials, and square footage throughout the character area. Public water and sewer are available throughout the character area though many of the streets are single lane thus limiting density.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family dwellings
- Two-family dwellings
- Multi-family dwellings
- Institutional
- Parks

Compatible Zoning Categories

- PR – Performance Residential

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Agricultural area:

- **Heritage Preservation:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- **Housing Choices:** 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, to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.
- **Transportation Alternatives:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle lanes and routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each



community. Greater use of non-automobile transportation should be encouraged.

- Traditional Neighborhoods: Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

Implementation Strategies

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Protect Bear Creek watershed by enforcing buffers, limiting total impervious surface coverage to 25% of the land area in the watershed.
- Conserve and expand tree canopy.
- Ensure that new development, infill development, and improvements to existing properties is compatible with the existing/historic character.
- Provide information on funding opportunities for the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources.

Community Facilities

- Evaluate, maintain, and repair municipal utility systems (as needed).
- Encourage safe and active transportation between elementary school and neighborhoods.

Transportation

- Design streets to maximize efficiency (minimize pavement width) and safety, and to accommodate users.

Land Use

- Design developments to be context-sensitive.
- Concentrate growth in suitable locations while preserving sensitive or other critical areas.

Agriculture



Description of Character

The overall character of the area can be classified as rural, agricultural, or woodland. Extremely low residential densities, greater than one acre, should be supported where residential farms exist to preserve the natural and agricultural resources. Residential structures may be built on a parcel but, the predominant use of the parcel is agricultural, open space, or woodland.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Agricultural operations
- Institutional uses
- Single-family dwellings
- Plant nursery, greenhouses



Compatible Zoning Categories

- A – Agricultural

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Agricultural area:

- Heritage Preservation: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.
- Environmental Protection. Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Implementation Strategies

Natural and Cultural Resources

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- Protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses by directing all new development to appropriate areas as defined on the Future Development Map.
- Conserve and expand tree canopy.

Transportation

- Design streets to maximize efficiency (minimize pavement width) and safety, and to accommodate users.

Land Use

- Design developments to be context-sensitive.
- Concentrate growth in suitable locations while preserving sensitive or other critical areas.

Downtown



Description of Character

This character area is the historic business center of Mansfield and includes small retail business, offices, and light industrial that are pedestrian oriented. Structures in the character area are generally older, brick, and do not exceed two stories. The community's vision for this area focuses on preserving existing buildings, encouraging context-sensitive improvements, and maintaining current land uses.



Appropriate Land Uses

- Public and Institutional uses
- Retail – small scale and low number of employees
- Corporate offices – small scale and low number of employees
- Professional offices – small scale and low number of employees
- Banks
- Personal Services

Compatible Zoning Categories

- B – Business
- M – Light Manufacturing

Quality Community Objectives

The following Quality Community Objectives will be pursued in the Agricultural area:

- **Heritage Preservation:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

Implementation Strategies

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Protect Bear Creek watershed by enforcing buffers, limiting total impervious surface coverage to 25% of the land area in the watershed.
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- Conserve and expand tree canopy.

Transportation

- Design streets to maximize efficiency (minimize pavement width) and safety, and to accommodate users.

Land Use

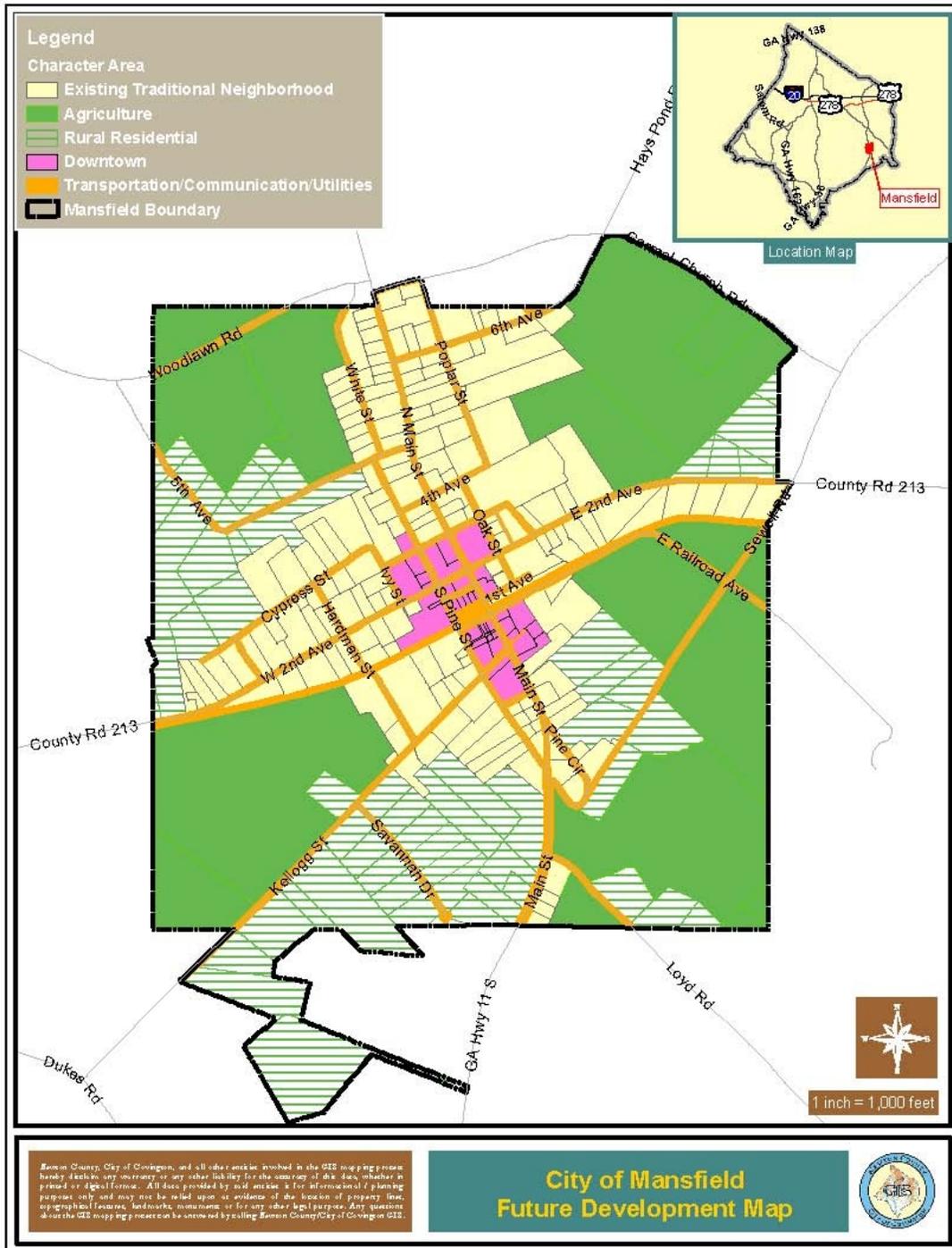
- **Infill Development:** Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

Social and Economic Development

- **Appropriate Business:** 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.
- **Employment Opportunities:** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
- **Sense of Place:** Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.



Future Development Map





Short-Term Work Program, 2011 -2015

Project Description	Project Timeframe					Cost	Funding Source	Responsible Party
	11	12	13	14	15			
Apply for grant to inventory trees and develop maintenance plan.	X					0	N/A	Mansfield Tree Board
Inventory trees and develop maintenance plan	X	X				7,500	Ga. Forestry Comm U&CF Grant	Mansfield Tree Board
Develop and implement tree planting plan for downtown.		X	X	X	X	unknown depending on scope	City, Grants	Mansfield Tree Board
Tree Restoration Project: develop and implement tree planting plan for various areas around town to restore tree canopy lost due to age, disease, storms, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	7,000	City, Grants	Mansfield Tree Board
Assess and develop sign replacement plan to meet minimum retro-reflectivity standards.		X				unknown due to scope and potential contractor	City	City



Replace non-compliant warning and regulatory signs to meet minimum retro-reflectivity standards.					X	unknown, depends on number of signs replaced	City	City
Encourage context-appropriate facade improvements to structures in Downtown character area.	X	X	X	X	X	0	NA	City