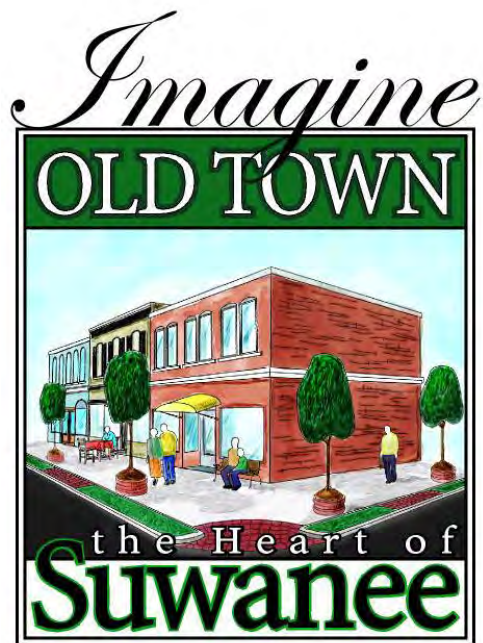


# Suwanee Old Town Master Plan Report

February 19, 2002





# Executive Summary

New, exciting developments are planned for the historic part of Suwanee, Georgia. Like many other historic railroad towns, the advent of the car and the construction of the highway system have left the center of town behind in an almost forgotten world. The historic Old Town Suwanee area, located along Main Street where it crosses Scales and Russell Roads, was once a vibrant center with homes, shops and offices. New subdivisions and strip malls have sprung up along the highways, and local citizens and visitors tend to identify Suwanee more with an interstate exit than any sense of history.

The City of Suwanee has taken several aggressive steps to reestablish its historic downtown area as the heart of its community. In 2000, the City was designated a Better Hometown Community, which opens the City to alternative funding sources and technical assistance in its redevelopment efforts. The City also recently formed a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to help raise funding, promote redevelopment of the area, and serve as a “development company” for the City if needed. In the Fall of 2000, the City participated in a design charrette with the University of Georgia, which produced some design concepts and ideas that the City wanted to take a step further and incorporate into an executable plan of action.

Inspired by the spirit and intent of the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Program, the City hired a team of planning consultants, Jordan, Jones & Goulding (JJG) and Urban Collage, in April 2001 to assist them with the plan’s development. The plan drawing presented on the following page, **Figure ES-1**, is one key product of this effort. It illustrates a community vision for the area that was the result of extensive public involvement, and one that supports the goals of the LCI program by encouraging the development of a live-work-play environment.

Currently the historic downtown is not highly visible from major transportation routes. Many people that pass by Old Town on Buford Highway and Suwanee Dam Road are not even aware it is there. A key objective of this project was to assess the overall area and identify an appropriate

location for a traditional, mixed-use town center, one that symbolizes Suwanee and helps to draw attention to the old downtown. It is intended that all new development will be designed in a complementary manner that highlights the Old Town’s historic character whether along Main Street or Buford Highway.

The Old Town Master Plan is the culmination of many hours of study. The City explored the possibility of encouraging significant new growth and development in the heart of Old Town along Main Street. Responding to a lack of visibility, access, road capacity, sewer and other infrastructure, as well as the wishes of current residents, the City decided to focus efforts on existing undeveloped land within the study area that does not have the same constraints. The City chose to focus efforts around the proposed library on Main Street and on 60 undeveloped acres across from City Hall while simultaneously supporting appropriate redevelopment and infill development in and around the Main Street/Scales Road area.

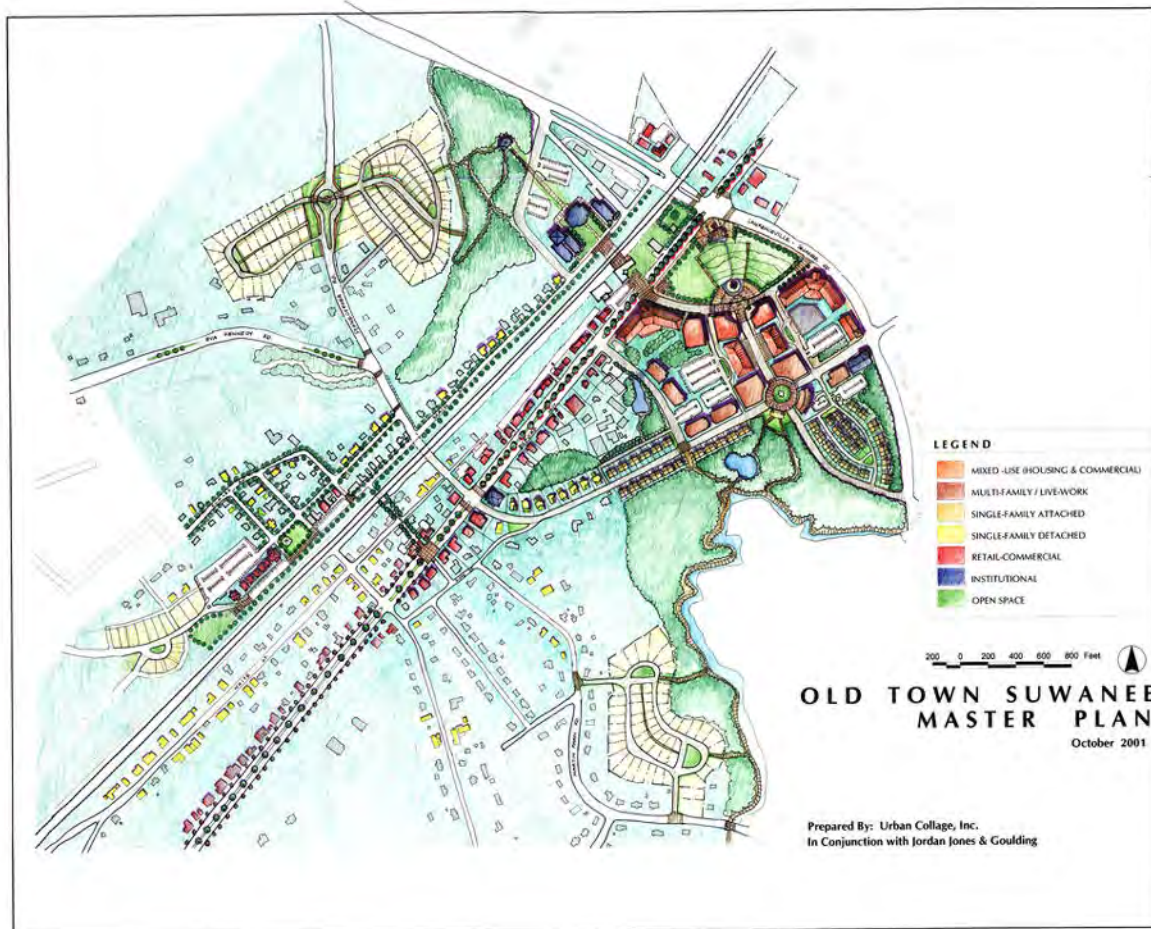
The Old Town Master Plan establishes a vision that can be achieved only through a combination of public investment, careful planning and active promotion.

Key public investments needed to make this plan a reality include:

- ◆ Creation of a new Town Square;
- ◆ Encourage complementary uses for new and



**Figure ES-1**  
**Old Town Suwanee Master Plan**



Note: A larger fold-out version of this plan can be found in Section 5, page 53.  
 Source: Urban Collage, February 2002.

infill development

- ◆ Support for the construction of a new county library;
- ◆ Development of a multi-modal transportation system; and
- ◆ Improvement of infrastructure in the historic Old Town Suwanee area.

Capitalizing on its access and existing civic uses a new Town Square is proposed at the corner of Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, directly across from City Hall. It will include a new town amphitheater (illustrated in

**Figure ES-2).** The Town Square also will serve as a community gathering spot, a passive recreation area and the focal point for a new mixed-use development.

The proposed mixed-use development as drawn would be a true live-work-play community that would include approximately 82,000 square feet of institutional uses, 49,600 square feet of retail commercial space and 249,400 square feet of mixed housing/commercial. It is estimated that this development could provide an additional 245 single-family parcels, 227 new multi-family and 421 mixed-use housing/commercial units by 2025.



**Figure ES-2**  
**Artist rendering of the proposed Amphitheatre**



Note: This figure is included as a conceptual drawing only.

Source: Urban Collage, November 2001

Within walking distance of the proposed Town Square, Gwinnett County is planning to build a new library on Main Street in 2003. This new facility will help to draw attention to the downtown area and provide a center for community activities. To link this new library to the Town Square, the city plans to build a pedestrian underpass under the railroad tracks behind City Hall. Once constructed, this tunnel will provide a vital link along a proposed multipurpose path that would stretch from the Richard Trice Trail on Suwanee Creek to a proposed passive park/nature preserve behind the Library.

This new trail will be part of a much larger city multi-purpose path system, and an even greater multi-modal county transportation system. In the coming years, the Gwinnett County Transit system will be operating a local bus route through the study area along Buford Highway. The proposed path and sidewalk system, as well as the addition

of a more urbanized landform, will help support transit ridership.

To help support this new development, the City also proposes to improve Old Town's roadways and public utilities. Much of the Old Town area still relies on septic tanks, and many of its narrow roads are in need of improvement. Through careful planning and public investment, the older portions of town can be brought up to modern standards.

The careful planning needed to implement this plan requires enacting new zoning regulations and the adoption of new land use policies. This plan includes new design standards to help preserve the historic character of the area and to provide a recognizable and unifying theme or look to the area. This plan recommends the adoption of an Old Town Overlay District that requires new buildings in the area be consistent with the setbacks and character of the historic buildings.

Finally, active promotion of the plan by the Downtown Development Authority and the City is essential for the plan's implementation. Private investment needs to be fostered with careful direction and financial support. Towards this end, it is recommended that the City undertake a full market study to more accurately determine what elements of this plan that the market will support and what adjustments may be needed to ensure that the plan will be a success. As illustrated in **Figures ES-3 and ES-4**, the improvements called for in this plan can have a dramatic impact on the look of Suwanee's Old Town and with continued investment and planning restore the heart of the community. The City and Downtown Development Authority should

continuously examine and evaluate the goals and recommendations outlined in this plan to ensure consistency with the community's priorities. The City may want to consider an annual review of the plan in some form.

**Figure ES-3**  
**A new look for Historic Main Street**

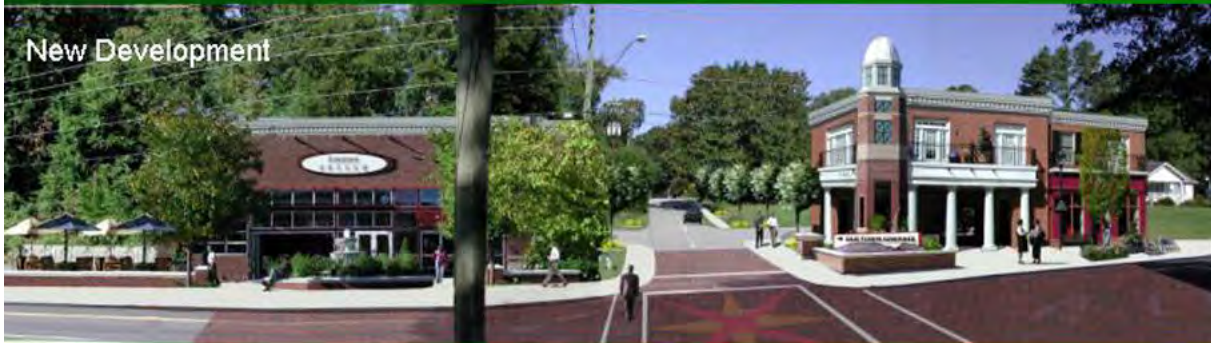


Source: Urban Collage, October 2001.

**Figure ES-4**  
**A new look for Russell Street**



**Russell Street Gateway: Before**



New Development

**Russell Street Gateway: After**

Source: Urban Collage, October 2001.





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## A. Background and History

The City of Suwanee, Georgia, with assistance from Jordan, Jones & Goulding Inc. (JJG) and Urban Collage has created a Master Plan for Old Town Suwanee. The Old Town study area is defined as an area in keeping with the original city limits, which were set as a one-mile radius around Main and Scales Streets. **Figure 1-1** provides an illustration of the study area boundaries.

As is the case with many communities throughout the South, Suwanee can trace its beginnings to the growth and evolution of transportation. As transportation evolved, the community of Suwanee evolved with it. In 1820 a Land Lottery was held in Gwinnett County. There were four land lots awarded in that lottery that intersect in the Town of Suwanee, about 100 feet to the east of where Davis Street crosses Buford Highway. The federal government recognized Suwanee as a town when the Suwanee Post Office was established in 1838. On May 21, 1869 Abram Moore sold a right of way to the Georgia Airline Railroad 100 feet through his property. The Southern Railroad and depot were constructed through this section of Gwinnett County in 1871. The village of Suwanee grew around this depot. A second small railroad station called Shadowbrook, was added on the south side of the railroad tracks at which is now the intersection of the tracks and Lawrenceville Suwanee Road. "The Belle," which stopped at this station, was in operation from 1879 to 1931. In 1881 the Richmond & Danville railroad opened a narrow-gauge railroad, known as the Lawrenceville-Suwanee Narrow-Gauge Railroad from Lawrenceville to Suwanee. Suwanee became a changing station as people transferred from this line to the Southern Railroad line that could take them into Atlanta.

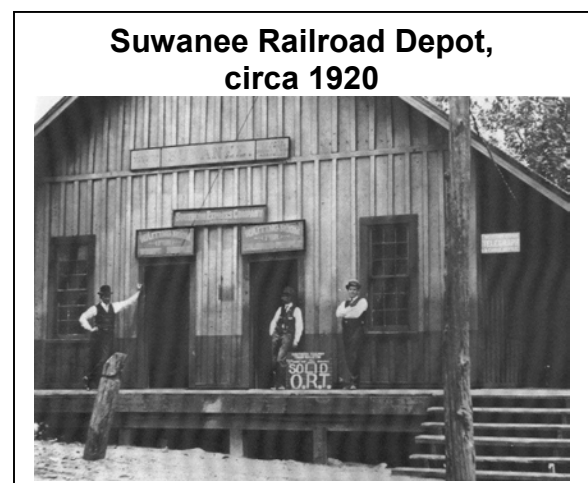
In 1880 there were 39 dwelling units and 216 people in the Town of Suwanee. There was a hotel, a department store and other commercial establishments in the town. In 1923 the Sandborn Map Company published a detailed map of the town. The 1923 map showed 12 stores in operation, a cotton gin house, a feed mill, two auto repair garages, two blacksmith shops, a coffin

factory, a gristmill, a mill and a livery stable. Pierce's Corner, built in 1910, is still in operation today as an antique mall.

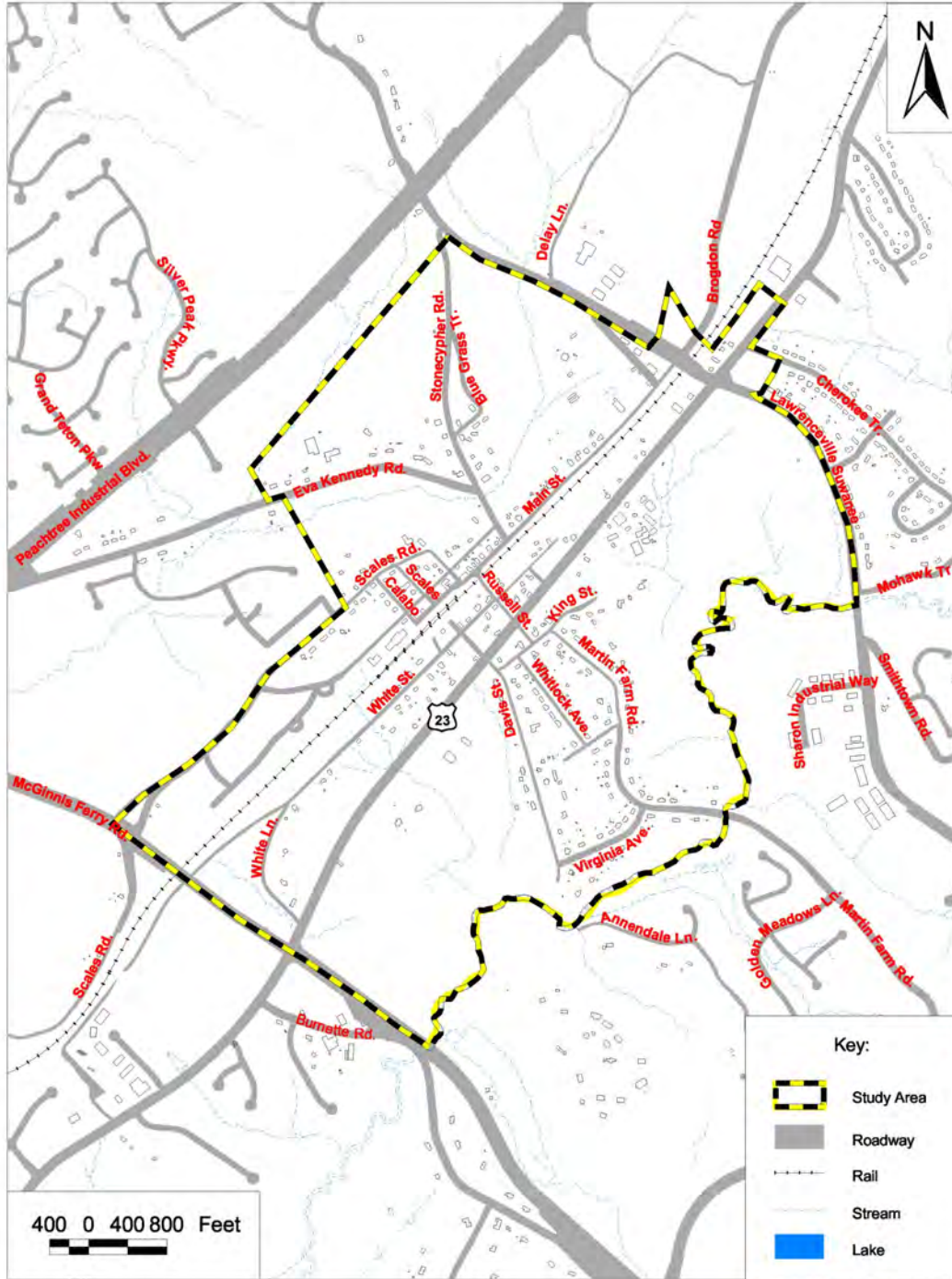
Cotton was the town's economic base. Up until 1830 the majority of farmers in the Suwanee area grew cotton. The first cotton gin house was built between 1872 and 1875 on the northeast corner of Jackson and Scales Street. As the transportation network continued to grow and expand, so did the City of Suwanee. With the growth of the highway system in the 1970s more development was occurring along I-85 and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road.

Today's City limits reach out approximately five miles. Much of the recent growth continues to take place in Suwanee along I-85 and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. The historic downtown area has remained pretty much the same, as it must have appeared in the early part of this century.

The following sections discuss the commercial, residential, and institutional resources of Suwanee. There is no industrial resource having historic value. In 1996 Richard P. Plumer compiled, "Town of Suwanee History Late 1700s - 1920s." This document used several sources to document both town history and a partial historic resources inventory including the Town of Suwanee Deed Records. The City relied heavily upon his work in documenting this information.



**Figure 1-1**  
**Study Area Boundaries**



Source: Jordan, Jones & Goulding

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## Historic Commercial Resources

As transportation evolved, a commercial core was formed around the railroad depot. The historic commercial area is today referred to as Old Town Suwanee. This area is broadly defined as that area located around Main Street, White Street, Russell Street, Davis Street, Stonecypher Road and Scales Street. On May 20, 1881 a fire destroyed all of the stores in downtown Suwanee. Several commercial buildings built after this time still exist and are in use today, including Pierce's Corner, built in 1910 and currently used as an antique mall. Several other historic commercial buildings are in use as a woodworking shop and a clothing consignment shop today. A goal of the City is to preserve and revitalize this area.

## Historic Residential Resources

The historic houses in the City of Suwanee are clustered in and around Old Town Suwanee, the original one-mile radius from Main and Scales Streets. Although there are several houses farther out from this area the majority of historic homes are on Main, Calaboose, White and Davis Streets.

Most of the houses within the old Suwanee area are a simple regional farm style. There are some examples of Queen Anne Victorian such as 587 Main Street, and the Rhodes House. The house across the street from the Rhodes House is an example of Queen Anne Victorian, although it has been altered. The majority of the historic houses in Suwanee have side or front gabled.

The Rhodes House, commonly referred to as the Rhodes Hotel, is one of the older structures in Suwanee. Daniel M. Born built the small home on this location for his daughter Lillie and her husband Henry W. Rhodes about 1880. The first time it can be ascertained that the house owned by Henry W. Rhodes served as a hotel was in 1892. Over the years the family added substantially to the house until it boasted six bedrooms and wide porches, both upstairs and down. By 1911 it was used as a boarding house, primarily for teachers.

It was used as a residence into the 1950's when it fell into disrepair. Today, it is once again being used as a private residence.

## Historic Institutional Resources

In 1874 the first church in town, the Methodist Episcopal Church, was built by its six African-American trustees on White Street. The Church began extensive interior and exterior renovations in 1999, and hopes to reopen in the future.

In 1876, the Suwanee Methodist Church was formally organized with 34 members. The church building was erected in 1879 or 1880 at the west end of Main Street. Prior to this, people of Suwanee held worship services in a school building. Sometimes the church was a part of the Duluth circuit and sometimes it belonged to the Lawrenceville circuit. In 1909 a windstorm caused so much damage to the building that a new church had to be built. A site was acquired, and in 1910, a new building was erected on top of the hill on Scales Road. In the 1940's the Duluth circuit was divided and a Suwanee circuit was formed. This included churches from Level Creek, Meadow, Mt. Zion, Trinity and Suwanee. In 1952 the church grounds were graded making more parking spaces available. Three classrooms were also added at this time, as was gas heat. The church is now called Suwanee First United Methodist Church.

The First Baptist Church of Suwanee is believed to have been organized before the Civil War with services held in a local schoolhouse, but no records show that a Baptist Church was organized there before 1886. At that time, the church was known as the Suwanee Baptist Town Church. The original church was built on a lot where the Mount Olive Baptist Church now stands.

In 1920 a new lot was purchased and an auditorium was erected on Scales Street. It was constructed of brick and stone with a seating capacity of 250 people. The original frame church was deeded to the black trustees of the Mount Olive Baptist church in 1926. This frame building no longer exists, and has been replaced by a concrete building about 50 feet from the original building. In 1926 the name of the church was changed to Suwanee Baptist Church. In 1945 the pastorium was erected directly across the street from the church. In 1949 the church changed its name from Suwanee Baptist Church to First Baptist Church of Suwanee, Georgia. In 1982



many members split from this church and formed the Shadowbrook Baptist Church.

The City of Suwanee has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade, and revitalizing the Old Town area in a Smart Growth manner is viewed as the key to combating many of the negative aspects of this growth, including traffic congestion, environmental problems, and increased loss of community identity.

## B. Study Scope

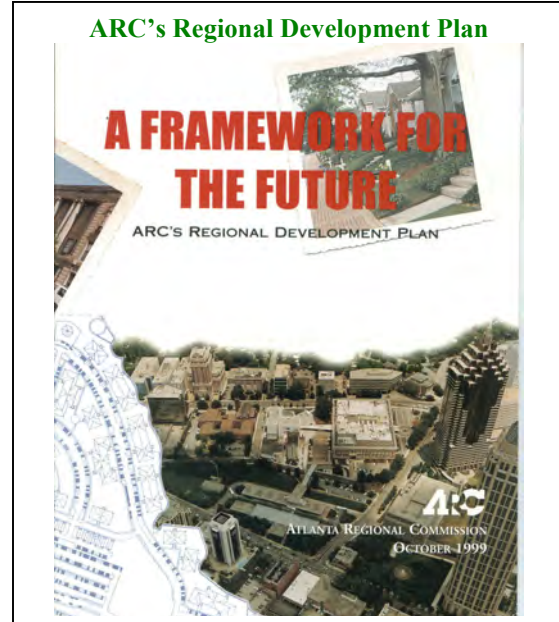
The goals of the project are aimed at providing implementable solutions and a plan of action for the City. These goals include:

- ◆ Prepare policy guidelines for the future development of Old Town Suwanee;
- ◆ Prepare Urban Design Guidelines/Regulations and Streetscape Plan;
- ◆ Meet Atlanta Regional Commission guidelines for a Livable Centers Initiative; and
- ◆ Draft a short-term work program for transportation improvements and local initiatives.

## Overview of the Livable Center Initiative

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Board adopted policies in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) proposal in May 1999 to provide funding for investment studies and transportation projects located in activity and town centers in the region. This program of studies and projects has become known as the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). The focus of the program is to encourage increased residential development, mixed-uses and connectivity in activity and town centers. The studies also define detailed plans that support the adopted policy of the Regional Development Plan (RDP) to encourage activity and town center development.

In 2000, the ARC Board approved an allocation of \$5 million over 5 years to fund the Livable Centers Initiative program. The study projects are awarded on a competitive basis to local



governments and non-profit sponsors, such as Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), for producing plans to define future center development strategies and supporting public and private investments.

The ARC Board also approved an allocation of \$350 million for priority funding of projects resulting from Livable Centers Initiative studies. The first \$20 million allocation of these funds is included in the FY 2001 Transportation Improvement Program, with availability in FY 2003. The funds will be awarded based on separate evaluation criteria and processes to be determined. Local implementation of LCI study recommendations, including innovative land use strategies, will be a primary factor in determining investment awards.

The City of Suwanee applied for the LCI program in 2000 and 2001, but was not funded. Subsequently, the City boldly decided to commission and fund development of the Old Town Master Plan utilizing City funds. Grandfathered status for the plan was obtained from ARC on January 2, 2002. Grandfathered status will allow the City to be eligible to compete with other LCI communities in seeking LCI implementation funding for capital projects consistent with the plan. In order to help ensure



grandfathered status, this plan closely follows ARC standards and requirements.

### C. Study Methodology

Following the LCI program requirements, the project was divided into 5 primary tasks, with a strong emphasis on public participation. **Figure 1-2** shows the project schedule. Those five tasks included:

- ◆ Public Outreach;
- ◆ Data Gathering;
- ◆ Community Design & Analysis;
- ◆ Development of Recommendations; and
- ◆ Project Deliverables.

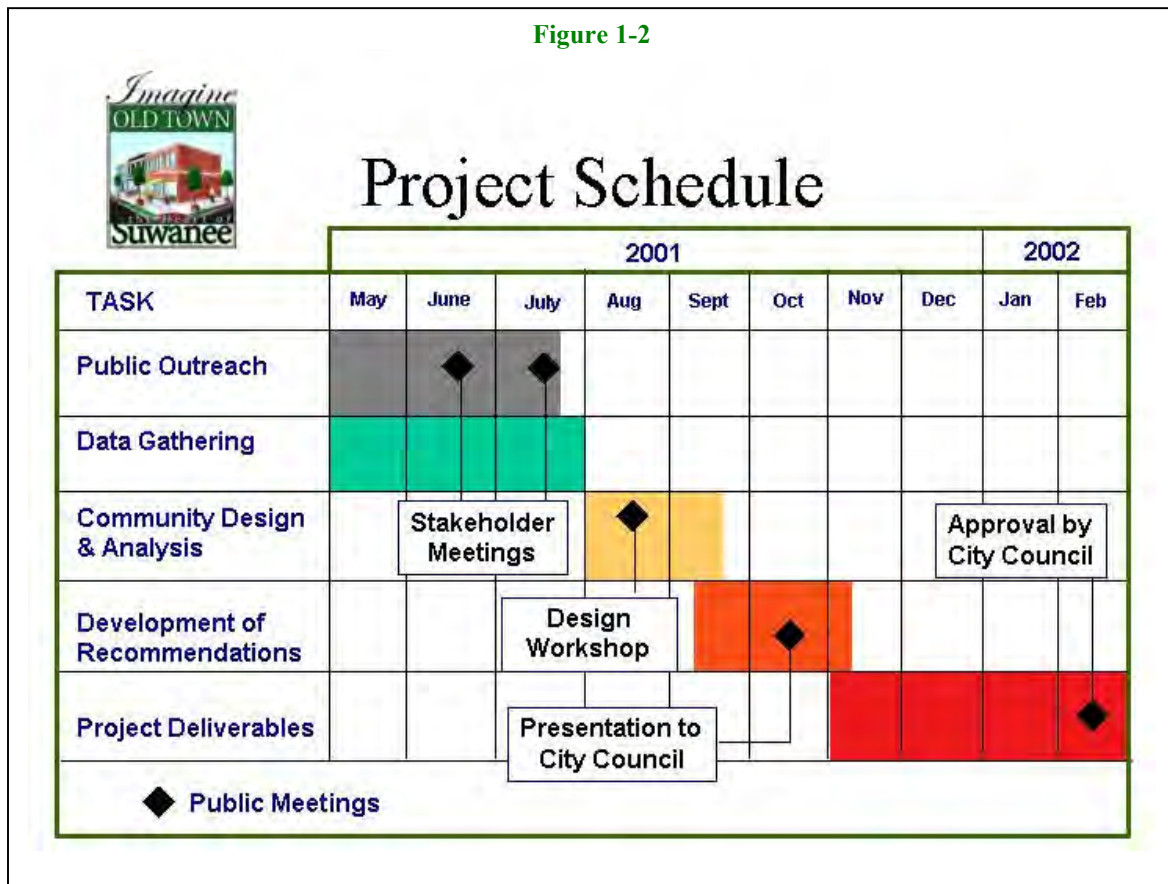
Two interim reports were prepared in the preparation of this document. The first was completed in July 2001 and documented all of the public outreach and data gathering efforts. It included a detailed inventory of existing

conditions to aid in the preparation of the Design Workshop. The second interim report was completed in September 2001 and documented the preparation, procedures and results of the Design Workshop.

Community involvement was a key part of each of the tasks listed above. Four public meetings were held throughout the formulation of the Master Plan including:

- ◆ Stakeholder Meeting #1 (June 9, 2001)
- ◆ Stakeholder Meeting #2 (July 16, 2001)
- ◆ Community Design Workshop (August 24 and 25, 2001)
- ◆ Presentation of recommendations (October 22, 2001)

The following section, “Community Involvement,” describes this effort in greater detail.





## Section 2

# Community Involvement

### A. Process

JJG designed a public participation process for Suwanee's Old Town Master Plan that used previous planning initiatives as a foundation along with incorporating the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Development Plan and Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) goals into the plan. JJG's public participation process offered opportunities for citizen input, as well as generated dialogue and enthusiasm for the future of Suwanee.

Previous efforts of the City's Better Hometown Program were important building blocks for these new community involvement methods. City officials were adamant about the JJG team understanding and using the outcomes of the Old Town Strategy Session held February 2000 and the Design Charrette led by UGA students in September 2000.

JJG's strategy for public involvement is education first. Prior to receiving any meaningful input from citizens, they must be educated on the issues and their options. With that in mind, JJG provided stakeholders with specific, relevant facts and information so that the group could create good choices for the future of Suwanee. A variety of activities with stakeholders enabled them to clearly see their common concerns and common dreams. They began to see solutions in terms of "common wealth." While obtaining a level of consensus was important, equally important was the need to develop a sense of ownership within the community so that citizens would become champions of their plan. The public participation process for Suwanee included the following major components:

- ◆ Education on the history and goals of the Regional Development Plan (RDP) and LCI study along with the specific development practices and transportation strategies that can lead to implementation of that plan; and
- ◆ Opportunities for public input and hands-on participation in the development of concepts and scenarios for managing future growth in Suwanee while adhering to the goals of the RDP.

JJG produced informational posters and table tents to inform and involve the community in developing the Old Town Master Plan. Approximately 100 posters and 200 table tents were given to the City of Suwanee for distribution throughout the community. The majority of posters and table tents were given to a variety of Suwanee business owners, restaurants, hotels and major employers in the area.

JJG also produced a website at [www.jjg.com/suwanee](http://www.jjg.com/suwanee) linked to the City of Suwanee's homepage. The website included general information about Suwanee's Old Town Master Plan and the public involvement process that included meeting dates, minutes, a community preference survey and a walkability survey. Also included on the website was general information about the LCI program to better help the community understand the goals and principles of the project. The website also contained contact information for citizens with questions concerning the Old Town Master Plan.

Meetings were held throughout the formulation of the Master Plan with a 16-member steering committee, stakeholders (general public) and City officials. Highlights of these meetings are listed below.

- ◆ Stakeholder Meeting #1 (June 9, 2001) - Provided stakeholders with specific, relevant facts and information so the group could create good choices for the future of Suwanee. Citizens expressed concerns ranging from public transportation and destinations to land use management and public investment.
- ◆ Monthly Steering Committee Meetings (monthly, beginning in May 2001) - Topics of discussion included the Regional Development Plan policies, transportation solutions, the design workshop, and implementation priorities. A list of the Steering Committee members can be found in **Figure 2-1**.
- ◆ Stakeholder Meeting #2 (July 16, 2001) - Citizens identified destinations that should be available within the focal points of the

**Figure 2-1**  
**Suwanee Steering Committee**

Toby Blackwell	Jimmy Burnette
Deborah George	Ron Hadaway
Peggy Johnson	Randy Jones
Jerry Little	Kevin McOmber
Earl Mitchell	Richard Plumer
Pam Reeves	Jeannine Rispin
David Sergio	Joy Still
Susan Taylor	Bill Thee

historic area, library site and a new town center that could make Suwanee socially and economically viable. JJG also conducted a Community Preference Survey to help citizens identify types of green space, architecture, pedestrian and traffic patterns appropriate for Suwanee.

- ◆ Community Design Workshop (August 24-25, 2001) - A day and a half workshop at Suwanee City Hall that brought together the information provided by citizens at the two previous Stakeholder Meetings and the design elements reflected by the community preference survey. Planners from JJG and Urban Collage began identifying specific transportation projects needed to support the creation of a town center, a civic/recreational center and a more economically viable historic area.
- ◆ Presentation of Recommendations (October 22, 2001) - Planners from JJG and Urban Collage presented to City Council a list of prioritized projects and several conceptual sketches of various new improvements called for in the draft plan.

## B. Opportunities and Constraints

Through the extensive public involvement process, citizens have identified many of their concerns and ideas for the future of Suwanee. JJG encouraged citizens to think about a location for a new town center that would allow connectivity between the historic area and the library site, while reducing traffic demand for

Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road in anticipation of future population growth. **Figure 2-2** shows a list of the community's concerns and visions.

**Figure 2-3** provides a list of citizen identified destinations that should be available within the focal points of Old Town, the library site and the new town center that could make Suwanee socially and economically viable.

## C. Design Workshop

On August 24 and 25, 2001 citizens participated in a design workshop held at Suwanee City Hall. Notification for the workshop was provided through an announcement on the City's website, posters hung around the City, table tents placed in several stores and 300 post cards mailed to residents on the project mailing list.

Prior to the day and a half workshop, study team members met with City staff and the steering committee to determine what their expectations were for the meeting. Their comments and concerns were central in crafting the agenda and workshop materials.

Utilizing the information provided by stakeholders at the two previous meetings and the design elements reflected by the community preference survey, the stakeholders, along with consultants from JJG and Urban Collage, began the process of identifying specific transportation projects needed to support the creation of a town center, a civic/recreational center and a more economically viable Old Town.

Stakeholders began the day on Friday by taking a short "field trip" of the study area, designed to create a greater awareness of the physical environment. The group observed elements such as streetlights, height of the railroad, distance from City Hall to the historic area of Old Town and the quality of current development in the study area. The remainder of the day was spent actually determining the best location for a town center, the kinds of land uses that would be appropriate there, how the town center and library property could successfully co-exist and the transportation improvements needed to create both a desirable vehicular and pedestrian



**Figure 2-2**  
**Results of a Stakeholder Brainstorming Session -  
 Community Concerns and Visions**

**Concerns:**

- ◆ Public safety
- ◆ Crime, fear
- ◆ Transit
- ◆ Lack of connected streets
- ◆ One-way streets
- ◆ Not through my neighborhood

**Destinations (what currently exists):**

- ◆ Country Store
- ◆ Saturday night destination
- ◆ Library
- ◆ City Hall
- ◆ School
- ◆ Large stores – competition?

**Destinations (what is needed):**

- ◆ Grocery store
- ◆ Evening entertainment
- ◆ Doctor's office
- ◆ YMCA/Community recreation center
- ◆ Park with children's playground
- ◆ Workplaces
- ◆ Town green/gathering
- ◆ Department of Motor Vehicles
- ◆ Post office
- ◆ Reconstruction – Buford Hwy (median and sidewalk trails)
- ◆ Alternate routes
- ◆ Slower speeds
- ◆ Market concept – “Character” vs. “Economy”/Mass production
- ◆ Incentives
- ◆ Public investment
- ◆ Balance
- ◆ Land use control/management

**Vision:**

- ◆ Parks, pool, kids, trees, trail
- ◆ Historic value
- ◆ Preservation plan
- ◆ Focal point
- ◆ Compatible new development
- ◆ Design standards for new commercial
- ◆ Tax abatements
- ◆ Acquisition for City project

environment. Designers from Urban Collage assisted stakeholders by preparing conceptual drawings of the preferences expressed during the session.

By the close of the day, a location for the town center, its uses, uses for the property around the library and supporting transportation projects were established. Two locations were favored for the location of the town center. One was located on Main Street close to the new library site. The second was across Buford Highway from City Hall. After much public debate, the site across Buford Highway from City Hall was chosen.

There were several reasons for selecting the Buford Highway site, but it was generally felt that the high visibility of this location, at the corner of Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, would better serve the need for establishing a landmark that the entire City could recognize as the town center. It also was felt that it would be easier to provide new water and sewer service to the Buford Highway site than to retrofit the old system in the historic area. Several residents of the historic area also expressed support for the Buford Highway site because redevelopment of the historic area may bring too much traffic.

**Figure 2-3**

**Results of a Stakeholder Brainstorming Session -  
Ideas concerning desired destinations in the study area**

**Historic Old Town** – Much discussion took place regarding what types of retail could be viable in the Old Town area and what could attract and keep people in the area. The group made the following points:

- ◆ Primarily residential now
- ◆ Restaurants
- ◆ Boutiques
- ◆ Art Galleries
- ◆ Antiques
- ◆ No “Big Box”
- ◆ Create gateway (Russell St)
- ◆ Trails – bike and walk
- ◆ Community theater
- ◆ Sidewalks and curbs

**Library Site** - The group suggested that there be more than just municipal-type buildings and services in this location. Following are some ideas that were discussed:

- ◆ Recreation center
- ◆ Move City Hall to the site
- ◆ Similar retail as in Old Town
- ◆ Town green
- ◆ Traffic concerns
- ◆ Small retail, such as café, etc.
- ◆ Consider moving the library site. Is it a done deal?

**Buford Highway/Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road** – Many felt that this area should be the focus – how to connect to Old Town and the Library. Points raised were:

- ◆ Green space
- ◆ Parking
- ◆ Small retail
- ◆ Traffic patterns
- ◆ Parking

The following day was utilized as an implementation session. Even though the final report had not yet been prepared, this morning session provided an opportunity to orient the group to the challenges that lie ahead with regard to financing the projects, acquiring land and utilizing the participation of other established groups in the community in plan implementation.

The Master Plan drawing presented in the Executive Summary of this report and the proposed projects found in the Implementation Strategy portion of this report were all derived from careful analysis and review of the recommendations initiated at this Design Workshop.

**Participants at the Design Workshop**



### A. Inventory of existing and proposed land uses

The City of Suwanee has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade. Suwanee's population has almost tripled in size since 1990. The City population in 1990 was 2,412 residents and the 2000 census revealed that Suwanee had grown by more than 260 percent in ten years, with a total population of 8,725 residents. The development pattern associated with this growth has been one typical of many suburban communities, which has not focused around the downtown core. New cul-de-sac residential developments, strip commercial shopping centers, and modern business parks have replaced the traditional urban landform of city blocks and mixed land uses.

Much of the reason for this newer suburban landform has been strong reliance upon an auto-oriented transportation system. The general goal of this Old Town Master Plan is to create a functional and symbolic Old Town for Suwanee. A fundamental feature of this plan is a more efficient landform that supports alternative modes of transportation and offers residents greater convenience in conducting their day-to-day activities.

Following is a detailed inventory of the existing land use conditions within Old Town Suwanee and the proposed conditions reflected in the Master Plan. This review of the community's land use, business and housing mix reveals a number of significant characteristics. It also includes a discussion of land use efficiency that is based on an analysis of the jobs to housing balance within the study area. On Stonecypher Road there is a restored farm that is an example of sustainable agriculture.

### Land Use Mix

Existing land use figures for the City of Suwanee were extracted from the City's comprehensive plan, and the study area itself was field verified in May 2001. **Figure 3-1** shows a comparison between the existing land use mix in the study area and the City of Suwanee as a whole.

Commercial/retail, industrial, and multi-family land uses are not as common in the study area as in the city as a whole. The institutional/public sector, however, is more prominent in the Old Town area, which will serve its purpose in providing the civic orientation that generally is needed for a livable community. The results of this existing land use survey are illustrated in **Figure 3-2**.

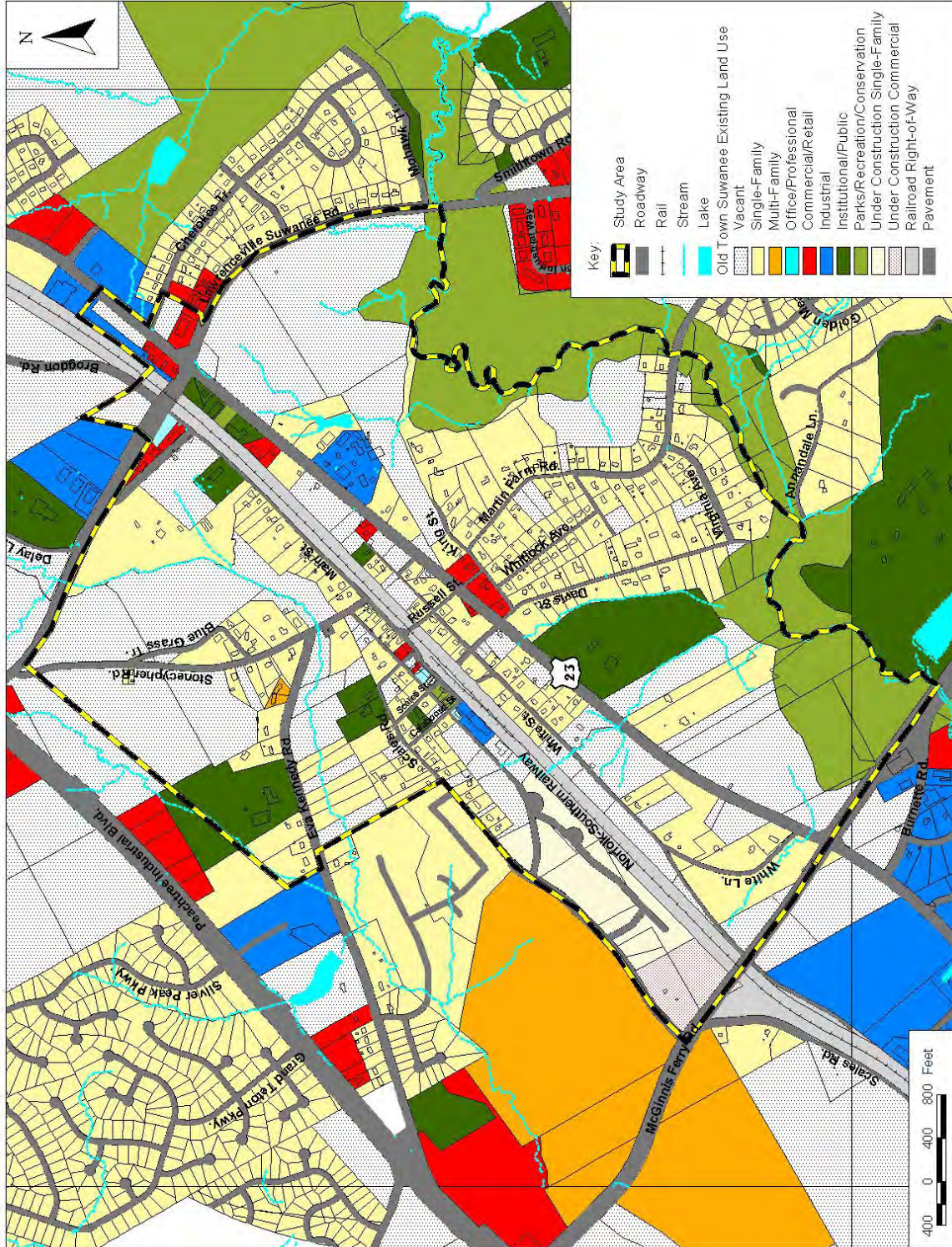
**Figure 3-1  
Existing Land Use Mix**

Land Use	Old Town Suwanee		City of Suwanee	
	Acres	Percent Total	Acres	Percent Total
Vacant/Undeveloped	255	33.1%	1662	26.2%
Single-Family	238	30.9%	2326	36.6%
Multi-Family	1	0.1%	140	2.2%
Office/Professional	1	0.1%	5	0.1%
Commercial/Retail	9	1.2%	263	4.1%
Industrial	9	1.2%	292	4.6%
Institutional/Public	46	6.0%	207	3.3%
Parks/Conservation/Recreation	75	9.7%	804	12.7%
Under Construction Single-Family	21	2.7%	*	*
Under Construction Commercial	9	1.1%	*	*
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	105	13.7%	649	10.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6348</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*not field verified; therefore, acreage is included in the Vacant/Undeveloped Classification



**Figure 3-2**  
**Existing Land Use**





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A large portion of the land within Old Town Suwanee today is vacant or undeveloped at 33.1 percent of the total area. The next most concentrated use is residential. Single-family land use accounts for approximately 31 percent of the total area, while multi-family uses account for only 0.1 percent. This master plan proposes to introduce a wider variety of housing types, commercial uses and additional public space. The plan also recognizes alternate modes of transportation, by placing a focus on compact neighborhoods that support activities such as walking or bicycling.

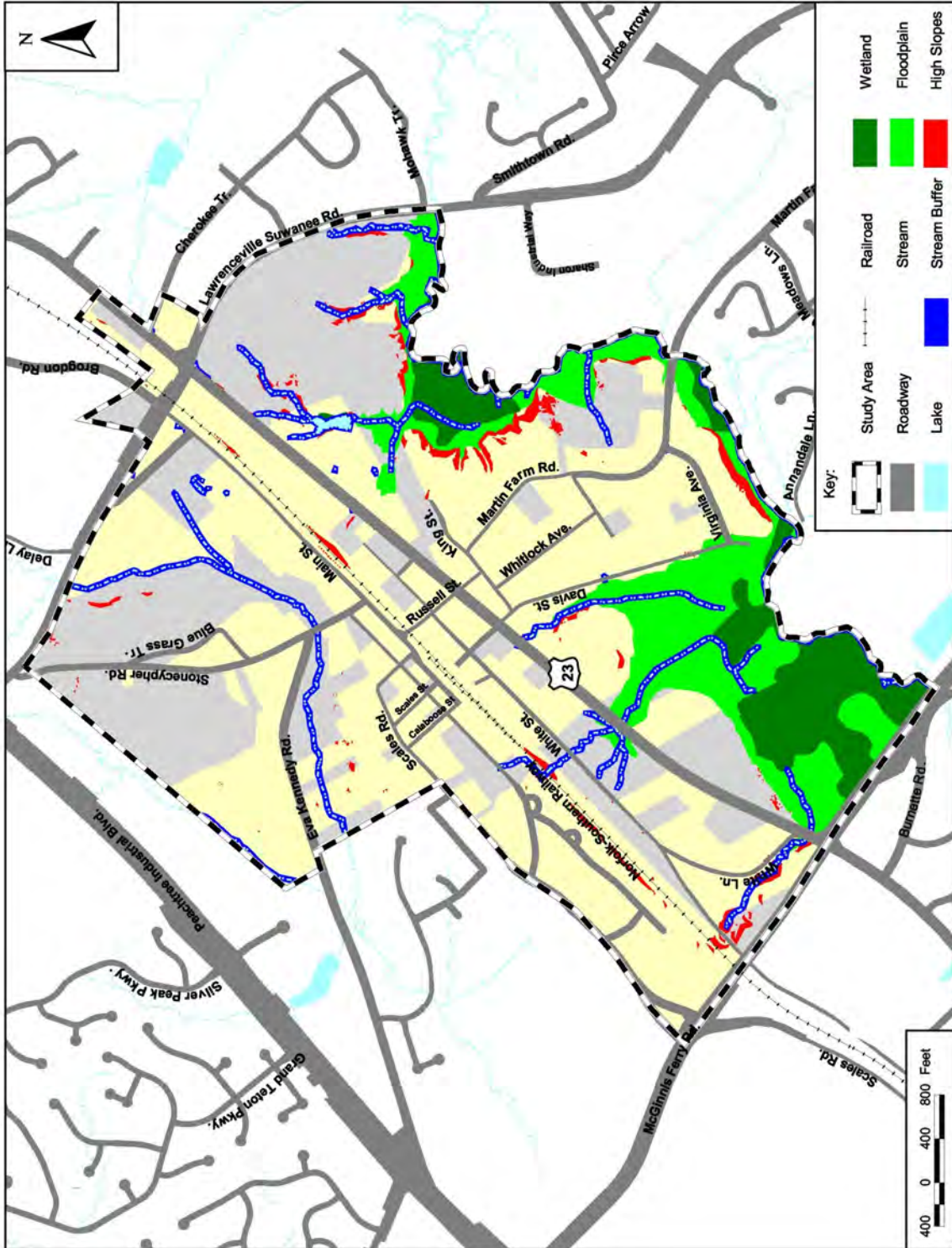
### ***Developable Land***

The study area encompasses a large amount of undeveloped or vacant tracts of land. The total area of the Old Town District is approximately 769 acres. From this total, approximately 255 acres or 33 percent has been classified as undeveloped or vacant. These undeveloped tracts are not concentrated in one specific area, but rather are dispersed throughout the study area. This will be an important factor in the consideration of pedestrian connectivity and the placement of various land uses.

Due to environmental constraints, 13% or 27 acres of the vacant land in the Old Town may be undevelopable. These 27 acres are either lost to wetlands, floodplain, high slope, or stream buffers. A map of this undevelopable land can be found in **Figure 3-3**.

Opportunities for infill development are present due to the low density of existing uses. Building footprints tend to occupy only a small portion of the total land area of each parcel and several large undeveloped tracts remain throughout the study area.

Figure 3-3  
Undevelopable Land



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## B. Analysis of land use policy guidelines

Regulatory controls are tools that City leaders can use to help guide and regulate growth within the corporate limits. Both the City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance were reviewed to gain an understanding of the City's current regulatory environment. The results of this analysis are provided below.

### Comprehensive Plan

The City's Comprehensive Plan is entitled "Suwanee 2020: A Citywide Comprehensive Plan and Town Master Plan" and was adopted by City Council in November 2000. The Plan addresses a wide range of elements including demographics, economic development, natural and historic resources, housing, community facilities and land use. The Plan provides City officials, staff and residents with a blueprint to guide growth and development over the next 20 years. This document is used as the basis for zoning, transportation planning and utility systems decisions for the City.

In the Land Use chapter of this Plan, growth in the City of Suwanee was attributed to the explosive growth in the county and the expansion of sewer. Key issues concerning land use dealt with transitional areas, incompatible land uses, environmentally sensitive areas, infill development, market forces and development policies and land resources for future development. By the year 2020, the City estimates that Suwanee's developed land will increase by 22 percent. The foremost land use is expected to be single-family residential. The City appears to have a progressive attitude toward planned development and recognizes its correlation with the quality of life for its residents.

A recommended Future Land Use Plan for the Old Town Suwanee is presented in **Figure 3-4**. This map is an adaptation of the Future Land Use Plan that is included in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Modifications have been made based on concepts developed through this master planning process.

Both the recommended land use plan and the existing land use plan identify a "Mixed-Use Center" and several areas as "Mixed-Use Villages." Through these designations, the City is trying to guide development within Old Town Suwanee. Both of these mixed-use areas allow developments to integrate residential and nonresidential uses.

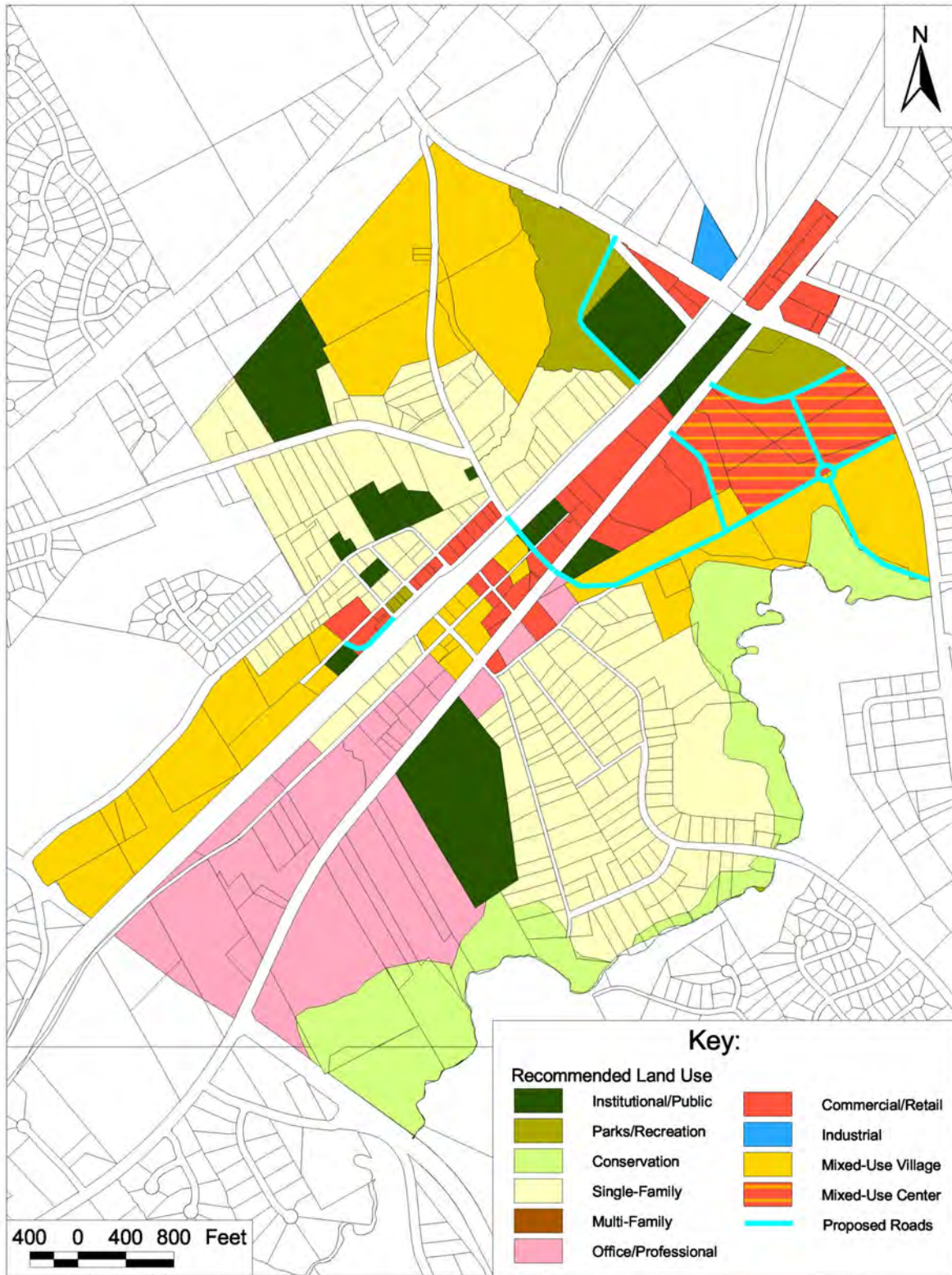
A "Mixed-Use Center" would be mostly commercial and would also allow a variety of other uses to include retail, office and residential uses. A "Mixed-Use Village" would be primarily residential; however, other non-residential uses would be allowed. These mixed-use areas that have been applied to Old Town Suwanee support the premise behind the Livable Centers Initiative. The City has encouraged infill development, within the study area, to create a more livable environment with a sense of neighborhood. Infill development as described in the Comprehensive Plan has been for two different purposes. First, the development is guided in such a way as to complete the current development pattern, and second, the infill construction should create new and exciting developments.

The primary differences between the Land Use Plan included in the Comprehensive Plan and the recommended Future Land Use Plan are listed below.

- ◆ A park/recreation area at the corner of Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. This important corner property will serve as a community gathering area, providing open space and an amphitheatre for the new Town Square.
- ◆ A park/recreation area north of the new library site that would become a passive park/nature preserve.
- ◆ A mixed-use village area along Main Street just south of the new library site.



**Figure 3-4**  
**Recommended Future Land Use Plan**



## Zoning

The City's Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1998 and most recently amended on January 3, 2002. Generally, this document describes the specific uses allowed in the various zoning districts throughout Suwanee.

Within Old Town Suwanee, there are a number of zoning districts. These districts are briefly described in **Figure 3-5** and the location of these various districts can be seen in **Figure 3-6**.

For the most part, land uses inside the study area are of low intensity.

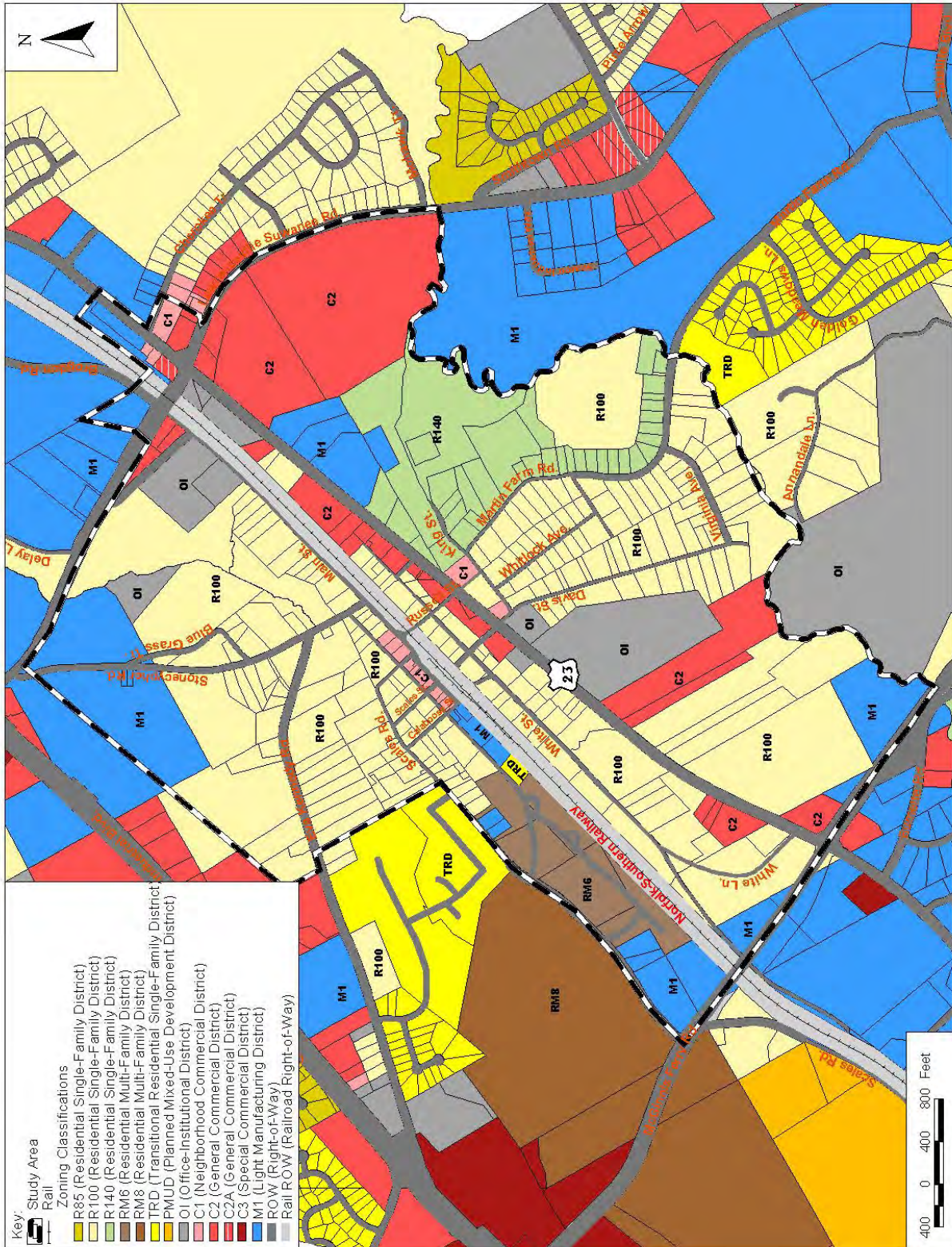
The dominant zoning classification within Old Town Suwanee is Single-family Residential (R-100); approximately 351 acres are zoned accordingly. The smallest zoning district within the study area is General Commercial – Alcoholic Beverage Sales (C2A), a barbeque restaurant, with 0.67 acres. The most intense land use appears to be the General Commercial (C2) zoning district,

**Figure 3-5**  
**Zoning Classifications**

District	Use	Description
R-140	Single-Family	Intended primarily for Single-Family dwellings and related uses.
R-100	Single-Family	Intended primarily for Single-Family dwellings and related uses.
RMD	Multi-Family Duplex	Intended primarily for duplexes and related uses, provided only one duplex is constructed on each lot of record.
TRD	Transitional Residential Single-Family	Intended as a transitional residential area between established areas zoned residential and non-residential zoned districts.
RM-6	Multi-Family	Intended primarily for Multi-Family dwellings at a maximum density of 6 units per acre.
RM-8	Multi-Family	Intended primarily for Multi-Family dwellings at a maximum density of 8 units per acre.
C-1	Neighborhood Commercial	Provides a location for convenience goods and services for people in nearby residential neighborhoods.
C-2	General Commercial	Intended primarily for those commercial uses that require a location accessible to large numbers of people and that serve substantial portions of the community.
C-2A	Alcoholic Beverage Sales	Intended primarily for those uses that sell alcohol for consumption in a location accessible to large numbers of people and that serve substantial portions of the community.
C-3	Special Commercial	Intended for those commercial uses that require a location accessible to the business and residential community.
O-I	Office-Institutional	Intended to provide a location for offices, institutions and related limited retail business and service activities in buildings of high character located within attractive surroundings.
M-1	Light Manufacturing	Provides a location that is well adapted for industry use. Proximity to other uses makes it desirable to limit impacts.
PMUD	Mixed-Use	Provides a location for appropriate planned development of quality mixed-use projects within the City of Suwanee.



**Figure 3-6**  
**Zoning Map**





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which has 101 acres inside the study area. These developments are confined to the major roadway corridors along Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. The Neighborhood Commercial District, classified as C1, is located in the historic area of the Old Town Suwanee District. There are approximately 6 acres of land zoned C1 located mostly along Main Street. The Light Manufacturing zoning classification, M1, is scattered throughout the study area, consuming 81 acres of land. However, not all of this property is active. The active sites appear to be located along Callaboose Street, Buford Highway and at the intersection of Suwanee Dam Road and Buford Highway. The Office-Institutional District (OI) covers approximately 42 acres of the study area and contains most of the City's community facilities. The City Hall complex, police and fire stations and various churches are zoned as Office-Institutional. The remaining zoning districts within Old Town Suwanee are Single-family Residential (R140), Multi-Family Residential (RM6) and Transitional Residential Single-Family (TRD).

In comparing the existing zoning and Future Land Use Plan for the Old Town Suwanee District, it appears that the anticipated growth links closely with the current pattern of development. There is an area along Buford Highway that is currently designated as an Office/Professional use on the Future Land Use Plan that was zoned as residential. However, other areas of change do not exchange one use for another, but provide a mixture of uses to create the live-work neighborhood that the City desires.

Like most suburban communities' zoning ordinances, Suwanee's current regulations are built upon the desire to discretely separate land uses. The City's zoning ordinance, for example, requires large building setbacks, landscaping and parking requirements and other things that tend to encourage land consumption and sprawl. The City does not have a downtown zoning category that would permit zero lot line development and mixtures of land uses. The City's Planned Mixed Use Development (PMUD) category accomplishes this to a certain extent, but is

primarily intended for large master planned projects.

In order to blend new development with existing structures in the Old Town District, it is recommended that the City establish an overlay district for the Old Town area. An overlay district would allow greater flexibility in site planning and building arrangements to promote an appropriate mix of new structures with the existing buildings. It is recommended the requirements of the overlay district promote mixed-use developments, build-to lines, floor-to-area ratios and parking maximums.

## **C. Analysis of Land Use Efficiency**

### **Jobs-Housing Balance**

In the metropolitan Atlanta area, like in many major cities around the country, surveys indicate that people are driving greater distances on a daily basis than ever before. One of the contributing factors to the increase in trips and distances are our land use patterns that tend to separate jobs, houses and other destinations. Better planned, mixed-use communities with balances of jobs and housing can help reduce travel distances and thus help limit the growth in trip lengths (Urban Land Institute 1999).

Jobs-housing balance is a planning tool that local governments can use to achieve a roughly equal number of jobs and housing units or households in their jurisdiction or part of a jurisdiction (Weitz 2001). In addition to a numerical balance of jobs and housing, a balance is desired for the types of jobs and housing that are provided. Jobs should match the labor force skills in the area and the size and price of housing should be varied.

One of the most important objectives in attaining an appropriate jobs-housing balance is to reduce the vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This reduction is possible if jobs and housing are located close together where people have shorter trips.

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission's Smart Growth Tool Kit, the generally accepted standard to strive for in a jobs-housing balance is a

range of 1.3 to 1.7 jobs per house. It is estimated now that the Study Area contains 235 jobs and 237 housing units. This results in a jobs-housing ratio of .99. Therefore, using this measurement, more jobs should be added to accommodate citizens within the Study Area. Additionally, if more homes are added, then the City should try to attract additional employment opportunities for these residents to maintain the jobs-housing balance within the target range.

**Business Mix**

The business mix in Old Town Suwanee is significant for the purposes of employment and services that can be offered to residents of the City. Field observations revealed that most of the commercial establishments serving the Old Town area are located outside of the study area. Commercial and office establishments for the Old Town Suwanee District are confined to Buford Highway and Main Street. Antique and gift shops are abundant within the study area. Other various types of establishments include a bank, automotive center, convenience store/drycleaners, florist, restaurant and miscellaneous retail.

The City should encourage a greater mix of businesses in the downtown area along with mixed-use developments. Such developments can reduce travel demand and create a self-sufficient community. The types of businesses and their location are essential for the community's

functionality and can even provide the symbolic element that is desired for Old Town Suwanee. For example, the historic Main Street area lends itself well to the types of uses already prevalent in the study area, such as antique and gift shops, and small offices. The new Town Square area, however, is a better location for more traditional community-oriented retail uses that could serve the day-to-day needs of local residents, such as restaurants, dry cleaners, and drug stores.

**Housing Mix**

The housing mix within Old Town Suwanee, presented in **Figure 3-7**, consists mainly of single-family developments. There are three parcels within the study area that contain multi-family units. The first two are located together along Eva Kennedy Road and house eight units. The next multi-family unit is located in the heart of the Old Town Suwanee District. Interestingly enough, this multi-unit development is part of a small-scale historic mixed-use development over Pierce's Corner Antiques. However, it should be noted that there are approximately 900 multi-family apartment units just outside of the study area along McGinnis Ferry Road.

Based on the recommended Old Town Master Plan, numerous housing units, commercial establishments and institutional uses will be added. According to the Plan, an additional 245 single-family parcels will be added, 227 new multi-family

**Figure 3-7  
Housing Mix**

	<b>Current (2000)</b>	<b>Planned Additions</b>	<b>Totals (2025)</b>
No. of single-family units	234	245	479
No. of multi-family units	3	227	230
Mixed-Use housing/commercial	n/a	421	421
Total number of households	246	893	1,139
Average household size	2.89	n/a	2.54
Approximate population for Study Area	711	2,268	2,979
Jobs-Housing balance	.99	n/a	1.1
Total City population	8,725	n/a	21,407

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and 421 mixed-use housing/commercial units could be added by 2025. These new units added to the existing housing stock totals 1,139 households by 2025. The Plan includes approximately 82,000 square feet of institutional uses, 49,600 square feet of retail commercial space and 249,400 square feet of mixed housing/commercial (this is square footage of commercial only). These uses will generate approximately 1,030 new jobs. Add these to the existing number of jobs and jobs created in other parts of the study area and the result is a total of 1,365 jobs by 2025. This results in a jobs-housing balance of 1.1. This ratio suggests there could be a shortage of housing in the Old Town District by 2025. However, other parts of the City, just outside of the study area are heavily residential. This will provide additional housing in close proximity to Old Town.



## A. Transportation

The Old Town area contains numerous roads that have been designed and built over many years. Consequently, there are substandard areas as well as new modern construction. Within the older residential areas, there are a number of roads that are too narrow and have substandard composition. Additionally, some streets are experiencing high vehicular speeds that could be improved through traffic calming measures. Following is a detailed description of the transportation data gathered for this project.

### Traffic Control Devices

JJG staff completed a field inventory of existing traffic control devices (signs and traffic signals) throughout the study area in June. **Figure 4-1** presents the locations of the observed traffic control devices.

### Sidewalk and Parking Inventory

The location of both existing sidewalks and proposed sidewalks were identified through field observation and through review of the City's comprehensive plan<sup>1</sup> (proposed sidewalk locations). The locations of the existing and proposed sidewalks are presented on **Figure 4-2**.

Existing parking facilities were also identified through field observation. The parking inventory information is presented on **Figure 4-3**. The only areas of public parking identified in the study area were located in the historic downtown area.

### Historical Traffic Analysis

Historical traffic data was obtained from the Gwinnett County publication *Traffic Count Report* (summarizing Average Daily traffic counts for the period 1996-2000) including data from State, Gwinnett County, and private sources.

**Appendix B** presents a summary table of the historical data for the major roads within the study

area (for consistency, only the Gwinnett County data for 1999 is presented; the County and State data for 2000 is not available for each major road).

**Figure 4-4** presents a graphical summary of the estimated daily traffic values (1999 data) for the major roads within the study area.

In summary, the major roads within the study area experienced an increase in traffic volumes (generally over four percent) for the period between 1996-2000. Two road sections appear to have experienced a slight decrease in traffic volumes including Main Street and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (between McGinnis Ferry Road and Suwanee Dam Road).

This reduction of traffic volume on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard can be attributed to one of many explanations. First, the construction work that was recently completed on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard may have caused a slight shift of traffic to Buford Highway during the construction period. Additionally, increasing congestion along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard is likely resulting in a traffic shift to other roads with less congestion (such as Buford Highway). It should be noted that this conclusion is based upon an average of all the traffic counts (from state, county and private sources) for each major road; therefore, a certain level of error is inherent with this approach. **Figure 4-5** presents a graphic showing the average traffic volume changes for the major roads within the study area between 1996 and 2001.

Turning Movement Count data included as part of the County's *Traffic Count Report* was also reviewed. The major intersections within the study for which turning movement data was reported included:

- ◆ Eva Kennedy Road/Moore Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
- ◆ Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and McGinnis Ferry Road
- ◆ Suwanee Dam Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

<sup>1</sup> *The Town Master Plan – A Comprehensive Plan for Suwanee Georgia to the Year 2020*, November 2000,

Figure 4-1  
Traffic Control Devices

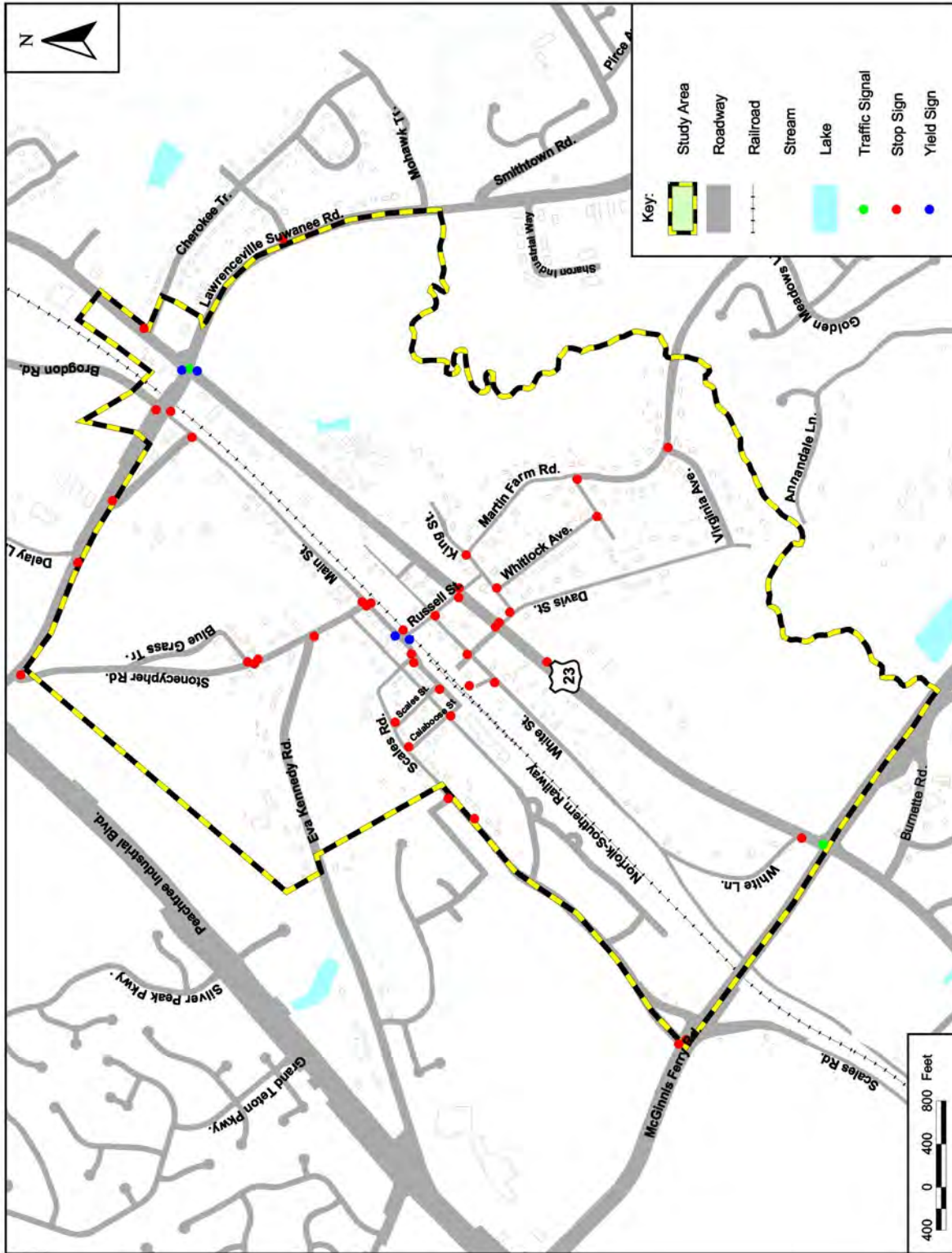
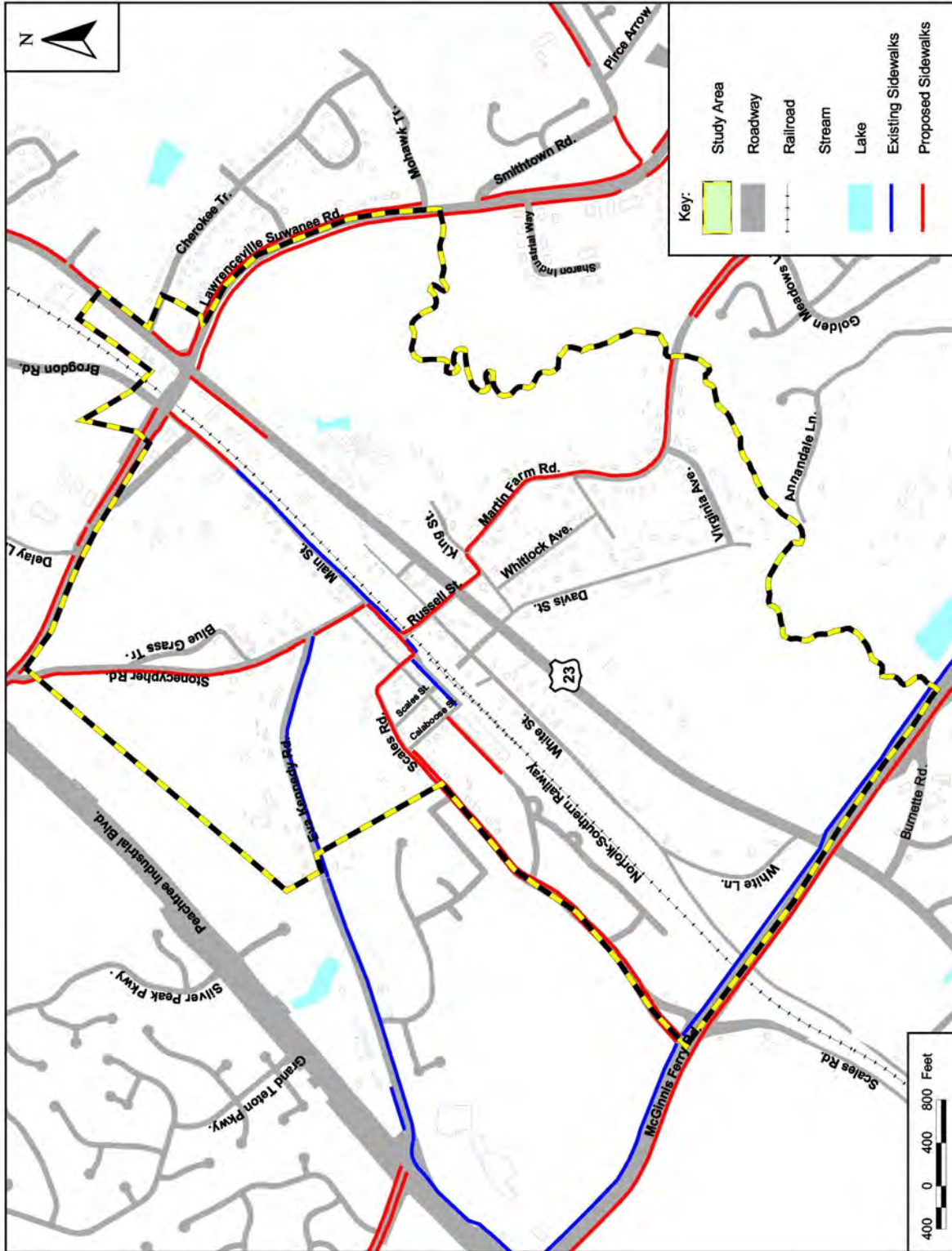




Figure 4-2  
Sidewalk Locations



**Figure 4-3**  
**Parking Inventory**

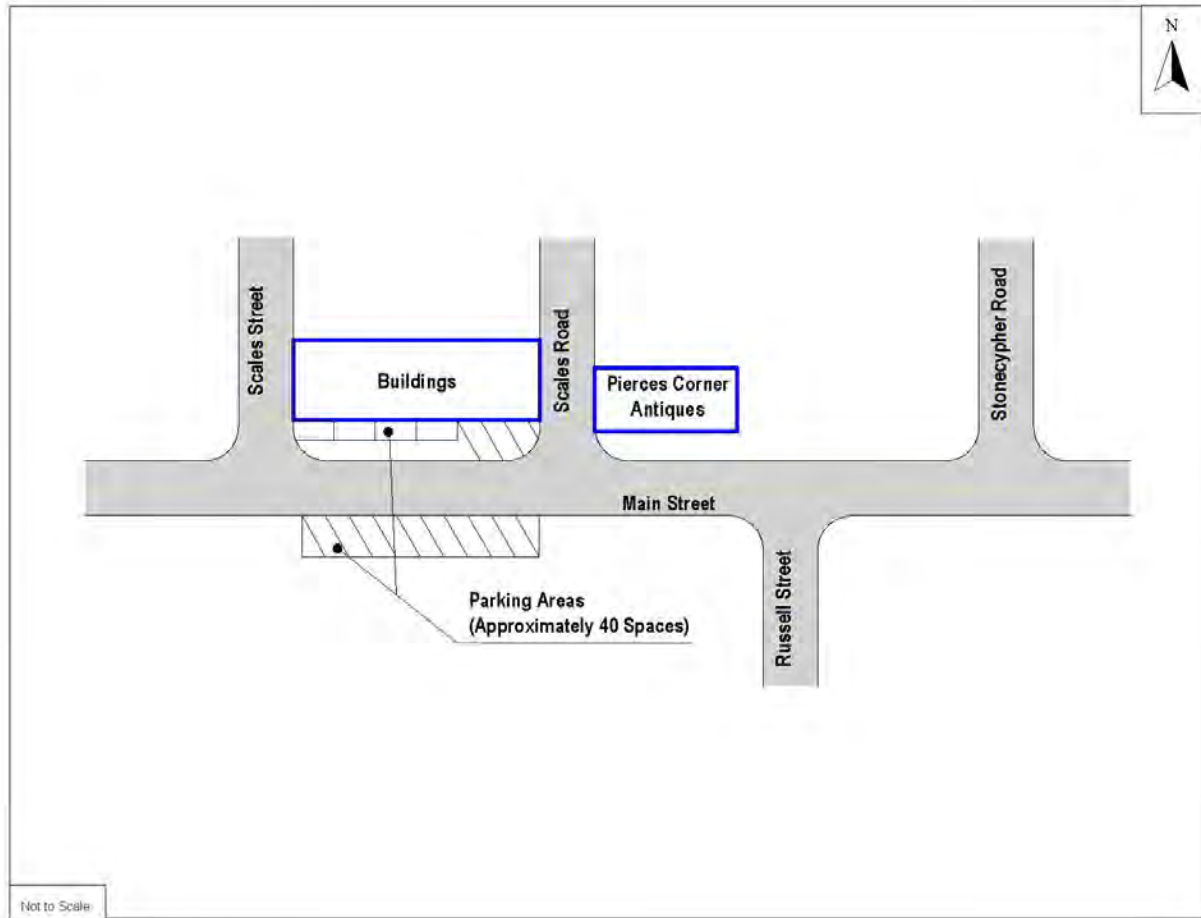


Figure 4-4  
 Estimated Daily Traffic Values (1999 data)

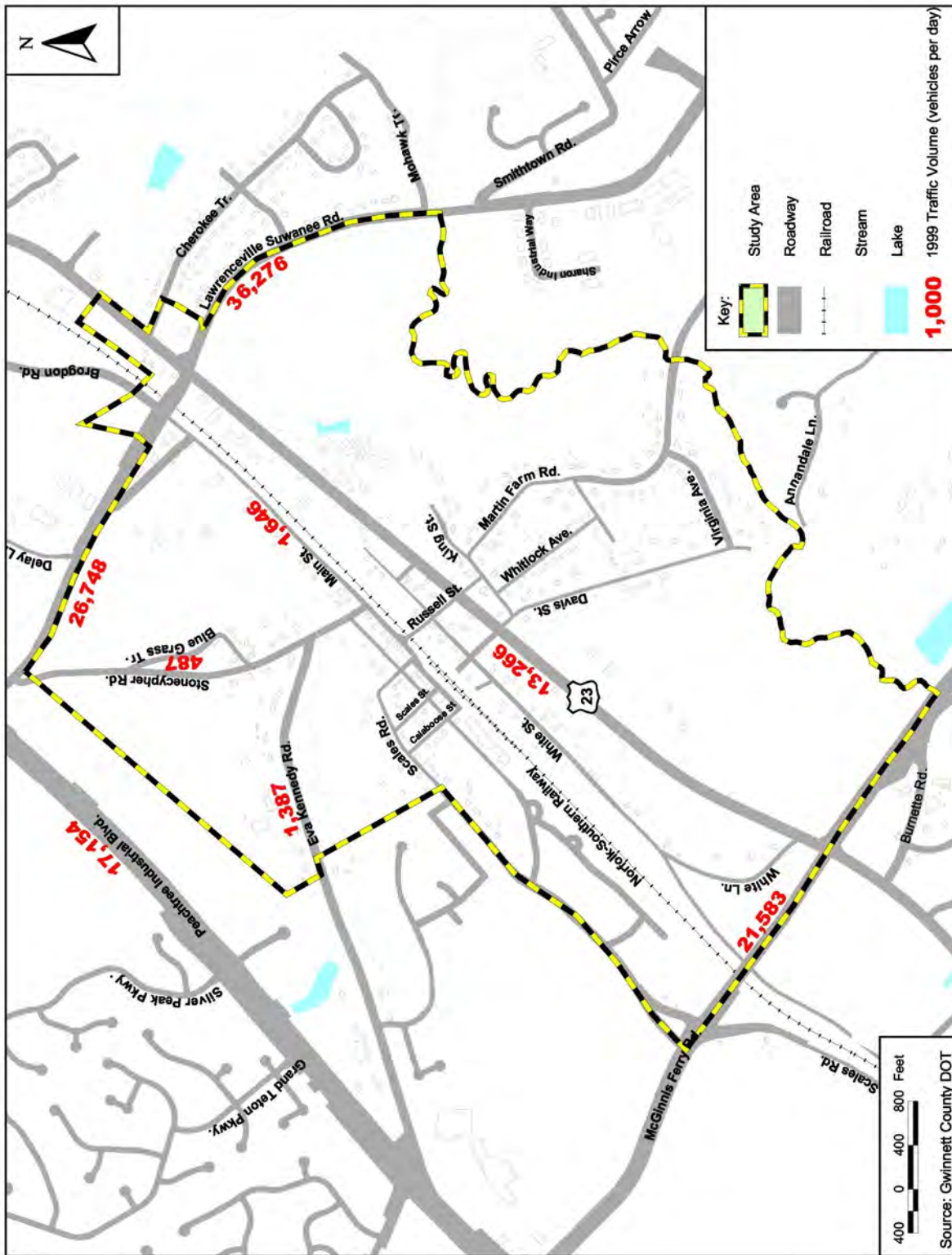
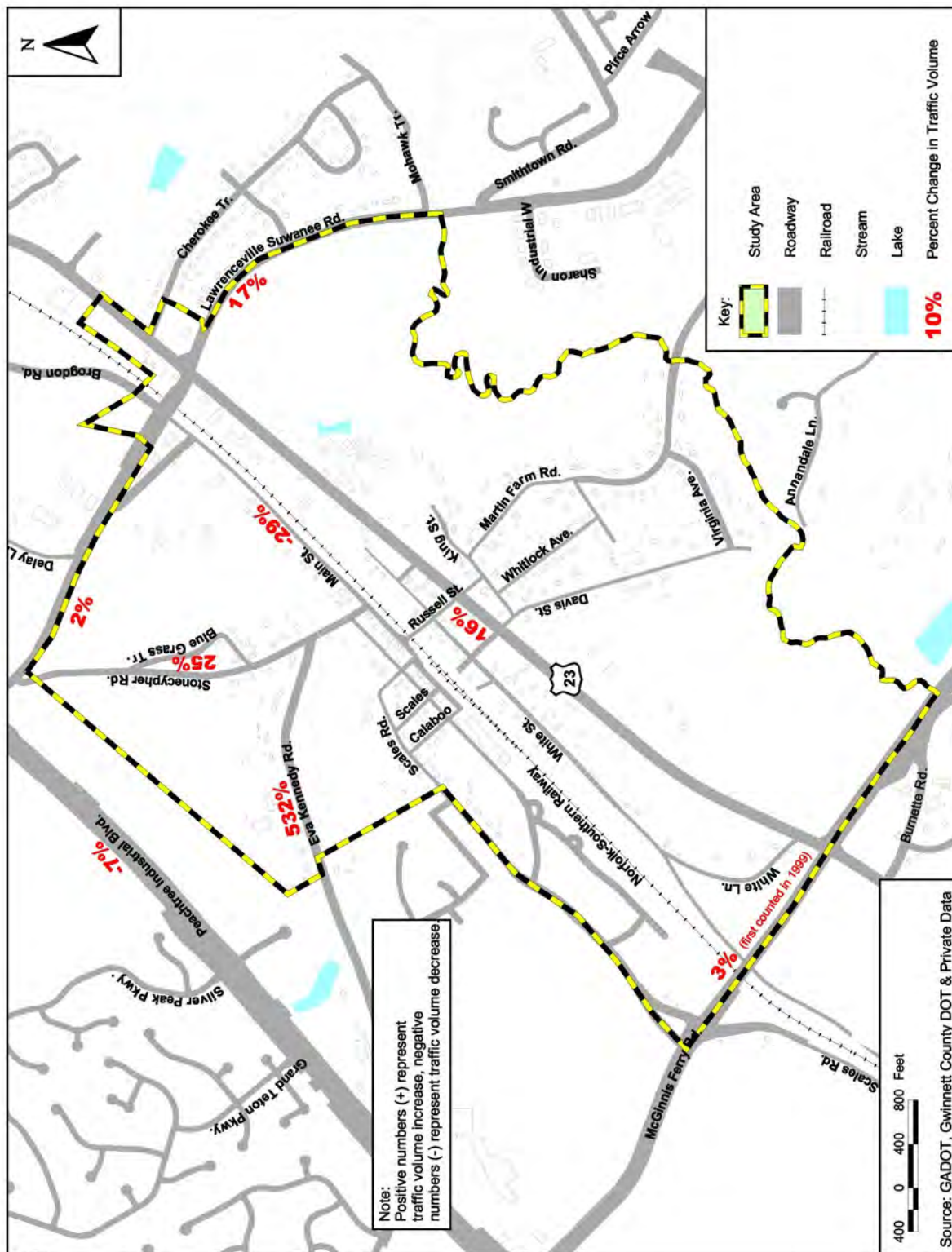




Figure 4-5  
Traffic Volume Changes (1996-2001)



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The turning movement count information is summarized and presented in **Appendix C**.

Additionally, signal timing plans were obtained for the two signalized intersections located within the study area:

- ◆ Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road/Suwanee Dam Road and Buford Highway
- ◆ McGinnis Ferry Road and Buford Highway

Turning movement count data was not available for these two intersections from the County DOT.

### **Automobile Accident Data**

Accident data for the study area was obtained from both the City of Suwanee and Gwinnett County sources. City accident data reports for the months of April and May 2001 were obtained from Chief of Police Mike Jones during a meeting on June 21, 2001. Based upon review of these reports, there is only one high incident location (three or more accidents occurring at or within 100 feet of the intersection) within the study area for the months of April and May 2001. This high incident location is the intersection of Buford Highway (Highway 23) and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road (Highway 317)/Suwanee Dam Road.

According to Police Chief Mike Jones, other high accident locations within Suwanee are as follows:

- ◆ Suwanee Dam Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
- ◆ Scales Road and Calaboose Street (the hump causes sight restrictions)

Additionally, the intersection of Scales Road and McGinnis Ferry Road may experience more accidents in the future due to increased traffic with the development (and completion) of the Old Suwanee neighborhood.

Accident information was also obtained from Gwinnett County Department of Transportation for the major roads within the study area (for the period between 1996-2001). According to the

County data, there have been no accidents at the following locations:

- ◆ Stonecypher and Suwanee Dam Roads
- ◆ Stonecypher and Eva Kennedy Roads
- ◆ Scales Road and Main Street
- ◆ Scales Street and Main Street
- ◆ Scales Street and Scales Road
- ◆ Calaboose Street and Main Street

Accident summaries for other intersections within the study area are presented in **Figure 4-6**.



Figure 4-6

Summary of Traffic Accident Locations 1996-2000

Intersection/Year of Reportable Accident(s) Between 1996 and 2000	Crashes	Injuries	Fatalities	Off-Road Crash	Angle Type Crash	Rear End Crash	Other Crash
<b>Stoneypher Road and Main Street</b>							
1996	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Scales Road and McGinnis Ferry</b>							
1997	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Calaboose Street and Scales Road</b>							
1998	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Buford Highway and McGinnis Ferry</b>							
1996	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
1997	8	0	0	0	3	5	0
1998	10	7	0	0	2	8	0
1999	14	3	0	0	5	9	0
2000	14	2	0	0	1	13	0
<b>Buford Highway and Davis Street</b>							
1996	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
1999	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Buford Highway and Russell Street/Martin Farm Road</b>							
1996	4	1	0	1	0	2	1
1998	2	1	0	0	1	1	0
1999	3	1	0	1	2	0	0
2000	3	8	0	0	1	2	0
<b>Buford Highway and Suwanee Dam Road/Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road</b>							
1996	19	6	0	0	9	8	2
1997	13	6	0	0	5	8	0
1998	18	5	0	0	6	11	1
1999	20	3	0	0	8	10	2
2000	23	3	0	1	4	17	1
<b>Main Street and Suwanee Dam Road</b>							
1996	5	0	0	0	3	2	0
1997	3	0	0	0	2	1	0
1998	4	0	0	0	0	2	2
1999	5	2	0	0	3	2	0
2000	3	2	0	0	3	0	0
<b>White Lane and Buford Highway</b>							
2000	3	2	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Suwanee Dam Road</b>							
1996	24	11	0	1	10	7	6
1997	17	3	0	0	9	8	0
1998	28	2	0	0	14	9	5
1999	12	4	0	2	3	5	2
2000	26	7	0	1	6	17	2
<b>Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Eva Kennedy Road</b>							
1996	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
1997	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
1998	3	0	0	0	0	2	1
2000	3	1	0	0	1	2	0

Source: Gwinnett County Department of Transportation (correspondence dated July 19, 2001)

## Rail Crossing Accident Data

According to information obtained from the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), there are two rail crossings located within the Old Town Suwanee study area. The rail crossing information is presented on **Figure 4-7**.

**Figure 4-7**  
**High Crash Rail Crossing Locations<sup>1</sup>**  
**(1990 – July 23, 2001)**

Street Name	Crashes (1990-7/2001)	Injuries (1990-7/2001)	Fatalities (1990-7/2001)	Crossing Number	Estimated AADT	Approximate Current Daily Train Movements	Total Number of Tracks	Current Warning Device <sup>2</sup>
Suwanee Dam Road <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	717832B	17,000	29	1	Active
Russell Street	1	0	0	717833H	8,950	29	1	Active

<sup>1</sup> Source: US DOT FRA Crossing Inventory Information (dated 7/23/01)

<sup>2</sup> Type of warning device at crossing. Active warning devices include flashing lights, gates, bells, etc. that are activated by an oncoming train.

<sup>3</sup> This crossing was named "Roberts Road" on the FRA web site, but confirmation of the county road designation indicates that this is incorrect information.

NA – Information Not Available

## Traffic Circulation Issues

In addition to accident data, Chief Mike Jones also shared information regarding traffic circulation and traffic related violations within Suwanee. Mr. Jones stated that 95 percent of all police calls within the City of Suwanee are traffic related. Additionally, cut-through traffic is one of the worst traffic problems within the city, especially for the following roads:

- ◆ Eva Kennedy Road
- ◆ Stonecypher Road
- ◆ Martin Farm Road
- ◆ Scales Road (may become a cut-through street in the future)

Suwanee City staff also stated that the signals within Suwanee are not timed properly, which adds to the congestion problems within the City. Additionally, the City staff also stated that the cut-through traffic is believed to be mainly from commuters, and not from the residents of Suwanee.

## Planned Transportation Projects Within the Study Area

As part of the data-gathering phase of the Old Town Suwanee Master Plan project, a review of proposed transportation projects was conducted to help determine future potential deficiencies in the study area's transportation system.

Information from the Georgia DOT, ARC, Gwinnett County and the City of Suwanee was reviewed, and has been summarized in **Figures 4-8, 4-9, and 4-10.**

**Figure 4-8**  
**Georgia Department of Transportation**  
**Six-year Construction Work Program (Projects within the Study Area)**

Project	Project Type	Project Extents	Date to be Implemented or Constructed
Implementation of Countywide bus service (Proposed Routes 10 and 15 to include Suwanee along Buford Highway)	Various Transit Related Expenditures	NA	Bus Acquisition in 2002
Suwanee Creek Greenway Trail	Bike/pedestrian facility enhancement	McGinnis Trail to Buford Highway (1.4 miles)	2004
Suwanee Creek Greenway Trail	Bike/pedestrian facility enhancement	Martin Farm Park to McGinnis Trail (0.8 mile)	2004

NA = Not Applicable

**Figure 4-9**  
**State of Georgia Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

Project	Project Type	Project Extents	Date to be Implemented or Constructed
Implementation of Countywide bus service (Proposed Routes 10 and 15 to include Suwanee along Buford Highway)	Various Transit Related Expenditures	NA	Bus Acquisition in 2002

NA = Not Applicable

**Figure 4-10**  
**Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)**  
**Transportation Improvement Program**  
**(Projects within the Study Area, TIP- FY 2001-2003)**

Project	Project Type	Project Extents	Date to be Implemented or Constructed
Suwanee Creek Trail Extension	Bike/pedestrian facility enhancement	Martin Farm Road to McGinnis Ferry Road	Authorized in 2000
Suwanee Creek Trail & Landscaping	Bike/pedestrian facility enhancement	McGinnis Ferry Road to Buford Highway (US 23)	Authorized in 2000
Implementation of Countywide bus service (Proposed Routes 10 and 15 to include Suwanee along Buford Highway)	Various Transit Related Expenditures	NA	Bus Acquisition in 2002

NA = Not Applicable



**Planned Transportation Projects  
Adjacent to the Study Area**

planned project information graphically (both inside and immediately outside of the study area).

In addition to the planned projects within the study area, projects that are planned near the study area, or near the City of Suwanee may have a potential impact on the transportation system within the study area in the future. **Figures 4-11 through 4-15** present these planned projects outside the study area. **Figure 4-16** presents the

**Figure 4-11**

**State of Georgia Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Extents</b>	<b>Date to be Implemented or Constructed</b>
I-85 widening	Adding travel lanes (4 to 6 lanes)	I-85 from I-985 to CR 134/Hamilton Mill Rd	2002
I-85 widening	Adding travel lanes (4 to 6 lanes)	I-85 from CR 134/Hamilton Mill Rd to SR 211/Farm Market Road in Barrow County	2003

NA = Not Applicable

**Figure 4-12**

**Georgia Department of Transportation  
Six-year Construction Work Program (Projects Adjacent to the Study Area)**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Extents</b>	<b>Date to be Implemented or Constructed</b>
I-85 North ATMS Communication/Surveillance	ATMS	SR 316 to SR 20 (9.22 miles)	2002
Buford Highway Scenic Improvements	Landscaping/enhancement	Awaiting response from Ronda Britt with GDOT	2004
Outer Perimeter	New Four-lane Road Facility	Chattahoochee River to Old Suwanee Road (4.88 miles)	Long-Term (date not specified)
Outer Perimeter	New Four-lane Road Facility	Old Suwanee Road to Alcovy Road (12.0 miles)	Long-Term (date not specified)

**Figure 4-13**  
**Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)**  
**Transportation Improvement Program**  
**(Projects Adjacent to the Study Area TIP- FY 2001-2003)**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Extents</b>	<b>Date to be Implemented or Constructed</b>
I-85 and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road (SR 317)	Reconstruct Interchange, upgrade bridge, add turn lanes to all approaches	I-85 and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road (SR 317)	Authorized in 2000
Satellite Boulevard Extension	Road Extension (four-lane)	Smithtown Road to SR 20/Buford Drive	2002
I-85 North ATMS Communication/Surveillance	ATMS	Not Specified	2002

**Figure 4-14**  
**Illustrative List of Other Potential Projects Listed in City of Suwanee's Comprehensive Plan**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Extents</b>
McGinnis Ferry Road – Burnette Road Extension across I-85, and improved I-85 access.	New Road Corridor	Burnette Road to Old Peachtree Road
Scales Road Connector	New Road Corridor	Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to Buford Highway at South Scales Road
Reconnect Smithtown Road	New Road Corridor	Extend Smithtown Road

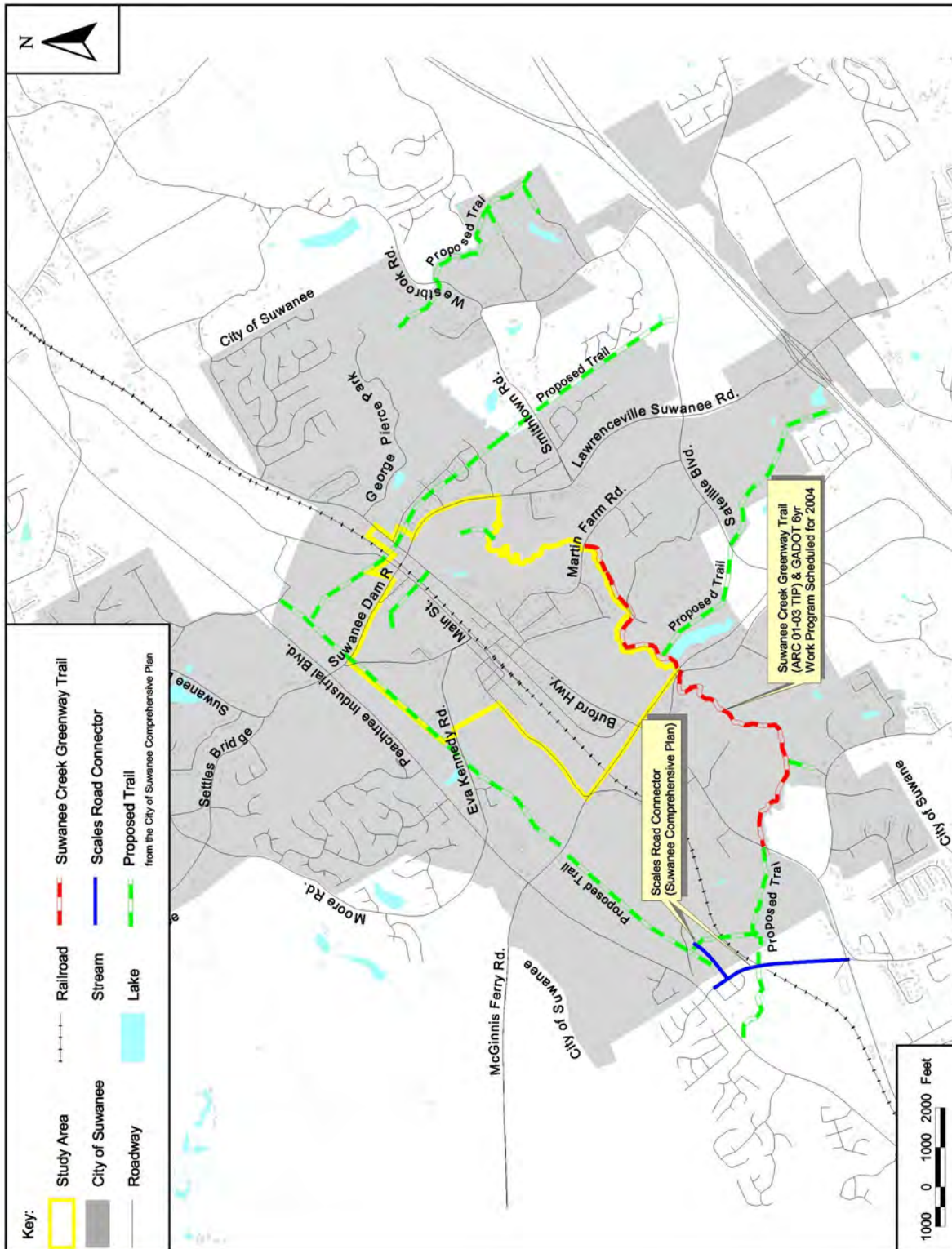
Source: The City of Suwanee. *The Town Master Plan – A Comprehensive Plan for Suwanee Georgia to the Year 2020*. November 2000.

**Figure 4-15**  
**Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)**  
**2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Extents</b>	<b>Date to be Implemented or Constructed</b>
I-85 North	Major Freeway Capacity Expansion (4 to 6 lanes)	I-985 to Hamilton Mill Road	2005
I-85 North	Major Freeway Capacity Expansion (4 to 6 lanes)	Hamilton Mill Road to SR 211	2010
I-85 North (2 Phases)	Roadway widening (4 to 6 lanes)	I-985 to SR 211	2005-10
Northern Arc (a.k.a. Outer Perimeter) 5 Phases	New Roadway Corridor	I-75 to SR 316 (four lanes)	2015
Satellite Boulevard Extension	New Roadway Corridor	Smithtown Road to SR 20 (four lanes)	2003
McGinnis Ferry Road Extension	New Roadway Corridor	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to Satellite Boulevard (four lanes)	2010

Notes: Only major projects are reported

Figure 4-16  
Planned Transportation Projects



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## Existing Deficiencies

Following is a brief review of the major traffic system deficiencies that are addressed as part of this plan.

- ◆ Pavement markings need re-painting in certain locations
- ◆ Certain traffic control devices fail to meet Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards. Examples are stop sign and yield signs throughout the study area that are too low (less than the required 5 feet prescribed by the MUTCD<sup>2</sup>).
- ◆ Certain traffic control signs need to be removed if not needed such as the yield signs for the through movements on Main Street before the intersection of Russell Street and the railroad crossing. This signage does not appear to be warranted by MUTCD standards. However, the signs should remain if there is a condition that exists, which JJG is not aware of, that would allow for the use of signs at this location<sup>3</sup>.
- ◆ A new warning sign is recommended for the railroad crossing on Russell Street. Although not specifically required by the MUTCD, this sign is recommended for safety purposes. Additionally, a railroad symbol could be painted on the pavement on Russell Street before the rail crossing; however, this is not specifically required by the MUTCD<sup>4</sup>.
- ◆ There is a lack of sidewalk continuity essential to creating a complete and helpful pedestrian network. The major arterial roadways such as Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road do not have sidewalks or crosswalks. The exception to this is McGinnis Ferry

Road, which has a multipurpose path running along side it. There also are no bicycle connections between the Richard Trice Trail and the Old Town area.

- ◆ Some roads are experiencing high speed rates particularly, Buford Highway, Eva Kennedy, Martin Farm and Stonecypher. Though these roads are only two lanes, they are conducive to high speeds due to their long and straight design.
- ◆ Ensure that the preemption traffic control system is working properly on the southbound approach of Suwanee Dam Road to ensure that vehicles do not form a queue across the railroad tracks. The system should activate a green phase signal for southbound traffic on Suwanee Dam to prevent the queuing from happening.
- ◆ The connection between Stonecypher and Suwanee Dam Roads is awkward. A reconfiguration may be warranted.
- ◆ The intersection of Main Street and Suwanee Dam road currently allows the northbound traffic on Suwanee Dam to turn left onto Main Street, just after an at grade railroad crossing. This poses a dangerous situation for vehicles queuing in line to make this turn. With the increased traffic anticipated on Main Street due to the construction of the proposed library, it is anticipated that this dangerous situation will become more common. One option is to close the median break on Suwanee Dam Road at Main Street.
- ◆ Some of the road sections are narrower than typical size lanes (10 to 12 foot). However, lane widths less than 9 feet can be used in residential areas or as a means to calm traffic. Examples include White Street between Davis and Russell Streets and the northern portion of Whitlock Avenue near Martin Farm Road.
- ◆ Some roads that are currently gravel and/or dirt, including Delay Lane, White Street and Jackson Street may need to be improved.
- ◆ Buford Highway has high vehicular speeds. Efforts are needed to slow traffic in this area

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<sup>2</sup> MUTCD, (December 2000). Section 2A.18 *Mounting Height*. "Signs installed at the side of the road in rural districts shall be at least 1.5 m (5 ft), measured from the bottom of the sign to the ear edge of the pavement. Where parking or pedestrian movement occurs, the clearance to the bottom of the sign shall be at least 2.1 m (7 ft)". The only other standards given are for signs along expressways and freeways, and for overhead signs (which all require higher minimum mounting heights).

<sup>3</sup> MUTCD, (December 2000). Section 2B.09 *YIELD Sign Applications*, Yield signs may be installed: A) "At an intersection where a special problem exists and where engineering judgment indicates the problem to be susceptible to correction by the use of the YIELD sign."

<sup>4</sup> MUTCD, (December 2000). Section 8B.16 *Pavement Markings*. "Pavement markings shall not be required at highway-rail grade crossings where the posted or statutory highway speed is less than 60 km/h (40 mph), or in urban areas, if an engineering study indicates that other installed devices provide suitable warning and control."



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– City Limit speed limit signs should be installed along this route. Pending development south of Buford Highway, the City may want to conduct a speed study to justify to GDOT the need to reduce the speed limit. This is particularly important for the viability of pedestrian connectivity between City Hall, the proposed library and the Town Square.

### Recommended Circulation System

The integration between land use planning, transportation planning and urban design is important to developing a unified downtown area that may function as a live-work-play environment. To best represent the elements of the recommended transportation system, a road classification system has been developed that unites the urban form design features with the proposed transportation and land use design elements.

**Figure 4-17** presents a map of the proposed road classification system applied to the existing and recommended streets in the Old Town Area.

**Figure 4-18** presents a tabular summary of the design specifications for each proposed classification type. **Figure 4-19** through **Figure 4-23** present cross-sectional illustrations of the proposed road classification for Suwanee.

Individual street cross sections have been created for each road classification type. It should be noted that the recommended road classification system identifies several new roads, including the following:

- ◆ A new access road just north of the proposed library. This will help relieve potential congestion on Main Street. In conjunction with the construction of this new road, it is recommended that the median on Suwanee Dam Road be extended to block left-turn movements onto Main Street for motorist traveling northbound. Main Street would only allow right-in and right-out movement, and motorist wanting to turn left onto Main Street will be redirected to the new access road. This median extension and redirection left-

turn movements onto Main Street will allow for safer queuing of traffic further away from the railroad crossing.

- ◆ A new access road connecting Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road located just behind the proposed Town Square. This will allow for easy access to the new amphitheatre and proposed mixed-use development.
- ◆ An extension of Stonecypher Road under the railroad and to Buford Highway, as well as a second phase of this extension that would provide additional access to the new mixed-use development and connect to Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. This extension of Stonecypher is considered a long-term project.

### Other Proposed Road Projects

In addition to the new road projects, other road projects are proposed based upon recommendations discussed during the Design Workshop. A brief description of these projects follows.

#### ***Intersection of Calaboose Street and Scales Road - “The Hump” Issue***

Through discussions with the public, City officials during the workshop and subsequent discussions with the City Engineer, it was determined that the “Hump” on Scales Road at Calaboose Street should be lowered. This proposed project would improve the vertical sight distance limitation that has been blamed for many vehicular accidents at this location. The City Engineer currently is working on a design for this project, which will be partially funded through grant money for new sidewalks along Scales Road.

#### ***Realignment of Main Street Through Metal Products Facility***

This proposed project involves the straightening/realignment of Main Street west of Old Town, through land currently occupied by the existing Metal Products property. The

construction of this project would likely require the removal of the facility; and assumes that the future land use for this property would change to one more in line with the overall plan for the historic Old Town area. The proposed design for this proposed transportation project is for a two-lane facility with on-street parking and adequate sidewalks (where feasible).

**Figure 4-17  
Proposed Street Classification System**

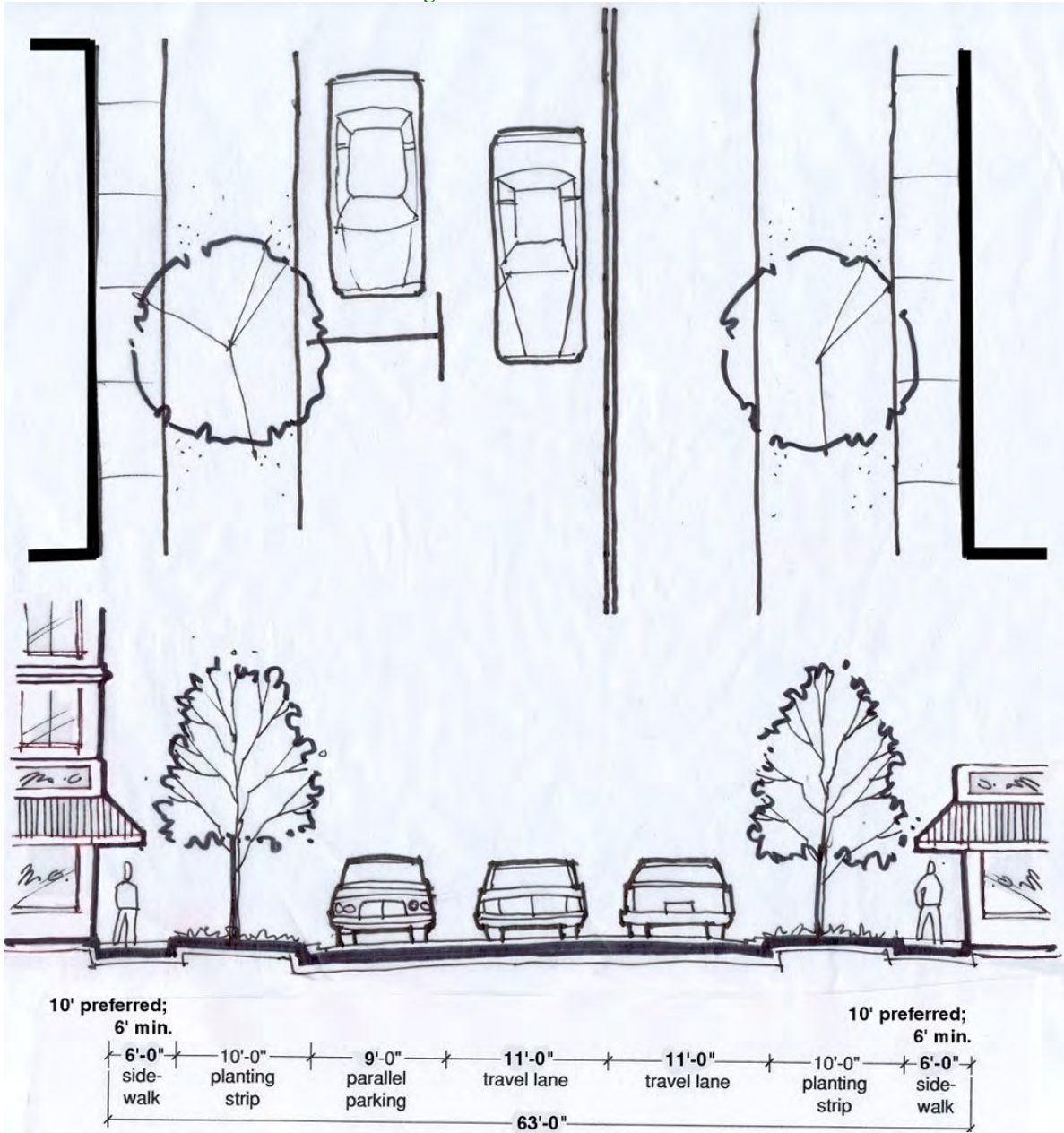
Facility Type	Typical	Optional	Transit	Bike	Multi-Use Pathway
<b>Access Road</b> (Proposed New Library Road and Select Proposed Roads Within the Town Square Site)	Two moving lanes and on-street parking on a single side	On street parking (one side)  Streetscape with street trees and sidewalks on both sides	*	*	--
<b>Commercial Street</b> (Select Proposed Roads Within the Town Square Site)	Two moving lanes and on-street parking on both sides	On street parking (both sides)  Streetscape with street lights, street trees and sidewalks on both sides	**	**	--
<b>Enhanced Old Town Street</b> (Main Street, Scales Road, Russell Street)	Two moving lanes (No on-street parking)	Streetscape with street lights and sidewalks on both sides	**	**	**
<b>Local Street Unimproved</b> (Calaboose Street, Davis Street, Scales Street, Jackson Street, King Street, Whitlock Avenue, Virginia Avenue)	Two moving lanes (No on-street parking)	No formal streetscape	--	*	--
<b>Parkway</b> (Buford Highway)	Four moving lanes (No on-street parking)	Streetscape with landscaped center median, street lights, street trees and multi-use path on both sides)	**	**	**
<b>Residential Collector</b> (Eva Kennedy Road, Stonecypher Road, Martin Farm Road)	Two moving lanes	Streetscape with street trees and sidewalks on both sides (where feasible)	*	*	--

\*\* Encouraged, \* Allowed, -- Not Provided

**Figure 4-18**  
**Recommended Road Classification System**

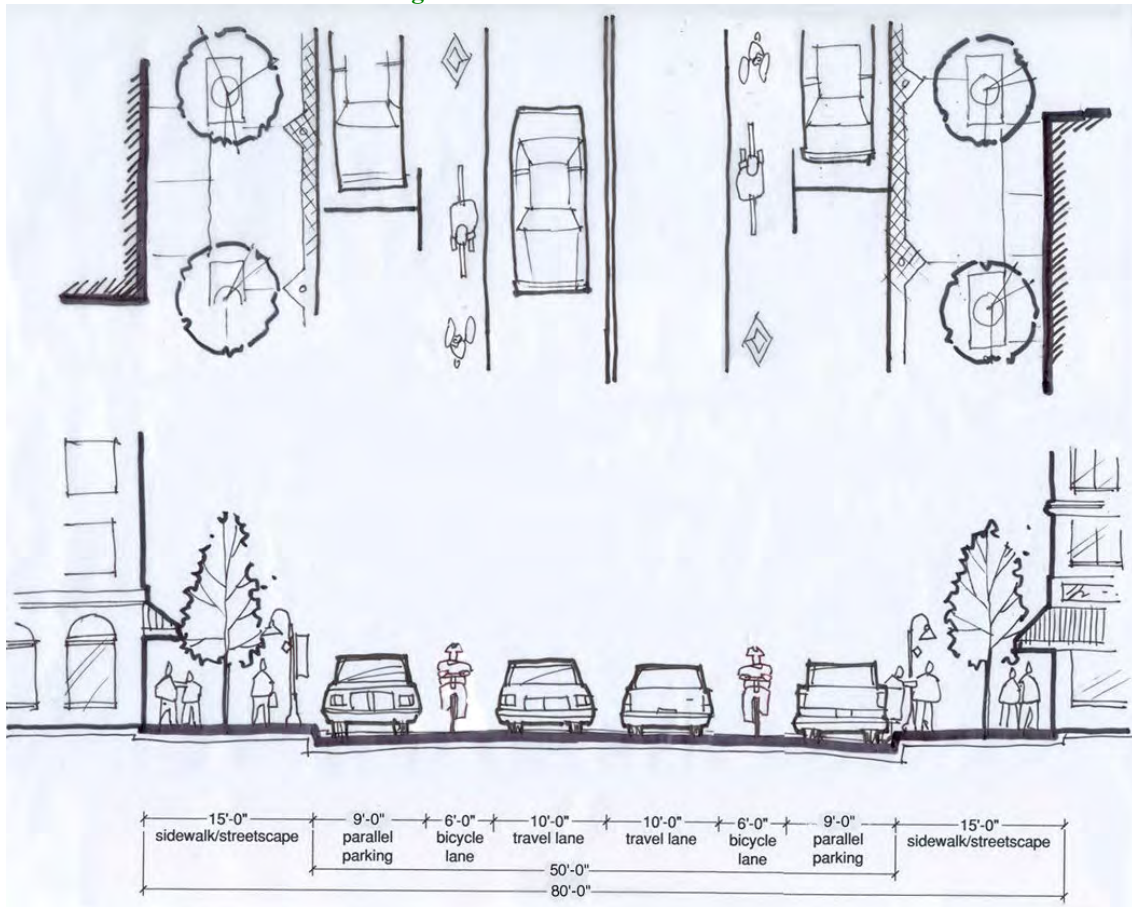


Figure 4-19: Access Road

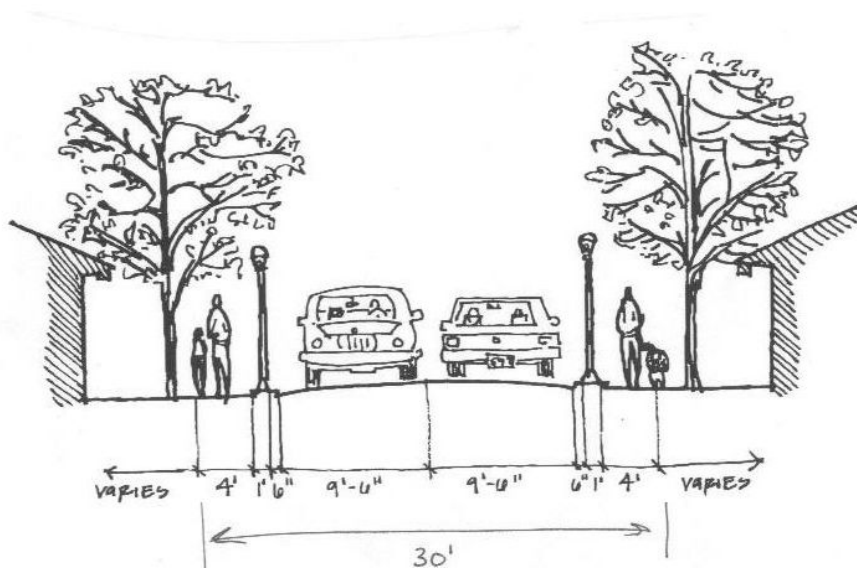




**Figure 4-20: Commercial Street**

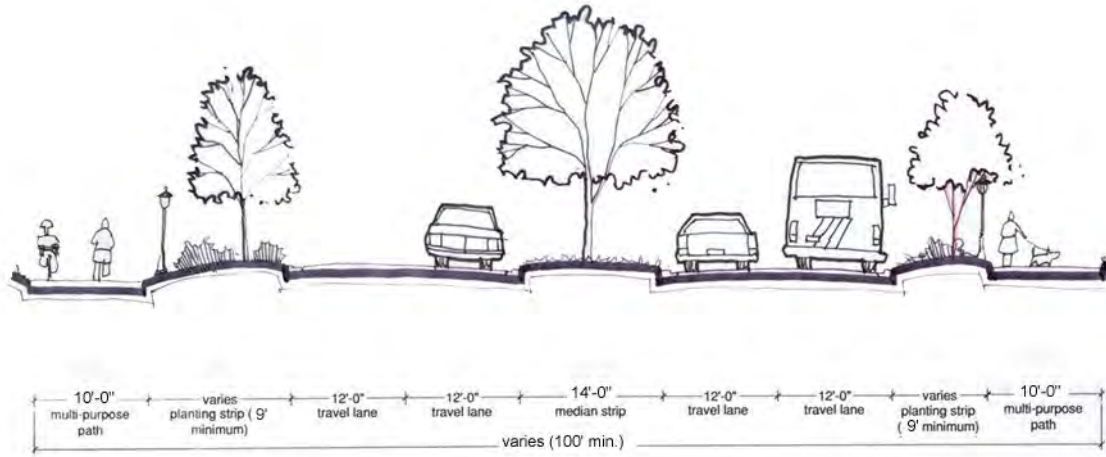


**Figure 4-21: Enhanced Old Town Street**

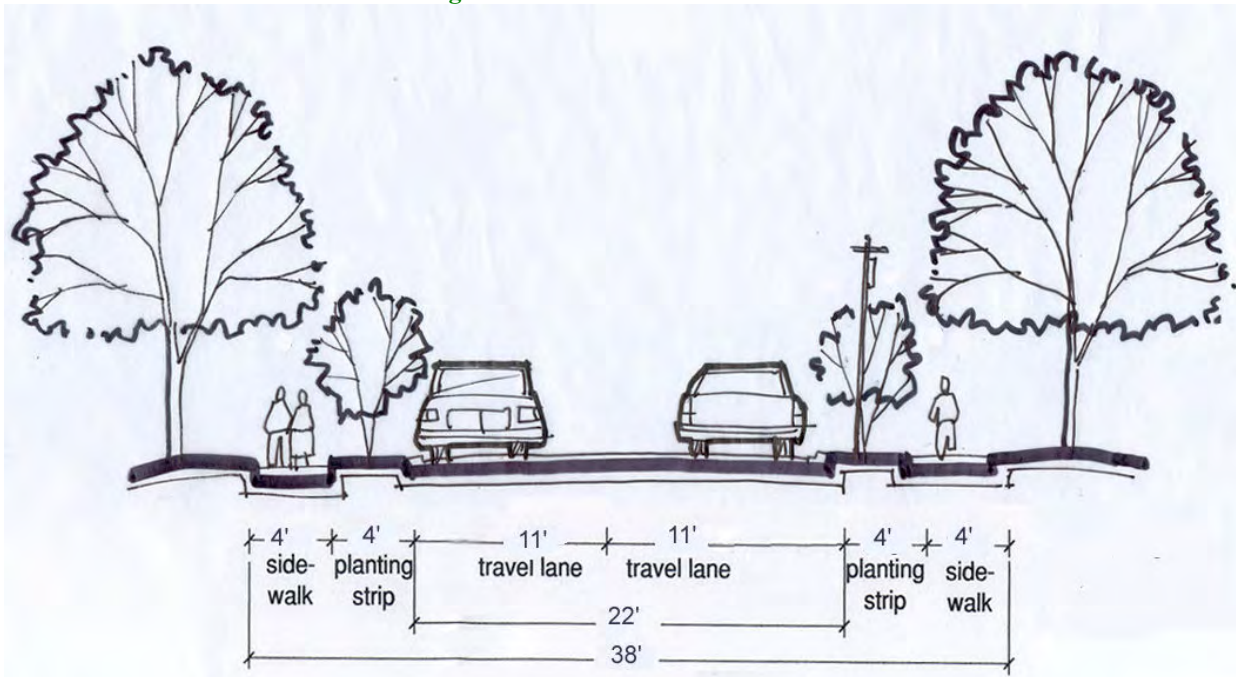




**Figure 4-22: Parkway**



**Figure 4-23: Residential Collector**



### ***Pedestrian Circulation System***

**Figure 4-24** on page 47 shows the existing and proposed pedestrian circulation system. As can be seen, the plan calls for sidewalks throughout the study area. **Figure 4-25** on the following page illustrates the existing and proposed multi-purpose trail system.

A key component of this proposed system is a pedestrian/bike railroad underpass behind City Hall linking the existing and proposed civic uses on Main Street and Buford Highway. This proposed underpass would connect the proposed new library on Main Street, City Hall, and the proposed new town center south of Buford Highway. The underpass would require appropriate lighting, landscaping and design to accommodate pedestrian traffic between these three locations.

Another key component of this proposed system will be the crossing of Buford Highway across from City Hall. The pedestrian crossing areas will need to be clearly delineated, preferably with fences that “corral” pedestrians to cross at only certain locations. Overhead flashing lights indicating to vehicles that pedestrians are crossing would also be helpful and enhance the safety of the crossing. In time, with the widening of Buford Highway, a landscaped median will offer pedestrians refuge from on-coming vehicular traffic. Special care must be taken in this area to insure pedestrians can cross Buford Highway safely.

### ***Recommended gateways and traffic calming measures***

Two existing problems that trouble the downtown area are fast cut-through traffic and lack of gateways or design features that announce to passersby that they are approaching or have reached the historic downtown area.

To address these issues, the plan calls for the construction of traffic calming measures on major residential collectors approaching the Old Town area. **Figure 4-26** on page 49 shows the desired location of these road features. Two types of traffic calming measures were determined most

### **Example of Pedestrian Railroad Underpass**



Source: Con-Span Bridge Systems

### **Example of Splitter Island**



### **Example of Traffic Island**



suitable for Suwanee, splitter islands with paving blocks and traffic circles (see **Example Photos on the previous page**).

These two types of traffic measures were chosen based upon engineering judgment, and public preference (via the visual preference survey). The locations of two types of traffic calming measures are proposed for implementation as follows:

**Splitter Island With Paving Block:**

- ◆ Eva Kennedy Road (two locations)
- ◆ Stonecypher Road (near Main Street)
- ◆ Martin Farm Road

**Traffic Circles:**

- ◆ Stonecypher Road at the intersection with Blue Grass Trail (replace three-way stop signs)

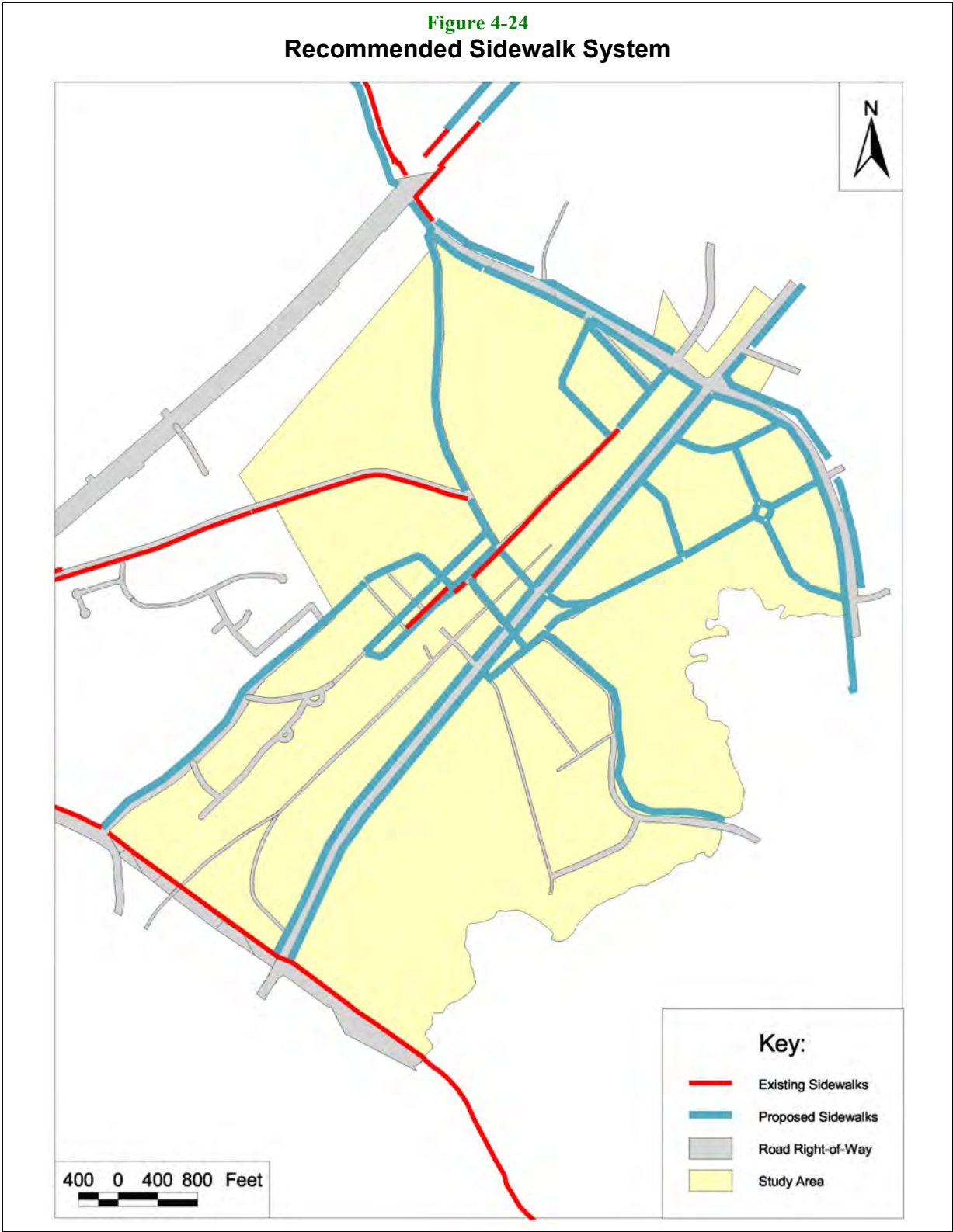
**The example photos on this page** present a collage of various gateway examples for a variety of uses. The City of Suwanee will finalize specific designs for its proposed gateways in the near future.

**Examples of Gateways**



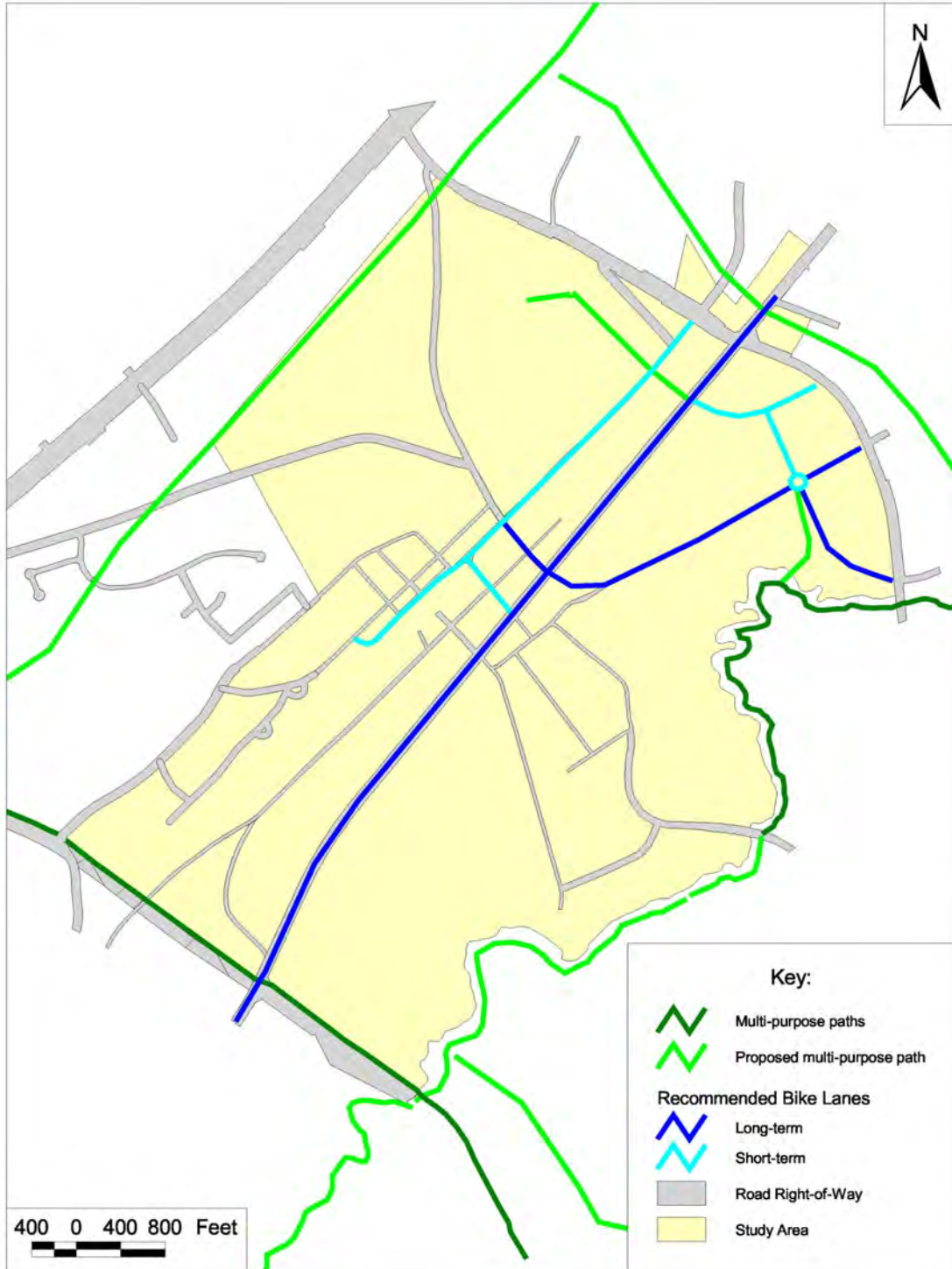


**Figure 4-24**  
**Recommended Sidewalk System**

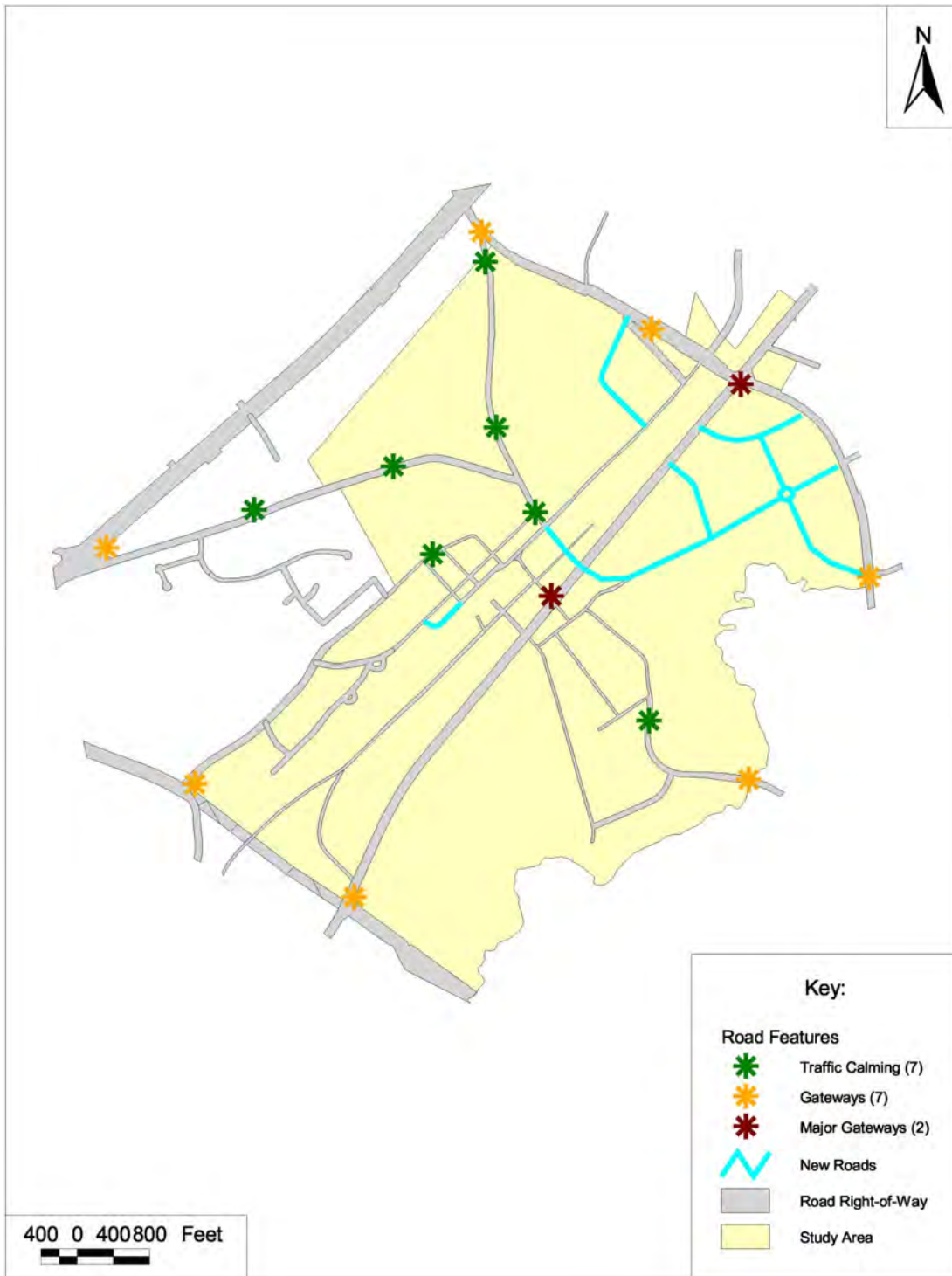




**Figure 4-25**  
**Recommended Multi-purpose Path System**



**Figure 4-26**  
**Recommended Locations of Gateways & Traffic Calming Measures**



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## B. Water and Sewer

The City's existing water system has 240 connections in the Old Town area. For many residents, businesses and undeveloped areas in Old Town, this is the only available water source. The City's system is served by a well located on Stonecypher Road that has a 60-gallon per minute (86,400 gallon per day) submersible pump. Average demand on the system is approximately 61,500 gallons per day (gpd) with peak demands sometimes reaching 80,000 gpd. Existing capacity remains, but major new construction in the Old Town area will require upgrades to the system. This could include a new pump and possibly a second well.

The City's Public Works and Inspections Department recently completed a study on its water system and released the results in a document entitled *Report on the Suwanee Water System*. The report included a section on long-term issues for the City's water system. Three options were outlined for the future of the system including:

- ◆ Continue with the current arrangement by producing and distributing water to the customer service area;
- ◆ Shut down the City's existing well and purchase water from Gwinnett County. The City would retain the distribution system and its current water customers; and
- ◆ Sell the entire water system to Gwinnett County, therefore all current customers would then become Gwinnett County customers.

It should be noted that an additional option exists, expand the water system. The City may want to consider expanding the existing system to be able to serve future development anticipated in Old Town. This will require a study of the capacity of the city's equipment and water supply. Nevertheless, it may be an attractive option in certain circumstances.

Currently, sanitary sewer is provided by Gwinnett County. Only a portion of the Old Town area is connected to the sewer system, with many septic tanks still remaining. This Master Plan will require

an expansion of the sanitary sewer system, both in the Old Town area and east of Buford Highway. It is important to coordinate any sewer system expansions in the Old Town area with planned road improvements. This is necessary because sewer expansions will require roadways to be heavily impacted. Cost savings can be realized if these improvements can be properly coordinated.

Long-term solutions will need to be determined before any major upgrades to the water and sewer systems are pursued. The following sections provide estimates of the water and sewer costs to implement the City's Master Plan.

### Sanitary Sewer

As mentioned, larger portions of the study area lack sanitary sewer. Some of the older homes have failing septic systems. Adequate sewer is necessary to the long-term viability of the area. Furthermore, a lack of sewer significantly impacts redevelopment and infill development.

The City recently partnered with a private development to construct an 8" line down Main Street. This line will provide a valuable linkage to future construction. The City should explore options, such as working with Gwinnett County, to provide sewer throughout the area.

It is estimated that an additional 14,812 linear feet (lf) of sanitary sewer will be needed. Based on assumptions listed below, the estimated cost for the sewer system improvements is \$864,460.

- ◆ Length = 14,812 linear feet (lf)
- ◆ Average man holes every 200 lf (74 total) – 6' depth
- ◆ Assume 8" PVC Pipe = \$30.00/lf
- ◆ Man holes (6' deep) = \$3175.00/ea.
- ◆ Trenching = \$11.00/lf
- ◆ Bedding = \$1.50/lf

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### **Water Mains**

It is estimated an additional 6,356 lf of water lines are needed. Based on assumptions below, the total cost for improvements is \$219,198.

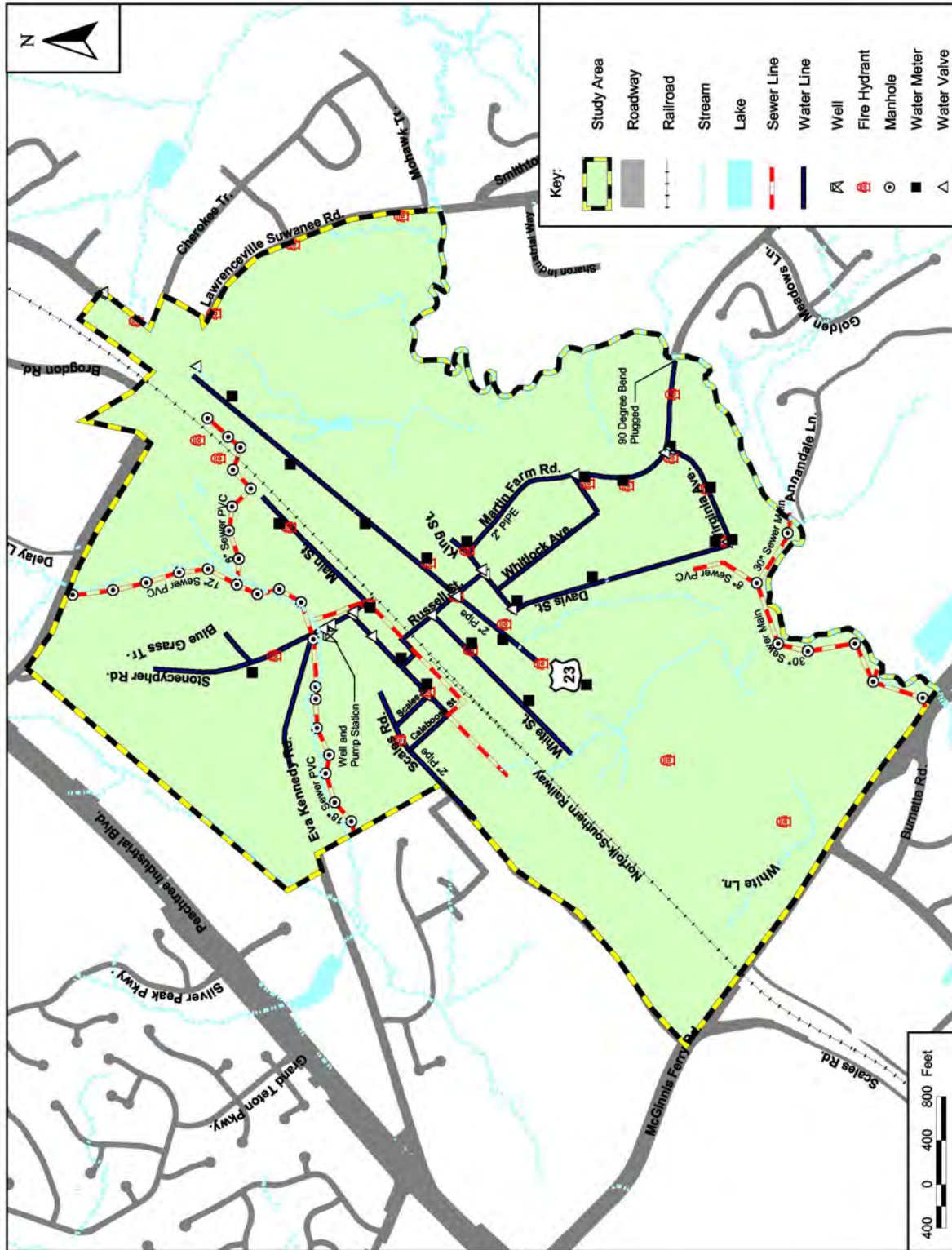
- ◆ Length = 6,356 lf
- ◆ Assume 3" depth
- ◆ 8" DIP = \$29.50/lf
- ◆ Assume: 1 90° elbow/100 lf
- ◆ 1 elbow = \$98.00
- ◆ Trenching = \$4.00/lf

### **Pavement Replacement**

In order to make improvements, a 6' wide cut will be required in the pavement. This cut and subsequent pavement replacement is estimated at \$24.00/lf. With a total length of 21,168 lf and assuming 75 percent of water and sewer lines are in roadways, the pavement cost is \$508,032.



**Figure 4-27**  
**Public Utilities**



Following are four graphics prepared by Urban Collage illustrating the urban design characteristics of the study area. The first graphic is the Old Town Master Plan, which is the result of several months of work by City residents, elected officials, City staff and the project team. The concept was originally developed during the Community Design Workshop and has undergone a number of revisions leading up to its current form. It is important to remember that the implementation of the Master Plan will likely take 15-20 years. Below is a description of some of the key features of the plan. On the following page is table giving a detailed breakdown of the square footages and uses depicted in the plan.

- ◆ A new Town Square will be created on 10 acres in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. This important tract of land will serve as a gateway into Suwanee and will help set the tone for the area. Included in the new Town Square will be an amphitheatre for concerts and other public gatherings. This area will provide open space that residents can use when an event is not taking place.
- ◆ Located southeast of the Town Square will be a mixed-use development including commercial, residential and institutional uses. Not only will different uses be located next to each other, but also certain uses will be mixed within the same building. For example, several buildings allow for ground floor commercial uses with residential uses above. This mixed-use development includes 88,900 sq. ft. of commercial space, 404,000 sq. ft. (227 units) of multi-family/live-work units, 754,200 sq. ft. (421 units) of mixed-use housing/commercial units, 258,000 sq. ft. (86 units) single-family units, and 52,000 sq. ft. of institutional space. The institutional uses are anticipated to be two day-care centers. Additionally, a parking deck that can accommodate 229 spaces is included in this development.
- ◆ Two Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs) are included in the Master Plan. One 56-home development is

located south of the mixed-use development and one 103-home development is located off of Stonecypher Road.

- ◆ A new library on Main Street, Police Station and City Hall are included as part of the Master Plan.
- ◆ Important transportation improvements that are part of the Master Plan include the widening of Buford Highway. A landscaped median is proposed along this roadway throughout the Old Town area. Stonecypher Road will be extended eastward across Buford Highway to connect to the new mixed-use development. More details about transportation recommendations have already been described in Section 4.

The second graphic describes the existing design features of the public and private realm. Private design features refer to residential and commercial structures, and public refers to streets, parking, street furniture, parks, signage and civic buildings.

The third graphic is an inventory of the study area's historic resources. It provides photographs of 34 historic structures and a map of their location.

The fourth graphic provides an urban design analysis of the study area, highlighting the location of its historic buildings, high points, transportation network, gateways, development constraints and land use character. In some respects, it is a synthesis of many of the other maps in this report that describe existing conditions.



**Estimate of building square footages  
shown on the Suwanee Old Town Master Plan**

OLD TOWN SUWANEE MASTER PLAN								
Building Reference Number	Land Use	Footprint	# of Stories	# of Units/ Spaces	Total Housing Square Feet	Total Commercial/ Office Square Feet	Total Institutional Square Feet	Total Square Footage
7	Institutional	16,000	2				32,000	32,000
23	Institutional	10,000	2.0				20,000	20,000
30	Institutional	18,725	2.0				37,450	37,450
31	Institutional	14,400	2.0				28,800	28,800
32	Institutional	23,700	2.0				47,400	47,400
<b>Sub Total Institutional</b>		<b>82,825</b>					<b>165,650</b>	<b>165,650</b>
1	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	54,800	3	91	109,600	54,800		164,400
3	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	20,000	3	33	40,000	20,000		60,000
4	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	15,200	3	25	30,400	15,200		45,600
5	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	26,400	2	22	26,400	26,400		52,800
12	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	26,400	2	22	26,400	26,400		52,800
18	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	24,000	3	40	48,000	24,000		72,000
19	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	58,800	4	147	176,400	58,800		235,200
11	Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial	23,800	3	40	47,600	23,800		71,400
<b>Sub Total Mixed Use/ Housing- Commercial</b>		<b>249,400</b>		<b>421</b>	<b>504,800</b>	<b>249,400</b>		<b>754,200</b>
8	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	16,400	2	27	32,800			32,800
9	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	11,200	2	19	22,400			22,400
13	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	36,800	3	55	110,400			110,400
14	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	18,000	2	18	36,000			36,000
15	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	18,000	2	18	36,000			36,000
16	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	16,000	2	16	32,000			32,000
17	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	12,000	2	12	24,000			24,000
6	Multi Family/ Live Work Units	36,800	3	61	73,600	36,800		110,400
<b>Sub Total Multi Family/ Live Work Units</b>		<b>165,200</b>		<b>227</b>	<b>367,200</b>	<b>36,800</b>		<b>404,000</b>
2	Parking Deck	38,200	3	229	114,600			114,600
25	Retail Commercial	3,600	2.0			7,200		7,200
26	Retail Commercial	4,000	1.0			4,000		4,000
27	Retail Commercial	3,600	1.0			3,600		3,600
28	Retail Commercial	2,400	1.5			3,600		3,600
29	Retail Commercial	3,000	1.5			4,500		4,500
33	Retail Commercial	6,400	2.0			12,800		12,800
34	Retail Commercial	15,000	2.0			30,000		30,000
35	Retail Commercial	3,600	2.0			7,200		7,200
24	Retail Commercial	8,000	2.0			16,000		16,000
<b>Sub Total Retail Commercial</b>		<b>49,600</b>				<b>88,900</b>		<b>88,900</b>
21	Single Family Attached	1,500	2	12	36,000			36,000
10	Single Family Attached	1,500	2	44	132,000			132,000
20	Single Family Attached	1,500	2	22	66,000			66,000
22	Single Family Detached	2,000	1.5	8	24,000			24,000
<b>Sub Total Single Family Detached</b>		<b>6,500</b>		<b>86</b>	<b>258,000</b>			<b>258,000</b>
36	Traditional Neighborhood Dev.	1,200	1.5	103	185,400			185,400
37	Traditional Neighborhood Dev.	1,200	1.5	56	100,800			100,800
<b>Sub Total Traditional Neighborhood Dev.</b>		<b>2,400</b>		<b>159</b>	<b>286,200</b>			<b>286,200</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>555,925</b>		<b>892</b>	<b>1,416,200</b>	<b>375,100</b>	<b>165,650</b>	<b>2,071,550</b>



















Source: Urban Collage









Insert and Z-fold the following pdf file here, DesignFeatures.PDF.

EXISTING PRIVATE REALM DESIGN FEATURES			EXISTING PUBLIC REALM DESIGN FEATURES			
<b>RESIDENTIAL BUILDING FORMS</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic houses constructed 1875-1922</li> <li>House forms resemble American Folk style</li> <li>Two basic Folk House styles:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small and Single Room</li> <li>Two rooms wide, 1 room deep, 1.5-2 stories</li> <li>Usually with rear extension</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mixed Plan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 rooms wide, more than 1 room deep</li> <li>no extensions</li> <li>fall under one roof</li> <li>1.5-2 stories</li> <li>flexible</li> <li>rectangular or square plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 	<b>RESIDENTIAL ROOF LINES</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earlier Folk style houses have simple, steep pitched roof lines. Houses built later have a pitched or variety of Victorian Queen Anne cross gabled dormers, the basic roof lines are the same simple shapes and pitches as those built before.</li> <li>Half / Parlor Types               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep Gabled Roof</li> <li>works with rear gable roof extension</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mixed Plan Types               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gabled / Mansard or Gable Cabled Roof</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 	<b>FRONT PORCHES</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All porches are covered with a separate roof from the main roof</li> <li>Elevated 4" to 6" off ground</li> <li>Porches 7" or higher have wood railings and steps, those lower than 7" do not</li> <li>There are two types of porch roofs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shed Roof used on multiple building types with multiple main roof lines</li> <li>Gable Roof used on multiple building types with multiple main roof lines</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 	<b>ARTERIAL STREET</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways with or without median</li> <li>OTV road like path on limited stretch</li> <li>Generally no sidewalks</li> <li>Closed with parking lots fronted by landscaped or grass strips</li> <li>Deep building setbacks</li> <li>High speeds and volume</li> </ul> 	<b>MAIN STREET</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 lane road with shallow or no curb</li> <li>On-street parking</li> <li>1-2 tree planting strip</li> <li>Narrow foot sidewalk</li> <li>10 foot building setback from sidewalk - front of building sign to front street wall</li> <li>Pedestrian lighting along sidewalk</li> <li>Frontal lawn between sidewalk and building contains benches and scattered landscaping</li> <li>Main Street is the only street of this type in Old Town</li> </ul> 	<b>RESIDENTIAL STREET</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-2 lane wide roads</li> <li>Follow topography of land</li> <li>Center crooked road</li> <li>No curbs or sidewalks</li> <li>Seals on each side</li> <li>Front yards close up from road</li> <li>Butler Highway is similar in design</li> </ul> 	
<b>SITE LAYOUT</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings are parallel to and face the street</li> <li>Sidewalk vary by street type - min. 20 feet for residential</li> <li>Bidirectional parking in gravel drive parallel to side of house</li> <li>Driveways are attached from the house and located behind a line equidistant to the rear wall of the house</li> <li>Commercial parking on-street</li> <li>Both street parking in paved lot, typically beside buildings</li> <li>Building walls are brick or stone</li> <li>Few fences</li> </ul> 	<b>COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brick or stone buildings with very low pitched roof and front and side porches, with or without shed roof porch</li> <li>1 or 2 stories</li> <li>Lap wood siding, front gabled buildings with side shed from and front porch</li> <li>1 story</li> <li>No storefront solution</li> <li>Detached buildings</li> <li>Buildings are rectangular with the short side facing the street</li> </ul> 	<b>TRIM DETAILS</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diamond shaped roof tops</li> <li>Wide, built up wood fascia and overhang</li> <li>Victorian Queen Anne public ornaments, spinelle like finials on porch facias, and face-like brackets</li> </ul> 	<b>PUBLIC PARKING</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parallel and perpendicular parking along commercial portion of main street</li> <li>No other public parking</li> </ul> 	<b>STREET FURNITURE</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pedestrian lighting, benches and trash cans along sidewalk on Main Street</li> <li>Pedestrian light - dark green painted metal with lantern top</li> <li>New lamp posts placed in civic plazas - black painted metal with lantern top and red accents with Swainsee logo</li> </ul> 	<b>SIGNAGE</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal signage identifying Main Street or the street</li> <li>Small wood carved and painted signs attached to buildings on Main Street</li> </ul> 	
<b>HOUSE FACADES</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials: lap wood siding, brick or stone foundations, metal or asphalt shingle roofs</li> <li>Entrance on center with house</li> <li>Windows generally two are symmetrically arranged on either side of the door</li> <li>Front porches cover 85% of facade</li> <li>Each column symmetrically frame doors and windows (1 or 4 column variations)</li> </ul> 	<b>WINDOWS</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Double Hang</li> <li>Paneled</li> <li>Taller than wide</li> <li>Wood trim</li> <li>Wood shutters used sparingly or not at all</li> </ul> 	<b>FRONT ENTRANCES</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wood paneled doors - solid or with window</li> <li>Frequently doors are surrounded by paneled transom windows</li> <li>Wood trim</li> <li>Porch stairs are on center with door</li> </ul> 	<b>PARKS / PLAZAS</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No historical plazas</li> <li>Civic presence</li> <li>recreational</li> <li>Used for organized events</li> <li>Small scale, open with low trees</li> </ul> 	<b>OPEN SPACE</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature trail along creek</li> <li>Pedestrian and bicycle access only</li> <li>Conservation methods throughout community</li> </ul> 	<b>CIVIC BUILDINGS</b> TYPICAL FEATURES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No historical civic building other than churches</li> <li>Churches historically placed at key town nodes - styles vary</li> <li>Churches - wood with symmetrical facades, centered onites and small covered elevated front porches</li> <li>New City Hall - brick, low pitched hip roof, wide overhang, crabsman style brackets, oriented at angle to street, pedestrian lighting and benches on plaza</li> </ul> 	



**Existing Design Features**  
June 2001



Insert and Z-fold the following pdf file here, HistoricResources.PDF.

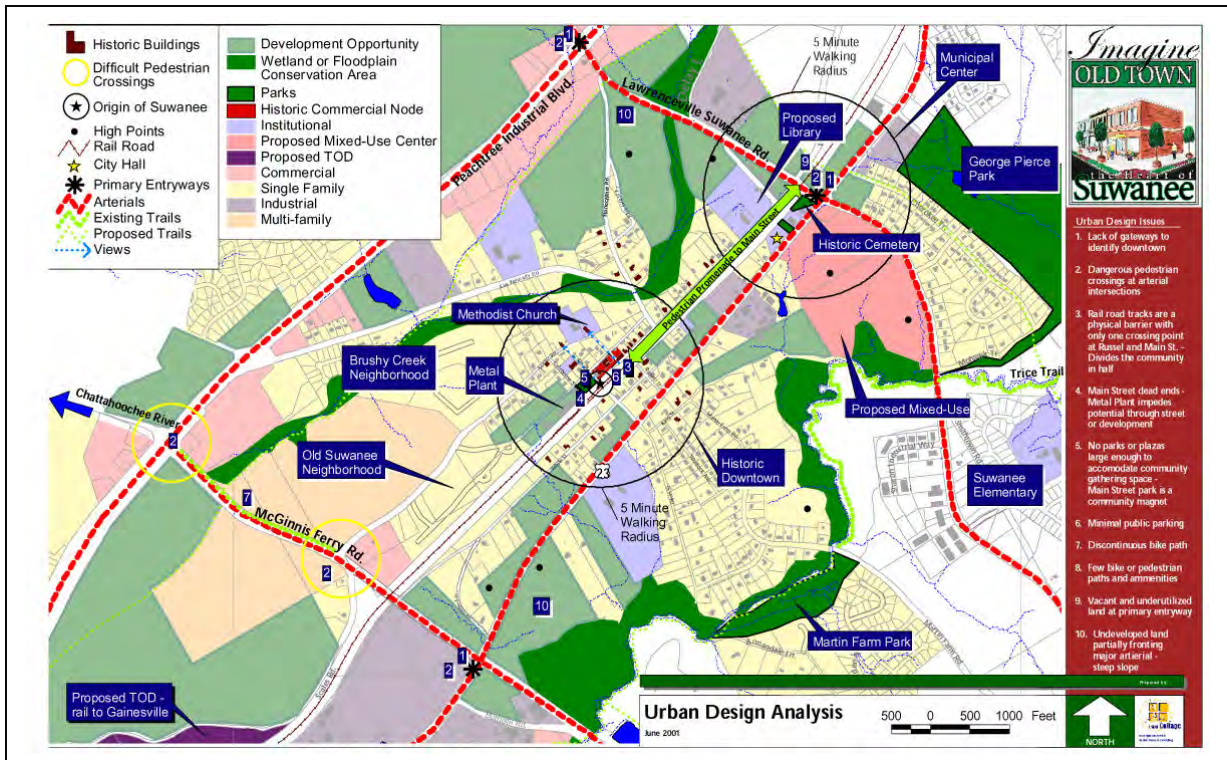
The image displays a grid of 34 numbered photographs of historic buildings in Suwanee, Georgia. The buildings are arranged in a grid, with some labeled with their names. The labels include: 1. Old-Fashioned Store, 2. The Woods House, 3. Old-Fashioned Church in Suwanee, 4. [unlabeled], 5. Coca-Cola Post Office, 6. [unlabeled], 7. [unlabeled], 8. [unlabeled], 9. The Woods House, 10. [unlabeled], 11. [unlabeled], 12. Stone Stable, 13. John W. Doby House, 14. [unlabeled], 15. [unlabeled], 16. [unlabeled], 17. [unlabeled], 18. [unlabeled], 19. [unlabeled], 20. [unlabeled], 21. Original Bank of Suwanee, 22. Nancy L. Carter House, 23. [unlabeled], 24. [unlabeled], 25. [unlabeled], 26. Suwanee Methodist Church, 27. [unlabeled], 28. [unlabeled], 29. [unlabeled], 30. [unlabeled], 31. Fire Director's Office, 32. [unlabeled], 33. [unlabeled], 34. Original Suwanee Town Baptist Church.

To the right of the grid is a map of Suwanee, Georgia, showing the town's layout and the locations of the historic resources. The map is titled "Existing Historic Resources" and includes the date "June 2001".

At the top right of the grid is a logo for "Imagine OLD TOWN The Heart of Suwanee".

At the bottom right of the grid is a logo for "Historic Resources" and a small logo for "The Heart of Suwanee".

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UrbanDesign.PDF.





# Section 6

## Implementation Strategy

### A. Short-term Strategy of Transportation Improvements

**Figure 6-1 (1 of 5)**

Description	Type of Improvement	Eng. Year	Engineering Costs	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs*	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Source	Local Match Amount
<b>Roadway</b>										
Flatten Hump at Intersection of Scales Road and Calaboose Streets <sup>1</sup>	Road/Safety	2002	\$19,500	2003	\$150,000	\$169,500	City	City, State, Other	City, state	10%
Construct a new road connecting Main St. with Suwanee – Dam Rd. in an "L-shape" design.	New Road With Sidewalks	2004	\$79,560	2005	\$612,000	\$691,560	City	City, LCi, State, Other	City, state	10%
Construct a new road connecting Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Buford Highway (to link to proposed Amphitheatre)	New Road With Sidewalks	2004	\$62,400	2005	\$480,000	\$542,400	City	City, LCi, State, Other	City, state	10%
Construct a pedestrian tunnel under the existing Norfolk-Southern railroad line.	Pedestrian	2004	\$52,000	2005	\$400,000	\$452,000	City	City, LCi, TE, State, Other	City	10%
Straighten/Realign Main St. west of Old Town, through land currently occupied by the existing "Metal Products" facility.	Road/Safety	2005	\$28,600	2006	\$220,000 (plus acquisition of business \$2 million)	\$248,600	City	City, LCi, State, Other	City, state	10%
Improve and pave Jackson Street (from Stonecypther to Calaboose)	Road/Safety	2005	\$42,250	2006	\$325,000	\$367,250	City	City, LCi, State, Other	City, state	10%
Improve Martin Farm Road	Road/Safety	2005	\$42,250	2006	\$325,000	\$367,250	City	City, LCi, State, Other	City, state	10%
Improve and pave White Street (from Russell St to White Ln)	Road/Safety	2005	\$97,500	2006	\$325,000	\$367,250	City	City, LCi, State, Other	City, state	10%



**Figure 6-1 (2 of 5)**

Description	Type of Improvement	Eng. Year	Engineering Costs	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs*	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Source	Local Match Amount
<b>Roadway (Continued)</b>										
Improve and pave White Lane from White St. to Buford Hwy	Road/Safety	2005	\$46,800	2006	\$360,000	\$406,800	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
<b>Traffic Calming</b>										
<i>Install traffic calming measures in the form of splitter islands/paving blocks in the following locations:</i>										
Eva Kennedy Rd. – south of Peachtree Industrial Blvd. at the crossing location of proposed trail.	Road	2003	\$ 1,950	2003	\$ 15,000	\$ 25,000	City, DDA, Other	City, DDA, Other	City	100%
Eva Kennedy Rd. – in front of church property, approximately midway between Peachtree Industrial Blvd. and Stonecypher Rd.	Road	2003	\$ 1,950	2003	\$ 15,000	\$ 25,000	City, DDA, Other	City, DDA, Other	City	100%
Stonecypher Rd. – south of Suwanee Dam Rd. (at power line easement).	Road	2003	\$ 1,950	2003	\$ 15,000	\$ 25,000	City, DDA, Other	City, DDA, Other	City	100%
Stonecypher Rd. – between Main St. and Eva Kennedy intersection.	Road	2004	\$ 1,950	2004	\$ 15,000	\$ 25,000	City, DDA, Other	City, DDA, Other	City	100%
Martin Farm Road	Road	2004	\$ 1,950	2004	\$ 15,000	\$ 25,000	City, DDA, Other	City, DDA, Other	City	100%
Construct a traffic circle at the intersection of Stonecypher Rd. and Blue Grass Trail.	Road	2004	\$ 1,300	2004	\$ 10,000	\$ 11,300	City, DDA, Other	City, DDA, Other	City	100%

**Figure 6-1 (3 of 5)**

Description	Type of Improvement	Eng. Year	Engineering Costs	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs*	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Source	Local Match Amount
<b>Sidewalks</b>										
<i>Assumes sidewalks are constructed with no curb, no additional ROW acquisition, minimal earthwork required, and no major changes to existing drainage systems/swales or culverts</i>										
Stoneypher Rd. (5-foot wide) from Lawrenceville-Suwanee to Main Street	Pedestrian	2004	\$ 6,718	2005	\$ 51,680	\$58,398	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Martins Farm Rd. (5-foot wide) from King Street to Richard Trice Trail	Pedestrian	2004	\$ 6,277	2005	\$48,288	\$54,565	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Suwanee Dam Road (6-foot wide) from New Library Road to Buford Highway	Pedestrian	2004	\$ 3,359	2005	\$ 25,840	\$ 29,199	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Lawrenceville Suwanee Rd. (6-foot wide) from Buford Highway to Mohawk Trail	Pedestrian	2004	\$ 7,410	2005	\$57,000	\$ 64,410	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Buford Hwy. (6-foot) From Suwanee-Dam/Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to Russell Street	Pedestrian	2004	\$ 7,966	2005	\$ 61,275	\$ 69,241	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
<b>Multi-use Paths</b>										
<i>Construct several multi-use paths/trails to supplement the existing system that currently exists or is planned for the Old Town area including:</i>										
Suwanee Creek Trail - Martin Farm Park to McGinnis Trail (0.8 miles)	Pedestrian / Bicycle	Not Specified in TIP	Not Specified	Authorized in 2000	Not Specified	Not Specified	ARC TIP	Federal	City, state	20%
Suwanee Creek Trail - McGinnis Trail to Buford Highway (1.4 Miles)	Pedestrian / Bicycle	Not Specified in TIP	Not Specified	Authorized in 2000	Not Specified	Not Specified	ARC TIP	Federal	City, state	20%

**Figure 6-1 (4 of 5)**

Description	Type of Improvement	Eng. Year	Engineering Costs	Const. Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs*	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Source	Local Match Amount											
<b>Multi-use Paths (Continued)</b>																					
Greenway/Path connecting new Library to "Corner/Town Square property" development south of Buford Highway. This path would traverse the new pedestrian tunnel near City Hall and would require a pedestrian crossing at Buford Highway	Pedestrian	2004	\$ 44,337	2005	\$ 341,050	\$ 385,387	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%											
Trail connecting the new library with the proposed transit station (intersection of McGinnis Ferry Road and Buford Highway)	Pedestrian	2004	\$86,450	2005	\$ 665,000	\$751,450	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%											
Install a wayfinding system to help guide visitors to the various attractions and places of interest in the Old Town Area. (Costs are estimates - will depend on quantity and quality of actual system installed)																					
<b>Miscellaneous</b>																					
Upgrade Traffic Control Devices (e.g. Stop Signs) to MUTCD Standards	Pedestrian	NA	NA	2006	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%											
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;">Approx. \$300 per sign - As many per year as feasible</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> </table>													Approx. \$300 per sign - As many per year as feasible								
		Approx. \$300 per sign - As many per year as feasible																			
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$ 644,427</b>		<b>\$ 4,632,133</b>	<b>\$ 5,276,560</b>															
<i>NOTE: costs do not include right-of-way or cost of acquisition of businesses (see note for "Straighten/Realign Main St. on page 59).</i>																					
<sup>1</sup> Construction Costs Discussed With City Engineer Kevin McOmber of Clark Patterson Associates on October 2, 2001.																					
\$60,000 in CDBG grant money has been received by the City of Suwanee for sidewalks along this section of roadway.																					
NA = Not Applicable																					

**Figure 6-1 (5 of 5)**

Description	Type of Improvement	Eng. Year	Engineering Costs	Const. Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs*	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Source	Local Match Amount
<b>Urban Design Projects</b>										
Streetscape* for new road connecting Main St. with Suwanee – Dam Rd. in an "L-shape" design.	Streetscape	2004	\$39,780	2005	\$ 306,000	\$ 345,780	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Streetscape* for new road connecting Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Buford Highway (to link to proposed Amphitheatre)	Streetscape	2004	\$31,200	2005	\$ 240,000	\$ 271,200	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Construct 2 major gateways for the city, one at the intersection of Buford Hwy. and Lawrenceville - Suwanee Rd., the other at the intersection of Buford Hwy. and Russell St.	Gateway	2005	\$ 13,000	2006	\$ 100,000	\$ 113,000	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
<i>Construct 7 minor gateways along roadways entering the city including:</i>										
Eva Kennedy Rd.	Gateway	2005	\$ 1,950	2006	\$ 15,000	\$ 16,950	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Stonecypher Rd.	Gateway	2005	\$ 1,950	2006	\$15,000	\$16,950	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Lawrenceville – Suwanee Rd.	Gateway	2005	\$ 1,950	2006	\$15,000	\$16,950	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Buford Hwy. (2)	Gateway	2005	\$ 1,950	2006	\$15,000	\$ 16,950	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Scales Rd.	Gateway	2005	\$ 1,950	2006	\$ 15,000	\$ 16,950	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
Martin Farm Rd.	Gateway	2005	\$ 1,950	2006	\$ 15,000	\$ 16,950	City	City, LCI, State, Other	City, state	10%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>NA</b>	<b>\$ 95,680</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>\$ 736,000</b>	<b>\$ 84,750</b>				

\* Streetscape costs estimated at \$200/Linear foot (both sides of street)



## B. Short-term Strategy of Local Actions

Figure 6-2

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Amendment to Suwanee Town Master Plan	N/A	2002	City	City
Creation of Old Town Overlay District	N/A	2002	City	City
Initiate ongoing active promotion of plan	N/A	2002	DDA, Better Hometown and City	N/A
New Library Design	N/A	2002	County/City	N/A
Apply for 2004 transportation funding through TIP and SPLOST	N/A	2002	City	N/A
Initiate discussion with Norfolk-Southern on plan for the pedestrian tunnel	N/A	2002	City, DDA	N/A
Acquisition of Suwanee Town Square Site	\$3.5 million	2002	City, DDA	Greenspace Bond
Acquisition of Old Town Park behind Library	\$1.8 million	2002	City	Greenspace Bond
Gateway Design Finalized	N/A	2002	DDA	N/A
New Police Station Development	\$2.5 million	2002	City	General Fund
Cemetery Beautification	N/A	2002	DDA	N/A
Independent Audit of City Water System	\$50,000	2002	City	General Fund
Streetscape of Russell Street and Main Street	\$900,000	2002	City	Transportation Enhancement Funds
Undertake full Market Study for the study area	\$25,000	2003	DDA	N/A
Town Square Engineering	\$200,000	2003	City	N/A
Old City Hall façade improvement	N/A	2003	DDA	N/A
Encourage reuse of Old Town Industrial Site	N/A	2003	DDA	N/A
Suwanee Town Square & Amphitheatre construction	\$1.4 million	2004	City	City
Extension of sewer along Buford Highway and through Old Town area.	\$864,460	2005	County	City
Extension of water throughout the new town square area.	\$219,198	2005	County	City

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## C. Long-term Priorities

The Old Town Master Plan illustrates a number of transportation projects that likely will be undertaken beyond the 5-year time horizon of the short-term work program. Below is list of these long-term projects:

- Extension of Main Street through Old Town Industrial Site
- Buford Highway widening
- Buford Highway landscaping
- Stonecypher Road extension and vehicle underpass
- Development of Trail System

The Buford Highway widening is a state project, that currently is identified in the County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. No specific date has been given for its construction.



## Appendix A - Implementation Steps

Following is a review of Downtown Development Authorities that was presented on the Saturday of the workshop. This summary serves as a resource of information about Downtown Development Authorities in Georgia. The summary covers the following relevant information about Downtown Development Authorities: law review, funding opportunities, Main Street designation, Better Hometown designation, and successful examples of downtown development.

### Overview of Downtown Development Authorities

Once all interested parties have an understanding of what a Downtown Development Authority is, what it's able to do, and what others have successfully done, the question arises, "What do we do with ours?" The focus in Suwanee will need to center on funding sources and implementation capacity.

With the prospect of funding the Greenspace Plan, the City is facing some difficult questions about what happens when this LCI plan and process comes to a close. Some of the financing opportunities that could be explored by the City include: historic preservation funding, federal housing assistance funding, formation of a Community Improvement District (CID), formation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, CDBG funds, a variety of loan funds from DCA, and grant and foundation monies. A reality check must be taken about the LCI funding pool from ARC, and the \$20 million set aside for implementation. The funding level falls short of the estimates that are coming out of the individual LCI implementation plans across the region.

There is also the potential to draw from the county SPLOST funds. Additionally, possibilities exist to dedicate some of the City's general funds to the implementation of the Old Town Suwanee Master Plan.

Another option Suwanee should consider in relation to implementation is pursuing more active support from the non-profits in the area, such as civic associations, neighborhood associations,

business associations, and historic preservation groups. Implementation normally has to be approached through incremental phasing, and involving as many groups as possible to adopt elements of the plan they are interested in. This can be challenging from a coordination standpoint, but the payoff of increased buy-in and consensus, as well as moving forward towards the plan's goals, is worth it.

Suwanee is facing a situation many communities have faced before and many more will in the future. That is, how to make the plan work, once it has been completed. In order to address this concern, the following steps should be taken:

- ♦ Carefully prioritize elements of the plan that will be noticed and will create buy-in immediately;
- ♦ Involve as many groups as is manageable in adoption of implementation steps for the final plan;
- ♦ Continue coordination of these groups, with the Downtown Development Authority taking a key lead in the process;
- ♦ Pursue a variety of outside funding sources aside from the City itself; and
- ♦ Leverage the funds used to increase the possibility of funding for other projects.

Suwanee is at a key point in this process. It is time to begin to "shift gears" from planning for the future to figuring out how the future plans are going to be implemented today.

### Key Components of Downtown Development Authorities Law (OCGA 36-42-1)

#### **Purpose**

"Revitalization and redevelopment of central business districts by financing projects under this chapter will develop and promote for the public good and general welfare trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities and will promote the general welfare of this state. It is, therefore, in the public interest and is vital to the public welfare of the people of this state, and it is



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declared to be the public purpose of this chapter, so to revitalize and redevelop the central business districts of the municipal corporations of this state.” (OCGA 36-42-2)

### **Geographic Designation**

- ◆ The governing body of the municipality designates the downtown development area as “that geographical area within the municipal corporation which, in the judgment of the governing body, constitutes the central business district.” (OCGA 36-42-5)

### **Role of Local Government**

- ◆ Governing body of the municipality appoints directors of the Authority.
- ◆ Governing body of the municipality can change its designation of the downtown development area.
- ◆ Governing body of the municipality can disapprove any proposed issue of revenue bonds, notes, or other obligations of the Authority.

### **Administration**

- ◆ A copy of the governing body of the municipality’s resolution must be filed with the Secretary of State.
- ◆ The Department of Community Affairs may furnish written comments to any authority within 30 days of filing the resolution. Comments are informational only, and do not affect the actions taken by the Authority.

### **Authority Membership**

#### **General Characteristics**

- ◆ A Downtown Development Authority consists of a board of seven directors.
- ◆ The governing body of the municipality appoints the board of directors.
- ◆ A majority of the board of directors constitutes a quorum.

#### **Terms**

- ◆ At initiation, two members of the board will serve for two years each, two for a term of

four years each, and three for a term of six years each.

- ◆ The governing body of the municipality may appoint one of its elected members as a member of the board.
- ◆ After the expiration of initial terms, all directors shall be appointed for a term of four years.
- ◆ The director that is a representative of the governing body of the municipality has a non-specific term, and serves until he or she is no longer a member of the governing body of the municipality.

#### **Directors**

- ◆ Directors must be taxpayers that live in the municipality, owners or operators of businesses location within the downtown development area that also live within the county, or persons that have a combination of these qualifications.
- ◆ No less than four of the directors should be people that have or represent a party who has an economic interest in the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown development area.
- ◆ The directors elect one member as chairman and another as vice chairman. They also elect a secretary and a treasurer or secretary-treasurer, either of whom can be a director, but do not have to be.
- ◆ Directors receive no compensation for their services, but are reimbursed for actual expenses incurred by performing their duties.
- ◆ Directors must attend and complete at least eight hours of training on downtown development and redevelopment programs within the first 12 months of a directors’ appointment to the Authority. Training and education should include: role of Authority board; economic development; Downtown Development Authority law; financing; tax incentives; grants; and design issues.

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## **Authority Powers**

The vital powers that are afforded to a Downtown Development Authority include:

- ◆ Make and execute contracts, agreements and other instruments.
- ◆ Acquire by purchase, lease, or otherwise and to hold, lease, and dispose of real and personal property.
- ◆ Finance (by loan, grant, lease, or otherwise), refinance, construct, . . . projects and to pay the cost of any project from the proceeds of revenue bonds, notes or other obligations.
- ◆ Borrow money to further its public purpose and to execute revenue bonds, notes, and other obligations.
- ◆ Issue revenue bonds, notes or other obligations.
- ◆ Make applications to any federal, state, county or municipal government for loans, grants, guarantees, or other financial assistance.
- ◆ Extend credit or make loans to any person, corporation, partnership or other entity for the costs of any project.
- ◆ Pledge, mortgage, convey, assign, or otherwise encumber any property of the authority as security for repayment of any revenue bonds, notes, or other obligations of the authority.
- ◆ Receive and use the proceeds of any tax levied by a municipal corporation to pay the costs of any project.
- ◆ Appoint, select, and employ engineers, surveyors, architects, urban or city planners, fiscal agents, attorneys, and others and to fix their compensation and pay their expenses.
- ◆ Encourage and promote the improvement and revitalization of the downtown development area and cause long-range plans or proposals to be made.
- ◆ Serve as the urban redevelopment agency.
- ◆ Contract with a municipality to carry out supplemental services in a city business improvement district.

- ◆ Serve as a redevelopment agency.

## **Power of Eminent Domain**

Downtown Development Authority has the right to acquire, by exercise of the power of eminent domain, any real property that it may deem necessary for its purposes. Once condemnation proceedings are instituted, the Downtown Development Authority becomes vested with a fee simple indefeasible title to the property to which the condemnation proceedings relate. The following are conditions that must be met for the Downtown Development Authority to exercise the power of eminent domain:

- ◆ Proposed rehabilitation must be set forth in a downtown development area plan adopted by the municipality and incorporated into its comprehensive plan.
- ◆ Governing body of the municipality must adopt a resolution approving the proposed use of eminent domain power by the Downtown Development Authority.
- ◆ Downtown Development Authority must notify the owner of the property proposed to be acquired of the planned rehabilitation of the property as set forth in the downtown development plan.
- ◆ The owner of the property has the option of notifying the Downtown Development Authority, in writing, of their willingness and intention to rehabilitate and maintain the property in accordance with the downtown development plan within 30 days of notification. If multiple owners are involved, it requires unanimous agreement among the owners.
- ◆ Owner(s) of the property can execute an agreement with the Downtown Development Authority to rehabilitate the property in accordance with the downtown development plan. As such, the Downtown Development Authority has the right to require sufficient performance, payment, and completion bonds. If there is failure to comply, the property is no longer subject to the agreement and the property can be acquired by the Downtown Development Authority through purchase or eminent domain.

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### ***Power of Bond Issuance***

- ◆ Revenue bonds, notes, or other obligations issued by an authority shall be paid solely from the property pledged, mortgaged, conveyed, or otherwise encumbered to secure or to pay such obligations.
- ◆ All revenue bonds, notes, or other obligations will bear the date, maturation time, interest rate, redemption terms, and other such terms and provisions they permit or provide.
- ◆ Issuance of such bonds, notes, or other obligations binds the directors of the authority then in office and their successors.
- ◆ Downtown Development Authority has the power to refund any bonds by the issuance of new bonds, and may issue bonds partly to refund bonds then outstanding and partly for any other purpose permitted.
- ◆ There is no limitation upon the amount of revenue bonds, notes, or other obligations that any Authority may issue.

Tables 3-1 – 3-4 below provide information on various financing opportunities offered through the Downtown Development Authority.

**Figure 3-1  
Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund**

<b>Financing Tool</b>	<b>Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund</b>
Responsible Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Department of Community Affairs (DCA)</li> </ul>
Financing Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ No more than \$200,000 per project</li> </ul>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assists in performance of duties and responsibilities related to development, promotion and retention of trade, commerce, industry and employment opportunities by providing flexible and timely financial assistance for downtown development projects around the state</li> </ul>
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Non-entitlement municipalities and counties</li> <li>◆ If not municipality, then applicant must have strong letter of support and commitment of cooperation from the applicable municipality</li> <li>◆ Downtown commercial areas that have:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A significant number of commercial structures 50 years or older</li> <li>◆ High percentage of empty storefronts or documentation of an immediate threat to a downtown's commercial viability</li> <li>◆ Feasibility/Market analysis identifying the businesses/activities which could be supported in the downtown area</li> <li>◆ Plan for attracting and retaining such businesses/activities downtown</li> <li>◆ Commitment(s) for private/public funding to support downtown development activities enhancing, directly or indirectly, the activity to be financed with DCA's loan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Eligible Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Real estate acquisition, clearance, development, redevelopment, and construction</li> <li>◆ Reconstruction and rehabilitation of public and private infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>◆ Purchase or lease of equipment or other assets (on a limited basis and as defined by DCA)</li> <li>◆ Loans to sub-recipient organizations to carry out eligible activities</li> <li>◆ Leaseback or sale of project assets (when approved by DCA)</li> </ul>



**Figure 3-2  
Local Development Fund**

Financing Tool	Local Development Fund
Responsible Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Department of Community Affairs (DCA)</li> </ul>
Financing Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Maximum amount for single community projects is \$10,000</li> <li>◆ Maximum amount for multi-community projects is \$20,000</li> </ul>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provides matching grants to fund community improvement activities</li> </ul>
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All Georgia cities and counties that meet the following qualifications:</li> <li>◆ DCA has certified them as a “qualified local government”</li> <li>◆ Submitted their current year “Report of Local Government Finances”</li> <li>◆ Eligible to receive solid waste grants, loans, and permits as outlined in the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990, if applying for solid waste related activities</li> <li>◆ Can demonstrate broad-based local leadership and have developed a reasonable community planning and development strategy</li> <li>◆ Can commit local funds as a match – 50% cash or in-kind match is required</li> </ul>
Eligible Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Examples of eligible activities include:</li> <li>◆ Downtown development projects</li> <li>◆ Public parking facilities</li> <li>◆ Historic preservation projects</li> <li>◆ Tourism and related marketing activities</li> <li>◆ Recreation improvements</li> <li>◆ Community facilities</li> <li>◆ Limited solid waste activities</li> <li>◆ Activities implementing approved comprehensive plans</li> <li>◆ Preservation improvement to historic public buildings</li> </ul>

**Figure 3-3  
Redevelopment Fund**

Financing Tool	Redevelopment Fund
Responsible Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Department of Community Affairs (DCA)</li> </ul>
Financing Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Maximum amount is \$250,000</li> </ul>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Flexible financial assistance to local governments to assist them in implementing challenging economic and community development projects that cannot be undertaken with existing public sector grant and loan programs</li> <li>◆ Provides financing to leverage private sector investments in commercial, downtown and industrial redevelopment and revitalization projects</li> <li>◆ Allows projects to be approved using an “eliminating slums or blight” national objective which allows many smaller scale projects</li> </ul>
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Non-entitlement municipalities and counties</li> <li>◆ For-profit businesses and local development authorities can serve as eligible sub-recipient borrowers</li> </ul>
Eligible Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activities identified in Title I of The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974</li> <li>◆ Activities eligible under DCA’s Employment Incentive Program (EIP), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and CDBG Loan Guarantee program (Section 108)</li> </ul>

**Figure 3-4  
Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund**

Financing Tool	Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund
Responsible Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Georgia Cities Foundation (non-profit subsidiary of Georgia Municipal Association)</li> </ul>
Financing Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Maximum amount is \$200,000 or no more than one-third of the cost of the total project</li> </ul>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Foundation’s goal is to promote economically sustainable projects and build partnerships in order to help ensure the long-term health and economic vitality of Georgia’s downtown areas</li> <li>◆ Financial assistance to revitalize and enhance downtown areas through infusion of capital using a revolving loan fund</li> <li>◆ Loan is made to the municipality’s Downtown Development Authority who can use the funds to carry out the activity, or sub-contract to carry out the activity</li> </ul>
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Must have broad public and private support for downtown revitalization projects</li> <li>◆ Must have organized and comprehensive approach to downtown revitalization and/or community economic development, either:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Active Merchants Association, Chamber or Downtown Development Authority with a comprehensive downtown/community revitalization strategy in place</li> <li>◆ Georgia Main Street or Better Hometown City designation in good standing</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Must have realistic project with a reasonable budget and timeframe for completion</li> <li>◆ Must have project that will be supported and sustained by other development initiatives in the downtown area</li> <li>◆ Must be certified as a “qualified local government” by DCA</li> </ul>
Eligible Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Real estate acquisition</li> <li>◆ Building rehabilitation</li> <li>◆ Construction</li> <li>◆ Green space and parks</li> </ul>

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## Main Street Program

### Program Background

- ◆ Program based in historic preservation, but has become a key economic development tool for downtowns or neighborhood commercial districts.
- ◆ Began in 1980 to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district – ranging from improving economic management to strengthening public participation to recruiting new businesses to rehabilitating buildings.
- ◆ Main Street Program is part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- ◆ The Georgia Main Street Program is housed at the Department of Community Affairs. There are 46 cities designated as Main Street cities in Georgia.

### Program Overview

- ◆ Program includes a comprehensive strategy of work, tailored to local needs and opportunities. Main Street Four-Point Approach includes the following.
  - 1) **Design** – enhancing physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.
  - 2) **Organization** – building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.
  - 3) **Promotion** – marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors.
  - 4) **Economic Restructuring** – strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities –

and challenges from outlying development.

- ◆ There are also eight principles that help to guide the Four-Point Approach.
  - 1) **Comprehensive** – a single project cannot revitalize a downtown; it must a series of initiatives to create lasting progress.
  - 2) **Incremental** – small projects help to demonstrate that “things are happening” downtown.
  - 3) **Self-Help** – local leadership has to be strongly involved and committed to the effort.
  - 4) **Public/Private Partnership** – support and expertise of the public and private sectors are needed.
  - 5) **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets** – communities have to recognize and make the best use of their unique local assets.
  - 6) **Quality** – needs to be primary goal for all activities.
  - 7) **Change** – community attitudes and habits have to change to help revitalize a commercial district.
  - 8) **Action-Oriented** – frequent, visible change in the look and activities of the downtown will reinforce the perception of positive change.
- ◆ Some of the key reasons for downtown revitalization cited by Main Street include: stronger tax base, good incubator location for small businesses, reduces sprawl, protects property values, provides more options for goods and services, creates a civic forum, and provides tourist attraction.

### Program Eligibility

- ◆ Has population between 5,000 and 50,000 residents.



- ◆ Has clearly defined central business district with historic buildings.
- ◆ Has broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support (funding and commitment) from both the public and private sectors.
- ◆ Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage.
- ◆ Has a comprehensive Main Street work plan.
- ◆ Possesses an historic preservation ethic.
- ◆ Has an active board of directors and committees.
- ◆ Has an adequate operating budget.
- ◆ Has a paid, professional program manager.
- ◆ Conducts program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers.
- ◆ Reports key statistics.
- ◆ Current member of the National Trust's National Main Street Network membership program.

### **Program Benefits**

- ◆ Technical assistance.
- ◆ Georgia Main Street serves as a resource and clearinghouse for downtown development information.
- ◆ Gain access to national Main Street network.
- ◆ Prestige of Main Street designation helps in funding applications since it communicates that the downtown development program is active and well-organized.
- ◆ Main Street training that takes place in Georgia is free of charge.
- ◆ Resource teams are available for community visits and evaluations.

- ◆ Design assistance program is provided through the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, in conjunction with historic preservation planners from the appropriate Regional Development Center.

## **Better Hometown Program**

### **Program Background**

- ◆ Self-help community development program intended to revitalize small communities with a population generally between 1,000 and 5,000.
- ◆ Program began in 1997, and 52 cities have been designated through 2001.
- ◆ Public-Private partnership between the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Georgia Power Company, Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia.

### **Program Overview**

- ◆ Designated cities have access to technical and fiscal resources designed to stimulate economic revitalization, bring jobs, provide identification and recognition, and bring an overall higher quality of life to their community.
- ◆ Cities develop an ongoing commitment for improvement and economic revitalization of their downtown area through a strategic planning and goal setting process.
- ◆ Better Hometown assistance is approached through a six-stage process: (1) Strategic Stage (identify goals); (2) Committee Development (set up four committees: policy, design, economic development and marketing); (3) Resource Identification (technical assistance offered in addressing the community's main goals); (4) Committees Implement Program of Work (progress toward achieving community goals); (5) Periodic Program Review (measure progress

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toward achieving goals); and (6) Program Evaluation and Modification (continuing technical assistance with achieving community goals).

- ◆ Uses same principles as the Georgia Main Street Program. Four-Point Revitalization Approach focuses on (1) community organization, (2) design, (3) promotion, and (4) economic restructuring.
- ◆ Each community receives a community entrance sign to distinguish their boundaries and highlight program efforts.

### **Program Eligibility**

- ◆ City with a population between 1,000 and 5,000 residents.
- ◆ Must have a Task Force and Coordinator (paid or volunteer full- or part-time manager).
- ◆ Must provide a written document of “Why the City Wants to be a Better Hometown City”.
- ◆ Must have a designated “Downtown Area”.
- ◆ Must form a Downtown Development Authority, 501c(3) non-profit, or equivalent type of organization to promote downtown revitalization.
- ◆ Willing to accept re-certification in three years.
- ◆ Willing to accept the Four-Point Revitalization Approach of the Georgia Main Street Program.
- ◆ Must attend Better Hometown Applicant Workshop.
- ◆ Must attend the annual Better Hometown Conference.
- ◆ Must submit quarterly reports to DCA on local progress.
- ◆ Must have active Better Hometown committees that meet at least quarterly to implement the Four-Point Approach.

- ◆ Two or more cities that feel they have natural linkages and shared community issues are permitted to apply jointly.

### **Program Benefits**

- ◆ Technical assistance.
- ◆ Planning and strategy meetings.
- ◆ Demographic and market analysis community surveys.
- ◆ Business Retention and Expansion Process (BREP).
- ◆ Listing of buildings on “Available Buildings” Database.
- ◆ Design services include: façade rehabilitation drawings, historic building materials recommendations, design alternatives to modern structure, paint colors recommendations, streetscapes, landscape plan, planting plans, park designs, and signage.
- ◆ Assistance with grant programs offered by: Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Historic Preservation Division (HPD), and Department of Transportation (DOT).
- ◆ Assistance in historic building rehabilitation and tax credits offered by: Historic Preservation Division (HPD), Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, and University of Georgia’s School of Environmental Design.

## **Successful Downtown Profiles**

### **Decatur Downtown Development Authority**

#### **Role**

- ◆ Directs economic development activities in the central business district of Decatur.
- ◆ Advocate and advisor to the Decatur City Commission on issues related to downtown redevelopment.
- ◆ Partner with Decatur Business Association.

- ◆ Decatur Town Center Plan provides the blueprint for the DDA's work.
- ◆ Overarching goal is to “maintain Decatur’s small-town character while bringing new businesses downtown and attracting quality development projects for vacant parcels in the central business district”.
- ◆ Serves as promotion and marketing vehicle for the City.

### Tasks

- ◆ Works with developers, property owners, retailers, restaurant owners and office tenants to match tenants with available property.
- ◆ Pursues development of residential projects in the downtown area.
- ◆ Provides design assistance to local developers and property owners to assure new developments maintain the small-town character of the community.
- ◆ Responsible for parking management in the downtown area.
- ◆ Maintains up-to-date economic development packets about downtown.
- ◆ Publishes the Retail and Restaurant Guide.
- ◆ Produces regular news releases designed to keep the media throughout the metro Atlanta area informed about activities and events in the City of Decatur.
- ◆ Processes requests for information related to business relocation and residential relocations.
- ◆ Produces the *Decatur Focus*, official newsletter of the City of Decatur.
- ◆ Supports the production of a full calendar of concerts and festivals downtown, in conjunction with their partners, the Decatur Arts Alliance and the Decatur Business Association.
- ◆ Coordinates activities for the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.

### Successes

- ◆ Healthy downtown office market, vacancies are very low.
- ◆ Brought Emory to downtown Decatur, with growing presence of Emory Clinic administrative offices and Egleston Hospital-related offices.
- ◆ Completed a Retail Market Study in 2000 to assist in recruiting new retail and restaurant business downtown.
- ◆ New mixed-use development in downtown, including condominiums, retail and office space.
- ◆ Established Downtown PALS program six days a week, these part-time employees write tickets for parking violations, give directions, distribute Retail and Restaurant Guides, and serve as greeters downtown.

### Lessons

- ◆ ***Partnerships are crucial for success.*** The Decatur City Commission, Decatur Downtown Development Authority and the Decatur Business Association work closely with each other.
- ◆ ***Careful planning with adherence to a mission delivers results.*** Decatur has worked towards the same mission – to create a pedestrian friendly, safe place to live and work that conveyed a strong sense of community – for almost 20 years.
- ◆ ***Being persistent with incremental steps pays off.*** In the 1980s, Decatur concentrated on adding office space. In the early 1990s, restaurants, retailers and other commercial uses became the focus. In more recent years, bringing housing to downtown became the primary focal point.

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## **Americus Downtown Development Authority**

### **Role**

- ◆ Key focus is economic incentives to spur development within the central business district.
- ◆ Tourism is also another critical role of the DDA.
- ◆ Works in conjunction with the Americus Historic Preservation Commission to retain and redevelop key historic landmarks.
- ◆ Manages the Downtown Central Business Improvement District.
- ◆ Main Street designation received in 1983.

### **Tasks**

- ◆ Manages economic incentives for the Downtown Central Business Improvement District including:
  - 1) *Revolving Loan Fund* (DCA) – assists small businesses by providing funds for exterior and interior improvements; all work on exterior of buildings must be approved by the Americus Historic Preservation Commission; priority for loan funds is given for projects with job creation or retention.
  - 2) *Revolving Loan Fund* (US DoAg) – provides additional lending source to assist existing and emerging businesses where the City’s involvement is necessary for the project’s viability; used to help businesses who are unable to find sufficient financing or to provide gap financing for working capital and inventory.
  - 3) *Façade and Sign Grants* – matching grants of 50% up to \$150 are available for signs; façade grants can provide up to a maximum of \$5,000 over a ten-year period in 50% matching funds for rehabilitation and renovation projects; all work performed on the exterior of the building and all signs must be approved

by the Americus Historic Preservation Commission.

- ◆ Assists in historic downtown walking and driving tours.
- ◆ Assists in direction of historic rehabilitation and preservation.

### **Successes**

- ◆ Blend of businesses downtown – antique stores, art galleries, eateries, financial and governmental services.
- ◆ 34 lofts located downtown.
- ◆ Historic Victorian Windsor Hotel reopened in 1991 after restoration to be fully operational.
- ◆ Rehabilitation of Rylander Theatre that was closed for 40 years, now supports live productions, corporate presentations and conference activity.
- ◆ Habitat for Humanity’s International Headquarters is located in Americus, and tours of the original headquarters and current headquarters are provided.

### **Lessons**

- ◆ ***Historic preservation is key to a successful downtown.*** Americus’ renovation and preservation of Victorian commercial architecture has helped to lend to the vibrancy of the central business district. The partnership with the Americus Historic Preservation Commission is an asset.
- ◆ ***Providing a variety of financial assistance options is critical for accomplishment*** Americus’ financial assistance options help to attract businesses, start businesses, and conduct renovation – all part of the Main Street mission. The sources of the financial assistance are varied, but local businesses only have to go to one place to get assistance.
- ◆ ***Celebrate and embrace homegrown successes.*** While no one can predict the creation of an organization like Habitat for Humanity, it would have been very easy for the organization to leave Americus for a larger city as it grew. The relationships that were



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developed and are maintained, as well as the pride the City shows, are part of the reason Habitat for Humanity's International Headquarters remain in Americus, Georgia.

### **Thomasville Main Street Program**

#### **Role**

- ◆ All purpose entity with downtown focus including financial assistance, historic preservation, tourism, recruiting and marketing activities.
- ◆ Strong history of historic preservation, beginning with a non-profit group in 1964.
- ◆ Main Street designation received in 1981, awarded The Great American Main Street Award in 1998 from the national Main Street program.

#### **Tasks**

- ◆ Initiated comprehensive redevelopment plan for downtown that provides a framework for future growth.
- ◆ Sponsors special events and advertising to bring customers into downtown, special events include: Peacock Day Festival, Downtown Thomasville's Art on the Bricks, Boston Mini-Marathon, Old South Day Festival, Plantation Wildlife Arts Festival, Metcalfe Farm Day Festival, Holiday Homecoming, Victorian Christmas, and Thomasville Antiques Show and Sale.
- ◆ Provides listing of available properties in downtown to new and relocating businesses.
- ◆ Administers a matching Façade Incentive Grant Program – assistance for exterior improvements for the front, side or rear façade that must pass the review of the Architectural Review Board.
- ◆ Provides consultations, information, and referrals to new and existing businesses.
- ◆ Publishes a bi-monthly newsletter to keep members and volunteers informed of events and happenings in downtown.

- ◆ Serves as a liaison between business and property owners and the City of Thomasville.
- ◆ Aggressively pursues the redevelopment of threatened areas or properties through the Thomasville Downtown Development Authority.

#### **Successes**

- ◆ Over 100 buildings have been restored, rehabbed, and repainted in downtown.
- ◆ Downtown transformed into a high-end specialty retail district to fight the competition of a Wal-Mart that entered the same market, over 50% of downtown sales come from Tallahassee, Florida shoppers who drive over 60 miles to the specialty district.
- ◆ Over 20 buildings have been purchased by local people.
- ◆ New medical facility constructed in area of downtown previously considered to be declining.
- ◆ Since 1982, there have been over 150 new businesses created and over 475 new jobs.
- ◆ Private investment in downtown totals more than \$26 million.
- ◆ Victorian Christmas celebration is an award winning festival, and brings thousands of visitors to downtown Thomasville annually.

#### **Lessons**

- ◆ ***Strong local involvement is key factor of success.*** The beginnings of this program date back to a group of concerned citizens in the 1960s that wanted to keep the character of the historic downtown alive. Today, citizens volunteer hundreds of hours to the Main Street program.
- ◆ ***Tourism is a viable business for downtowns.*** Through historic preservation efforts and strong event programming, people have many reasons to be downtown. The Victorian Christmas celebration is an annual event that is well known and brings visitors

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from a 100-mile radius to downtown Thomasville.

- ◆ ***Specialty downtown retail can survive big box development.*** When Wal-Mart entered the Thomasville market, the downtown merchants increased the quality of their merchandise and agreed to offer high levels of customer service. The result is a specialty district that attracts customers from at least a 60-mile radius year-round.



## Appendix B: Traffic Count Summary

**City of Suwanee Historical Traffic Count Summary  
Estimated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Values<sup>1</sup>**

Station	Agency*	Location	Between	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total Change <sup>2</sup>	Avg. Annual Change
0087	S	Buford Highway	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd	11,831	9,749	11,182	14,142		20%	7%
0087	C	Buford Highway	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd				13,266	13,780	4%	4%
0087	P	Buford Highway	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd				12,890		NA	NA
0087	T	Buford Highway	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd			11,309			NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>11,831</b>	<b>9,749</b>	<b>11,246</b>	<b>13,433</b>	<b>13,780</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>4%</b>
0458	S	Eva Kennedy Road	Peachtree Industrial Blvd	202	368	850	834		313%	104%
0458	C	Eva Kennedy Road	Peachtree Industrial Blvd		543	767	1,387		155%	78%
0458	P	Eva Kennedy Road	Peachtree Industrial Blvd				1,606		NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>202</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>532%</b>	<b>177%</b>
0256	S	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd	Buford Highway	26,382	21,383	25,636	28,981		10%	3%
0256	C	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd	Buford Highway				27,993	29,084	4%	2%
0256	P	Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd	Buford Highway				27,065		NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>26,382</b>	<b>21,383</b>	<b>26,815</b>	<b>30,774</b>	<b>29,084</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>4%</b>
0451	S	Main Street (Suwanee)	Stoneycpher Road	2,365	2,120	3,080			30%	15%
0451	C	Main Street (Suwanee)	Stoneycpher Road				1,441	1,546	14%	14%
0451	P	Main Street (Suwanee)	Stoneycpher Road				1,728		NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>2,365</b>	<b>2,120</b>	<b>2,261</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>-29%</b>	<b>-10%</b>
7245	C	McGinnis Ferry Road	Buford Highway				21,583	22,225	3%	3%
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>							<b>21,583</b>	<b>22,225</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
0541	S	Peachtree Ind. Blvd.	McGinnis Ferry Road	21,024	17,364	20,970	17,887		-15%	-5%
0541	C	Peachtree Ind. Blvd.	McGinnis Ferry Road				22,300	17,154	-23%	-12%
0541	P	Peachtree Ind. Blvd.	McGinnis Ferry Road				23,678		NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>21,024</b>	<b>19,832</b>	<b>20,831</b>	<b>19,873</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>-7%</b>	<b>-2%</b>
0569	S	Stoneycpher Road	Main Street	366	257	278			-24%	-12%
0569	C	Stoneycpher Road	Main Street				440	468	6%	3%
0569	P	Stoneycpher Road	Main Street				430		NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>366</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>8%</b>
0447	S	Suwanee Dam Road	Buford Highway	22,357	19,097	16,902	19,036		-15%	-5%
0447	C	Suwanee Dam Road	Buford Highway				23,454	21,009	-10%	-5%
0447	P	Suwanee Dam Road	Buford Highway				22,608		NA	NA
<b>AVERAGE ADT VALUES</b>				<b>22,357</b>	<b>19,097</b>	<b>20,175</b>	<b>22,797</b>	<b>21,009</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>

Source: Gwinnett County Department of Transportation - Average Daily Traffic Counts - 1996 through 2000.

\* S=State, C=County, P=Private

<sup>1</sup> If two or more values were presented from the same agency for the same year, the values were averaged

<sup>2</sup> Represents total change for years that data is available (varies by road section)

NA = Not Applicable





## Appendix C: Turning Movement Count Information

NBSB Road	EBWB Road	Date	Peak Hour	Northbound			Southbound			Eastbound			Westbound			Inter Total				
				Left	Thru	Right	Left	Thru	Right	Left	Thru	Right	Left	Thru	Right					
Eva Kennedy/Moore Road*	Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	7/31/97	5:05 PM	10	2	7	19	11	2	41	54	128	2073	28	2229	6	564	19	589	2891
Eva Kennedy/Moore Road*	Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	8/1/97	7:30 AM	9	0	0	9	7	0	105	112	49	471	7	527	1	1411	28	1440	2088
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard*	McGinnis Ferry Road	1/23/97	5:00 PM	45	876	23	944	22	280	217	519	517	260	93	870	21	94	67	182	2515
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard*	McGinnis Ferry Road	1/24/97	7:00 AM	44	251	21	316	51	653	577	1281	208	116	146	470	20	201	15	236	2303
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard*	McGinnis Ferry Road	7/22/98	7:10 AM	33	206	88	327	236	701	455	1392	154	448	73	675	136	610	65	811	3205
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard*	McGinnis Ferry Road	7/23/98	5:10 PM	44	736	104	884	74	293	167	534	415	779	47	1241	110	382	207	699	3358
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard*	McGinnis Ferry Road	4/11/00	7:30 AM	58	302	140	500	176	757	398	1331	164	668	65	897	139	413	67	619	3347
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard*	McGinnis Ferry Road	4/11/00	5:05 PM	32	465	114	611	126	405	193	724	214	1172	74	1460	49	532	211	792	3587
Suwanee Dam Road*	Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	3/23/98	5:10 PM	247	599	162	1008	56	357	74	487	239	657	239	1135	91	242	55	388	3018
Suwanee Dam Road*	Peachtree Industrial Boulevard	3/26/98	7:05 AM	367	309	60	736	29	688	343	1060	71	241	117	429	237	583	15	835	3060

Sources:  
\* Gwinnett County, Traffic Count Report (Peak Hour Turning Counts for Nov. 1996 – Dec. 2000)



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## **Appendix D: How the Suwanee Old Town Master Plan Addresses the LCI Goals (As Submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission)**

### **1) Encourage a diversity of medium to high-density, mixed income neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the activity and town center level.**

The City of Suwanee currently has a high jobs-housing balance and provides residents with housing choices in the low, medium and high-income classes. However, within the Suwanee Old Town area, the jobs-housing balance is not as favorable and housing choices are limited. As a result, recommendations are included in the Master Plan that address this issue by providing a greater range of housing opportunities.

The proposed New Town Square would be a true live-work-play community that would include approximately 82,000 square feet of institutional uses, 49,600 square feet of retail commercial space and 249,400 square feet of mixed housing/commercial. It is estimated that this development could provide an additional 245 single-family parcels, 227 new multi-family and 421 mixed-use housing/commercial units by 2025.

### **2) Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area.**

The Old Town Master Plan includes recommendations for transportation improvements for both the Old Town area and the New Town Square that encourage transportation options. The resulting transportation network is one that promotes increased pedestrian mobility, connectivity and safety.

An example of the transportation options being recommended is a new pedestrian tunnel under the railroad. In order to link the new library to the new Town Square, the City plans to construct a new pedestrian tunnel under the railroad tracks behind City Hall. Once constructed, this tunnel will provide a vital link along a proposed multipurpose path that would stretch from the Richard Trice Trail on Suwanee Creek to a proposed passive park behind the Library. Additionally, the City plans to construct several multi-use paths/trails and sidewalks to provide connectivity and accessibility to citizens.

These new trail and sidewalk connections will be part of a much larger multi-purpose path system, and an even greater multi-modal transportation system. In the coming years, the Gwinnett County Transit System will be operating a local bus route through the study area along Buford Highway. The proposed path and sidewalk system, as well as the addition of a more urbanized landform, will help support transit ridership.

### **3) Encourage integration of uses with transportation investments to maximize the use of alternate modes.**



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The Future Land Use Plan for the City of Suwanee identifies several areas in the City as a “Mixed-Use Center” or a “Mixed-Use Village”. Both of these land use categories can be found within the study area. These areas allow developments to integrate residential and nonresidential uses. A “Mixed-Use Center” allows predominately commercial uses and would also allow other uses such as retail, office and residential. A “Mixed-Use Village” allows primarily residential; however, other non-residential uses would be allowed. These mixed-use areas that have been applied to the Old Town Suwanee area support the premise behind the Livable Centers Initiative. The City has encouraged infill development, within the study area, to create a more livable environment with a sense of neighborhood.

The New Town Square will be a true mixed-use development that includes uses such as institutional, commercial and housing. Both multi-family and single family housing will be provided, as well as mixed housing/commercial. The New Town Square will include an internal grid of streets and sidewalks. Connections will be made to the Old Town area and other parts of Suwanee through planned sidewalks and trail connections.

#### **4) Through transportation investments increase the desirability of redevelopment of land served by existing infrastructure at activity and town centers.**

Additional sidewalks and trail connections in both the Old Town area and New Town Square will increase the desirability of redevelopment throughout the study area. Other transportation improvements in the study area that would promote redevelopment include:

- A new access road connecting Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road located just behind the proposed Town Square. This will allow for easy access to the new amphitheatre and proposed mixed-use development.
- An extension of Stonecypher Road under the railroad and to Buford Highway, as well as a second phase of this extension that would provide additional access to the new mixed-use development and connect to Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road.
- Realign Main Street through the existing “Steel Mill” site. The construction of this project would likely require the removal of the existing Steel Mill facility; and assumes that the future land use for this property would change to one more in line with the overall plan for the historic Old Town area. The proposed design for this proposed transportation project is for a two-lane facility with on-street parking and adequate sidewalks (where feasible).

#### **5) Preserve the historical characteristics of activity and town centers and create a community identity.**

Suwanee has a strong community identity and historical characteristics. The City has taken several aggressive steps to reestablish its historic downtown area as the heart of its community. The City has been designated a Better Hometown Community, recently formed a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and participated in a design charrette with the University of Georgia to develop some design concepts for its Old Town area.

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By replicating the architecture of previously existing historical structures in the Master Plan, the plan pays tribute to the community's roots. The Old Town Master Plan includes new Design Standards that help assure that new development is built in the architectural character of the Old Town. The plan also recommends that the city's Zoning Ordinance be amended to enforce the Design Standards implementation.

**6) Develop a community-based transportation investment program at the activity and town center level that will identify capital projects, which can be funded in the annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).**

The public involvement process involved a diverse group of constituents. All of them agreed upon the need for new transportation improvements and increased pedestrian and bicycle safety. The project list included in this Plan identifies those projects appropriate for TIP funds that resulted from this effort

**7) Provide transportation infrastructure incentives for jurisdictions to take local actions to implement the resulting activity or town center study goals.**

The Old Town Master Plan identifies transportation projects, which can be funded through the LCI program and serve as incentives for further local actions. For example, the plan identifies the need for a new roadway linking Buford Highway and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road which will serve the Town Square and serve as an incentive for private investment

**8) Provide for the implementation of the RDP policies, quality growth initiatives and Best Development Practices in the study area, local governments and at the regional level.**

RDP policies and Best Development practices were guiding policies in developing the Master Plan. Both RDP and Best Development practices will be incorporated, where appropriate into the City's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

**9) Develop a local planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders particularly low income, minority and traditionally underserved populations.**

The strategy used for public involvement in Suwanee was education first. Prior to receiving any meaningful input from citizens, they must be educated on the issues and their options. With that in mind, stakeholders were provided with specific, relevant facts and information so that the group could create good choices for the future of Suwanee. A variety of activities with stakeholders enabled them to clearly see their common concerns and common dreams. They begin to see the solutions in terms of "common wealth." While obtaining a level of consensus was important, equally important was the need to develop a sense of ownership within the community so that citizens would become champions of their plan. The public participation process for Suwanee included the following major components:

- Education on the history and goals of the Regional Development Plan (RDP) and LCI study along with the specific development practices and transportation strategies that can lead to

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- implementation of that plan; and
  - Opportunities for public input and hands-on participation in the development of concepts and scenarios for managing future growth in Suwanee while adhering to the goals of the RDP.

**10) Provide planning funds for development of activity and town centers that showcase the integration of land use policy and regulation and transportation investments with urban design tools.**

In order to blend land use policy with transportation investments and urban design tools the Old Town Master Plan recommends that the City establish an overlay district for the Old Town area. An overlay district would allow greater flexibility in site planning and building arrangements to promote an appropriate mix of new structures with the existing buildings. The requirements of the overlay district should promote mixed-use developments, build-to lines, floor-to-area ratios and parking maximums. The overlay district will use architectural, urban design and landscape guidelines to guide future development and transportation investments.