

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2017-2037
CITY OF CUMMING, GEORGIA



Adopted by Resolution

June 20, 2017



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION AND ECONOMY

The City of Cumming lies in Forsyth County, Georgia, in the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area, along the western shoreline of Lake Lanier. Cumming is the only incorporated place in Forsyth County. Cumming, as the most densely developed economic base in the county, has remained the center of trade for the county for decades. Cumming's location adjacent to Lake Lanier makes it a jumping off point for recreational activities along the lake, including sightseeing, boating, fishing, and camping. Tourism dollars are often spent on retail goods, lodging, and food.



Buford Dam

The city has a well-diversified economic base, one that is especially strong in government, retail trade, manufacturing, and health care, and that has historically maintained substantial shares of total county employment in other industry sectors such as real estate and information. Cumming has a sizable share of land for expansion of major sectors of the economy. There is considerable vacant acreage for the expansion of retail trade, Class A office space, and services, including health care. Cumming will continue to be a prime location for a wide variety of jobs for skilled labor, unskilled labor, recent college graduates, and professionals and managers in the county.

ORGANIZATION

This chapter introduces the comprehensive plan, articulates purposes of comprehensive planning, summarizes prior planning efforts, describes the community participation process followed in completing the plan, and provides other contextual information about Forsyth County.

Chapter 2 is the “needs and opportunities” element. Chapter 3 of the comprehensive plan describes existing land use and provides a future land use plan map (for the year 2037) to guide future zoning and development decisions. Chapter 4 addresses transportation. Chapter 5 contains a vision, goals, and policies for all subject matters: natural resources and the environment, housing, economy, land use, community facilities and services, transportation, and intergovernmental cooperation. Chapter 6, provides the city's community work program for the years 2017 to 2021 and identifies long-term plans and projects. Appendix A is a report on accomplishments in implementing the city's previous short-term work program, 2012-2016.

PURPOSES OF PLANNING

A rationale for land use planning is provided in Chapter 3. Here, the major purposes of comprehensive planning are summarized. As noted in the state's rules for local comprehensive planning, comprehensive planning by local governments enhances coordination at many levels, especially relations between the city and host county but also other local, regional, state, and federal agencies. According to the state rules, the "highest and best use" of comprehensive planning for local governments is to show important relationships between community issues. Unless a concerted effort is made to understand interrelationships between various subject matters like land use and transportation, the community may remain unaware of how actions in one arena of policy affect another.

A comprehensive plan has value in terms of transparency. In adopting a comprehensive plan, the local government is offering information on intentions and likely future conditions. The plan provides an "environment of predictability" for businesses, institutions, industries, investors, property owners, and residents. Communities that engage in planning are more likely to be better prepared to attract new growth in a highly competitive global market. Local planning can help the community reinforce its strengths, overcome its weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and minimize or mitigate threats.

PLANNING HISTORY

In the early 1980s, Cumming operated a joint planning commission and planning department with Forsyth County. However, long ago it decided to provide its own planning and zoning department and to prepare its own comprehensive plan. The City of Cumming has now had a long history of comprehensive planning. One of the earliest comprehensive plans was the *General Plan for the Year 2015*, adopted in 1995. In 2003, the city prepared a new comprehensive plan which was adopted in 2004, in compliance with rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). As a part of the revised zoning ordinance in 2003, Cumming adopted the environmental planning criteria (1990) adopted pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Article X of the zoning ordinance covers groundwater recharge areas, Article XI provides regulations for the Big Creek Water Supply Watershed, and Article XII provides regulations for wetlands. In 2009, the City Council adopted a partial plan update in compliance with local planning rules in effect at that time. The city then adopted a new comprehensive plan prior to its recertification deadline of June 30, 2012. The 2012 comprehensive plan consisted of a community participation program, a data-driven community assessment, and a "community agenda" (i.e., the plan portion of the comprehensive plan).

This comprehensive plan (2017-2037) was prepared in accordance with DCA rules that went into effect in 2014. The DCA rules in effect and governing this planning effort are much more basic than those rules in effect at the time the 2012 comprehensive plan was prepared and adopted. A community assessment is no longer required, although local plans are expected to be based on analysis of data where appropriate. The 2014 DCA rules for local planning emphasize brevity in the presentation of the plan document itself, and considerable effort to involve the public in the plan making process, especially local elected officials.

This comprehensive plan (2017-2037) draws extensively from, and retains many contents of, the city's comprehensive plan adopted in 2012. The 2012 community agenda and this comprehensive plan are similar in many respects; in particular, both planning processes were driven by needs assessment and issue identification processes in participatory context, and both plans are organized similarly with chapters on needs and opportunities, goals and policies, and land use.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

As required by DCA rules, a comprehensive plan steering committee was appointed by the Mayor and City Council to spearhead the effort. Two elected city council members were appointed to and actively served on the steering committee. On August 16, 2016, the city held two public hearings (4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.) with members of the appointed comprehensive plan steering committee present. The steering committee met again September 27, 2016, and the committee meeting included a public comment opportunity. The emphasis of that second meeting was land use. A third meeting of the appointed steering committee was held in October 2016, during which members discussed land use issues and a first draft of the community work program. Mayor Ford Gravitt attended the first and third meetings of the steering committee, and the Mayor as well as those council members not appointed to the steering committee were interviewed in stakeholder meetings held in September 2016.

Stakeholders (i.e., people with a major stake in outcomes of the planning process) were identified in a public process which included input from steering committee members and suggestions by individual citizens via a community survey. The stakeholders identified were interviewed during September 2016 by Scott Morgan, the city's planning and zoning director, Jerry Weitz, the city's comprehensive planning consultant, and Crystal Ledford, the city's communication coordinator for the plan effort. There were 14 stakeholders who were interviewed as a part of the planning process.

Cumming's comprehensive plan process also benefited from a community questionnaire, developed by the planning consultant and made available electronically to the community by Crystal Ledford using Constant Contact. The survey instrument asked questions, among others, about who were the important stakeholders to interview (100 responses received), what the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were, specific questions about annexation, environmental quality, satisfaction with facilities and services provided by the City of Cumming, and what the highest priorities should be for the new comprehensive plan. The results of the questionnaire are not included in the plan itself but are available for public review.

The community participation process continued in early 2017 with another meeting of the comprehensive plan steering committee to review and comment on the complete draft of the comprehensive plan, and a final public hearing as required by DCA rules. Additionally, the Mayor and City called a special, advertised meeting of the City Council and the appointed steering committee on April 11, 2017, to continue discussion of the draft. At that meeting there was consensus to make certain refinements to the plan draft. In particular, it was decided that the city should modify its existing "multi-use" zoning district instead of adopting a new mixed-use

district, and also that the density allowance for housing in the central business district was no longer viable and references to that deleted from the plan.

FORSYTH COUNTY CONTEXT

This section summarizes information from Forsyth County’s updated comprehensive plan that is relevant in context to the city. The population estimate for Forsyth County in 2015 is 212,438. The City of Cumming is the only incorporated area in Forsyth County, representing 2.7 percent of the total Forsyth County population as recorded by the 2014 American Community Survey; this is less than the 3 percent of the population that it accounted for in the 2010 Census. Unincorporated Forsyth County has seen disproportionate growth compared to the City of Cumming since 1990, with Cumming dropping from 6.4 percent to 2.7 percent of the total Forsyth County population (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

Rapid Development and Efforts to Manage Growth

Forsyth County is a suburban growth hotspot of metropolitan Atlanta. In 2015 and 2016, development resumed (if not exceeded) the frantic pace which had occurred prior to the great recession (2008). As noted in chapter 2 of the county’s comprehensive plan, since 2010, approximately 4,000 acres in the county have been developed.

“From 2010 to 2015 there were 14,043 building permits for new residential units issued in Forsyth County, inclusive of the City of Cumming (U.S. Census Bureau Building Permit Survey for New Residential Construction). This is twice the rate of permitting as Cherokee County and just below the 15,185 permits issued over the same period in Gwinnett, a county four times larger than Forsyth”
(Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan, Appendix A).

Many changes have occurred due to rapid urbanization, including mass grading of land for development sites, removal of trees, increased stormwater runoff, loss of historic landscapes, and changes in aesthetics and character. Rapid land development practices have led to considerable angst and discontent among the county’s unincorporated residents, as the county attempts to keep up its level of services for community facilities such as schools, roads, parks, public safety, and cultural facilities. Forsyth County’s residents are legitimately concerned about growth outpacing infrastructure, and it appears that a sizable segment of them desire to slow the pace of development. There are also concerns about the quality and character of new development.

Such concerns will continue given the outlook for continued record growth, assuming that the economy does not falter. The county’s total population is projected to be 353,518 by 2030, and 446,778 by 2040. For 2037, the planning horizon of this Comprehensive Plan update, the projected total county population based on residential permits is 418,800 (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

Transportation Needs

Many of the highest-ranking needs identified in the Forsyth County comprehensive plan relate to transportation. There is a need to reduce the punishing levels of traffic congestion with additional road capacity and greater efficiencies in the transportation network. Future development needs to be better connected by roads. There is a lack of appropriate transportation infrastructure in some places, especially when traveling east-west. The county's development pattern is over-reliant on Georgia Highway 400 for mobility. The single-function, suburban land use pattern of development lengthens commute times. There is great interest in expanding transportation choices by adding sidewalks and bicycle lanes to the existing transportation system. And there is a notable lack of existing public transit options and a need to connect with regional transit services.

Traffic congestion has an important and potentially detrimental relationship to economic development. As explained in the county's comprehensive plan (Appendix A), when the transportation system does not work well, there can be significant economic penalties through opportunity costs (such as spending too much time in traffic), fuel costs, and business relocations.

Income and Housing

The median household income in Forsyth County is \$85,639. This is significantly higher than all of the other geographies analyzed, with the second-highest recorded as \$69,711 in Cherokee County, and nearly double that of the State of Georgia at \$49,321 (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

Because of incredible increases in affluence of Forsyth County residents and an emphasis on owner-occupied, large lot, suburban, single-family homes, the county's housing stock as a whole is becoming lopsided in terms of housing choice. Indeed, as reported in the county plan, the percentage of Forsyth's housing stock that is single family (either detached or attached) is notably higher than that of Fulton, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties. Renters comprise only 17.6 percent of the population. This development trend towards Forsyth County remaining a "bedroom community" is further confirmed when one examines the significant number of residential developments constructed between 2010 and 2015. Out of the approximate 4,000 acres developed or redeveloped, more than 3,700 acres were developed for detached single family uses (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

Housing affordability is an increasing issue. Forsyth County demonstrates the highest median housing value when compared to Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, and Cherokee Counties – with an estimated median housing value of \$276,800 (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A). The county plan also notes there is a noticeable lack of housing options for persons and households earning less than \$50,000 a year. Expensive housing in the county has reportedly discouraged one or more corporations from locating in Forsyth County. Indeed, as the County's service and retail footprint increases, local employers may find it harder to attract the best employees if attainable housing is located too far away (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A). There is

also a lack of senior housing, and the housing market has been slow to anticipate and provide housing options appropriate for an aging population.

As family households age into empty nesters, demand for smaller, low- or no-maintenance homes will increase. Older households may begin to seek age-targeted townhomes, single-story detached homes, age-restricted communities and even continuing care communities (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

Labor Force, Employment, and Commuting

The unemployment rate for the Forsyth County labor force is reportedly among the lowest in the region. There were 89,099 Forsyth County residents in the labor force as of 2013. The largest industries for employment were professional and technology with 10,717 employees (12.0 percent of the workforce), retail trade (9,968 workers, 11.2 percent), and manufacturing (8,738 workers, 9.8 percent). Major employers in Cumming include Tyson Poultry, Koch Foods, Northside Hospital, and the Forsyth County School System. (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A). It is estimated that 69 percent of people employed in Forsyth County live in another county, while the remaining 31 percent working in Forsyth County also live in Forsyth County.

Though likely to change soon, Forsyth County is not yet a substantial office market. The large majority of Class A professional space in the area is located in north Fulton County. There are office buildings in and around Cumming, including condominium, executive suites, and small-format office space serving professional services and medical users. A large concentration of medical office building spaces surrounds Northside Hospital-Forsyth in Cumming. The most intensive concentration of retail trade exists at the Georgia 400 and State Route 20 (Buford Highway) interchange, where more than 1.5 million square feet of community-scale retail is found in four main shopping centers (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A), some of which lies immediately outside the Cumming city limits.

Community Facilities

Forsyth County public schools serve 44,400 students with 4,500 employees, according to the county comprehensive plan. Strong county public school performance is reinforcing Forsyth County's desirability as a residential community, and the excellent school system will continue to attract new households from metropolitan Atlanta and from other regions and states. In 2012, the University of North Georgia Cumming campus opened and has since tripled its enrollment, thus helping to fill a need for additional higher education opportunities in Forsyth County (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

With regard to county law enforcement, the county consolidated the Sheriff's Office into a headquarters at the old courthouse and completed construction of the new courthouse and detention center in Cumming. The new jail facility in downtown Cumming began operations in September 2015 (County comprehensive plan).

With proceeds from a \$100 million parks/recreation and green space general obligation bond which passed in 2008, Forsyth County has acquired and developed multiple new parks spaces. Near Cumming, Sawnee Mountain Preserve gained six miles of hiking trails, two picnic pavilions, a playground, restrooms, and additional parking. The county has also completed Phase IV construction for the Big Creek Greenway and Phase V is under design. When open to the public, these two phases of the greenway will add seven miles of new multi-use trail to the greenway (County comprehensive plan).

In 2016, the City of Cumming completed major improvements to its city park facility on Pilgrim Mill Road, including a new multi-purpose building, parks and recreation department offices, arts and crafts and dance pavilions, and a high-end playground.

CHAPTER 2 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The needs and opportunities element includes a description of needs and opportunities the city has identified through a public process. Each need or opportunity that the community has identified as a priority is followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program (see Chapter 5 of this plan). To identify needs and opportunities, as recommended by state rules for local comprehensive planning, a SWOT analysis was conducted, based on input from citizens in a questionnaire. The figure below summarizes that analysis, and additional narrative about selected needs and opportunities follows.

<p>+ <u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location in county and region • Financial progress and stability • Increase in affluence • Business-friendly posture • County school innovation • Recreation, parks, fairgrounds 	<p>+ <u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Alice Park development • City-owned properties • “Greenfield” development • Local road network extensions • University of North Georgia campus • Redevelopment • Annexation
<p>— <u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown is not a destination • Architectural appearance and sign clutter • Lack of “Class A” office space • Housing affordability • Limited public transportation • No rail access • Limited options for SR 20 bypass 	<p>— <u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worsening traffic congestion • Transitional neighborhoods • Limited expansion potential: Fairgrounds • Loss of historic resources • Prospect of additional incorporated cities

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Summary

STRENGTHS

City government leadership and facilities. A strength of the city government is its leadership in promoting financial progress and stability over time. Another city strength is its excellence in the delivery of city facilities and services. The community questionnaire was designed to gauge citizen satisfaction with the city’s community facilities and services generally and individually. Police, utilities (water, sewer, stormwater), parks, and fairgrounds all received very high satisfaction ratings. Residents were somewhat satisfied with city streets, sidewalks and streetscapes, and city buildings and grounds other than the fairgrounds. The absence of very high satisfaction levels in those facilities is attributed in part to traffic congestion in the city and the dominance of institutional facilities (e.g., county jail) in the downtown.

Central location for development and city-owned properties. The local real estate market is primed for additional investment, given the city’s central location in the county. There has been a huge increase in affluence countywide.

The city owns vacant property that can and will shape its future, including prime commercial property along Lanier 400 parkway. There are also relatively large blocks of private land that are “greenfield” and available for development. Economic development in the city and county is coordinated via the Chamber of Commerce. The community appreciates the business-friendly posture of the city.



Vacant city-owned property along Lanier 400 Parkway

Educational facilities. Forsyth County schools are also growing rapidly and innovating (e.g., Alliance Academy) in the delivery of education services. Residents, businesses, and city leaders are excited about the presence of the University of North Georgia in Cumming City Hall and at the satellite campus of the University of North Georgia located off Pilgrim Mill Road in Cumming, and the future possibilities those arrangements will bring.



University of North Georgia classroom space in Cumming City Hall

OPPORTUNITIES

Mary Alice Park. This comprehensive plan calls for initiating a master planning process for Mary Alice Park, a jewel that needs to be cultivated. Prior to the great recession (2008), the city was working with a resort hotel developer to produce a recreation-oriented development at Mary Alice Park. Citizens and officials of the city are excited about the prospects for leisure-oriented development of Mary Alice Park.



Sketch view of Mary Alice Park

The final uses and composition of development within Mary Alice Park will need to be developed with community consensus, including dialogue with Forsyth County government and Forsyth County school system officials. Any development of the park is subject to approval by

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It has been suggested that Mary Alice Park could serve as a multi-faceted indoor and outdoor recreation complex, with lodging and supportive accessory retail and service functions. It has also been suggested that Mary Alice Park may be an appropriate site to develop a sports stadium serving all high schools in the county (rather than having high schools build separate stadiums).

Further, in terms of developing Mary Alice Park, the master planning process to be undertaken in the future should focus on providing additional, multi-modal access to the park. Options that should be considered include establishing a ferry from Bald Ridge Marina to Mary Alice Park, providing a secondary road/bridge access from the north end of the park to Georgia 400, and a trolley for inner-city mobility.



Future planning for Mary Alice Park (peninsula in center of picture) should consider an additional road connection on the northwest and also ferry access to Bald Ridge Marina.

Growth preparedness and development.

Cumming aspires to its next level of greatness. The market is primed for additional Class A office space. There is extensive development potential in the Georgia 400 corridor, including vacant city-owned property along Lanier 400 Parkway and private property within the Georgia 400 corridor.



Existing office space in the city

Opportunities exist for substantial office development in Cumming, in the form of smaller, in-town office parks and also in multi-story office commercial campuses along Georgia 400 (see land use chapter).

Cumming expects that most of the remaining large tracts of agricultural, vacant or underutilized land in the city will eventually be developed as master planned, mixed-use communities. The city adopted a multi-use (MU) zoning district and has articulated the desire to see mixed use development with traditional neighborhood development principles occur in the MU district.

The city has completed improvements to infrastructure including water and sewer system expansions, widening of roads, installation of sidewalks, improvement of parks, development of fairgrounds, and installation of pedestrian friendly, attractive streetscapes in the downtown area. The city will continue to stay abreast of the service needs imposed on its infrastructure by rapid growth in the city and its service area.

University of North Georgia campus. The city looks forward to collaborating with University of North Georgia in the development and expansion of its university satellite campus in Cumming. The city can focus attention on connecting the campus with downtown in a pedestrian-friendly way.



Atlanta Road redevelopment. Atlanta Road is no longer a state route, and the city is in the process of pursuing a redevelopment plan that slows/calms traffic and re-orientes the area to facilitate pedestrians. Through master planning of future private developments, extensions of and additions to the local road network are possible. The city will use the development review process to facilitate improvements to east-west traffic flows through the central business district.

Economic development. While the city is generally satisfied with services provided by the chamber of commerce, there are opportunities for more active roles of city government in promoting and facilitating economic development. The city can consider establishing and/or activating a downtown development authority, to participate in downtown development and Atlanta Road redevelopment. It was also suggested during the comprehensive planning process that the city provide an on-line inventory of potential development sites in the city, ease or help facilitate small business loans, assist with the assembly of small development sites, consider development of a small business incubator site, and prepare design guidelines for the aesthetics of development. There is also more the city could do that advertises the city is “open for business.”

Annexation. Community residents are split in their opinions on whether the city’s corporate boundary should stay about the same, or expand significantly through annexation. There are opportunities for additional annexation, and the general direction of expansion is most likely to be southeast and east of the current city limits.

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

Traffic congestion. The chief weakness in the city is traffic congestion, due especially to bottlenecks in downtown. The improvement of state routes is under control of the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the city’s power in that capacity is limited. As has been highlighted in prior city comprehensive plans, local street network additions and extensions are proposed to help improve east-west flow through downtown Cumming. The Georgia Department of Transportation previously studied environmental impacts of possible highway bypass routes for SR 20 around the west and south sides of Cumming. Though some general alignments for such a bypass were considered, no specific route was selected and Georgia Department of Transportation has not pursued further the potential project. However, the citizenry wants traffic congestion issues in Cumming solved, and a bypass route remains on the list of the city as a

transportation need. This comprehensive plan therefore retains the prior plan suggestion to continue pursuing a highway bypass around the City of Cumming. However, there are very limited practical options available for a bypass, which is another weakness.

Downtown is not a destination. Citizens responding to the questionnaire revealed a strong sense of dissatisfaction with Cumming’s downtown. There are several explanations for this. The city’s downtown is dominated by county and city government uses, including the county jail which is not conducive to creating pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

Survey respondents (2016) suggested, as they did in the prior comprehensive plan questionnaire (2011), that more can be done to promote the aesthetics of private downtown development. Survey respondents suggested stronger guidance of architectural design for new buildings in the downtown and a reduction in sign clutter.



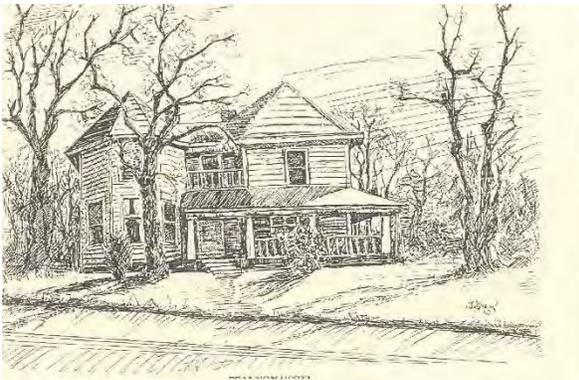
Representative guideline for improved signage

Housing affordability. Home prices in Forsyth County are reportedly \$380,000 to \$450,000 average; there is demand for 1,500 square foot dwellings in the city and county, but committee members and citizens indicate that constructing homes of that size (below the median) is not possible, given that land values are so high. As a result, it is increasingly challenging for custodial and transportation workers and moderate income households to live in the city.

Rail and public transportation. It was noted that the lack of rail transportation could be considered a weakness, and the city is automobile dependent. Ideas for studying freight and passenger rail access between Canton and Gainesville were discussed but determined not to be priorities to pursue in this comprehensive plan. Receptiveness to public transit is still not strong enough in Cumming for the advancement of public transportation. However, this comprehensive plan leaves open the possibility that during the planning horizon the city will consider an inner-city and/or intra-county public transportation “trolley” to connect the University of North Georgia Campus with the downtown, fairgrounds, county schools, and eventually, a newly developed Mary Alice Park. Also, eventual connections to public transportation in Fulton County are recommended.

Loss of historic resources. For more than two decades, Cumming has followed a policy of purchasing and renovating available historic properties. Key examples are the Cumming School and the Brannon-Heard House (pictured below). The city also acquired, renovated and preserved an old corner gas station in downtown. The city will continue to pursue its own brand of preservation, which entails acquiring and renovating important properties as opposed to regulating their preservation via local historic districts.

There are some historic resources remaining that are not in public ownership (e.g., Log Cabin Village, Merritt House, Williams House, etc.). However, because they are privately owned and not necessarily for sale, there are limited if any opportunities for the city to play an increased role in the acquisition of historic sites and buildings that may be threatened by development.



Sketch of Original Brannon-Heard House



Brannon-Heard House as restored by the City, now a Cultural Arts Center

Transitional neighborhoods. As recognized in prior comprehensive plans, certain residential neighborhoods are subject to disinvestment and decline. The city does not have an active community development program, and more can be done to encourage homeowner retention and reinvestment in inner-city neighborhoods. However, the future land use plan anticipates that some of the transitional neighborhoods may redevelop for office, commercial, and mixed-use developments.

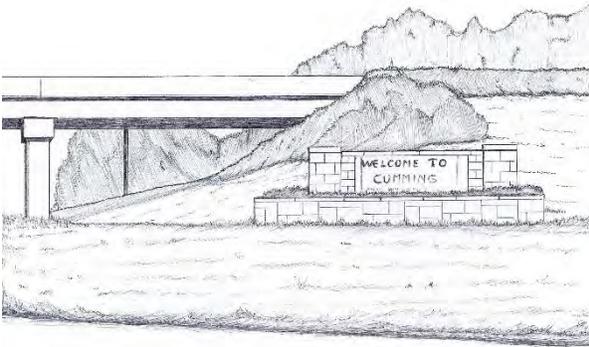
School facility impacts. It was reported that almost one quarter of the county’s total population consists of county public school students. Development has a major impact on school facilities, but also, school facilities impact the city’s transportation and other facilities. There is a risk of duplication of resources spent at county high schools for facilities. One measure to be further considered is a stadium at Mary Alice Park for the joint use by all high schools.

Fairgrounds capacity. The Cumming fairgrounds is no longer large enough to serve all high school graduations; most graduation events are reportedly being moved out of county. There is limited land potential for expansion of the fairgrounds for larger and growing events. This comprehensive plan establishes priorities for the continued development and expansion of the fairgrounds.

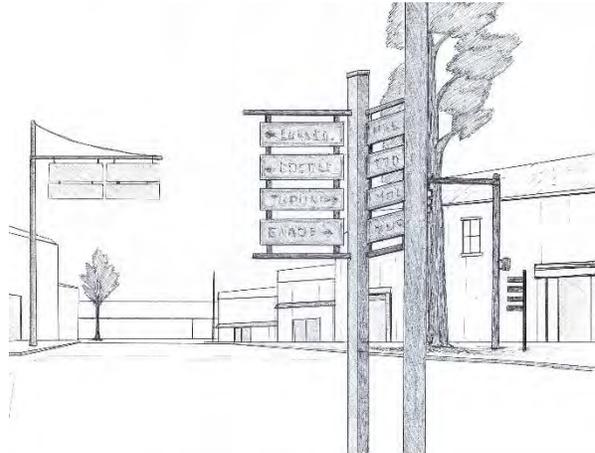


Sense of place and aesthetics. The city has for several years encouraged a sense of place for the downtown, with distinctive streetscape improvements. The community desires and the city

supports additional measures and improvements to make the downtown area more inviting and pedestrian friendly. More can be done to make entrances to the city attractive and distinctive.



Concept for gateway signage along Georgia 400



Concept for adding wayfinding signage in Central Business District

Improvements are achievable with a public signage program, improved sign controls, corridor plans, and gateway improvements. Cumming can enhance its sense of place with additional gateway signage along Georgia 400 and wayfinding signage in the central business district. Two illustrative examples are provided above; these do not represent final decisions about design for such improvements. There are also opportunities to provide better street tree canopy in the city. Many suburban communities require street tree plantings as a part of new land developments, and Cumming can revise its regulations to ensure trees will shade public rights of ways and tree canopies will enhance the aesthetic character of the city.

CHAPTER 3 LAND USE

The way different land uses are located, arranged, and interact with one another is critically important and is therefore addressed in detail in this chapter (land use element) of the city's comprehensive plan. The peace and quiet, as well as quality of life and enjoyment, of residential neighborhoods is a fundamental purpose of land use planning and regulation. Industries and businesses, if located close to homes, can create noise, odor, unsafe conditions, and other unwanted characteristics such as unsightliness. Communities implement zoning regulations to ensure that land use impacts of one site do not degrade the quality of life of nearby uses. In doing so, there is a tendency to separate homes from businesses and industries, and there are several good reasons why such separation is appropriate.

However, the strict separation of different land use types has led to a reliance on cars for mobility. If homes continue to be separated from workplaces and institutions, the community's residents will continue to rely on the automobile to get to destinations. Communities with high quality of life also enable residents to safely walk or bike to destinations such as school, the local park, or the corner neighborhood store. A community with safe sidewalks and bike lanes can lead to more active, healthy, and satisfied residents. For these reasons, the comprehensive plan includes a detailed land use plan and specific policies that will guide how the community's neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, industries, community facilities, and open spaces will be physically arranged in ways that meet the community's objective of a healthy, safe, high-quality, built environment.

There is also an important "efficiency" consideration in planning future land use arrangements. Land is a resource, not just a commodity. The arrangement of land uses can result in efficient use of land, or it can be inefficient and wasteful. Communities can be spread out at low densities or more compact with higher densities. The city by advance planning seeks to determine the proper balance in terms of density and intensity of land uses. Too much compactness can lead to congestion and crowding. Too much dispersal can make walking, biking, and public transit use difficult if not impossible, and it can make the extension of water and sewer lines or the building of schools inefficient. The land use plan reflects conscious decisions about where to allow intensive development and where more spacious living environments are desired and appropriate.

The state administrative rules for local comprehensive plans require that a local government which implements zoning must adopt either character areas or a future land use map. The local government is not precluded from adopting *both* character areas and a future land use plan map. This comprehensive plan utilizes the future land use plan map and does not include a character map like the 2012 comprehensive plan.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The state's local planning requirements do not require an existing land use inventory. However, an existing land use inventory helps the community understand how land uses have changed in preceding years and make predictions for development during the 20-year planning horizon.

Per state rules, the land use element must include either a character areas map and narrative, or a future land use map and narrative, or both. The city's previous comprehensive plan included both, but for simplicity and to avoid confusion, this iteration of the city's comprehensive plan deletes the character area approach and includes only a future land use map. However, the descriptions of character are retained in the narrative of future land use categories, where appropriate.

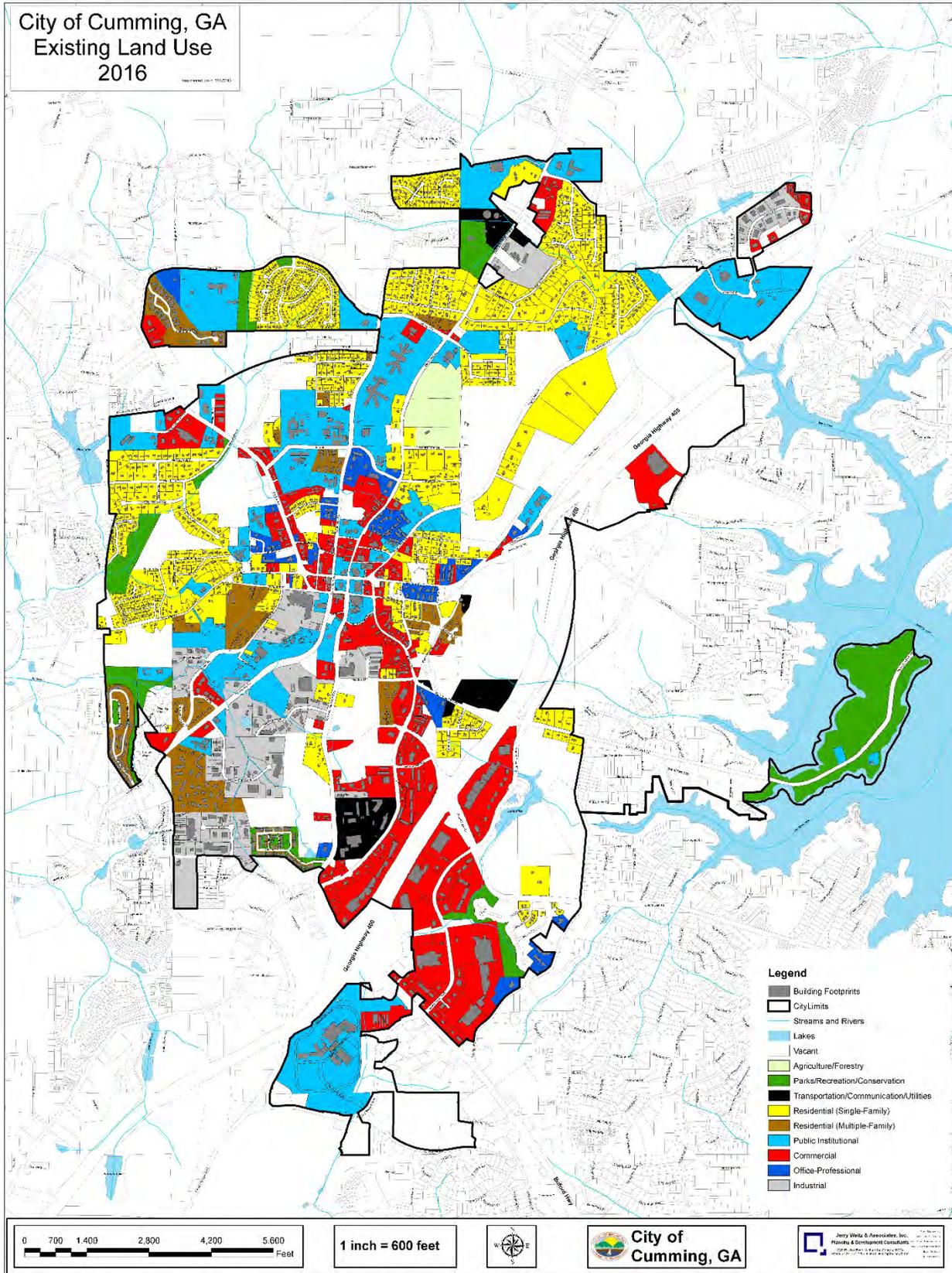
When a future land use map is included in a comprehensive plan, it must utilize standard land use categories as provided in the state's local planning requirements. The existing land use map utilizes the standard categories and also divides office-professional uses from commercial uses and multi-family residential from single-family residential uses.

Table 3-1 provides a description of the land use categories utilized on the existing land use and future land use maps. Existing and future land use maps are also provided in this chapter.

**Table 3-1
 Description of Land Use Categories
 Existing and Future Land Use Maps
 City of Cumming**

Category	Existing Land Use	Future Land Use	Description
Vacant/ Undeveloped	☼		Lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned
Agriculture/Forestry	☼		Farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting
Park/ Recreation/ Conservation	☼	☼	Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses
Residential, single-family	☼		Single-family dwelling units
Residential, multi-family	☼		Duplexes, townhouses, and apartments
Residential - 1		☼	Single-family residential up to 1.5 units per acre
Residential – 1A		☼	Single-family residential, 1.5 to 2.5 units per acre
Residential – 2		☼	Single-family residential, 2.5 to 3.0 units per acre
Residential – 3		☼	Residential (single- or multi-family), 3.0 to 6.0 units per acre
Public-Institutional	☼	☼	State, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government buildings, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, and schools. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.
Office-Professional	☼	☼	Offices (usually 1 or 2 stories)
Office-Commercial Multi-story		☼	Offices and commercial, more than 4 stories
Commercial	☼	☼	Retail, service or entertainment facilities
Mixed Use		☼	Residential, institutional, office-professional, commercial or combination thereof integrated vertically and/or horizontally. See Table 3-2 for details. See also policies for Mixed Use.
Industrial	☼	☼	Manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehouses and wholesale trade facilities
Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities	☼	☼	Electric power substations, utility company installations, and other similar uses

The future land use plan has a mixed-use district which requires further specification per the state’s rules (see Table 3-2).



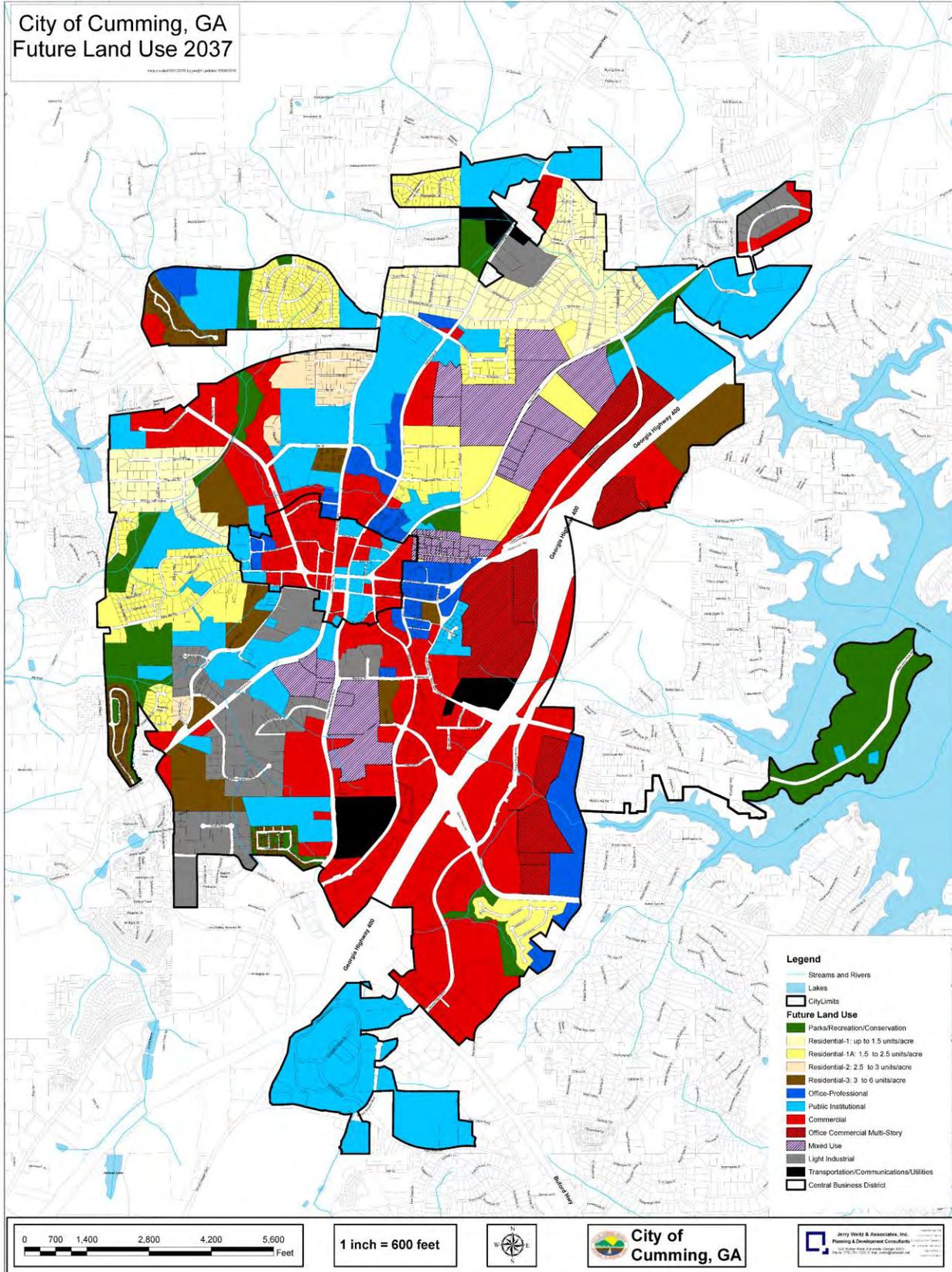


Table 3-2 provides further guidance in establishing land use proposals for the mixed use category shown on the future land use plan. The specifications in Table 3-2 pertain mostly to vertical mixed use buildings. This comprehensive plan calls for modification of the city’s multi-use zoning district to implement this land use category. The modified zoning district may retain, refine, or change the specifications shown in Table 3-2. See also policies in Chapter 5 for further guidance.

**Table 3-2
 Building and Density/Intensity Specifications for
 the Mixed Use District**

Building and Density/Intensity Specification	Mixed-Use
Typical Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) All Uses	0.50
Minimum Floor-Area Ratio (FAR), Nonresidential Uses	0.25
Maximum Floor-Area Ratio, Residential	0.25
Building Height (floors)	2 to 3
Building Height (feet)	35 to 45
Minimum Building Height (floors)	2
Minimum Building Height (Feet)	25
Freestanding Residential Permitted?	Yes
Range of Residential Density (Units per acre) for that portion of a development containing buildings with residential and nonresidential vertical mixes	5.5 to 10*
Average Heated Floor Area Per Dwelling Unit (sq. ft.)	1,600
Maximum Building Coverage (Footprint) (% of lot)	65%
Minimum open space (% of site area)	20%

* Residential density in the central business district may be allowed to exceed this category with conditional use if provided in the revised multi-use zoning district (to be prepared)

Note: Floor area ratio is the ratio of building space to land area. For example, on a one-acre lot (43,560 square feet) a floor area ratio of 0.5 is equal to 21,780 square feet of building space.

EXISTING LAND USE (2016) AND LAND USE CHANGE (2011-2016)

Table 3-3 provides acreage statistics for existing land use in 2011 (from the prior land use plan) and 2016. During the time period from 2011 to 2016, the overall size of the city increased by 433 acres. Due to annexation of land, vacant land within the city limits increased by 185 acres. Public-institutional development increased by 239 acres. Commercial development increased by 64 acres. Multi-family residential acreage was unchanged, and single-family residential land use increased by only 12 acres.

**Table 3-3
 Existing Land Use, 2011 and 2016
 and Land Use Change, 2011-2016
 Cumming City Limits**

Category	Acres (2011)	% Total (2011)	Acres (2016)	% Total (2016)	Acres Change, (2011-2016)
Vacant	932	24.2%	1,117	26.1%	+185
Agricultural/Forestry	120	3.1%	54	1.3%	-66
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	158	4.1%	218	5.1%	+60
Residential, Single-family	722	18.8%	734	17.2%	+12
Residential, Multi-family	158	4.1%	159	3.7%	+1
Public-Institutional	345	9.0%	584	13.7%	+239
Office-Professional	94	2.5%	82	1.9%	-12
Commercial	453	11.8%	517	12.1%	+64
Industrial	219	5.7%	243	5.7%	+24
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	43	1.1%	70	1.6%	+27
Right of way/Other	599	15.6%	498	11.6%	-101
Total, City Limits	3,843	100%	4,276	100%	+433

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2016.

FUTURE LAND USE (2037) AND FUTURE LAND USE CHANGE (2016-2037)

Table 3-4 provides acreages by future land use category shown on the future land use plan, as well as land use change from current to end-state (buildout), if all land in the city is developed within the 20-year planning horizon. The city may annex additional land over time, but for purposes of this analysis, the land area (city limits) is held constant between 2016 and 2037. Annexations are likely to occur and will affect land use change.

The future land use plan assigns a future land use to all property in the city; therefore, the plan implies that all land in the city will be developed in the long-term. While full development (i.e., “buildout”) is possible, it is unlikely (due to market cycles) that all land in the city will develop during the 20-year planning horizon.

The future land use plan has two categories that do not exist in terms of the existing land use (2016): office-commercial multi-story (+215 acres); and mixed use (+260 acres). If fully developed according to the future land use plan, commercial development will increase by 334 acres and office-professional development will increase by 158 acres during the planning horizon. From 2016 to 2037, public-institutional land use will increase by 208 acres to 792 acres, constituting 18.5% of total city land area. Multi-family residential is anticipated to increase by 88 acres. Single-family development will decrease by 112 acres – that decrease is attributed to the eventual development of large tracts with only a single-residence on it, as well as the possible redevelopment of certain transitional single-family subdivisions for nonresidential use.

**Table 3-4
 Future Land Use 2016 and
 Future Land Use Change, 2016-2037
 Cumming City Limits**

Category	Acres (2016)	% Total (2016)	Acres (2037)	% Total (2037)	Acres Change, (2016-2037)
Vacant	1,117	26.1%	--	--	-1,117
Agricultural/Forestry	54	1.3%	--	--	-54
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	218	5.1%	276	6.5%	+58
Residential, Single-family	734	17.2%	622	14.6%	-112
Residential, Multi-family	159	3.7%	247	5.8%	+88
Public-Institutional	584	13.7%	792	18.5%	+208
Office-Professional	82	1.9%	240	5.6%	+158
Office-Commercial Multi-Story	--	--	215	5.0%	+215
Mixed Use	--	--	260	6.1%	+260
Commercial	517	12.1%	851	19.9%	+334
Industrial	243	5.7%	243	5.7%	--
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	70	1.6%	70	1.6%	--
Right of way/Other	498	11.6%	460	10.7%	--
Total, City Limits	4,276	100%	4,276	100%	--

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. Revised December 2016.

A general forecast of the amount of development that will likely result from the land use change implied in the future land use plan is provided in Table 3-5. The land use forecasts are based on the acreage estimates from Table 3-4, as well as an examination of maximum densities and floor-area ratios per this plan and the city's zoning ordinance. All assumptions that were used in the forecast are not documented here. However, it is noted that the forecasts assume all vacant lands will develop and redevelopment will occur as implied in the future land use plan but at densities/intensities that are much less than the maximum possible buildout.

Table 3-5 shows that the city's future land use plan provides for a forecasted capacity of more than 20 million square feet of new nonresidential building. Again, the capacity is even higher if properties develop at maximum possible intensities, but it is unrealistic to assume that in the forecast. Of the 20 million square feet of new (forecasted) nonresidential building space, approximately 5 million square feet is anticipated to be commercial, 12.1 million as office-professional, and 3.1 million square feet is anticipated to be institutional land use. The distribution among office, institutional, and commercial uses cannot be predicted with any certainty and will depend on characteristics of new development and future market conditions.

**Table 3-5
 Forecasted Future Development Capacity by Land Use
 City of Cumming, 2017-2037**

Future Land Use Category	Residential	Office (Sq. Ft.)	Institutional (Sq. Ft.)	Commercial (Sq. Ft.)	Total Non-Res. (Sq. Ft.)
Residential (all)	450 units				
Public-Institutional			2,080,000		2,080,000
Office-Professional		1,208,700	134,300		1,343,000
Commercial		835,000		2,505,000	3,340,000
Office-Commercial Multi-Story		9,137,500		1,612,500	10,750,000
Mixed Use	2,831,400 sq. ft. (1,415 units)	943,800	943,800	943,800	2,831,400
Total	1,865 units	12,125,000	3,158,100	5,061,300	20,344,400

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., Revised December 2016.

Table 3-6 provides estimates of existing and forecasts of future (20-year) housing units, households, population, and employment in the City of Cumming, based on the future land use plan.

**Table 3-6
 Existing (2016) and Forecasted (2037) Housing Units,
 Households, Population and Employment
 City of Cumming**

	Estimated Existing (2016)	Forecasted New Per Land Use Plan, 2017-2037	Forecasted Total in 2037
Housing Units	2,000	1,865	3,865
Households	1,892	1,772	3,664
Population	5,600	5,540	11,140
Employment	16,000	20,000	36,000

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., Revised December 2016

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Table 3-7 provides a guide to implementing the future land use map. It shows the zoning districts which are appropriately assigned to land designated by future land use category.

**Table 3-7
 Future Land Use and Zoning District Consistency**

Future Land Use Category	Appropriate Zoning District(s)
Park/ Recreation/ Conservation	As currently zoned
Residential - 1	R-1, Single Family Residential District
Residential – 1A	R-1A, Single-Family Residential District
Residential – 2	R-2, Moderate-Density Residential District
Residential – 3	R-3, Multi-Family Residential District
Public-Institutional	INST, Institutional District
Office-Professional	OP, Office-Professional District
Office-Commercial Multi-story	OCMS, Office-Commercial Multi-Story District
Commercial (consult policies)	NS, Neighborhood Shopping District
	HB, Highway Business District
	PSC, Planned Shopping Center
	CBD, Central Business District
Mixed Use	The multi-use zoning district needs to be revised to implement this category. Properties designated for this future land use category may also be appropriately implemented by a variety of zoning districts in addition to applying the new zoning district to part of the site, such as but not limited to R-2 for stand-alone single-family neighborhoods and OP for stand-alone office parks.
Industrial	M-1, Restricted Industrial District
Transportation/ Communication/ Utilities	As currently zoned

See also the detailed policies for land use in Chapter 5 of this comprehensive plan, in making determinations as to whether a rezoning application is consistent with the comprehensive plan as a whole (not just the future land use plan map).

CHAPTER 4 TRANSPORTATION

Forsyth County and the City of Cumming lie within the Atlanta region and are therefore within the jurisdiction of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the Atlanta Regional Commission. Per the state's local planning rules, a transportation element of a comprehensive plan is required for the part of the jurisdiction that lies within a metropolitan planning organization. Since all of Cumming lies within an MPO, a transportation element is required to be a part of the city's comprehensive plan. Local planning rules of the state provide that the Metropolitan Planning Organization's transportation strategy for the region may be substituted for a local transportation element; if a separate transportation element is prepared, it must include strategies for addressing transportation needs as specified in the community work program, and it must be based on analysis of: the road network; alternative modes of transportation; parking; railroads, trucking, port facilities and airports; and transportation and land use connections.

Chapter 1 of this comprehensive plan introduced major transportation needs as identified in the Forsyth County comprehensive plan. Chapter 2 of this plan introduced the city's needs and opportunities, and many of the highest priority needs relate to transportation. Chapter 5 of this comprehensive plan provides detailed policies related to many facets of transportation. Chapter 6 includes transportation-related activities the city intends to accomplish during the next five years.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Road improvements are programmed in the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). ARC adopts an air-quality-conforming RTP every three years and a conforming three-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) annually. These decisions are made at the regional level with opportunity for local government input.

COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Rapid growth in Forsyth County has stressed the road system, particularly state routes. The roadway network in Forsyth County as a whole is projected to have significant amounts of congestion in 2040 (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A). Forsyth County completed a comprehensive transportation plan in 2011, and an update is expected to be completed in 2017 or 2018. In addition, an update to the county's bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways 2025 plan was completed in 2015 (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

ROADWAY NETWORK

The overriding objectives of the road system are to prevent injuries and deaths, reduce damage to motor vehicles and other property, and enhance the economic strength and social qualities of community life. Other important objectives to be served by the road system, in addition to safety, are to provide mobility and accessibility to destinations, comfort, convenience, and low air and noise pollution levels. Furthermore, the system should take into account the levels of service needed for persons without access to cars, particularly the elderly and handicapped.

No interstate highway passes through the city. Georgia Highway 400, a freeway, is the most important road in the county and city, carrying the highest traffic volumes, enabling county-wide connectivity, and providing access to regional employment centers. Georgia 400 is both a Federal (U.S. 19) and state route. Arterial roads in Cumming, which are classified as major and minor, include Canton Highway and Buford Highway (SR 20) (which connects with Georgia 400) as well as the one-way pair through the city formed by Main Street/Pirkle Ferry Road and East and West Maple Street, Bald Ridge Marina Road (which connects with Georgia 400), Veterans Memorial Boulevard (SR 9 and SR 20) and Dahlongea Street (SR 9), Atlanta Highway (old SR 9), Swanee Drive (SR 306) Market Place Boulevard, Tribble Gap Road, Castleberry Road, Kelly Mill Road, and Buford Dam Road. Ronald Reagan Boulevard serves the hospital area. The principal function of arterial roads is to move through-traffic, although they also provide some access to and from cross streets and driveways to private property.

Major collector roads in the city include Pilgrim Mill Road (which connects with Georgia 400), Mary Alice Park Road, Lanier 400 Parkway, and Sanders Road. The primary purpose of collector streets is to collect traffic on adjacent residential, commercial and industrial properties and carry it to the arterial road system. All roads that are not arterials or collectors are classified as local roads. Local roads are those streets that provide direct access to properties, both residential and commercial/ industrial. These are usually two-lane facilities and are characterized by frequent driveway cuts and slow speeds.

Cumming has widened to four lanes arterial and collector roads leading to and within the city, including Veterans Memorial Parkway, Castleberry Road, Tribble Gap Road. Others have been widened to three lanes, including Pilgrim Mill Road and Mary Alice Park Road. Most of the major road system under the control of the city has been improved. One exception is Kelly Mill Road, which will need to be improved with more capacity in the future.

While Cumming has anticipated, and been responsive to, future demands on the local road system, the state route system is largely outside the scope of the city's responsibility and must receive financial attention of the Georgia Department of Transportation. Significant improvements by the state over time have occurred to address traffic congestion on state routes in Cumming, such as the installation of a one-way pair of roads between GA 400 and downtown (i.e., Pirkle Ferry Road/Main Street and Maple Street), but it is generally accepted that potential remedies to traffic congestion are limited and that the state is largely unable to improve further the traffic flow on state routes in downtown Cumming. As a result, congestion is expected to remain; it is worst around the courthouse square, where several major and minor arterials converge in the downtown. However, the city has continued to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation on congestion issues, including possible improvements such as widening of SR 9, adding one or more lanes on SR 20, and improving Bethelview Road as a partial bypass. Additionally, a more extensive network of local roads within and outside the downtown central business district, as development and redevelopment occur, will help disperse traffic in the downtown and perhaps reduce congestion levels.

The city is responsible for eight traffic signals: two along Market Place Boulevard, two along Tribble Gap Road serving the Post Office (Elm Street) and elementary school (13th Street), and four signals along Atlanta Road (formerly SR 9) at Buford Dam Road, Meadow Drive, Maple

Street and Main Street. The city has reviewed the needs for signalization on exclusively local streets and has determined that existing traffic control is currently adequate to meet level of service standards. However, through its traffic signal management program, the city will continue to periodically reassess the functioning of the city’s traffic signals and adjust timing mechanisms where warranted. Any additional traffic signals that may be necessary during the planning horizon (which would be determined by a signal warrant) are most likely to be at the intersection of state routes and local roads, thereby becoming GDOT’s responsibility.

The maintenance of local roads is often ignored or underfunded by many local governments. Maintenance costs of the road system tend to mount, and the problem increases when local officials defer maintenance for “just one more year.” The city needs to know when to carry out road maintenance and rehabilitation projects to upkeep the local road system. If improvements are not completed in a timely manner when needed, the quality of local roads decreases and the costs to repair or rehabilitate them increases. For instance, it costs more to rehabilitate roads if the city delays until a given street is in very poor condition. Also, the cost escalates exponentially the longer maintenance is delayed. For these reasons, a systematic approach to pavement maintenance is desirable.

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Sidewalks and Bicycle Transportation

Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks are a key to creating livable communities that offer choices other than automobile use. The pedestrian system is therefore an important component needed to make Cumming the type of community it envisions itself being in the future. This is especially true in the downtown central business district, where many streetscape/sidewalk improvement projects have already been completed. The city has an extensive sidewalk system. Prior comprehensive plans for the city have provided inventories and assessments of the city’s sidewalk network. In contrast with many small cities, Cumming is very accessible via pedestrians due to its prior commitment to constructing adequate sidewalks along major city streets.

Cumming has ensured the installation of sidewalks in recent road improvement projects, such as Mary Alice Park Road (pictured right). This is a good example of the city’s and county’s commitment to improve the sidewalk network in and around the city. The sidewalks along Mary Alice Park Road now provide for safe pedestrian access all the way from SR 9 to Mary Alice Park on Lake Lanier, more than a few miles away.



Sidewalks, including ramps for handicapped access, were installed on both sides of Mary Alice Park Road as a part of that prior roadway improvement.

Cumming's subdivision and land development regulations specify requirements for the installation of sidewalks. Section 526 of that ordinance provides sidewalk specifications, including standard widths of five feet in residential areas and eight feet in commercial areas. Section 529 also requires that subdivisions and land developments that abut and access a public street have sidewalks and other road improvements installed along the abutting public streets.

The city has a designated bike route along Buford Dam Road. Bicycling is not a mode of travel for commuters in the city. There is not a significant constituency in the city that would like to see bike lanes added to the city's road system. However, if positioned along certain of the city's major collector and arterial streets, bike lanes could provide the routing and connectivity that is needed for experienced bicyclists to travel places in a timely manner while eliminating sidewalk conflicts with pedestrians. Bicycle routes could also provide routing for longer distance recreational trips, such as a connection to Sawnee Mountain Greenway. Similarly, the development of multi-use paths in appropriate locations, linked to Forsyth County's system, will go a long way to improve prospects for bicycle transportation in the city.

Public Transportation

Historically, Forsyth County has not been served by a public transit system, and as a result, its residents have remained almost totally dependent on automobiles for mobility. That dependence on vehicle travel has led to steady increases in vehicle miles traveled. However, there has been some movement in a positive direction in more recent years with regard to public transportation.

Forsyth County residents currently have transit options to meet their transportation needs. The county operates a demand response transit system (Dial-A-Ride), and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress operates two routes with connections to Fulton County. Xpress Route 400 includes a park-and-ride station in the City of Cumming. In the morning, three trips operate from Cumming to downtown Atlanta, and three trips operate from Cumming to North Springs. Reverse commutes operate between North Springs and Cumming only, with two trips in the morning and two trips in the afternoon. Route 400 is the more popular of the two Forsyth routes, averaging 266 daily passengers (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) is undertaking the Georgia 400 Transit Initiative to consider expansion of transit northward along the GA 400 corridor in north Fulton County. The proposed extension would terminate within one and one-half miles of the Forsyth County line by way of GA 400 (County comprehensive plan, Appendix A).

Research has shown that at residential dwelling densities of one to seven units per acre (i.e., much of Forsyth County), transit use is minimal, but at seven dwelling units per acre and above, transit use increases sharply. This means that investment in public transit could be uneconomical and inefficient because the land use pattern in the city and county consists of densities and intensities that currently do not support transit or justify public transportation investment. However, the city's comprehensive plan supports building differently in the future, with mixes of uses and somewhat higher densities that may during the planning horizon begin to provide support for additional transit options. Additional factors that suggest public transit will not be

fully developed during the planning horizon are high incomes in the county (which encourages private automobile use), low or moderate gas prices, and strong preference of the citizenry for the automobile. Given the low-density development pattern, government subsidies (local, state, and federal) would be required to develop a transit system in the county and city.

PARKING

The city of Cumming has an off-street parking lot in the downtown area next to Tysons, and it serves to assist with overflow parking for downtown retailers and county public facilities. Limited off-street parking is also available in the downtown. Forsyth County itself has accommodated needs at county facilities in the downtown with off-street parking. This comprehensive plan does not anticipate a major role by the city in providing additional public parking for downtown, although policies support inclusion of on-street parking facilities where feasible in new master-planned, mixed-use developments.

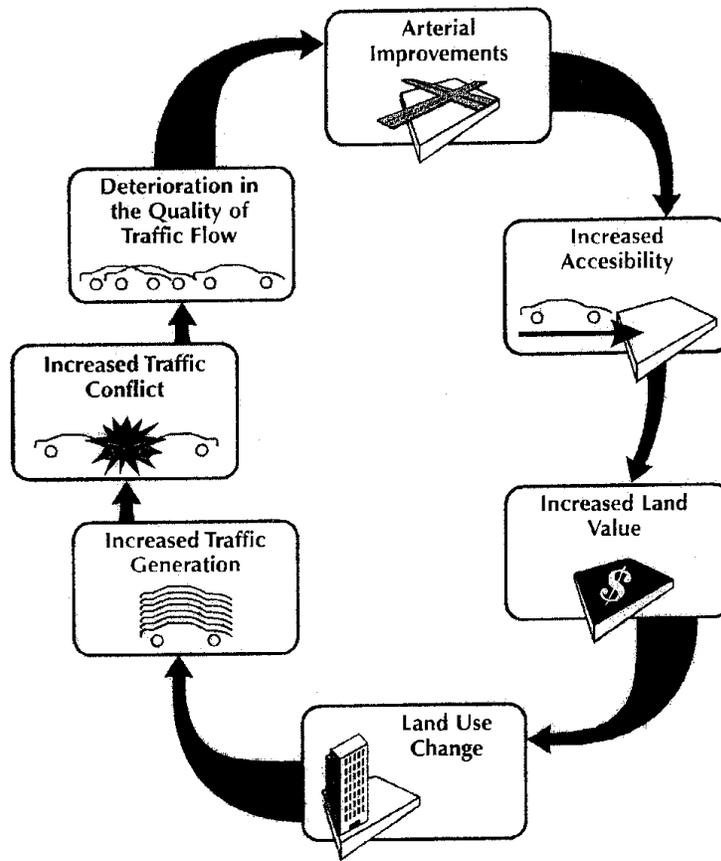
RAILROADS, TRUCKING, PORT FACILITIES AND AIRPORTS

These modes of transportation are mostly inconsequential in the City of Cumming. There are no railroads at all in Forsyth County. However, assessing the potential future of railroad transportation (both passenger and freight) was suggested during the city's public participation process. It was decided that pursuing rail facilities even in the long term was not a priority for the city. Trucking establishments exist in the county, but Cumming has no seaports or harbors. Georgia Highway 400 is not a major freight corridor like Interstate 85. There is no public general aviation airport in the City of Cumming or Forsyth County. The county's plan identifies potential for a future airport, but any future airport if constructed would be outside Cumming's city limits.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE CONNECTIONS

Transportation affects land use, and land use affects transportation. Urban form influences transportation systems, but transportation also affects urban form. Accessibility is a key element in land value and use. Land use patterns influence transportation demand, and land use patterns affect travel patterns. For example, new highway projects expand the commuter shed, making sites along that route more attractive for residential, industrial, and other development. The density and intensity of land use has a major bearing on whether transit can be supported. In other words, highways can encourage dispersal and sprawl. However, sprawl cannot be blamed all on highways, as they can be viewed as merely facilitating the choices made by consumers.

The connection between land use and transportation is best summarized by the accompanying graphic, which shows the cyclical nature transportation and development. Infrastructure investment can have important impacts on the magnitude, type, and location of development.



The Land Use and Transportation Cycle

Policies for land use and transportation need to reinforce each other. The city's transportation policies, programs, and projects should be planned in alignment with local land use and development policies. For additional information about land use and transportation policies, see Chapter 5 of this comprehensive plan. For projects, see Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5 VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES

The comprehensive plan is intended to provide a guide to everyday decision-making for use by local government officials and other community leaders. Local planning requirements specify that the local government must include a goals element, to include any policies to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with addressing the identified needs and opportunities. The state's local planning requirements also suggest that local governments refer to recommended policies listed in the "state planning recommendations" for guidance in developing goals and policies.

Cumming's previously adopted comprehensive plan contained numerous policies articulated under each of the respective plan elements. This comprehensive plan incorporates the previous plan's policy statements, with selected revisions. This comprehensive plan provides a synthesis and readoption of the city's comprehensive plan goals, policies, objectives from the 2012 comprehensive plan, with revisions and additions, as appropriate.

VISION

Cumming adopted a citywide vision statement in 2003. The vision serves as a complete picture of what the city of Cumming desires to become. The city's 2003 vision statement was included with modifications in the 2012 comprehensive plan. The 2012 version of the vision statement is included here, with modifications as appropriate.

"The City of Cumming desires to maintain and enhance its importance in Forsyth County as the only municipal corporation in the county. The city will ensure the stability of its detached, single-family neighborhoods in various areas of the city, while encouraging the transition of inner-city properties to office and business uses in a manner compatible with expansion of the city's downtown. The city will remain the commercial, office, government, and institutional center of Forsyth County. The city's downtown will be an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly area with human-scale development, including quality residential development, while serving as the government center of the county. Nonresidential land uses in the city will provide a wide range of job opportunities, including skilled manufacturing, professional, managerial, and other appropriate positions. Cumming will maintain its status as the central location of regional shopping, health care, education, and government for all or a large portion of Forsyth County's residents. The streams and Lake Lanier within the city will remain free of pollution, and environmentally sensitive areas will be protected. The city will provide the level of urban facilities and services, particularly water and sanitary sewer service, necessary to accomplish this vision. Cumming will work cooperatively with the county, adjoining local governments, and regional and state bodies and agencies in the furtherance of its community vision. The city will maintain its attachment to the Georgia Mountains region. Cumming recognizes that it will increasingly become connected in an interdependent fashion with metropolitan Atlanta, though it intends to retain small-town qualities of place and avoid being absorbed by metropolitan Atlanta growth in a way that it loses its character."

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

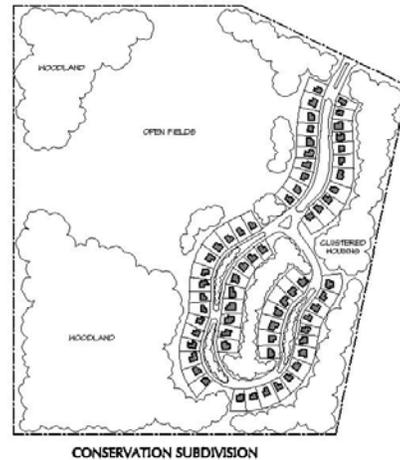
Environmental Goal

Protect and enhance the natural environment, with emphasis on water quality, sustainability, and tree retention and enhancement.

General Environmental Policies

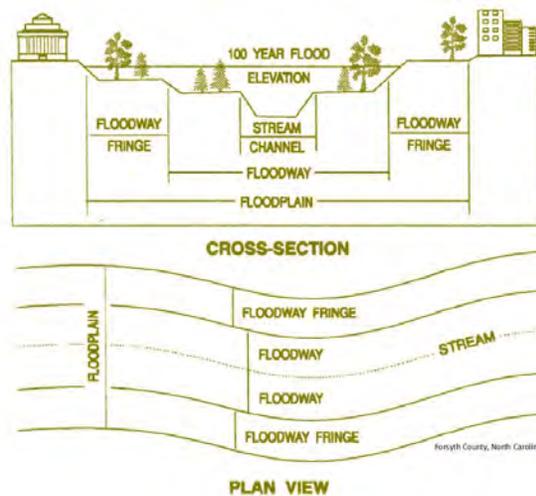
1. Limit development to a level that does not exceed the capabilities and requirements of a healthy environment.
2. Limit development in environmentally sensitive areas such as water supply watersheds, severe topography, and areas with drainage problems.
3. Restrict development within flood plains.
4. Provide permanent buffers to protect critical environmental features.
5. Conserve and protect natural resources, including air quality, trees, natural vegetation, existing topography, streams, creeks, wetlands, watersheds, and water quality.
6. Evaluate each proposed development's compatibility with the existing environment to determine the limitations and capabilities of the site for development.
7. Restore and enhance environmental functions damaged by prior site activities.
8. Development should respect, and blend with, the existing topography of the land.
9. Ensure that the city, in its own activities, follows the same environmental policies as required of private developers.
10. Seek out opportunities to acquire conservation lands and park spaces.

11. Conservation subdivision techniques are strongly encouraged.
12. The city expects sensitive development practices along steeply sloping lands and ridgelines of the city such as Bald Ridge. Development along ridge lines and on parcels with steep slopes should adhere to any design and development guidelines made a part of the comprehensive plan or as may be adopted by the city.



Flood Plain and Tributary Protection

1. Restrict or prohibit land disturbing activities adjacent to tributary streams, which lead to increases in erosion or to increased flood heights and velocities.
2. Prohibit development within floodways and restrict or prohibit development in flood plains. If development within flood plains is allowed, flood plain storage should not be decreased from its present state. In no event should development be permitted that inhibits the flow of floodwaters.



Source: Turner, Terri L. "Promoting Flood Resiliency through the Regulatory Process." Zoning News, Vol. 29, No. 4, April 2012

3. Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Periodically amend the flood damage prevention/floodplain management ordinance to comply with changes to ordinances required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Wetlands

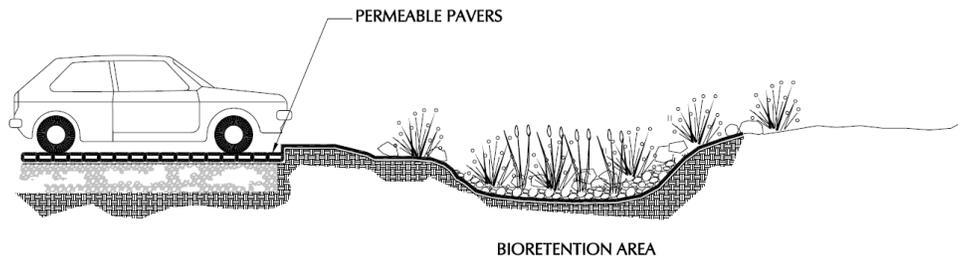
1. Design around significant wetlands.

2. Preservation is preferred over any form of destruction with mitigation. When roads must cross wetlands, they should be designed to cross at the point of minimum impact, ordinarily the narrowest point.
3. Establish upland buffers around retained wetlands and natural water bodies.
4. Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):
 - Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
 - Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
 - Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
 - Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
 - Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
 - Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
 - Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

Watershed Protection Generally

1. Soil and erosion best management practices should be required on all sites regardless of size, and soil erosion control plans are required to be submitted and approved for all sites larger than one acre, per applicable state law and local regulatory policy.
2. The effectiveness of storm water BMPs depends on design considerations. All structural BMPs are required to be consistent with the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual. Specific measures to provide additional water quality improvements, in addition to the hydrologic controls, should be incorporated to maximize water quality benefits.
3. All significant sources of aquatic contamination and degradation should be excluded from streamside zones. Uses within this area should be restricted to flood control and bank stabilization. Land disturbances including clearing should be prohibited except for specified managed uses when no practical alternative exists. Permitted uses within the managed zone include recreational activities, storm water BMPs, greenway trails, bike paths, utilities, and lawns.
4. Better stormwater site design practices include the following which will be implemented in the city:

- Preserve undisturbed natural areas where possible.
- Preserve riparian buffers.
- Avoid development in floodplains.
- Avoid development on steep slopes.
- Minimize the siting of development on erodible soils.
- Consider hydrology in the development site design process.
- Locate development in less sensitive areas.
- Reduce the limits of clearing and grading where possible.
- Utilize open space development.
- Consider and permit creative development designs.
- Reduce roadway lengths and widths where possible.
- Reduce building footprints and parking footprints.
- Reduce setbacks and frontages.
- Use fewer or alternative cul-de-sacs.
- Create parking lot stormwater “islands.”
- Maximize pervious surfaces.
- Use natural drainageways instead of storm sewers where appropriate.
- Use vegetative swales instead of curb and gutter where possible.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT - Stormwater detention areas and permeable paving for commercial development

Big Creek Watershed

1. Improve/maintain water quality of Big Creek and its tributaries.
2. Maximize recreation potential/value.
3. Minimize property damage, flooding, and stream impacts due to stormwater runoff.
4. Educate the watershed’s users about the resources.



5. Develop a framework for intergovernmental cooperation in protecting the watershed.
6. Insure compatibility of watershed plans developed by individual jurisdictions.

Big Creek Ecological Greenway

1. Adopt a multi-jurisdictional greenway plan and policy to guide the development of greenway segments across jurisdictional boundaries.
2. Make greenway connections across jurisdictional boundaries.
3. Develop and adopt unifying design guidelines and principles to guide the implementation of the greenway system across jurisdictions.
4. Adopt the conceptual greenway plan into local comprehensive plans and show preservation areas and greenway corridors on local comprehensive land use maps.
5. Incorporate greenway system implementation and preservation of conservation areas and corridors into local development codes and ordinances.
6. Develop a management plan which ensures the long-term maintenance and protection of the greenway system.
7. Establish multi-jurisdictional agreements that protect and preserve the integrity of the greenway system.
8. Restore greenway corridors in developed areas.
9. Require dedication of greenway corridors and linkage through the development review process.
10. Adopt tree ordinances that allow tree mitigation banking in greenway corridors.
11. Establish and maintain a watershed-wide monitoring program.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Preservation Goal

Protect historic resources and promote cultural resources in the city.



Cumming in regional context, 1899

Historic Preservation Policies

1. Encourage the eventual inclusion of all worthy historic buildings, structures, and districts in the listing of the National Register of Historic Places and the Georgia Register of Historic Places.
2. Educate the general public on the importance and benefits of preserving historic resources.
3. Utilize regional, state, federal, and university programs which provide funding, staff and services to enhance the city's historic preservation program.
4. Encourage property owners to take advantage of federal and state investment tax credits available for the rehabilitation of historic structures.
5. Consider the adaptive use of historic structures for government uses, where appropriate.



Cumming School, renovated by the City, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

HOUSING

Housing Goal

Protect neighborhoods and promote diverse and affordable housing that meets the needs of existing and future city residents.

Housing Policies

1. Provide a range of housing size, cost, and density to make it possible for a significant number of people who work in the community to also live in the community.
2. Continue to provide, in the city's zoning regulations, for opportunities for accessory apartments and homes for the developmentally disabled.
3. Avoid regulations and practices that would discourage the provision of housing for persons with disabilities.



A dwelling unit above a garage is one example of an accessory housing unit, conditionally permitted by Cumming's zoning ordinance.

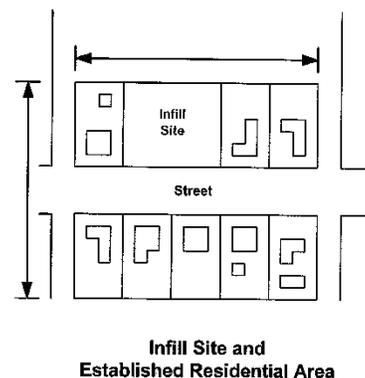
4. Maintain an overall maximum density limit of six (6) units per acre for single-function multi-family residential properties, with higher densities permitted for vertically mixed portions of master planned, mixed-use projects.



APARTMENT BUILDING

5. Continue to provide, in the city’s zoning regulations, for opportunities for nursing homes and other care facilities, continuing care retirement communities, and senior living.
6. Encourage “life cycle” or “mixed generation” communities that provide for persons of different age groups (including seniors) to live in the same community as they age.
7. Where allowed by the zoning regulations, encourage developments that mix different types of housing units (detached single family, attached single family, duplex, quadraplex, etc.) on the same site or within the same development.
8. Monitor housing conditions in identified transitional neighborhoods, and develop a program to administer community development activities if needed, during the planning horizon.
9. Upgrade or eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing. Encourage the demolition or removal of vacant dilapidated housing units which are beyond repair if such units contribute to the instability of the residential neighborhood and/or cause an immediate or foreseeable threat to public health, safety, or general welfare.
10. Consider and make use of incentives, state and federal funding, and/or any other available programs to encourage homeowners to improve and upgrade their homes so that they will remain owner-occupied so as to avoid a disproportionate number of renter-occupied housing units.

11. Stimulate infill housing in existing neighborhoods, where such opportunities exist, especially owner-occupied housing.
12. Identify, through the land use element, infill development opportunities and ensure that there are no significant barriers to housing construction on infill sites in the city.



13. To address the small number of units that may be overcrowded and which may present an issue of overcrowding, the city should ensure that it has adopted and enforced a housing code.
14. In planning for and redeveloping Cumming's city center into a mixed-use downtown, the city and development community should focus on providing higher-end, owner-occupied condominiums to upgrade the overall city housing stock and provide buying power for increased commercial opportunities in the downtown.
15. Collect and monitor any additional available data on special housing needs in the city and county.
16. Identify private and other special housing needs providers such as Habitat for Humanity, religious institutions, community development corporations, and non-profit social service and advocacy groups, and determine how the city can participate to some degree in encouraging private-sector responses to such needs.
17. Evaluate the city's public housing program and the city's housing authority in terms of existing assets, housing conditions, and future options in light of changing federal housing policies.
18. Consider the extension of sanitary sewer to the city's housing that is not yet connected to the city's sanitary sewer system, if costs are reasonable and can be equitably distributed.
19. Consider the eligibility of any homes fifty years old or older as "historic" if the homes are grouped together in a neighborhood, have architectural significance and are worthy of a historic designation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Goal

Grow the economy, increase local employment, increase personal incomes, and reduce poverty.

Economic Development Policies

1. Promote and enhance the City of Cumming as the commercial and service center for Forsyth County and the immediate region.
2. The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in the city should be suitable for the city in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the city or region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities (Quality Community Objective, Appropriate Business).

3. A range of job types should be provided in the city to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce (Quality Community Objective, Employment Options).
4. Maintain a diverse economy in the city, to ensure it does not rely too heavily on any one employment sector or industry (e.g., government).
5. Promote the role the city plays as the medical office center for Forsyth County and the immediate region.
6. Continue to pursue manufacturing and industrial establishments to locate in any remaining lots in existing industrial parks and on light-industrially zoned land outside of industrial parks.
7. Target new businesses that are looking for existing facilities, and encourage them to locate in existing, vacant commercial/industrial buildings, or to adapt such buildings and structures for their reuse.
8. Capitalize on the city's access to Georgia 400 and its close proximity to Lake Lanier and the Atlanta region.
9. Plan for expanded infrastructure (water, sanitary sewer, roads, drainage facilities, etc.) as may be needed to accommodate future office, commercial, and light industrial development.
10. Emphasize the need for and encourage the revitalization and redevelopment of existing developments in the Atlanta Road (old SR 9) corridor.
11. City leaders should be closely involved in major development efforts.
12. Make maximum use of Lanier Technical Institute's Adult Literacy Program to improve literacy levels of the city's population.

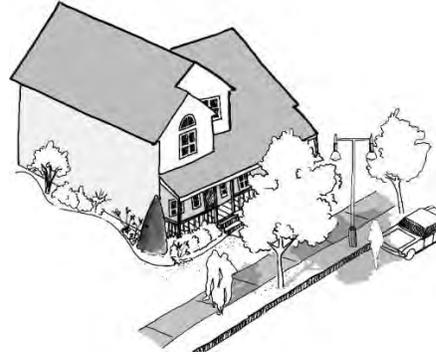
LAND USE

Land Use Goal

Promote and ensure efficient, functional and compatible land use patterns.

Established Single-Family Neighborhoods

1. Maintain and preserve quiet, stable neighborhoods of detached, single-family residences in a conventional suburban design and layout at low densities.



2. New residential development should provide for recreational opportunities such as greenspace, swim and tennis facilities, and for developments with more than 100 units, community buildings or multi-use recreation centers.
3. Applications for conditional uses should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood's residential character.
4. When acting on requests for re-zoning to single-family residential zoning districts (i.e., R-1, R-1A, and R-2), the city will consider the compatibility of the proposed (or permitted) lot sizes of the development in relation to those in the vicinity of the proposed rezoning.

Multi-Family Residential Development

1. Triplexes, quadraplexes, townhouses, and detached single-family condominiums may be appropriate, subject to approval as conditional uses and if designed to be in keeping with the character of existing development in R-2 districts. They are permitted in R-3 zoning districts.



Illustrative Townhouse Development

Source: John Matusik and Daniel Deible. "Grading and Earthwork." Figure 24.30 in *Land Development Handbook*, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002, p. 571.

2. New residential development should provide for recreational opportunities such as greenspace, swim and tennis facilities, and for developments with more than 100 units, community buildings or multi-use recreation centers.

3. The overall density of new residential development in R-3 districts shall not exceed six (6) units per acre.
4. Applications for conditional uses should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood's residential character.

Central Business District (CBD)

1. Development in the CBD may consist of greater lot coverages, building heights, and building intensities and little or no front and side building setbacks.
2. Development that is adequately served by public parking or on-street parking, or which qualifies for exemptions, should have reduced minimum off-street parking requirements.
3. Permitted uses in the CBD include those that contribute to a pedestrian-friendly design and that maintain the character of the district as the governmental office, financial, and commercial business center for the City of Cumming.
4. Automobile-related facilities and services are not appropriate in the CBD zoning district because they do not facilitate pedestrian friendly design, and thus, new highway business uses are not permitted in the CBD zoning district.
5. Pocket parks, or greenspace amounting to 20 percent of the total site area, shall be provided as a part of mixed-use developments in the CBD.
6. Where an extension of the grid street system is possible and recommended, the development shall incorporate the proposed grid-pattern street extension (with small block patterns).



Cumming Station is in the CBD and provides lofts for downtown living

Neighborhood Shopping

1. Neighborhood shopping districts are intended to provide areas for limited, small-scale commercial uses of a convenience nature serving nearby residential neighborhoods as opposed to a regional market.

2. With the exception of convenience stores with gasoline pumps, neighborhood shopping districts do not permit or accommodate automotive uses or other types of more intensive highway business activities, or those uses that generate excessive traffic, noise, odors, pollution, safety hazards, or other adverse impacts which would detract from the desirability of adjacent properties for residential use.
3. Uses within neighborhood shopping districts generally occur within enclosed buildings with no outside storage and limited if any outdoor display of goods and merchandise.

Highway Commercial Corridors

1. Along certain designated portions of state highways other than Georgia 400, highway commercial districts are established to provide suitable areas for those business and commercial uses which primarily serve the public traveling by automobile and which benefit from direct access to state highways. Highway business zoning districts are generally established with recognition that the automobile has precedence over the pedestrian.
2. Automobile sales and service, lodging, and mini-storage facilities are representative uses. Open storage and open-air business uses are also permitted, subject to certain screening requirements.
3. The creation of new highway business districts without frontage on a state highway is strongly discouraged. Great scrutiny will be given to any requests for rezoning to extend highway business zoning districts. Substantially compelling evidence of the need for additional highway business uses in Cumming must be presented to support such a change.

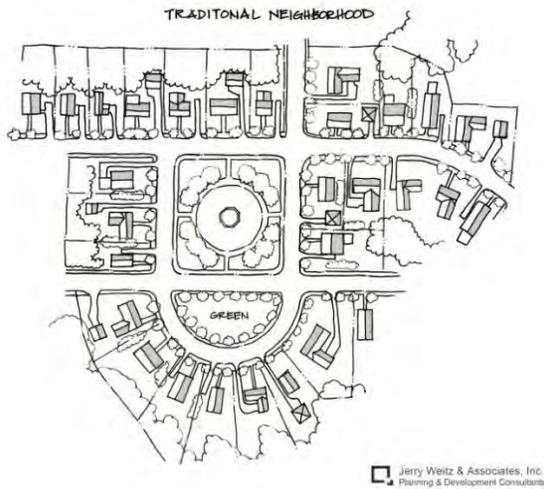
Planned Shopping Centers

1. Planned shopping centers serve as major regional shopping destinations for retail goods, dining, building supplies, indoor commercial recreation, and personal and lodging services. Uses permitted within planned shopping centers include certain highway business and open-air business uses.
2. Planned shopping centers are generally designed so that the automobile has precedence over the pedestrian (i.e., in a conventional, suburban layout with abundant off-street parking in front of commercial buildings), but such areas must safely accommodate pedestrians.
3. New planned shopping centers should provide inter-parcel connections, limited curb cuts on minor and major arterials, and generous landscaping and shade trees.
4. A natural buffer replanted where sparsely vegetated with a width of not less than fifty (50) feet shall be provided and maintained along all property lines abutting or adjoining single-family residential development, including subdivisions in unincorporated Forsyth County.

Mixed Use

For properties designated as mixed use on the future land use plan, the following policies apply:

1. **Specifications.** See Table 3-2 in this plan for general specifications (which may be superseded by zoning district requirements upon adoption). Desirable characteristics in mixed use developments include consistency with the following graphic concepts:



Traditional Neighborhood
Development Patterns



Representative Scale



Wide Sidewalk for Pedestrians



Outdoor Seating

2. **Master plan and limit on vertical mixed use.** A master plan for all land uses will be submitted as part of any rezoning request. The master planned development may utilize the multi-use zoning district (to be revised) for a portion of the development, typically not to exceed five to ten acres (twenty acres maximum). Other zoning districts of the Cumming zoning ordinance may be utilized as appropriate to accomplish horizontal mixes of land uses.
3. **Elevations and cross sections.** Architectural elevations and street cross sections for streets abutting and internal to the proposed development will be submitted as part of any

rezoning request. Design features of mixed-use development are subject to approval during the rezoning process, and conditions of zoning approval may be imposed.

4. **Residential densities.** The allowable residential density shall not be construed as allowing up to 10 units per acre for the entire site; rather, the suggested residential density of 5.5 to 10 units per acre (see Table 3-2) is applicable only to that portion of the site devoted to vertical mixed use, which for large sites will be limited to a relatively small percentage of the land in the master planned development. When stand-alone single-family dwellings are proposed, densities should be similar to R-1, R-1A, and/or R-2 zoning districts, as appropriate, considering surroundings. If stand-alone multi-family dwellings are proposed and authorized, the density should not exceed R-3 zoning district density provisions.
5. **Phasing.** Master planned developments in this future land use category should provide for phasing of development such that freestanding or stand-alone residential can be developed only in conjunction with or after (not before) development of vertical mixed use or nonresidential development.
6. **Jobs-housing balance.** As a general guide, at buildout, master planned developments should attain a ratio of 1.5 jobs for every housing unit within the development, or alternatively, nonresidential building floor area should equal or exceed the total residential floor area within the master planned development.
7. **Other policy consistency.** Master planned developments in this future land use category will be carefully evaluated for consistency with all other goals and policies contained in this chapter, as applicable, especially policies for connectivity and provision of new public streets connecting streets external to the master planned development. Projects may be conditioned at the time of rezoning to be consistent with one or more adopted policies.

Office Development

1. Office-professional districts are intended to encourage and provide suitable areas for professional, medical, and general offices and certain related activities.
2. Office-professional districts can serve as a transition between one or more commercial zoning districts and one or more residential zoning districts.

Institutional Districts

1. Institutional districts are established for a variety of public and semi-public uses, including public and private elementary, middle, and secondary schools, city, county, and state government offices, municipal fairgrounds, hospitals, churches, institutional residential facilities such as nursing homes and care centers, parks, public land, open space, public utilities, and other institutions and public uses.

2. Pedestrian access should be provided to and from all institutional districts.

Industrial Districts

1. Industrial land uses should be limited to areas with relatively level topography, adequate water and sewerage facilities, and access to arterial streets.
2. New industrial operations should be limited to those that are not objectionable by reason of the emission of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors or radiation and that do not create fire or explosion hazards or other objectionable conditions.
3. New industrial development should connect to existing industrial development, where such connection would facilitate traffic through light industrial parks and individual developments.

Transitional Neighborhoods

When the future land use plan indicates that a single-family residential neighborhood will transition to non-single-family use, the transition of land use should occur holistically, to include all lots within the subdivision or neighborhood. This plan policy does not support piecemeal, or lot-by-lot rezoning from single-family residential use, and such lot-by-lot or piecemeal rezonings will be considered inconsistent with this comprehensive plan policy.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

1. Areas of flood plain should be set aside for greenspace.
2. Areas designated as “environmentally sensitive parcel” according to the city’s zoning ordinance have unstable ground or other situations that require environmental monitoring or compliance. Environmentally sensitive parcels are declared to be unsafe for building without additional technical review. Environmental mitigation or remediation recommended by a qualified professional may be made a condition of approval for any building permit on an environmentally sensitive parcel.

Land Development Process

Critically re-evaluate and continuously improve the land development process in Cumming, particularly through the availability of clear, web-accessible instructions, guidelines, and resources. Maintain the business-friendly posture of city regulations and processes.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community Facilities Goal

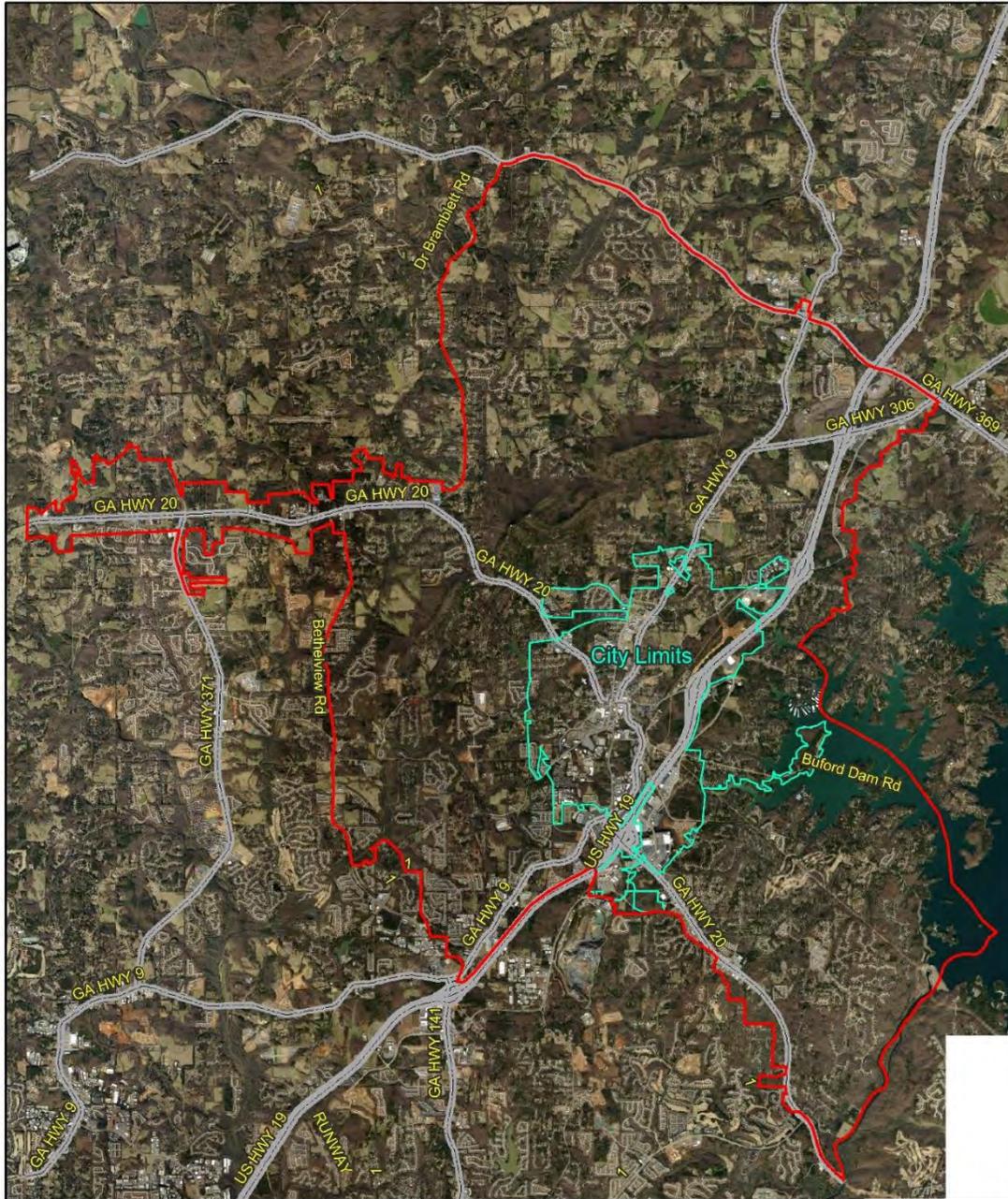
Accommodate existing and anticipated population and employment with public facilities, including public schools, parks, roads, water, sewer, public safety, that meet local level of service standards.

General Policy for Siting Community Facilities

1. The City of Cumming will strive to maintain municipal offices in the downtown central business district of the city.
2. The city encourages Forsyth County to maintain its major administrative and governmental offices in the downtown central business district of the city.

Water

1. Update the existing water master plan, including demand forecasts, and maps of the service delivery system, including lot lines, location/size/type of mains, valves, pumping stations, blowoffs, storage tanks, etc.
2. Complete upgrades to the water pipeline system in major roadways as suggested in capital improvement programs.
3. Promote extension of distribution systems and connection with county/regional systems.
4. Maintain and observe the raw water intake agreement and wholesale water user's agreement with Forsyth County for the specified periods, as applicable.
5. Deliver safe, potable water of approved quality at reasonable cost.
6. Comply with the water quality standards of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended. Monitor other water quality standards and be responsive to citizen complaints with regard to water quality.
7. Operate the water delivery system on a 24-hour basis, 365 days of the year.
8. Meet average and peak water service demands.
9. Maintain water pressure between 40 and 60 pounds per square inch (psi), not to drop below a minimum of 20 psi for firefighting purposes, with a maximum of 100 psi to restrict potential for leakage.



City of Cumming
Water and Sanitary Sewer
Service Area



10. Maintain a target water flow standard of 1,500 gallons per minute for firefighting commercial structures, although between 2,000 and 2,500 gallons per minute is considered optimum.
11. For fighting a residential fire, establish a minimum water target of 1,000 gallons per minute, although up to 1,500 gallons per minute is considered optimum.
12. Provide sufficient storage of treated water to permit normal delivery of all but the most severe emergencies and level out high peak flows.
13. Develop and enforce water conservation measures in all development in the city.
14. Require developers of residential subdivisions to install the appropriate water mains, fire hydrants, and other appurtenances.

Sanitary Sewer

1. Protect the quality of the natural waters and waterways.
2. Assure cost effective service delivery that protects the health and welfare of the community's households, businesses and institutions.
3. Update the existing sanitary sewer master plan every five years, including generation factors and demand forecasts.
4. Target sanitary sewer expansion to areas to be developed as commercial and residential subdivisions with the goal of providing service to 80 percent of the service area by 2021.
5. Operate, maintain, expand, and replace components of the wastewater system to assure uninterrupted wastewater collection and transportation, and adequate waste processing treatment and proper disposal or reuse of reclaimed waters and of waste treatment by-products.
6. Assure that the collection system has the hydraulic capacity and physical integrity to convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the wastewater treatment plant without bypassing these flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private property.

Stormwater Management

Maintain satisfactory municipal capability for stormwater management services, consistent with the city needs and those identified by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.

Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services

1. Maintain the existing formal service agreement with Forsyth County.
2. Enforce appropriate standard fire codes and state building code which requires automatic sprinkler systems in places of assemblage, and new commercial structures, based on the type of structure, size of structure(s), usage, number of occupants, whether alcohol is served, and other factors.
3. Ensure fire hydrants are installed along new public water lines every 1,000 feet in residential areas and every 500 feet for commercial/industrial development, and by developers in residential subdivisions.
4. Require that fire hydrants be placed such that a hydrant is not located further than 250 feet from the furthest rear portion of a commercial/industrial building.
5. Test fire hydrants regularly and institute prompt repairs where necessary.
6. Adhere to all requirements of the Forsyth County Fire Department in order to support a target first response time for properties within the city limits of 3 to 4 minutes.
7. Continue to utilize the fire safety inspector employed by Forsyth County to provide inspections of buildings in the city.
8. Continue to support the Forsyth County Fire Department's educational programs.
9. Work with the Fire Department to reduce the ISO rating where practical and cost effective to do so.

Police Department

1. Ensure that the law enforcement agency has adequate personnel, equipment, and training.
2. Work to improve the technology base to improve customer relations and work flows.
3. Maintain a target officer to population ratio of 2.2 officers per 1,000 population.
4. Strive to uphold an average 3 to 5 minute incident response time.
5. Promote community policing and crime prevention strategies.
6. Continue to provide drug education programs in the public schools.

Parks and Recreation/Fairgrounds/Cultural Facilities

1. Enhance the quality of life for residents through the provision of open space, park and recreation facilities, special events, cultural and entertainment opportunities at the fairgrounds, accessible to all city residents.



2. Prepare a parks and recreation master plan to address service delivery, deficiencies, recommended improvements and potential funding sources.
3. Dedicate land, where feasible, for passive recreation, public open space, and trails.
4. Encourage developers to build recreational opportunities in conjunction with new residential development, and encourage the use of permanently protected open space in subdivision design.
5. Purchase or annex acreage to provide sufficient parkland to achieve the City of Cumming's adopted level of service standard, as necessary.
6. Continue to maintain an informal usage agreement with the Forsyth County Board of Education, specifically for the school facilities in the City of Cumming, for the usage of basketball courts in gymnasiums, playfields and other facilities, as available.
7. Implement improvements as identified in capital improvement programs.
8. Prepare plans for the development of Mary Alice Park.
9. Maintain and promote "heritage" villages at the fairgrounds, and maintain adequate parking to accommodate annual attendees.

Education

Communicate with the Forsyth County Board of Education concerning future growth areas of the city and the board's plans for provision of public schools to meet future capacities.

General Government, Planning and Administration

1. Ensure that city government facilities keep pace with growth and develop concurrently with the city's population.
2. Ensure that infrastructure and public services are adequately positioned with personnel and facilities to provide coverage to existing and newly annexed areas.

Health and Hospitals

1. Meet health needs through a combination of public and private sources.
2. Continue to work with the Forsyth County Health Department to develop and expand programming to meet the needs of the citizens of the City of Cumming.
3. Continue to encourage private health care providers to locate in the City.



Health services is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the city. Pictured above: the growing Northside hospital campus area.

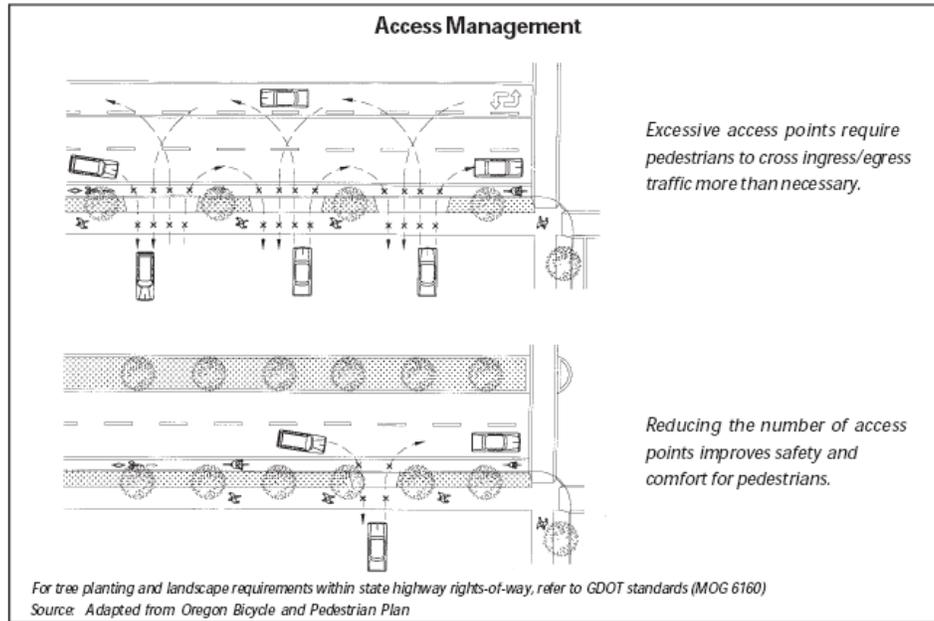
TRANSPORTATION

Goal

Provide mobility, safety, and connectivity via a multi-modal transportation system, with emphasis on solving traffic congestion problems and improving the pedestrian network.

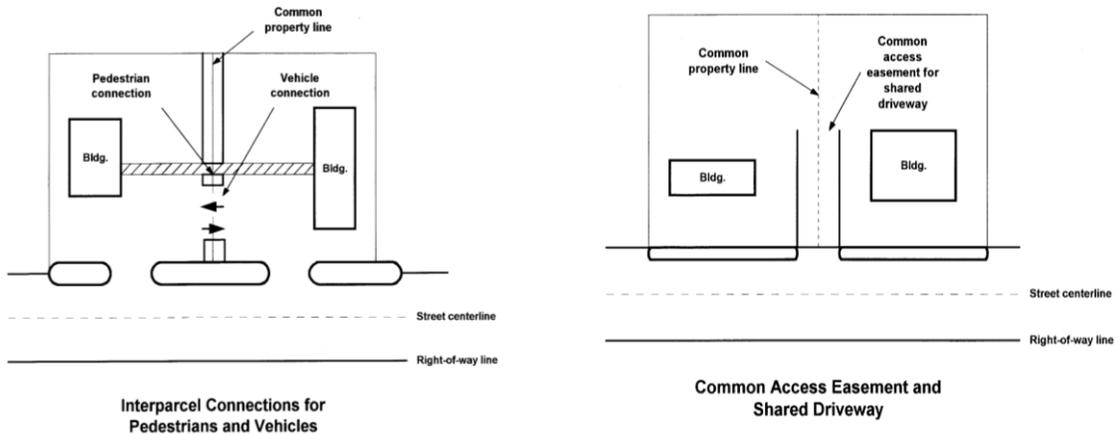
Highways and Roads

1. **Access management.** Apply state and local standards for access management along arterial and collector streets, including but not limited to specifications for curb cut location and separation, traffic signal spacing, and deceleration lanes.



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation. September 2003. Pedestrian and Streetscape Guide.

2. **Adequate sight distance.** There must be an unobstructed sight distance in both directions on all approaches at an intersection. Any object within the sight triangle that constitutes a sight obstruction should be removed or lowered, including parking, cut slopes, hedges, trees, and bushes.
3. **Intersection geometry.** Intersecting roadways should cross at, or as close as practical to, a right angle (90 degrees).
4. **Correct problem intersections.** Continue to design and fund improvements that will correct poor intersection geometry.
5. **Connectivity and direct travel.** The city supports the design of its local street network so that there will be multiple connections and relatively direct routes. During site plan and development permit review, measures should be made to connect streets to provide a local street network that serves as an alternative to the arterial and collector street system. This includes consideration of a grid-street pattern in all places where such design is feasible and practical. It also means discouraging, limiting, or prohibiting cul-de-sacs in some cases, and providing for stub connections at property lines to tie into future compatible development on adjoining properties.
6. **Inter-parcel access.** Encourage or require inter-parcel vehicle access points between contiguous and compatible commercial, office and mixed-use developments.



7. **Levels of service (LOS) standards.** Seek to maintain an overall LOS “D” for the city’s arterial and collector street system.

	Level of Service	Description
A		Free Flow: Low volumes and no delays.
B		Stable Flow: Speeds restricted by travel conditions, minor delays.
C		Stable Flow: Speed and maneuverability closely controlled due to higher volumes.
D		Stable Flow: Speeds considerably affected by change in opening conditions. High-density traffic restricts maneuverability; volume near capacity.
E		Unstable Flow: Low speeds, considerable delay; volume at slightly over capacity.
F		Forced Flow: Very low speeds; volumes exceed capacity; long delays with stop-and-go traffic.

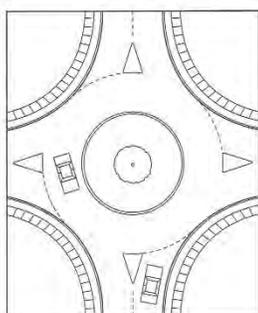
LEVEL OF SERVICE

Source: Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation.

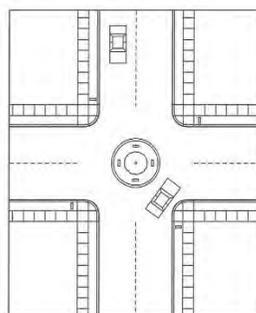
Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards. 2006. John Wiley & Sons. p. 523.

8. **Road maintenance.** Reduce the number and percentage of streets with pavement driving hazards. Hazards are large potholes, sharp bumps, drops, or tilts in the driving right-of-way. Cracks in the road shall be sealed, depressions or bumps will be corrected, water ponding of greater than one inch should be corrected, and broken pavement edges, potholes and breaks shall be promptly repaired. Local street maintenance workers should regularly examine streets and roads to rate their surface condition, then determine specific maintenance and repair programs.

9. **Pavement management.** Maintain a pavement management system for repairing, resurfacing, and rehabilitating existing local roads in the city.
10. **Downtown CBD grid extension.** As new development or redevelopment occurs in the designated central business district, ensure that the grid pattern of local roads is extended, creating or continuing an urban block pattern.
11. **Residential neighborhood road extensions.** As properties are developed for residential uses, a grid pattern or modified grid pattern of local public streets should be established, extended, and connected with existing residential streets.
12. **Traffic calming.** Utilize traffic calming measures for extensions of the grid patterned road network in the central business district, as appropriate, to ensure a pedestrian friendly environment.



Roundabouts

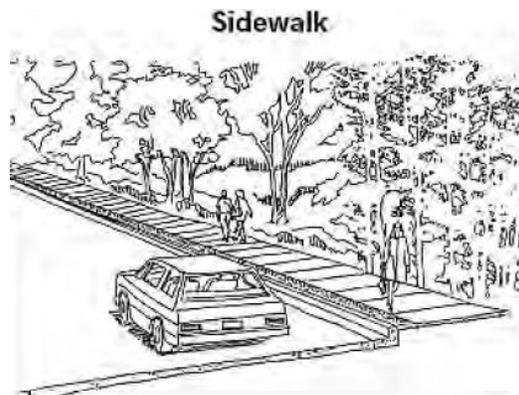


Traffic Circles

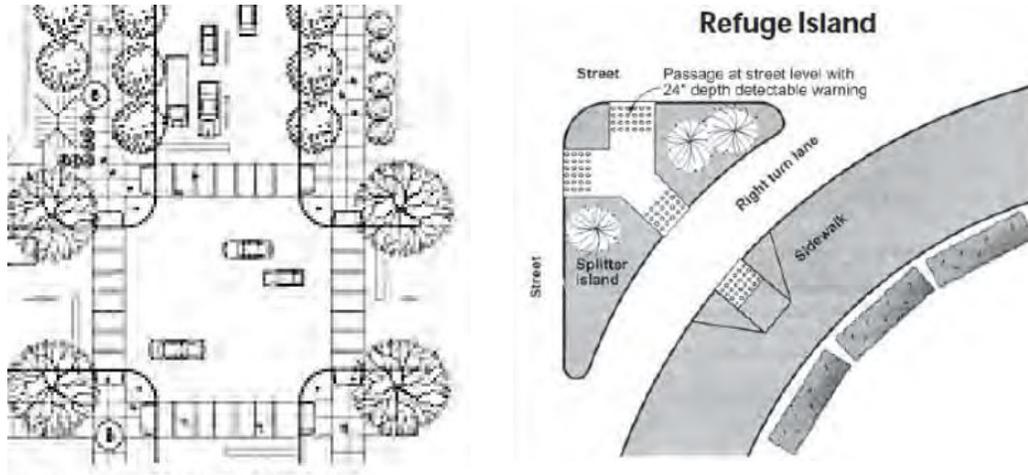
Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards. 2006. John Wiley & Sons. p. 239-240

Alternative Transportation

1. **Sidewalks.** Invest in the expansion of the city's sidewalk system to help create a pedestrian friendly community. Design and install sidewalk extension projects based on priorities stated in this comprehensive plan. Subject to funding limitations, sidewalks should be placed on both sides of arterial and collector streets.
2. **Sidewalk maintenance.** Provide adequate funding for repairs and maintenance on that portion of the sidewalk network that is the city's responsibility.
3. **Pedestrian safety.** Make existing pedestrian facilities safer with streetlights, refuge islands, signalized pedestrian crossings (mid-block if necessary), and brightly painted crosswalks.

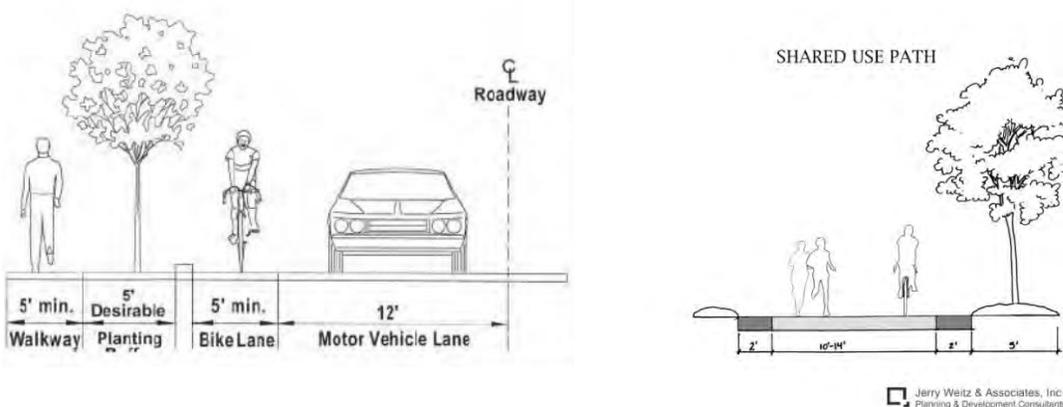


- Pedestrian connections to the street sidewalk system.** Individual developments, except for detached, single-family lots, shall provide direct pedestrian access ways to all public sidewalks or multi-use trails when located on a public street abutting the property to be developed.



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation. September 2003. Pedestrian and Streetscape Guide.

- Bicycle facilities and multi-use paths.** Explore opportunities to designate and fund bicycle lanes and bicycle paths in conjunction with other projects and programs. Work with the County School Board to coordinate the provision of bicycle facilities at existing and proposed school facilities. During the planning horizon, pursue improvements that will add bicycle travel to the city’s transportation system.

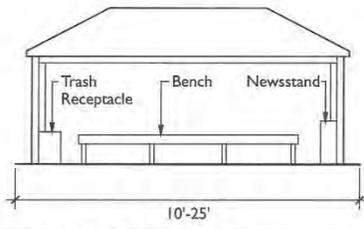


Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
 Planning & Development Consultants

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation. September 2003.
 Pedestrian and Streetscape Guide

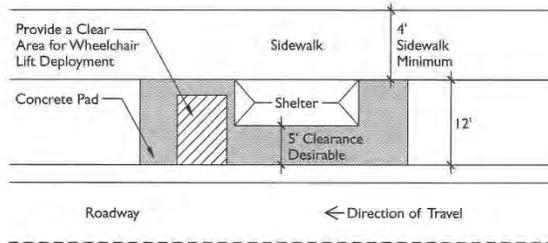
- Public transportation.** Anticipate that MARTA will be extended to north Fulton County during the planning horizon (to 2037). The city encourages the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority and the Georgia Department of Transportation to provide park and ride lots and maintain express bus service from Forsyth County to MARTA’s North Springs station. The city will cooperate with Forsyth County in providing public

transportation that will link to public transportation (heavy rail, express bus, etc.) in Fulton County.



BUS SHELTER AMENITIES

Source: Khaled Shammout.



BUS SHELTER PLACEMENT

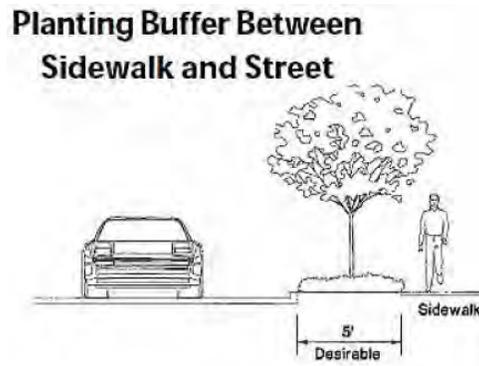
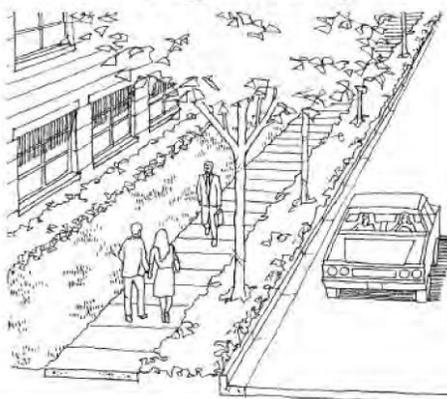
Source: Khaled Shammout.

Source: Planning and Urban Design Standards. 2006. John Wiley & Sons. p. 270.

- 7. Travel demand management.** Consider cooperative efforts with Forsyth County to study and implement Travel Demand Management (TDM) programs for local employees: ridesharing, modified work hours, telecommuting, and others.

Other Transportation Policies

- 1. Municipal parking.** Maintain one or more municipal parking lots in the downtown central business district, to help serve development, redevelopment, and the expansion of county government offices. Also, provide on-street parking where safe and appropriate.
- 2. Shade trees.** Prepare a public shade tree installation program for the city's arterial and collector road system, beginning with streetscapes in the downtown central business district.



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation. September 2003. Pedestrian and Streetscape Guide.

- 3. Community Improvement Districts.** Consider the appropriateness during the planning horizon of establishing community improvement districts for the central business district and the Market Place Boulevard area, to plan and install public improvements such as new roads, sidewalks, streetscapes, and street trees.

4. **Corridor Plan for Atlanta Highway.** Prepare a corridor plan for Atlanta Highway (old SR 9), to include proposals to consolidate curb cuts and driveways, improve intersections, control signs, conceal poor aesthetics, and beautify the corridor.
5. **Land use regulations.** Periodically review, and revise as necessary, the city's land use regulations to implement the policies of the comprehensive plan.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal

Cooperate with all other levels of government in the pursuit of shared goals, policies and objectives.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Policies

1. Consider municipal boundary expansion (annexation) opportunities as appropriate, and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation.
2. Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources (Quality Community Objective, Regional Cooperation).
3. Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer (Quality Community Objective, Regional Solutions).
4. Resolve conflicts with other local governments through informal means, including mediation when appropriate, but instituting litigation when necessary to protect the city's interests.
5. Share resources and information with all government entities.
6. Periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate.
7. Identify further opportunities for joint service delivery between Forsyth County and the city, and maintain and implement agreed upon service delivery strategies.
8. Adopt, and amend as necessary, plans and regulations to be consistent with the mandates and requirements of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.
9. Ensure that goals and implementation programs of the city's comprehensive plan are consistent with adopted coordination mechanisms and consistent with applicable regional and state programs.

CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

This chapter describes the initiatives, programs, regulations, and other efforts needed by the City of Cumming to implement its comprehensive plan during the next five years. These are all shown in Table 6-1.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Cumming Planning and Zoning Department is the primary administrative agency responsible for implementation of the comprehensive plan. However, other municipal departments have important responsibilities in their respective service areas, and the City Administrator must propose and approve funding levels appropriate to carry out the many programs suggested here. Furthermore, Cumming's Mayor and City Council have an obligation to keep the comprehensive plan current in terms of policy. The Cumming Planning and Zoning Commission also has an important role in ensuring the comprehensive plan is implemented through proper rezoning changes and development practices.

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

In presenting the short-term work program (Table 6-1), the city hereby articulates a number of important qualifiers and caveats. The city has included the projects listed in the work program because they were (a) identified by department heads; (b) called for in the previous work program but deferred; and/or (c) suggested by the city's planning consultant. Generally, the suggestions in the work program are *discretionary*, not based on critical health and safety concerns.

City leaders believe all of these projects and initiatives are worthy, *if funding is available*. However, this is a time of great uncertainty with regard to municipal revenues for capital projects and new program initiatives. Similarly, some of the work program initiatives may only be feasible if outside funding is obtained, such as a grant. Future economic conditions may pose significantly limits, and may constrain the city's spending with regard to funding capital improvements and initiating new projects as suggested in the work program. Therefore, *implementation of the community work program is not guaranteed*. Department heads, the general public, and others must keep these points in mind and cannot cite the suggested work program as a financial commitment by the City of Cumming.

Given the city's ongoing revenue limitations, and uncertainty about its future revenue streams, the projects and activities listed in the short-term work program may be: (a) deferred for one or more years; (b) moved to long-range; (c) reduced in scope if possible; and/or (d) deleted from the work program altogether. The city's administration will evaluate capital improvements and program needs each year during the budgeting process and will use the community work program as a guide in recommending priorities to the Mayor and City Council. If the city decides in the future not to implement one or more projects called for in the work program during the next five years, it will do so in a way that ensures the public health, safety, and general welfare will not be negatively impacted. When the city updates its comprehensive plan, it will further assess its funding capacity, re-evaluate the programs and initiatives called for in the community

work program, and report on its progress toward attaining the important objectives of the comprehensive plan.

**Table 6-1
 Community Work Program 2017 to 2021**

Description	Year to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Agency	Possible Funding Sources
Transportation – Local Street Maintenance				
Maintain, repair, replace all street maintenance equipment per pre-determined schedule	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	General Fund
Traffic signal management program	2017-2021	TBD	Planning	General Fund
Transportation improvements (e.g., restriping, intersections, signal timing)	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	General Fund
Implement street resurfacing program	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	General Fund
Transportation -- Sidewalks				
Update sidewalk inventory (downtown and city-wide components)	2017-2021	\$5,000	Administration	General Fund
Construct sidewalks along Atlanta Road (old SR 9) from Rest Haven to Veterans Memorial Boulevard	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Repair existing sidewalks where needed	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Transportation – Street Lighting				
Prepare street lighting improvement plan and capital program	2018	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget; Sawnee EMC
Transportation – Local Network Improvements				
Buford Dam Road: Extend from Atlanta Road (old SR 9) to Veterans Memorial Boulevard	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Construct east-west road network additions concurrent with development	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	City-Developer Partnership
Kelly Mill Road: widen to 3 lanes from SR 20 for about 0.8 mile	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Atlanta Road (Old SR 9): improve per plan	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Maple Street: Widen from Veterans Memorial Boulevard to Atlanta Road (old SR 9)	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Maple Street: Widen from Kelly Mill Road to State Route 20	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Camille and Ridgecrest Avenue: widen and construct intersection improvements and signalization at State Route 9, including sidewalks	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Brooks Farm: widen from SR 9 to Ridgecrest Avenue, including sidewalks	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Transportation – Arterial and Regional System				
Conduct State Route 20 (east-west) congestion relief or bypass study	2017-2021	\$125,000	Administration	MPO
Development/ Redevelopment				
Prepare Atlanta Road (old SR 9) subarea plan	2017	\$10,000	Planning	General Fund
Complete zoning ordinance revisions to implement plan (e.g., mixed-uses; design guidelines)	2018	\$15,000	Planning	General Fund
Prepare master plan for city-owned property along Pilgrim Mill Road including public services complex	2019	\$15,000	Planning	General Fund

Chapter 6, Community Work Program
City of Cumming, GA, Comprehensive Plan 2017-2037

Description	Year to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Agency	Possible Funding Sources
Explore establishment of a neighborhood improvement and community development program (e.g., CBDG)	2019	\$5,000	Planning; Housing Authority	Regional Commission
Property maintenance and/or housing code development and enforcement	Ongoing	Staff time	Planning	General Fund
Economic Development				
Establish Downtown Development Authority	2018	\$7,500	City Attorney	General Fund
Compile and maintain web-accessible data base of land development opportunities (city)	2018	Staff time	Public Information; Chamber of Commerce	General Fund
Prepare and implement a recruitment program with incentives for small businesses	2019	\$30,000	Administration	General Fund
Implement economic development program via Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	City Personnel	Administration	General Fund
Beautification/ Aesthetics				
Establish beautification or appearance commission, or ad-hoc committee	2018	Staff time	Administration	General Fund
Partner with Keep Forsyth Beautiful to institute tree planting programs along road rights of ways in the city	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Prepare new sign ordinance	2018	\$10,000	Planning and Zoning	General Fund
Implement streetscape projects (downtown and city-wide components)	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Design and install gateway signage and landscaping improvements	2019	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Parks and Recreation				
Add air conditioning and expand the number of basketball courts at Dobbs Creek Recreation Center	2018	TBD	Parks and Rec.	Capital Budget
Aquatic Center: add 600 square foot outdoor eating area with picnic tables and shade structure	2017-2018	\$10,000	Parks and Rec.	Capital Budget
Aquatic Center: Add building (13,125 sq. ft.) for pre-school pool with slide and adjacent splash pad; Also include 12 to 15-person hot tub/spa	2018	\$5,175,000	Parks and Rec.	Capital Budget
Aquatic Center: Add parking (some lost to building addition, plus additional expansion needed)	2018-2019	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget; SPLOST, other
Aquatic Center: Construct two additional cabanas (20' square in a 30' diameter cemented circular area)	2018-2019	TBD	Parks and Rec.	Capital Budget
Prepare master plan for Mary Alice Park	2018-2019	\$150,000	Administration	General Fund
Prepare/revise park master plan, with emphasis on all segments (youth, senior, disabled)	2019	\$65,000	Parks and Rec.; Fairgrounds	General Fund
Install new gymnastics facility at Dobbs Creek Recreation Center	2018-2021	\$1,000,000	Parks and Rec.	SPLOST; Capital Budget
Seek approval from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Mary Alice Park development	2020	Staff time	Administration	Capital Budget
Initiate additional cultural, civic, recreational programs per master plan	2020	Staff time	Parks and Rec.	General Fund

**Chapter 6, Community Work Program
City of Cumming, GA, Comprehensive Plan 2017-2037**

Description	Year to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Agency	Possible Funding Sources
Fairgrounds				
Install sun and wind screens on sides of arena	2017-2021	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Continue to resurface roadways within fairgrounds	2017-2021	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Install pedestrian bridge across Castleberry Road from parking lot #3 (Priority 1)	2017-2021	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Erect 8-10 foot retaining wall in front of arena and barn to enlarge vendor and sponsor area (Priority 2)	2017-2021	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Extend arena roof at rear of building (60-75') for more staging and floor seating area (Priority 3)	2017-2021	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Buildings/Grounds				
Prepare inventory and study of city property use and reuse	2018	Staff time	Administration	General Fund
Establish fund to acquire threatened historic structures	2018	Budget allocation	Administration	General Fund
Utilities – Water				
Update water master plan	2017	\$40,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Complete upgrade of water lines (to 24-inch) in the downtown area	2017-2021	\$700,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Upgrade 16-inch water line, SR 9 South	2017-2021	\$750,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install new 12-inch water line from Heard Industrial Boulevard to Hammonds Crossing	2018	TBD	Utilities	Utility funds
Install new 2 MG elevated water storage tank at Old Atlanta Road	2017-2025	\$3,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install 12-inch water line replacement along SR 369 from SR 9 to SR 306	2017-2021	\$2,500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install new 12-inch water line loop from Dr. Bramblett Road to Hendrix Road	2017-2021	\$2,500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Bethelview Road water (and sewer) improvements	2017-2021	\$3,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Pilgrim Mill Road 42-inch raw water line and 12-inch potable water line replacement	2017-2021	\$2,500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Hughes Drive/ Mountain Road potable water booster station	2017-2021	\$700,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install 12-inch water line along Lanier Parkway	2017-2021	\$300,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Smithdale Heights water booster station	2017-2021	\$700,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Mountainside water booster station	2017-2021	\$700,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Upgrade electrical and chemical feeds at potable water production facility upgrades; includes stream bank remediation	2017-2021	\$350,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Construction addition to raw water intake pumping capacity	2017-2025	\$5,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Utilities – Sanitary Sewer				
Update sanitary sewer master plan	2017	\$40,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Replace shop for distribution and collection division	2017-2021	\$250,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install new 4 MG clear well at PWWF	2017	\$8,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Complete the upgrade or replacement of the Haw Creek Road gravity sewer	2017	TBD	Utilities	Utility funds
Install new wastewater pump station and forced main at Settingdown Creek	2018	TBD	Utilities	Utility funds
Install new wastewater pump station and forced main at Mary Alice Park Road	2018	TBD	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Clay Creek wastewater pumping station	2017-2021	\$2,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Twin Branches wastewater pumping station	2017-2021	\$850,000	Utilities	Utility funds

**Chapter 6, Community Work Program
City of Cumming, GA, Comprehensive Plan 2017-2037**

Description	Year to be Implemented	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Agency	Possible Funding Sources
Install Mary Alice Park wastewater pumping station	2017-2021	\$850,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Bald Ridge Acres Drive wastewater pumping station	2017-2021	\$500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Chattahoochee River wastewater pumping station and force main	2017-2021	\$1,200,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Design development report for 7.5 MGD Lake AWRP	2017-2021	\$250,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Piedmont Corners gravity sewer extension to Mountain Road	2017-2021	\$750,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Settingdown Creek Outfall Sewer Line	2017-2021	\$2,500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Thalley Creek Outfall Sewer Line	2017-2021	\$2,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Haw Creek Gravity Sewer and FM Extension	2017-2021	\$1,500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Haw Creek Road sewer outfall to Ronald Reagan pump station	2017-2021	\$500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Upgrade Haw Creek Circle force main to 14-inch	2017-2021	\$300,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Lanier Parkway 12-inch sewer line	2017-2021	\$750,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Install Sawmill Branch gravity sewer relief line	2017-2021	\$3,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Decommission Cruise Marketplace pump stations	2017-2021	\$75,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Construct AWRP wetland mitigation education site	2017-2021	\$100,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Habersham WWTP facility and land acquisition for new AWRP	2017-2021	\$3,500,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Construct 7.5 MGD AWRP discharge into Lake Lanier	2017-2025	\$75,000,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Utilities – Stormwater				
Update stormwater master plan	2017-2021	\$40,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District compliance	2017-2021	\$200,000	Utilities	Utility funds
Broadband				
Determine needs and improve Fiber-optic/Broadband infrastructure	2019	TBD	Utilities	General Fund
Solid Waste Management				
Update solid waste management plan	Per schedule	Staff time or consultant	Administration	General Fund
Institute curbside recycling program	2018	Private Contractor	Administration	General Fund
Public Safety: Municipal Court and Police				
Hire / promote / designate a Court Administrator to separate Municipal Court from Police Department	2018	TBD	Administration; Police	General Fund
Purchase new copy/scan machine for courtroom	2018	TBD	Police	General Fund
Replace patrol vehicles as needed	2017-2021	\$35,000 ea.	Police	General Fund
Replace radios in vehicles and dispatch equipment as needed	2017-2021	TBD	Police	General Fund
Public Safety: Fire / Emergency Medical Services				
Improve fire and emergency medical service facilities	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Capital Budget
Institute innovations in control of crime, drugs, panhandling, other public concerns	2017-2021	TBD	Police	General Fund
Public Safety: Emergency Management				
Update tornado warning system	2018	\$90,000	Police	General Fund
Update emergency management and disaster preparedness plans	2017-2021	TBD	Administration	Grant from FEMA
Intergovernmental Coordination				
Renegotiate countywide service delivery strategy	2012-2022	Staff time	Administration	General Fund
Revisit and negotiate cooperative agreements with Forsyth County	2017-2021	Staff time	Administration	General Fund

TBD = To be determined

LONG-RANGE PLANS

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission prepares and maintains a regional comprehensive plan. It is important that the city's plan embrace regional goals, objectives, priorities and work programs. This comprehensive plan is not necessarily required to include reference to such regional goals and programs; however, the regional commission may suggest changes and refinements to more thoroughly embrace regional strategies.

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission, the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for Atlanta and the surrounding eighteen counties, has identified existing and future capacity needs for its region through its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is the Atlanta Regional Commission's long-range plan which includes a mix of projects such as bridges, bicycle paths, sidewalks, transit services, new and upgraded roadways, safety improvements, transportation demand management initiatives and emission reduction strategies. By federal law, the RTP must cover a minimum planning horizon of 20 years and be updated every four years in areas which do not meet federal air quality standards. A Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is developed annually based on the long-range RTP. Forsyth County has representation on the Atlanta Regional Commission's Transportation Coordinating Committee.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District was formed in 2001 and adopted comprehensive plans for stormwater, wastewater and water supply and water conservation in 2003 which were subsequently updated.

The Metro Water District's Wastewater Management Plan is a regional planning document that must be implemented by the local governments and local wastewater providers. To be compliant with mandates of the water district, Cumming needs to continue periodically updating its local wastewater master plan (also called wastewater management plan). Local wastewater master plans need to be integrated with the Metro Water District's Wastewater Management Plan as well as other state and regional plans.

The Metro Water District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan is a regional planning document that must be implemented by the local governments and local water providers. To be compliant with mandates of the water district, Cumming needs to continue periodically updating its local water supply and water conservation master plan. Local water master plans need to be integrated with the Metro Water District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan as well as other state and regional plans, including the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan.

Watersheds do not adhere to political boundaries of counties and cities. It is not uncommon for watersheds to cross over several cities and counties. Therefore, protection of watersheds and (by extension) stormwater management programs must also be treated as intergovernmental issues. Cities are generally too small to take on many of the important watershed protection and stormwater management functions that are likely to be needed during the planning horizon, and there are important economies of scale in terms of performing watershed assessments and providing for regionwide stormwater facilities. In addition, there are mandates that the City of Cumming continue complying with certain local planning requirements and local management measures for watershed management.

MUNICIPAL LONG RANGE PROJECTS

Table 6-2 provides a list of long-range capital needs identified by the city. Funding sources for these improvements are not yet determined or secured.

**Table 6-2
 Long-Range Projects
 City of Cumming**

Description	Estimated Cost (\$)	Responsible Agency	Possible Funding Sources
Transportation			
Prepare city multi-modal transportation plan (roads, bicycle, pedestrian, multi-use, and public transit)	\$50,000	Administration	Capital Budget; GDOT
State Route 20 bypass/ improvement	TBD	Administration	GDOT
Explore and if feasible implement an inner-city, intra-county transit/shuttle system (public or private)	TBD	Administration	General Fund; GDOT
Development/Redevelopment			
Implement improvements to central business district	TBD	Planning	Capital Budget
Develop Mary Alice Park	\$6,000,000	Administration; Parks and Rec.	SPLOST; Capital Budget; Grants
Parks and Recreation			
Acquire additional land for expansion of Cumming City Park	\$2,000,000	Park and Rec.	SPLOST; Capital Budget
Aquatic center: Additional indoor/outdoor 25-yard, 8-lane swimming pool with diving well and retractable roof	\$3,630,000	Park and Rec.	SPLOST; Capital Budget
Aquatic center: Additional office, storage, additional activity room, and locker room with toilets and showers	TBD	Park and Rec.	SPLOST; Capital Budget
Utilities – Water			
Construct 12.0 MGD addition to city’s 24 MGD Potable Water Production Facility (PWWF)	\$24,000,000	Utilities	Utilities Funds
Construct addition to raw water intake pumping capacity	\$5,000,000	Utilities	Utilities Funds
Construct South Ridge 2 MG elevated water storage tank	\$3,500,000	Utilities	Utilities Funds
Construct Hendrix Road 2 MG elevated water storage tank	\$3,500,000	Utilities	Utilities Funds
Undertake exploratory study on future water supply source(s)	TBD	Utilities	Utilities Funds
Utilities – Sanitary Sewer			
Construct 7.5 MGD AWRF addition to city’s existing 7.5 MGD AWRF	\$75,000,000	Utilities	Utilities Funds
Fairgrounds			
Add additional audio speakers to arena sound system (Priority 6)	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Relocate all Heritage Village buildings to new church property, freeing up more vendor and rides space on lower grounds (Priority 8)	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Develop additional parking facilities at 25-acre site (upon acquisition) (Priority 10)	TBD	Fairgrounds	Capital Budget
Public Safety: Police			
Remodel existing building or construct a new police headquarters building and/or public safety complex	TBD	Police; County Fire; EMS	SPLOST; Capital Budget
Purchase a modular firing range	TBD	Police	Capital Budget
Public Safety: Municipal Court			
Construct a separate municipal court facility; including technology throughout new courtroom	TBD	Administration; Court Administrator	SPLOST; Capital Budget

Appendix A
Report of Accomplishments
Short-Term Work Program
FY 2012 to FY 2016

Description	Year(s)	Responsible Party	Status of Work Program Item:
NATURAL RESOURCES			
Map future conditions floodplain	FY 2012 to FY 2014	GA DNR; Metro N. Ga. Water	Complete
Monitor application of policies for difficult development sites; consider additional regulations if warranted	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Planning & Zoning	Complete
LAND USE			
Review and revise all web-based materials regarding land development process	FY 2012	Planning & Zoning	Complete
Monitor attainment of community vision and report to city council	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Planning & Zoning	Complete
Prepare redevelopment plan for Atlanta Road (SR 9) corridor	FY 2013	Planning & Zoning	In Process: included in work program
Prepare design guidelines for difficult development sites, traditional neighborhood development within mixed-use master planned developments, and general aesthetic improvement	FY 2014	Planning & Zoning	Canceled in part; work scope included in work program under zoning ordinance
Prepare redevelopment plan for Central Business District (CBD)	FY 2015	Planning & Zoning	Cancelled – no longer considered necessary
STREET DEPARTMENT AND BEAUTIFICATION			
Maintain, repair, replace all equipment according to pre-determined schedule, including forklift, ditchwitch, skid steer, loader, tractor, cat, crane, compressor(s)	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Complete
Partner with Keep Forsyth Beautiful to institute tree planting programs along road rights of ways in the city	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Complete
Install pedestrian lighting from central business district to city limits on Pilgrim Mill Road	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Complete
COMMUNITY FACILITIES: POLICE			
Add additional sworn officers to maintain level of service for police force	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Police	Complete
Replace patrol vehicles as needed	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Police	In Process – included in work program
Replace radios in vehicles and dispatch equipment as needed	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Police	In process – included in work program
Add discreet shotgun racks to two patrol vehicles	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Police	Cancelled – handled in operating budget
Add a walk-through magnetometer to the Municipal Court	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Police	Cancelled – handled in operating budget
COMMUNITY FACILITIES: FAIRGROUNDS			
Reseal all Heritage Village buildings	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Fairgrounds	Complete (2013)
Repaint or reseal all Indian Village buildings	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Fairgrounds	Complete (2013)
Repaint steel beams for covered arena	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Fairgrounds	Complete (2016)
Install sun and wind screens on sides of arena	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Fairgrounds	Postponed – lack of funds – included in work program

**Appendix A, Report of Accomplishments, 2012-2016 Short-term Work Program
City of Cumming, GA, Comprehensive Plan 2017-2037**

Resurface roadways within fairgrounds	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Fairgrounds	Partially complete (2015); annual patching required
Description	Year(s)	Responsible Party	Status of Work Program Item:
COMMUNITY FACILITIES: UTILITIES			
Update comprehensive solid waste management plan	Per recertification deadline	Utilities	Complete
Upgrade/replace water lines in downtown area	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	In process – included in work program
Install new 4 MG clear well at PWWP and sludge collection system in 1996 and 1997 plants	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Postponed – included in sewer work program
Upgrade /replace wastewater pumping station and forced main at Ronald Reagan Boulevard	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Complete
Upgrade /replace Haw Creek Road gravity sewer	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	In Process – included in sewer work program
Install new wastewater pump station and forced main at Mary Alice Park Road	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Postponed – lack of funds; included in sewer work program
Remove wastewater pumping stations #1 and #2 and allow to gravity flow to Sanders Road pump station	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Complete
Install new wastewater pump station and forced main at Baldrige Marina Road	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Complete
Install new wastewater pump station and forced main at Lanier Beach South	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Complete
Install new wastewater pump station and forced main at Settingdown Creek	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	In process – included in sewer work program
Install new 2 MG elevated water storage tank at Old Atlanta Road	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Postponed – lack of funds; included in water work program
Install new gravity sewer line, Piedmont Corners	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Postponed – lack of funds, included in sewer work program
Upgrade/replace 16-inch water line, SR 9 South	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Postponed – lack of easements, included in water work program
Install new 12-inch water line loop from Dr. Bramblett Road to Hendrix Road	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Complete
Install new 12-inch water line from Heard Industrial Boulevard to Hammonds Crossing	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Utilities	Postponed – lack of funds, included in water work program
COMMUNITY FACILITIES: RECREATION AND PARKS			
Replace/upgrade department offices	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Recreation and Parks	Complete (2016)
Redevelop Cumming City Park	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Recreation and Parks	Complete
Acquire land and/or easements for greenway trail along Kelly Mill Branch; complete preliminary design for greenway trail in city	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Recreation and Parks	Cancelled – lack of support for project
Add air conditioning; Expand the number of basketball courts at Dobbs Creek Recreation Center	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Recreation and Parks	Postponed to coordinate with related project – included in work program

**Appendix A, Report of Accomplishments, 2012-2016 Short-term Work Program
City of Cumming, GA, Comprehensive Plan 2017-2037**

TRANSPORTATION – STREETS			
Repair existing sidewalks where needed	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Complete
Kelly Mill Road: widen to 3 lanes from SR 20 for about 0.8 mile	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Postponed – need was not immediate – included in work program
Sanders Road: redesign and widen to 4 lanes from Mary Alice Park Road to Buford Dam Road, including sidewalks	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Cancelled (county road)
State Route 9: Widen north of the Town Square (about 2 miles)	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Georgia Dept. of Transportation	Cancelled (not in state work program)
Maple Street: Widen from Veterans Memorial Boulevard to SR 9	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Postponed – lack of funds – included in work program
Maple Street: Widen from Kelly Mill Road to State Route 20	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Postponed – lack of funds – included in work program
Buford Dam Road: Extend from SR 9 (now Atlanta Road) to Veterans Memorial Boulevard	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets; private developer	Postponed – need to coordinate timing with developer – included in work program
Description	Year(s)	Responsible Party	Status of Work Program Item:
Pilgrim Mill Road – widen from city limits to Georgia 400	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Forsyth County	Cancelled – County jurisdiction
Church Street: Extend to State Route 20	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Completed by developer
Camille and Ridgecrest Avenue: Widen and construct intersection improvements and signalization at State Route 9, including sidewalks	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Complete
Brooks Farm: Widen from SR 9 to Ridgecrest Avenue, including sidewalks	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	In Process – included in work program
Tolbert Street: Resurface	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Complete
TRANSPORTATION -- SIDEWALKS			
SR 9 South (Atlanta Road) sidewalks from Rest Haven to Veterans Memorial Boulevard	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Streets	Cancelled pending subarea plan; no longer a state route
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION			
Reconsider and revise intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Administration	In process – included in work program
Revise/seek agreement of countywide service delivery strategy	FY 2011- FY2012	Administration	Complete
Annexation – pursue annexation plans	FY 2012 to FY 2016	Administration; Planning & Zoning	Cancelled – policy preference to initiate with property owner consent

**Status of Long-Range Capital Projects, City of Cumming
 2012 Comprehensive Plan**

Description	Year(s) To Be Implemented	Responsible Party	Status of Long-Range Project
FACILITIES: FAIRGROUNDS			
Erect 8-10 foot retaining wall in front of arena and barn to enlarge vendor and sponsor area	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #4
Add additional audio speakers to arena sound system	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #6
Extend arena roof at rear of building (60-75') for more staging and floor seating area	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #5
Acquire church property at Tolbert St. and Dogwood Street for future expansion	Long Range	Administration; City Council	Priority #3
Relocate all Heritage Village buildings to new church property, freeing up more vendor and rides space on lower grounds	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #8
Acquire Elzey property on Tolbert Street to provide for future expansion of fairgrounds	Long Range	Administration; City Council	Priority #2
Install pedestrian bridge across Castleberry Road from parking lot #3	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #1
Acquire old county site (25 acres) on Kelly Mill Road and Tolbert Street for additional parking and other city facilities	Long Range	Administration; City Council	Complete (Acquired 2012)
Remediation of 25-acre site (upon acquisition)	Long Range	Administration	Incomplete
Lease portion of 25-acre site (upon acquisition) to hotel chain for construction of convention and meeting building	Long Range	Administration; Chamber of Commerce	Incomplete
Develop additional parking facilities at 25-acre site (upon acquisition)	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #10
Acquire Flex-Fab property (now industrial) for expansion of Indian Village and Fairgrounds	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Cancelled
Acquire old Wheeler's Lumber Co. property (across Castleberry Road) for expansion of Indian Village and Fairgrounds	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #7
Develop old Wheeler's Lumber Co. property (across Castleberry Road) for major hotel and/or condominiums	Long Range	Fairgrounds	Priority #9
FACILITIES: PARKS AND RECREATION			
Acquire additional land for expansion of Cumming City Park	Long Range	Recreation and Parks	Complete
Construct a conference center and amphitheater on the 100+acre site at Mary Alice Park	Long Range	Recreation and Parks	
FACILITIES: WATER AND SEWER			
Construct new 7.5 MGD Lake Lanier AWRF	Long Range	Utilities	In process: Study completed; design report in process
Construct new 12 MGD Potable Water production facility (upgrade capacity to 36 MGD)	Long Range	Utilities	
FACILITIES: POLICE FACILITY			
Construct new police headquarters building	Long Range	Administration; Police	