CHAPTER THREE: LAND USE

3.0 Introduction

This section contains a review of existing conditions, analysis of land use issues, and recommendations for the future land use for the City of Auburn, looking forward to the year 2030. The heart of this section, and of the CompPlan as a whole, is the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan contains recommended land use designations for over 18,000 parcels in the Auburn city limits as of the writing of this plan as well as those areas the City may annex between 2011 and 2030.

What is the difference between land use and zoning?
Zoning is a tool used to implement plans and policies. It is a legal, enforceable part of City Code that is used to regulate the use of land and the type, scale, and intensity of use on that land.

Current land use is a description of how a parcel of land is currently being used; broad categories include residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional; land use designations can also be more specific. The **Future Land Use Plan** is *advisory* in nature and is intended to help achieve Auburn's long-range vision. The Future Land Use Plan provides parcel-level recommendations for the type, location and scale of new development for the existing city limits as well as areas the City may grow into over the next two decades. A parcel's future land use designation may be the same or may differ from what it is currently used for. If the designation is the same as its current use, then the Future Land Use Plan is advocating that no change occur. If the designation is different than the current use, the Future Land Use Plan is advocating that change to the "new" use be permitted, as redevelopment, *et cetera* occur over time.

3.1 Existing Conditions

The City of Auburn has seen tremendous growth since 1970, more than doubling in population since that date. The City has grown geographically during that period, from 17.16 square miles to 56.65 square miles in 2011.

Zoning

Table 3.1 - Zoning

Category	Acres	%
CC (Commercial Conservation District)	252.4	0.8%
CDD (Comprehensive Development District)	6085.7	19.3%
DD-H (Development District – Housing)	4298.1	13.6%
HD (Holding District)	3159.6	10.0%
I (Industrial District)	1367.3	4.3%
LDD (Limited Development District)	1129.3	3.6%
NC (Neighborhood Conservation Districts – Combined)	4026	12.8%
R (Rural District)	10430.1	33.1%
RDD (Redevelopment District)	457.0	1.4%
UC (Urban Core)	56.2	0.2%
US (University Service District)	288.3	0.9%

Table 3.2 - Overlay Zones		
Category	Acres	% of City
CEOD (College Edge Overlay District)	14.7	0.04%
COD (Conservation Overlay District)	3009	8.92%
PDD (Planned Development District)	3838.6	11.38%

The City's zoning is a modified performance zoning ordinance that utilizes less distinct zoning districts in favor of more general districts that require buffering between uses. One area of note is the large amount of land zoned CDD, Comprehensive Development District, which allows the broadest and most intense mix of uses of any zoning district in the City.

Land Use

Land use is a description of how land is occupied or utilized. The City of Auburn's current land use is broken down as follows:

Table 3.3 - Current Land Use						
Category	Parcel Count	%	Units	%	Acres	%
Residential	**12,422**	**74.0%**	**26,429**	**98.8%**	**12,049**	**34.9%**
Single-Unit	10,381	61.8%	10,329	38.6%	10,381	28.5%
Duplex	875	5.2%	1,765	6.6%	272	0.8%
Triplex	15	0.1%	44	0.2%	6	~
Quadplex	3	~	12	~	2	~
Apartments/Condominiums	325	1.9%	12,149	45.4%	1,296	3.8%
Dormitory – Off-Campus	10	0.1%	200	0.7%	17	~
Townhouses	784	4.7%	784	2.9%	88	0.3%
Group Home/Retirement Home	8	~	n/a	n/a	69	0.2%
Mobile Homes	18	0.0%	1,045	3.9%	266	0.8%
Other	n/a	n/a	123	0.5%	n/a	n/a
Commercial	**557**	**3.3%**	**n/a**	**1.2%**	**852**	**2.5%**
Mixed-Use (inc. residential)	22	0.1%	308	1.2%	28	0.1%
Industrial/Manufacturing	**98**	**0.6%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**974**	**2.8%**
Government/Social/Institutional	**133**	**0.8%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**844**	**2.4%**
Transportation	**32**	**0.2%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**226**	**0.7%**
Agricultural	**6**	**~**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**832**	**2.4%**
Recreational/Open Space	**237**	**1.4%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**1,727**	**5.0%**
Religious	**43**	**0.3%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**159**	**0.5%**
University	**96**	**0.6%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**5,432**	**15.7%**
Vacant	**3,163**	**18.8%**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**11,414**	**33.1%**
Total	**16,787**	**100%**	**26,761**	**100%**	**34,509**	**100%**
Notes: ~ indicates a number that is negligible. Percentages may not add to 100% in all cases.						

Lands classified as "university" are owned by Auburn University. Lands classified as "recreation and open space" are protected from development, while lands classified as "vacant" may currently exist

as open space, but could be developed in the future. The high percentage of vacant land suggests opportunities for infill development. See Map 3.1 for the current land use map.

Subdivision Activity

Auburn has seen significant subdivision activity in recent years. Since October of 2007, 6,472 single-family lots (including 3,087 in planned development districts) and nearly 285 townhouse lots have been approved. Many of the approved lots remain unbuilt as of this writing.

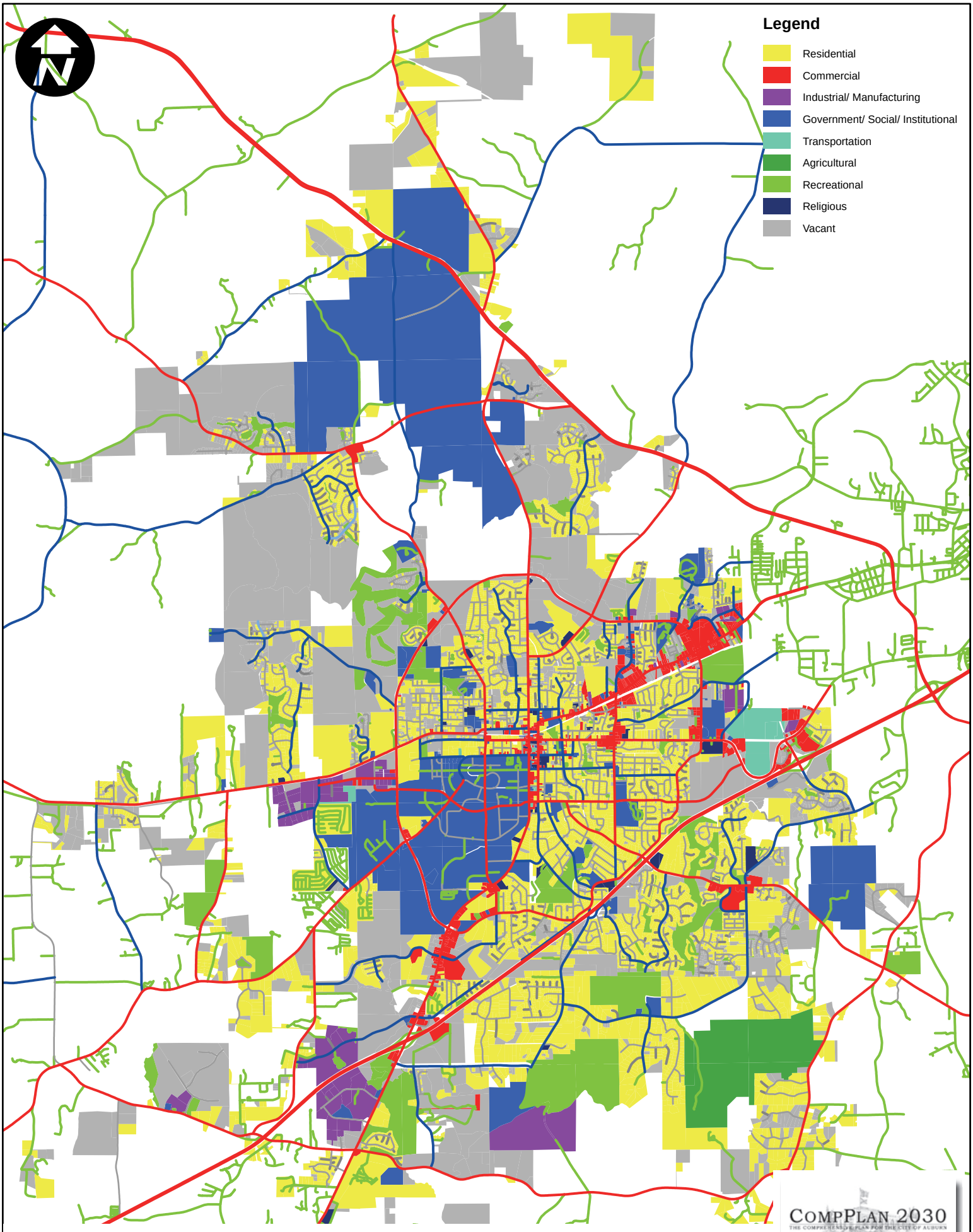
Building Permits:

Permitting activity has been strong in Auburn for the last decade. While the economic downturn affected residential building activity in 2008 and 2009, permit activity has rebounded since that time. It should be noted that apartment/condominium permits are issued per building, and not per unit.

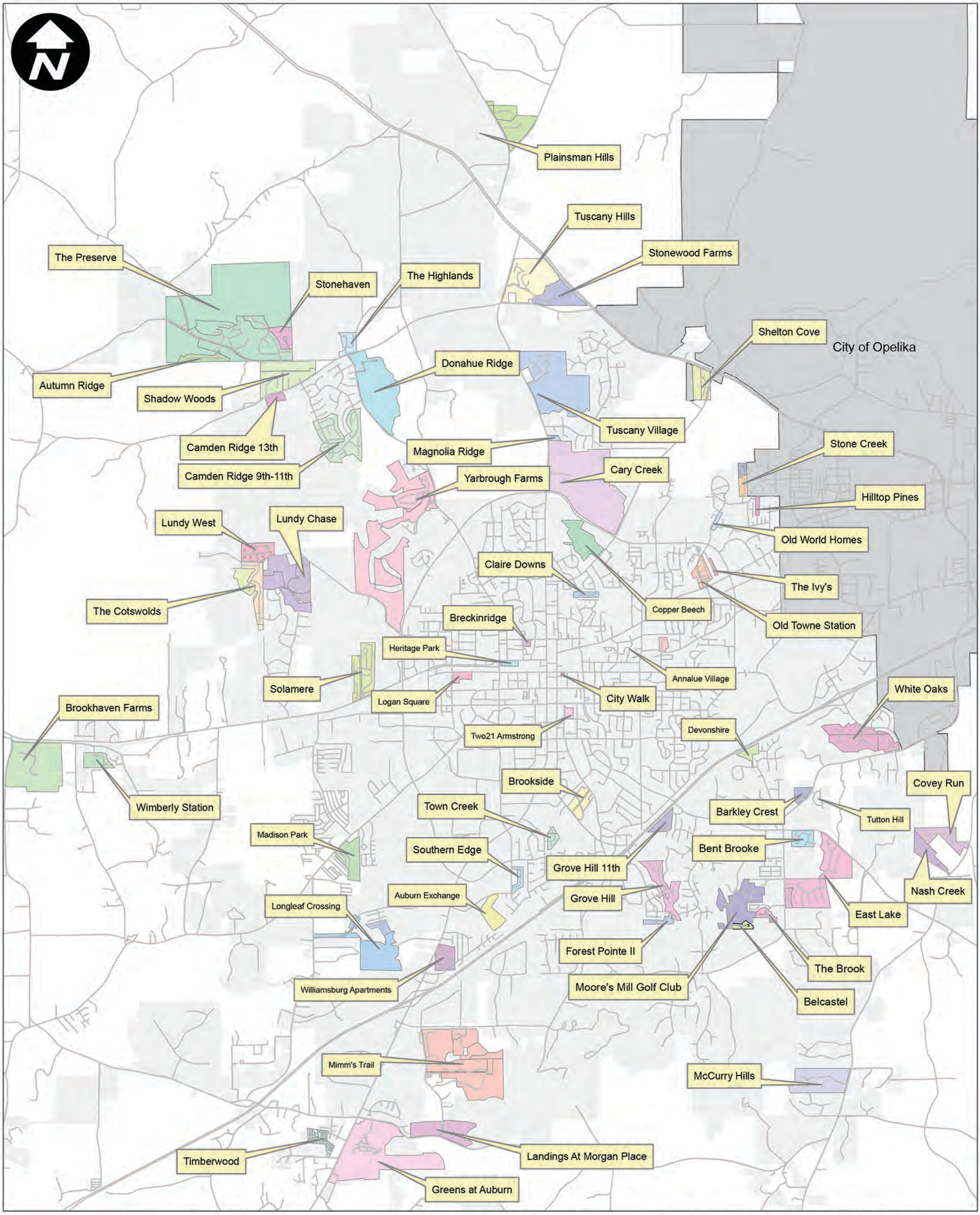
Table 3.4 - Building Permits

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Residential	**499**	**552**	**645**	**763**	**727**	**733**	**626**	**420**	**436**	**519**
Single-Unit detached	254	278	348	480	486	480	334	223	243	308
Single-Unit attached	26	22	44	48	28	50	85	14	0	12
Duplex	16	42	42	35	23	26	20	6	5	0
Triplex/Quadplex	1	10	11	1	0	1	0	7	1	0
Apartments/Condominiums	13	14	17	13	12	12	15	6	10	2
Alterations/Additions/etc.	189	186	184	185	178	164	172	164	187	197
Commercial/Industrial/Other	**105**	**99**	**107**	**119**	**91**	**67**	**106**	**94**	**107**	**97**
Buildings	39	35	40	52	19	22	37	38	43	28
Alterations/Additions/etc.	66	64	67	67	72	45	69	56	64	69
Other Structures and Roofing	**118**	**101**	**157**	**138**	**114**	**141**	**137**	**121**	**96**	**188**
Total Permits Issued	**722**	**752**	**909**	**1020**	**932**	**941**	**869**	**635**	**639**	**804**

Note: All years are fiscal.



Map 3.1: Current Land Use



Subdivision	Lots	Subdivision	Lots	Subdivision	Lots	Multifamily	Units	Townhomes/Duplexes	Lots
Annalue Village	18	Grove Hill 11th	76	Stone Creek	68	Auburn Exchange	312	East Lake Townhomes	45
Autumn Ridge	37	Highlands	81	The Cotswolds	155	City Walk Condos	54	Old World Townhomes	65
Autumn Ridge	178	Landing at Morgan Place	65	The Preserve*	1328	Copper Beech	474	Longleaf Crossing Phs III	19
Barkley Crest	178	Lundy Chase	14	The Summit*	637	Devonshire	55	Old Towne Station	97
Bent Brooke	47	Lundy West	175	The Brook	27	Forest Pointe II	14	The Ivy's	28
Breckinridge	49	Magnolia Ridge	26	Town Creek	28	Greens at Auburn	924	Oxley Manor	31
Brookhaven Farms	71	McCurry Hills	110	Tuscany Hills	65	Heritage Park	106		
Camden Ridge	21	Moores Mill Golf Course	14	Tuscany Village*	264	Logan Square	121		
Cary Creek*	302	Nash Creek	23	Tutton Hill	55	Madison Park	497		
Claire Downs	889	Plainsman Hills I-II	49	Grove Hill 11th	76	Perry Park	18	**Total Single Family Lots**	**6472**
Covey Run	30	Shadow Woods	35	White Oaks	120	Williamsburg Apts	247		
Donahue Ridge	10	Shelton Cove	260	Wimberly Station	106	Two21 Armstrong	156	**Total Townhome Lots**	**285**
East Lake	40	Solamere	45	Yarbrough Farms*	556	Brookside	29		
Grove Hill	56	Southern Edge	88					**Total Multi-family Units**	**3007**

* Includes Proposed numbers based on a Master Plan

(All subdivisions received approval from Planning Commission or were in developmental phases between October 2007 and April 2011)

Map 3.2: Residential Developments in the City of Auburn

3.2 Future Land Use Plan

3.2.1 Principles

The development of the Future Land Use Plan was an iterative process that incorporated community input, advanced modeling, and the best practices of planning. The principles that follow were developed from community input as well as the best practices of planning. They helped shape the Future Land Use Plan map itself as well as the recommendations that follow.

Promote infill development and redevelopment and reduce sprawl.

One thing that became clear as analysis was completed on the City's pattern of current land use was that many opportunities exist for developing close-in areas and redeveloping areas that are in decline. This can help to reverse the City's pattern of sprawl and encourage investment in areas that are already well-served by City services.

Provide an expanded urban core.

Downtown Auburn is the heart of the City, and is well-loved by both residents and visitors. The growth of Auburn's population, though, has out-paced the growth of downtown, so opportunities exist to expand downtown to meet the needs of Auburn's growing population.

Provide options for developing new mixed-use centers.

Auburn's existing mixed-use centers, such as downtown and the area centered on the intersection of Moore's Mill and Ogletree Roads, are some of Auburn's best-liked neighborhoods, offering daily needs in close proximity to residences and a visitor experience that is not centered on the automobile. Opportunities exist to provide new mixed-use centers (hereafter referred to as *nodes*) throughout the City. More information on nodes, including a full listing of their benefits, is in Nodes, Section 3.3.

Encourage a development pattern that promotes transportation choices.

The dominant form of transportation of Auburn is and in the future will remain the automobile. Auburn's road network, however, will face increasing strain in terms of providing an adequate level-of-service to get those automobiles from place to place. Opportunities exist to reduce the strain on the road network by providing for alternate forms of transportation, including walking, biking, and bus service. Encouraging infill development and mixed-use centers are two ways to develop that are supportive of these alternate forms of transportation.

Limit multi-family development to infill and mixed-use areas.

Auburn has seen a significant amount of multi-family construction in the last several years, with 3,007 multi-family units approved since late 2007. As the demographics of the City shift to include a smaller proportion of students, the need for additional multi-family units will decline. Placing new multi-family units in infill and mixed-use areas will help encourage development of those areas and lessen the strain on the City's road network.

3.2.2 Auburn Interactive Growth Model

The Future Land Use Plan was developed with the assistance of the Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM). The AIGM is a rule-based (zoning) and analytical tool for predicting the total population and population distribution of Auburn over time. The model helps us predict the

location of future growth based on a variety of factors. Other components of the model assist in predicting optimal future locations for schools, parks, commercial centers, and fire stations.

The AIGM consists of a number of separate but linked models, including demographic, economic, socio-political, spatial relationship, and land resource models. The AIGM is a very complex model applied to a very complex environment, but it provides the City of Auburn with a valuable tool in predicting where future population growth will occur. AIGM modeling serves as the foundation of the Future Land Use Plan.

The AIGM allows City staff to test what impact changes to land uses, zoning, or other factors will have on our future growth. As part of the development of the future land use plan, three scenarios were examined:

- 2009 baseline scenario
- Optimal boundary scenario
- Concept plan scenario

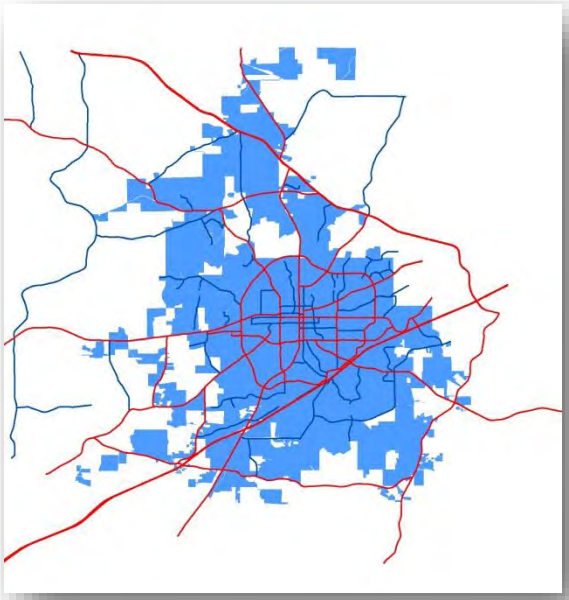
2009 Baseline Scenario

Briefly, the 2009 baseline scenario:

- Uses existing city limits and zoning
- Assumes area outside city develops at 1 unit per acre
- Updated annually

The baseline scenario tells us where growth and development is projected to occur by 2030 based on existing city limits and zoning and the model's internal features. This scenario is what will occur if Auburn's existing zoning and city limits do not change between now and 2030.

2009 Baseline Scenario

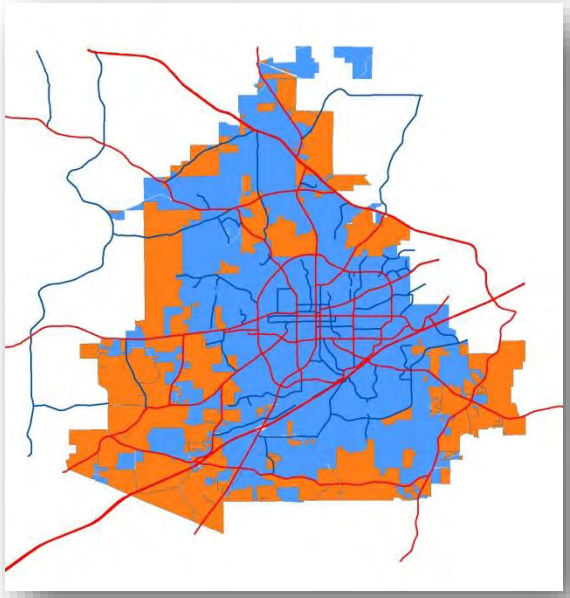


Optimal Boundary Scenario

Briefly:

- Uses existing zoning inside city limits (blue)
- Assumes optimal boundary (orange) will develop at 1 unit per 3 acres
- Optimal boundary will be part of City by 2030

Optimal Boundary Scenario



The AIGM allocates population in the study area based on the existing corporate boundary of the City. Since it is understood that the City's corporate boundary will continue to grow over time, it was necessary to attempt to project where it might be most desirable for the City to grow geographically over the next twenty years. Developing the optimal 2030 corporate boundary was the first step in developing the land use plan.

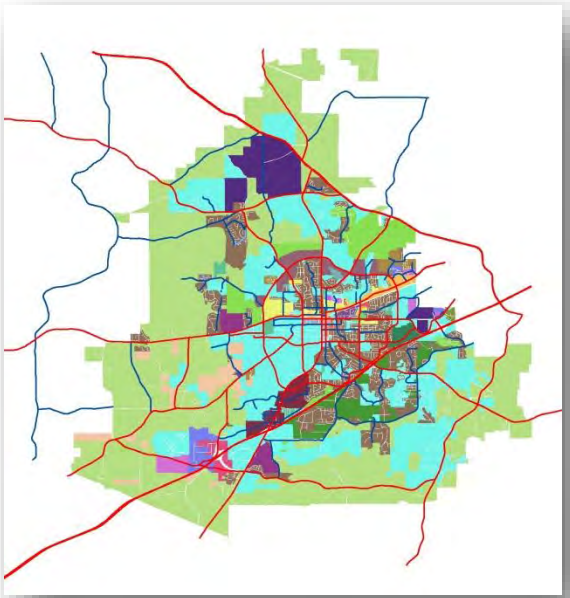
The boundary was developed using a GIS model developed at the City of Auburn. For more information on the model, see Appendix C. The resulting boundary, an area of approximately 37 square miles, consists of those areas that are most logical to be part of the City in 2030 based on the priorities of the CompPlan. The Future Land Use Plan provides recommendations for this area as well as the existing City limits.

Concept Plan Scenario

Briefly:

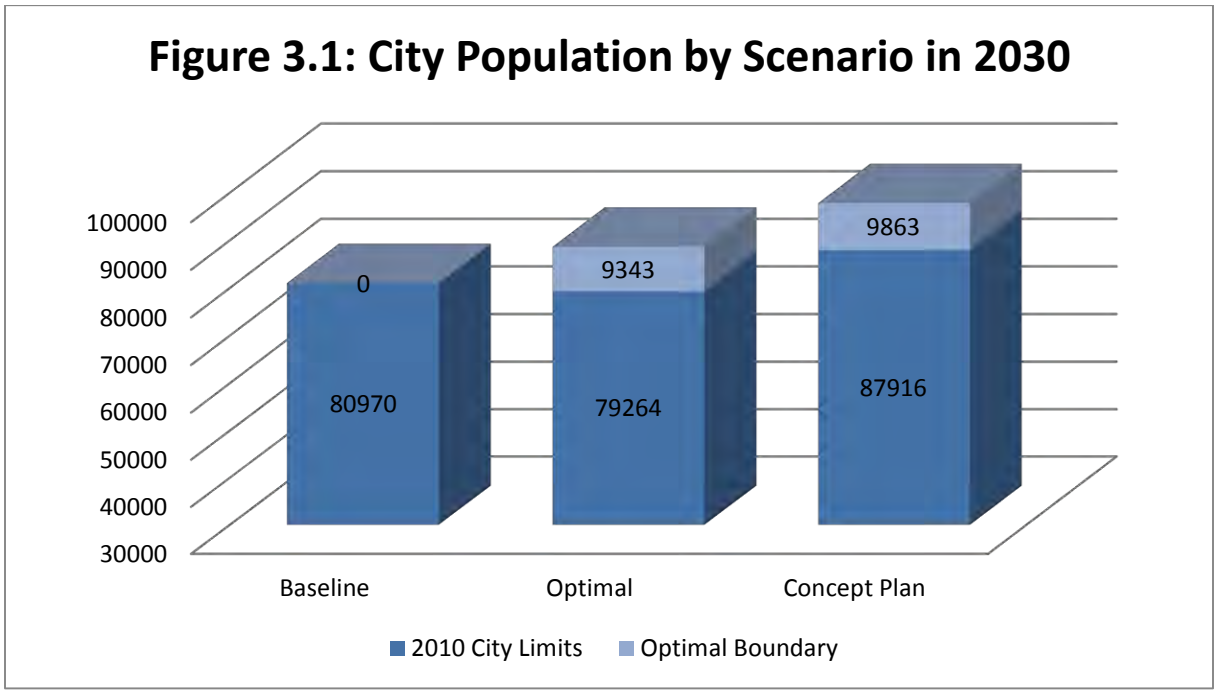
- Tested effect of focusing development within the existing city limits
- Future Land Use Plan was developed from this scenario

Concept Plan Scenario



Once an optimal boundary was established, a final scenario was run. The concept plan scenario tested changes to Auburn's current growth pattern, and began with the optimal boundary scenario as its basis. The concept plan scenario focused on infill development and transition of close-in rural land to denser residential uses. The scenario identified areas of change, no change, transition, and redevelopment. The resulting scenario showed increased density in and around the urban core as well as in areas currently zoned rural that will transition to denser uses under the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is derived directly from the concept plan scenario, with limited changes.

Infill Focus



The chart above shows Auburn's projected population in the year 2030 by scenario. As noted above, one of the defining factors used in developing the concept plan scenario was a focus on infill development. This focus is apparent when comparing where the City's future population is projected to live. Under the concept plan, 87,916 people are projected to live in the approximately 56 square miles that makeup the existing City limits. Only 9,863 are projected to live in the 37 additional square miles of the optimal boundary. This focus on infill development will help limit sprawl and ensure the City is able to effectively and efficiently deliver services in the future.

3.2.3 Future Land Use Plan Categories

Each parcel on the Future Land Use Map has a designation. The following list describes each category in detail. Some areas are also covered in additional detail in the focus areas section immediately following this section. When a category specifies a desirable percentage of uses, that percentage is intended to be maintained across all parcels in the category, not any individual parcels.

Category List

- 280 Corridor Reserve
    - The intent of this classification is to maintain the long-term development potential of the corridor while directing development towards infill areas for the time horizon of the CompPlan. Most uses are conditional and significant setbacks for residential uses are recommended to preserve the corridor's long-term development potential.
- Conservation/Cluster Residential
    - Conservation subdivisions are encouraged, with a five (5) acre minimum size for conservation subdivisions. Conservations subdivisions may develop at two (2) dwelling units per acre; all other development may develop at one (1) dwelling unit per acre.

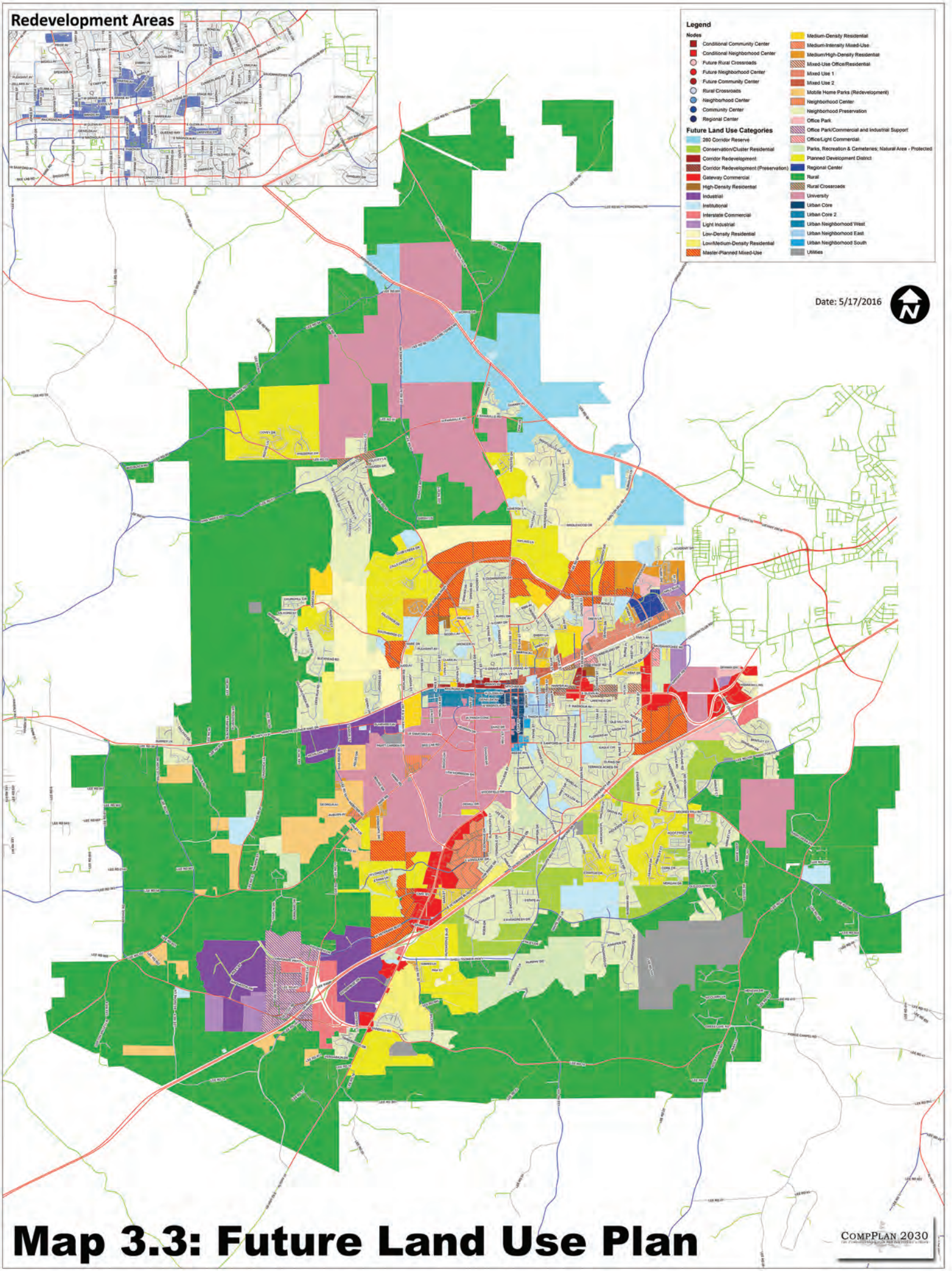
- Corridor Redevelopment
    - Redevelopment is encouraged, with incentives for redevelopment, reduced setbacks, shared parking, and possible City investments in infrastructure. The average breakdown of uses should be 85% commercial, 5% office, and 10% residential (12 du/ac).
- Corridor Redevelopment (Preservation)
    - Redevelopment is encouraged, but reuse and protection of existing historic structures is a priority. The average breakdown of uses should be 85% commercial, 5% office, and 10% residential (12 du/ac).
- Gateway Commercial
    - Broad mix of uses (see CDD zone) along existing corridors with emphasis on access management, corridor overlay requirements and quality aesthetics. Multi-family uses are conditional.
- High-Density Residential
    - Maximum density of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include all residential uses except manufactured homes.
- High-Density Residential (Redevelopment) *see redevelopment inset on Future Land Use Map*
    - Maximum density of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include all residential uses except manufactured homes. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Industrial
    - Existing industrial uses. Future industrial uses will be accommodated through future industrial parks, with locations to be determined.
- Institutional
    - Institutional uses include schools, churches, and government buildings.
- Interstate Commercial
    - Uses to serve the traveling public, such as hospitality uses, restaurants, and gas stations.
- Light Industrial
    - Intended to accommodate commercial support and light industrial uses, such as wholesale warehouses and services such as exterminators, plumbers, et cetera.
- Low-Density Residential
    - Average density of four (4) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached and duplex.
- Low-Density Residential (Indian Hills)
  See redevelopment inset on Future Land Use Map and Focus Area section
    - Property must be assembled incrementally to allow transition to gateway commercial. Otherwise, average density of four (4) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached and duplex.
- Low-Density Residential (Redevelopment) *see redevelopment inset on Future Land Use Map*
    - Average density of four (4) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached and duplex. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.

- Low/Medium-Density Residential
    - Average density of six (6) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development.
- Low/Medium-Density Residential (Redevelopment) *See redevelopment inset on Future Land Use Map*
    - Average density of six (6) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Master-Planned Mixed-Use
    - Broad mix of uses (similar to CDD zone) with conditional multiple-unit development. Must take access from internal network of streets and incentives are offered for implementing nodal principles. Form-based overlay zone permitted.
- Medium-Density Residential
    - Average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development.
- Medium-Density Residential (Redevelopment) *see redevelopment inset on Future Land Use Map*
    - Average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre. Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, and traditional neighborhood development. Incentives and assistance may be offered for redevelopment.
- Medium-Intensity Mixed-Use
    - Permitted uses include low and medium density residential, office, and neighborhood commercial.
- Medium/High-Density Residential
    - Average density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre for medium-density (75% of area) and sixteen (16) du/ac for high-density (25% of area). Permitted uses include single-family detached, zero lot line, townhouse, duplex, apartments, and traditional neighborhood development.
- Medium/High-Density Residential (Redevelopment) *See redevelopment inset on Future Land Use Map*
    - Encourage redevelopment with similar mix of uses and densities. Average densities of sixteen (16) dwelling units per acre for multi-family (50% of overall area), 7.5 du/ac for duplexes (40% of overall area), and 3.5 du/ac for single-family (10 % of overall area).
- Mixed Use 1
    - This category represents the area located along the corridor between the center locations as well as the area of the corridor located between the Mall and the city limits line. This designation may include retail, commercial, residential and office uses. Setbacks are intended to be larger and lot coverage to be smaller than the centers. Connectivity between parking lots is encouraged, along with shared parking. A mixture of uses is expected to be more horizontal than vertical. Due to the high quantity of commercial uses, residential uses are conditional except for single family detached which is not permitted.

- Mixed Use 2
    - This category is intended to have more urban feel than the remainder of the corridor and appropriately transition downtown to the regional commercial center to the East. Uses are focused on retail and adaptive reuse of existing structures, where possible. Residential uses are permitted in integration with retail uses, albeit at a lower intensity than in the Neighborhood Centers. Mixed uses are permitted both horizontally and vertically, while vertical mixtures will tend to be more appropriate closer to downtown.
- Mixed-Use Office/Residential
    - Allows office and residential uses as horizontal or vertical mixed-uses. Live-work units are encouraged. The average residential density is eight (8) dwelling units per acre, with an average breakdown of uses at 75% office/25% residential.
- Mobile Home Parks
    - Existing mobile home parks
- Natural Area – Protected
    - Protected natural areas that are not developable.
- Neighborhood Center
    - Permitted uses include neighborhood-serving commercial uses as well as residential uses. The Neighborhood Center designation allows both horizontal and/or vertical mixed-uses. Many uses are permitted within this area, the focus being high density residential, retail and entertainment uses; the main exceptions are single-family detached housing, heavy industrial, commercial support and storage facilities. Should be developed in accordance with neighborhood nodal guidelines.
- Neighborhood Preservation
    - Designation for stable existing neighborhoods. Existing density and housing types should be retained.
- Office Park
    - Uses in a campus setting. Average breakdown of use is 85% office, 15% commercial.
- Office Park/Commercial and Industrial Support:
    - This category envisions the transition of these parcels to either office park or commercial and industrial support uses. Prior to development or redevelopment, some of these properties may need to undergo lot consolidation to create lots that are an appropriate development size for the intensity proposed.
- Office/Light Commercial
    - Average breakdown of uses is 85% office, 15% commercial. Allows service-oriented commercial uses.
- Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries
    - Existing parks & recreation facilities and cemeteries.
- Planned Development District
    - Existing areas zoned PDD, Planned Development District. For more information on the uses permitted in a specific PDD, please contact the Planning Department.
- Regional Center
    - This area is intended to focus on entertainment and retail uses, but may be supported by office and residential uses. Any residential component, however, shall be limited to no more than 50% of the allowable dwelling units per acre. The Regional Center provides goods and services citywide and regionally with a diverse mixture of land uses at higher permitted densities. Roadways within this area are more automobile-

focused, and larger front setbacks (20' min.), rear setbacks (20' min.) are plausible in comparison to the Neighborhood Center category. Building heights should be no more than three stories. Many uses are permitted within this classification, the focus of which is retail, commercial and office uses that serve the community at-large; the main exceptions are single-family detached housing, heavy industrial, commercial support uses and storage facilities.

- Rural
  - Allows single-family detached residential at a density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) acres, as well as agricultural and other uses as permitted in the Rural zoning district.
- Rural Crossroads
  - Allows low-intensity service commercial uses, such as gas stations and feed stores
- University
  - Property owned by Auburn University
- Urban Core
  - The Urban Core is intended to serve as the retail, financial, service, historical, and religious focal point of Auburn. High-density residential uses and commercial as vertical mixed-uses are permitted. Private Dormitories are not permitted in the Urban Core. The average floor area ratio should be 5.0 but may be as high as 8.5.
- Urban Neighborhood – East
  - The UN-E represents a diverse mixture of uses, where commercial, residential, and institutional uses coexist. Residential densities are allowed up to 85 bedrooms per acre. The maximum height of new development will be limited to 45 feet, except where properties are adjacent to Neighborhood Conservation districts and limited to 35 feet.
- Urban Neighborhood – West
  - The neighborhood west of the Urban Core is envisioned to serve the needs of the University, while improving the pedestrian environment. The primary purpose for this area is to support the University's student housing needs by the development of new student housing on undeveloped land and the redevelopment of older, lower-quality student housing. Commercial uses should be limited to primary corridors in close proximity to campus and be typically oriented toward the needs of the student residents of the area. Residential densities allowances are the highest in the city at 255 bedrooms per acre. The maximum height of new development is allowed to be up to 75 feet east of North Donahue and 50 feet west of North Donahue.
- Urban Neighborhood – South
  - New development should be encouraged to replace noncontributing or dilapidated structures and should be sensitive to the existing built environment. Expansion of neighborhood commercial uses should be encouraged with a form that enhances the pedestrian experience. Residential densities are allowed up to 85 bedrooms per acre. The maximum height of new development will be limited to 35 feet.
- Utilities
  - Utilities include water, sewer, power, and telecommunications providers.



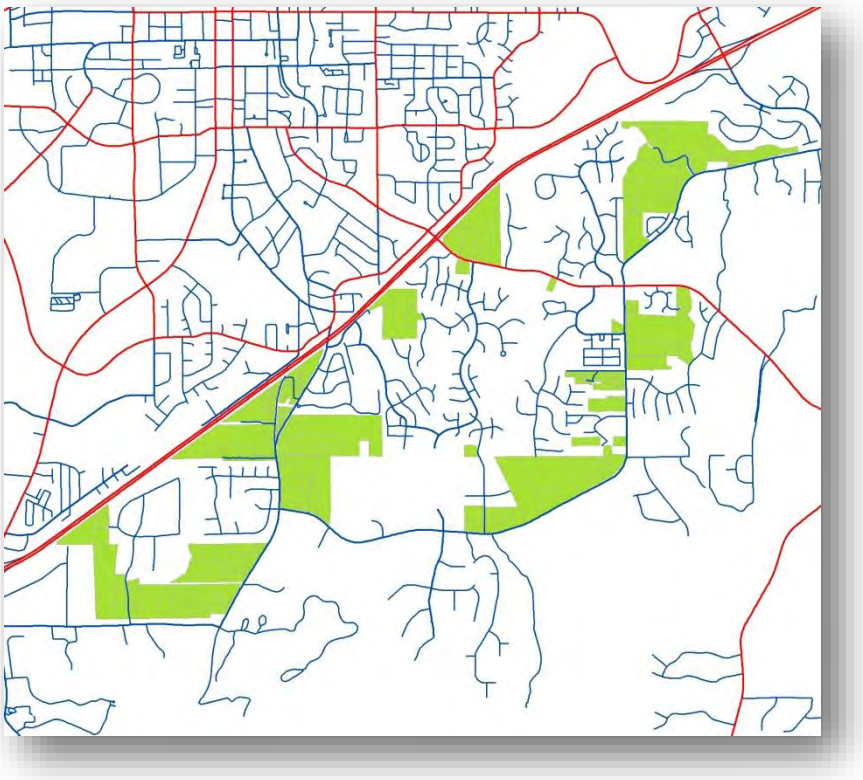
Map 3.3: Future Land Use Plan

CompPlan 2030

3.2.4 Focus Areas

Conservation/Cluster Residential (South of I-85)

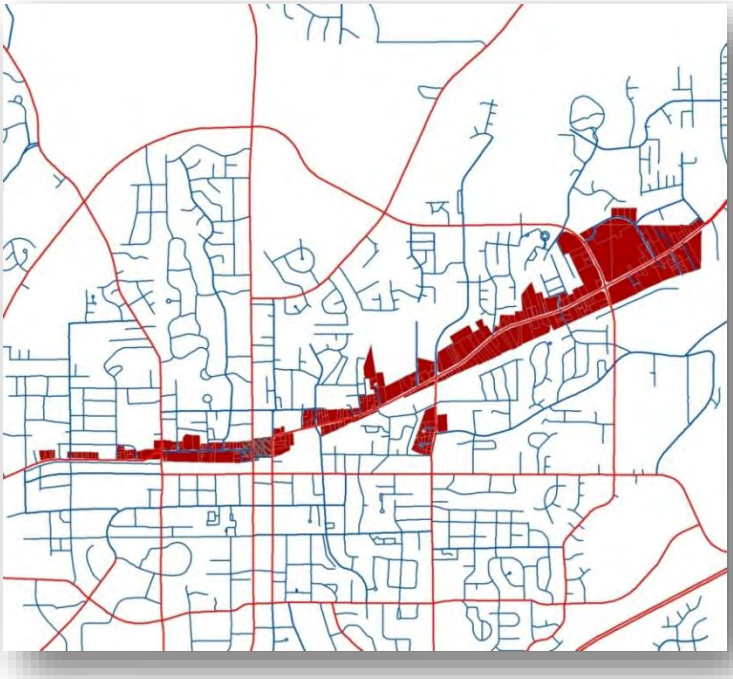
This area includes approximately 1,081 acres and extends along the north side of Ogletree Road between Moores Mill and Wrights Mill Road, as well as along Shell Toomer Parkway and Wrights Mill Road, south of Interstate 85. These areas have a distinctive rural and pastoral character that epitomize and reflect the type of residential community that one might ideally anticipate in a City that is home to a land grant university such as Auburn University. It is a character that is worthy of preserving and this area warrants special care as future development is contemplated here. It is also an area that largely exists in the Chewacla Creek watershed, which includes its sub-watersheds as well (Lake Ogletree, Moores Mill Creek, Parkerson Mill Creek, and Town Creek). This underscores an underlying theme that exists with this designation which is watershed protection, and this helps to largely explain the current rural, low density character of the area. Finally, this character area also includes Shell Toomer Parkway, which is the gateway to Chewacla State Park, thereby reinforcing its value as a primarily rural character area.



Recommendation

Maintain the rural character of this area by utilizing the City's Conservation Overlay District (COD) designation or a modified version thereof which encourages cluster housing and low impact development in concert with the City's Conservation Subdivision regulations. Conservation subdivisions are encouraged, with a five (5) acre minimum size for conservation subdivisions. Conservations subdivisions may develop at two (2) dwelling units per acre; all other development may develop at one (1) dwelling unit per acre.

Corridor Redevelopment



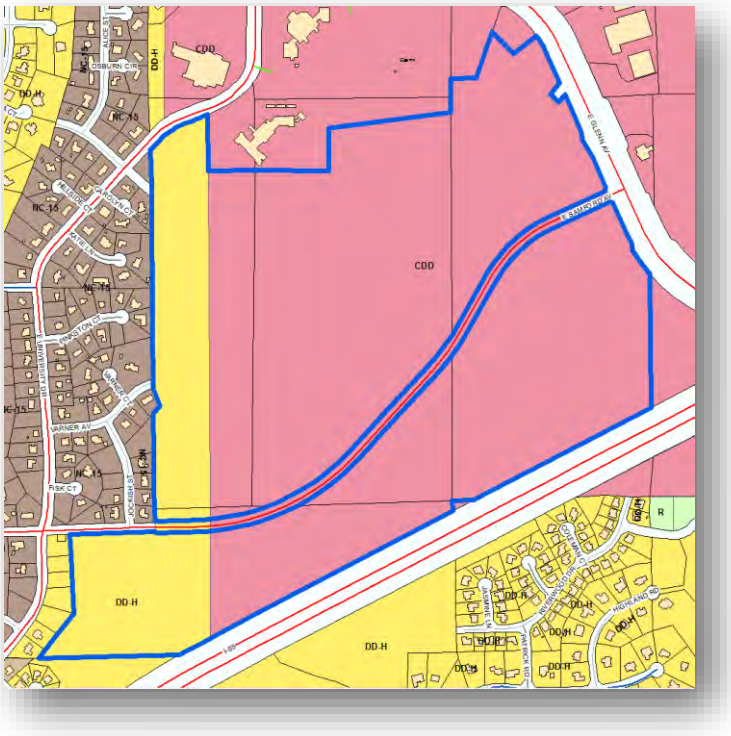
This area consists of approximately 378 acres, primarily along Opelika Road, Bragg Avenue, and Martin Luther King Drive, but also including a portion of North Dean Road. The Opelika Road corridor represents a prototypical auto-oriented commercial corridor, and, like many others developed during the same time period, is in a state of aesthetic and economic decline. While the corridor sees significant traffic volumes, it suffers from high rates of vacancy, an unattractive visual environment, outdated buildings and lot configurations, an unsafe pedestrian environment, and underutilized buildings and parcels. The relative health of the corridor differs, but generally from a retail standpoint the corridor is at most healthy in the area centered on the intersection of East University Drive and Opelika Road. While Opelika Road has long been a commercial corridor, Bragg Avenue is seen as having emerging potential for redevelopment, especially since the realignment of the MLK Drive/Bragg Avenue/North Donahue Drive intersection. The character of the Opelika Road corridor differs considerably over its length. For example, the segment from Gay Street to Old Stage Road has a narrower street width, smaller parcels, and smaller buildings built close to the street, while the segment from North Dean Road to East University Drive has a five-lane road section, larger parcels, and larger buildings with significant street setbacks.

Recommendation

There is significant interest in revitalizing the Opelika Road corridor. The Corridor Redevelopment Future Land Use designation is intended to encourage redevelopment through a variety of means, such as by offering incentives for redevelopment, reduced setbacks, shared parking, and/or possible City investments in infrastructure, such as streetscaping. The designation promotes limited mixed-use, with an average breakdown of uses across the entire area intended to be 85% commercial, 5% office, and 10% residential (12 du/ac). Preference should be given to projects that integrate residential with other use types. Parts of the Corridor Redevelopment area are also in a historic district; when that is the case, it is recommended that redevelopment efforts focus on retention and reuse of existing historic structures.

This area should be the first candidate for a corridor plan following adoption of the CompPlan. Some initial planning work has been completed through a City of Auburn/Auburn University collaborative project.

East Samford Focus Area

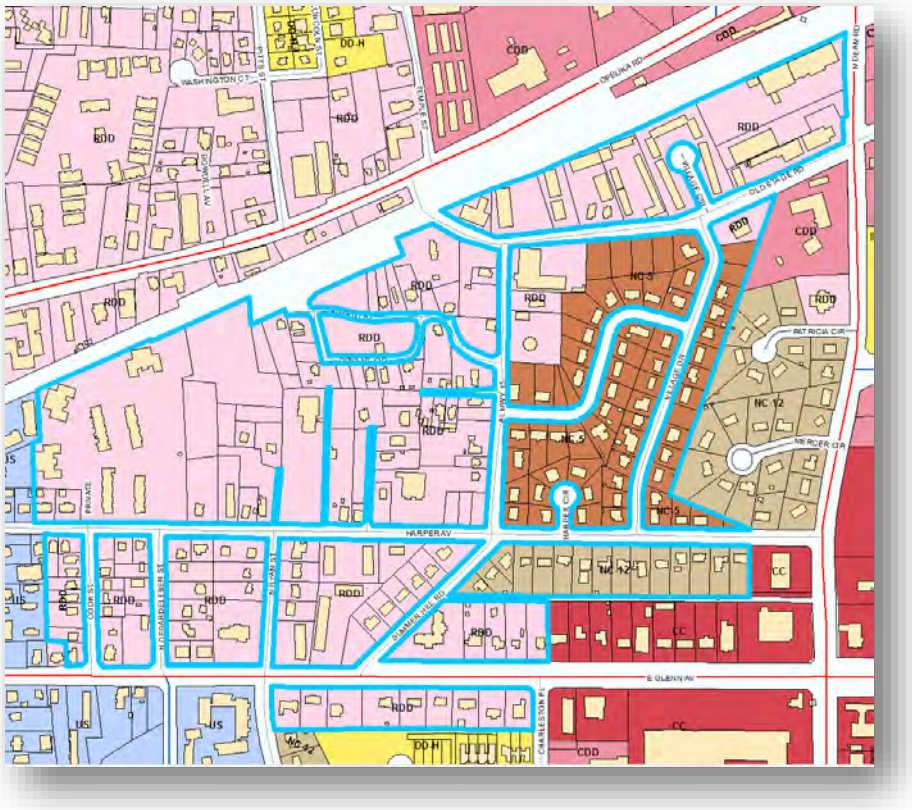


The East Samford focus area is located along the East Samford Avenue extension between East University Drive and East Glenn Avenue. The area comprises approximately 215 acres and is zoned almost entirely CDD, with the exception of a DD-H "buffer" that is located along the western boundary of the focus area which was designed to provide a transition from the existing single-family neighborhoods to the west, and the undeveloped CDD property to the east. The completion of the Samford Avenue extension in 2009 immediately elevated the importance of this area in terms of future development potential, and therefore, elevates the importance of this area in terms of the City needing to identify specific land use categories along this corridor to ensure its well-planned development. The proximity of the property to the Bent Creek/I-85 interchange and its southern boundary having I-85 frontage, combined with its entirely undeveloped state, provides a proverbial "blank canvas" and a unique opportunity for a functional eastern gateway and entry corridor leading directly to the City's core.

Recommendation

Ensure a gradual transition of uses and increase in development intensity from residential to office to commercial as one travels from west to east along the East Samford Avenue extension. A gradual increase in intensity from west to east utilizing mixed-uses is also encouraged. This will require zoning amendments to the existing CDD portion of the focus area to accomplish this and assure the desired transition. An access management plan will also be key as this corridor evolves into a major transportation corridor for the City, and residents increasingly utilize the Samford Extension as a viable and desirable transportation alternative to East Glenn Avenue.

Harper Avenue Focus Area



The Harper Avenue focus area is located along its namesake corridor and is generally bound by Ross Street to the west, Dean Road to the east, the railroad tracks and the Opelika Road corridor to the north, and East Glenn Avenue to the south. It includes approximately 85 acres of land area and its mix of uses is not dissimilar to those found in the Urban Core 3 area, with single and multi-family uses, institutional uses, commercial/professional uses along East Glenn Avenue, and several adaptive re-use examples where formerly small single-family cottages have been converted primarily into office uses. This area diverges from the Urban Core 3 in two fundamental ways, however. First, it does include heavy commercial and contractor-related uses along the north side of the study area where properties abut the railroad track. Secondly, and more importantly, the housing stock in the area is not as well maintained and appears to suffer from neglect. This is particularly true of the rental housing stock. One could easily conclude that the effects of inattention have spread to adjacent properties, thereby suppressing property values and creating an environment in which investment is not rewarded, and therefore, is not occurring in the area. While some of the centrally-located properties in the area are zoned Neighborhood Conservation (NC), the vast majority of the focus area is zoned Redevelopment District (RDD). This is important in that it would seem the issue of neglect was identified when the RDD designation was placed over the subject property, yet for whatever reason, redevelopment activity, with the exception of limited activity along Glenn Avenue, has been non-existent.

Recommendation

Examine the existing RDD regulations and look for regulatory incentive opportunities. This may result in changes to the existing RDD zone, the creation of an overlay district or even a new zoning designation, perhaps. Encourage mixed office/residential development along the Glenn Avenue corridor, and identify strategies for more targeted code enforcement in the subject area.

Indian Hills Focus Area

The Indian Hills area is located immediately northeast of the Sam's Club adjacent to the Bent Creek interchange. The average age of homes in the subdivision is around 23 years. When Indian Hills was constructed, the area around it had not yet developed commercially. As commercial development has progressed, the DD-H zoning buffer around Indian Hills has been of limited effectiveness, and the subdivision is now surrounded by commercial development to the south and west. A recent court ruling that allows access to a large office development in Opelika via Indian Hill Road could significantly increase non-residential traffic through the subdivision. With its close proximity to a major arterial as well as I-85, the Indian Hills subdivision will be under increasing commercial development pressure.

Recommendation

Allow commercial rezoning and redevelopment of the Indian Hills Subdivision at such time as most subdivision parcels can be assembled.

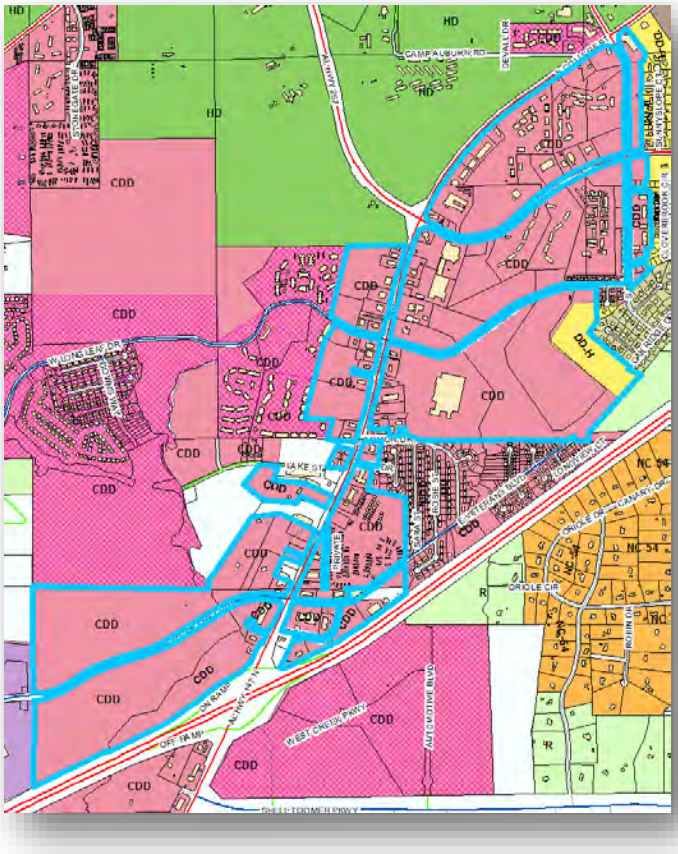
Mobile Home Parks

Mobile home parks within the City of Auburn have continued to decline in recent years. Those that have been in reasonable proximity to the Auburn University campus have been targeted for redevelopment opportunities by the private sector for multi-family housing designed for the student population. The parks have been attractive for acquisition because they are generally of substantive size and, equally important, are generally under unified ownership. Existing mobile home parks are largely on the City's periphery and located in Lee County, but within the optimal boundary identified for Auburn as part of this plan. The largest assembly of mobile home parks, specifically, exists in the southwest quadrant of Auburn's growth area, along the Cox Road and Webster Road corridors. These corridors will become of increasing strategic importance as the City's newest interstate interchange (Exit 50) located in the vicinity of I-85 and Beehive/Cox Roads comes to fruition.

Recommendation

Evaluate future land use classifications along the aforementioned corridors in light of the new interchange initiative. Acknowledge the importance of Webster Road as the primary access way to the Auburn Industrial Park from the south. Consider targeting strategic parcels for annexation and potential redevelopment as a means to better control access and curb cuts along the Cox, Beehive and Webster Road corridors.

South College Focus Area

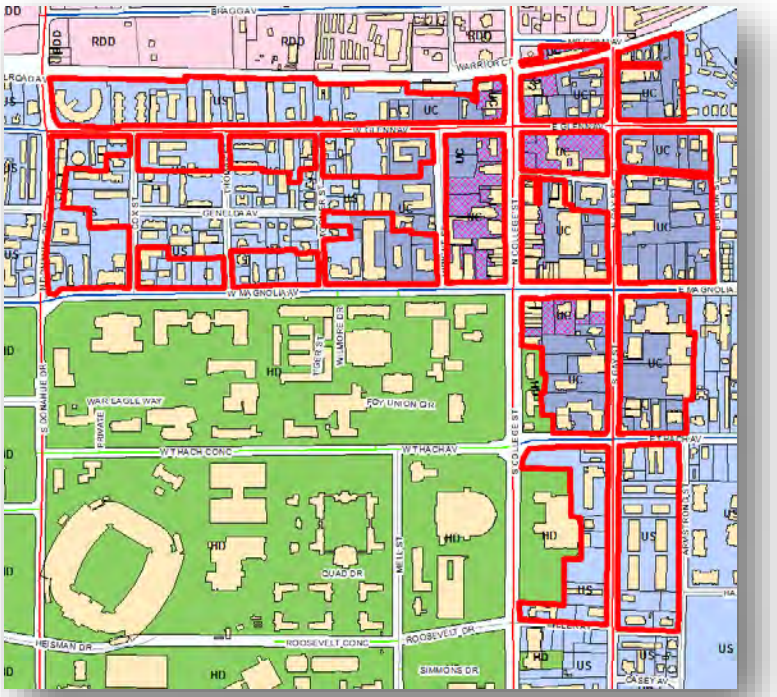


The South College focus area is located along the South College Street corridor and extends from its intersection with Donahue Drive to the north and Interstate 85 to the south. It encompasses approximately 618 acres of land area with major intersection points at East University Drive, Longleaf Drive, and Veterans Boulevard. While more current than the development along Opelika Road, it has developed in a similar strip commercial fashion, but has benefited from the implementation of cross-access requirements between adjacent developments, which then direct vehicular traffic toward signalized intersections whenever possible. Because it is a major commercial corridor and because it is a major gateway to Auburn University from Interstate 85, it does experience significant traffic during most periods of the day. It is anticipated, however, that some relief will come with the connection of West Longleaf Road between South College Street and Cox Road as well as with the addition of the new Beehive Road interchange on I-85. In reality, South College is mostly developed and opportunities for redevelopment are likely to be rare in the short term. In the longer term, however, it is anticipated that redevelopment opportunities will present themselves, much like is the case with the Opelika Road corridor today. Finally, this area cannot be fully discussed without raising the issue of those parcels that line this corridor, but remain in the County. These parcels have been identified for annexation for quite some time, but may not be expected to be annexed without some type of legislative remedy. The plan also identifies master-planned mixed-use opportunites along West Veterans.

Recommendation

Develop a corridor plan for the South College Street area. Continue to vigilantly control access to the South College corridor, while maximizing cross-access opportunities between adjacent parcels. Promote land assembly and redevelopment as opportunities present themselves. Require master development plans for future developments that are of a certain size. Consider legislative remedies for annexing parcels located within the focus area.

Urban Core

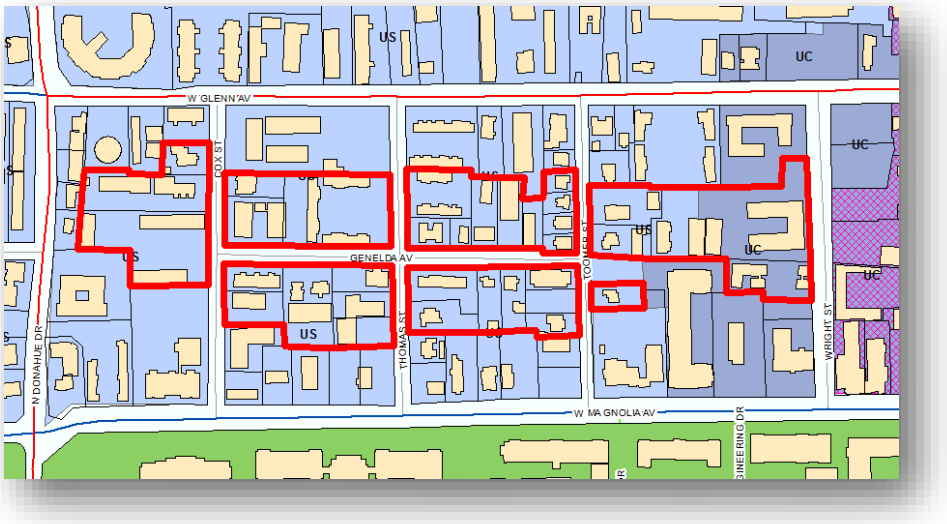


The Urban Core (UC) is proposed to expand substantially as part of CompPlan 2030. In fact, this expansion is one of the cornerstones of this plan. The plan acknowledges and embraces the undeniable fact that Auburn's citizens point to the downtown area as a primary component of the community's identity. Most of the proposed expansion area is located north of Magnolia Avenue and consumes what is currently identified as University Service- zoned areas. The main intent of this change is to facilitate form-based redevelopment along a corridor whose identity is inextricably linked to its interface with the northern boundary of the Auburn University campus. The secondary intent of this change is to incentivize redevelopment of existing, dated multi-family/student housing stock into more vibrant, urban, and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development. This is one important way that one of the primary themes of this plan, that being densification of infill areas, can be realized. As a result, the UC is proposed to expand from an existing 56.16 acres to more than 97.66 acres. The area is proposed to extend westward from just past Wright Street, all the way to Donahue Drive. On the opposite end of the UC, the area is proposed to extend southward from Thach Avenue to Miller Avenue. Finally, this furthers an important objective of the plan which is to ensure the relevance of Downtown Auburn over time by providing an opportunity for further growth and development of the UC commensurate with the growth being experienced throughout the City's outlying areas.

Recommendation

Implement form-based regulations to allow this area to redevelop, over time, into a true extension of the existing Urban Core while facilitating a greater balance between the scale and character of campus development with that of the City's downtown directly across the street. A future downtown master plan is also recommended by the plan.

Urban Core 2

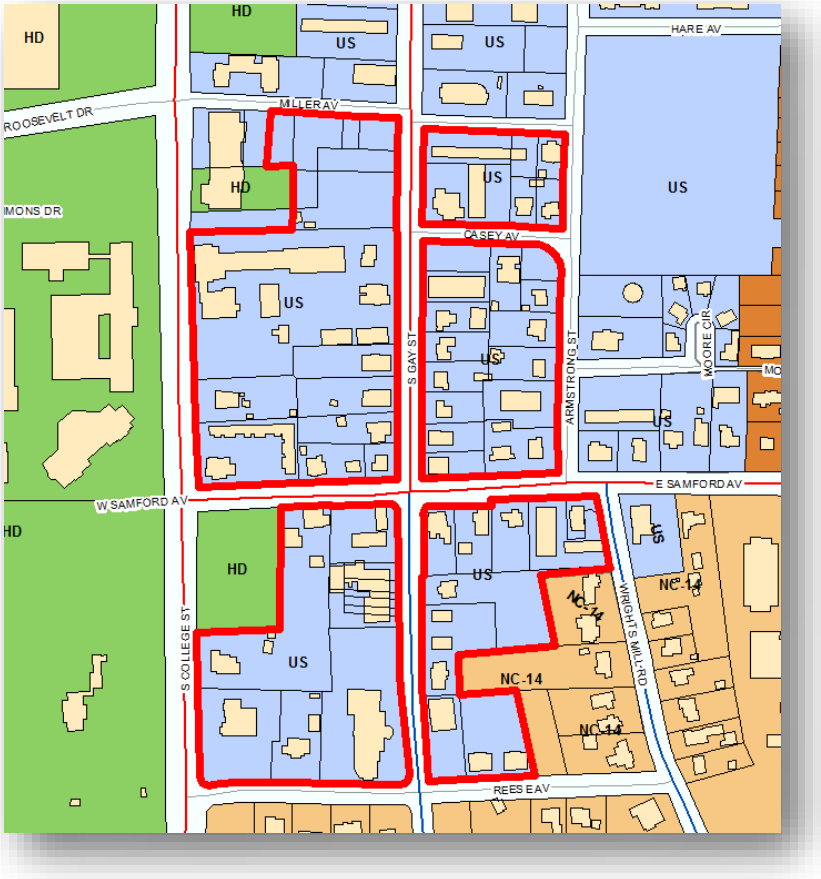


Urban Core 2 is envisioned as an extension of the existing Urban Core (UC) to the west along an area that is currently zoned University Service (US) and is comprised of, almost exclusively, older multi-family housing stock geared toward fulfilling the off-campus housing needs of Auburn University students. The area includes 15.78 acres and is bound by West Glenn Avenue to the north, Magnolia Avenue to the south, Donahue Drive to the west, and Wright Street to the east. It should be noted, however, that none of the parcels included in the Urban Core 2 area actually front Glenn Avenue, Magnolia Avenue, or Donahue Drive, and that is what sets this area apart. It is insulated from high-visibility corridors, which in turn, lessens the viability for commercial uses to locate here. Urban Core 2 is envisioned as an area where older multi-family housing stock can re-develop at densities similar to the UC and should also be able to realize a more desirable urban form, as a result, by not being encumbered by angle of light setbacks as are found in the existing US district. In other words, the focus in this area should be on form rather than use. While non-residential uses are envisioned to be encouraged in this area, particularly at major intersections, they are not envisioned to be required in recognition of the lower traffic counts and limited visibility of the area. This focus on urban form will increase the attractiveness and safety of the area for existing and future pedestrian traffic in the area which is already considerable. Unlike Urban Core 3 (see below), this area does not have a distinctive character or identity and would best be served by encouraging redevelopment and providing incentives to facilitate redevelopment activity

Recommendation

Implement form-based regulations to allow this area to redevelop, over time, into a true extension of the existing Urban Core with flexibility in use provisions, such that commercial/non-residential uses would not be required in the Urban Core 2 area due to limited exposure and visibility that is usually needed to sustain those types of uses. Encourage improved future connectivity, by extending Genelda Avenue to North Donahue Drive and Wright Street, for example.

Urban Core 3



Urban Core 3 is a relatively compact and unique enclave bounded by Miller Avenue to the north, Reese Avenue to the south, College Street to the west, and Armstrong Street to the east. The area comprises 24.91 acres and is zoned entirely University Service (US). However, the character of this area is distinctly different than what is normally found in the US district in other parts of the City, which is generally multi-family residential uses designed to meet the housing needs of Auburn University students, such as what predominates in the existing US district north of the Auburn University campus and West Magnolia Avenue. Instead, this area is an eclectic mixture of single-family, multi-family, commercial, and institutional uses, with some adaptive reuse thrown in. All together, the Urban Core 3 area has a certain appeal and character that is welcoming to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. With the Urban Core (UC) proper being expanded and Auburn University increasingly locating uses designed for the US district on its campus, there would appear to be some merit in examining this area with an emphasis on retaining much of its character and appeal, while also providing an opportunity for limited densification and encouraging the expansion of limited commercial uses such as the existing neighborhood commercial area located at the southwest corner of Samford Avenue and Gay Street. This type of pedestrian-friendly commercial destination is of a size and scale that provides an ease of transition from the Urban Core to the established and well-maintained neighborhood character areas along South Gay Street and East Samford Avenues.

Recommendation

Utilize the Urban Core 3 designation as a transition zone of one and two-story structures with viable mixed-use opportunities. This has the potential to enhance the value of the area, both aesthetically and economically, while protecting the character of the existing and surrounding neighborhoods. Emphasis should be placed on reuse of existing structures, especially adjacent to Reese Avenue.

3.3 Nodes[1]

3.3.1 What is a node?

Nodes are physically and aesthetically unified, concentrated mixed-use areas containing commercial, office, institutional, high- and medium-density residential uses, and parks and open spaces, arranged in a walkable, compact, pedestrian- and transit-friendly manner. All elements and land uses are designed to function as an integrated whole (rather than as a series of unconnected, unrelated developments). They are focal points for the surrounding neighborhood and community, and should have a strong sense of identity.[2]

Nodes can be magnets for activity and development that affect urban form, environmental quality and the transportation network in a positive way. Nodes can provide focus for the community and convenient access to employment, goods and services. Nodes promote the efficient use of land and public services such as water, sanitation, fire and police protection, recreation and open space, and transportation.

The three mixed-use node types (neighborhood, community, and regional) are intended to accommodate a significant amount of the City's projected commercial demand in the year 2030. This is further discussed in the Node Locations section.

Some nodes are pedestrian-friendly environments that are supportive of public transportation.
Some existing nodes feature an automobile-dominated development pattern and often have little or no relationship to surrounding residential neighborhoods. These types of nodes generally feature buildings that are set far back from streets with parking between the building and the street, or are completely surrounded by parking. Conventional commercial development is generally aligned along major thoroughfares in a strip pattern, with large concentrations frequently found at major intersections.

Nodes other than rural crossroads should be connected by public transit or major travel routes such as interstates, freeways, and arterials.

3.3.2 Why do we need nodes?

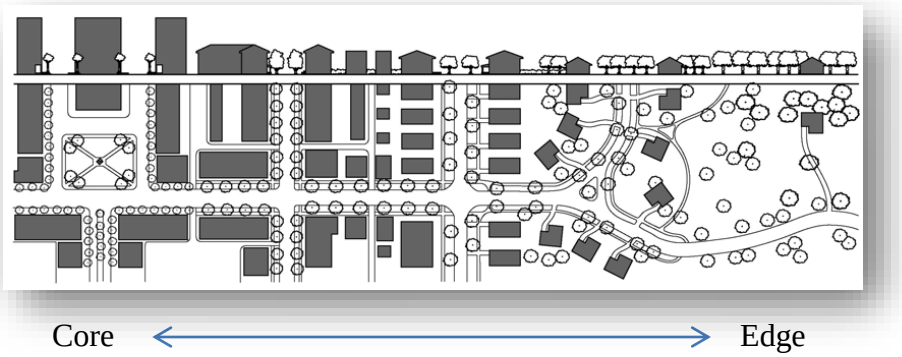
- Reduce sprawl and promote compact, efficient development with a strong sense of place
- Reduce vehicle trips by providing daily needs (commercial and civic) in close proximity to housing
- Limit the emergence of new commercial corridors (strip commercial) by concentrating development at crossroads and in mixed-use centers along corridors
- Promote transportation choices by creating walkable neighborhoods of sufficient density to make mass transit a viable option
- Maintain the excellent quality of life currently enjoyed by citizens of Auburn
- Promote redevelopment of existing corridors and expansion of the urban core
- Promote efficiency in delivery of city services

[1] Some language in this section comes from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County, TN Comprehensive Plan
[2] From Town of Cary, NC Comprehensive Plan

3.3.3 Node Components

Nodes are generally composed of three areas: the core, the transition, and the edge.

Image courtesy of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.



Core. The core consists of the most intense urban buildings in both mass and in land use, and is considered to be the center of pedestrian activity. Buildings in the core are often vertically mixed-use, providing opportunities for housing and office uses above ground level retail. Like most main streets, retail and eating establishments should be physically concentrated in the core, providing the critical mass of shopping and pedestrian activities that identifies it as an activity center or a destination point.

Transition Area

The transition area serves as the transition from the high intensity level of the core to the surrounding and supporting neighborhood areas. The transition area, due to its physical proximity to the core is the ideal location for medium-density residential. Housing is supported by the commercial core and vice-versa, along well-connected, pedestrian-scaled streets. In addition, where transit stops are located, or proposed to be located, there is a significant user population within walking distance to the transit stop.

Edge

While these areas are seamlessly connected to the core by pedestrian-oriented streets, transitions from the neighborhood to the core of the activity center should be accomplished through proper design of the street, appropriate massing, scale, and architectural design of the buildings.

3.3.4 Node Types

Nodes vary in size and function. Rural crossroads will not typically exhibit the same mix of uses and pedestrian orientation that is seen in the other node types. The other three node types (neighborhood, community, and regional) are of gradually increasing scales. It should also be noted that these recommendations are intended to primarily apply to future centers; for recommendations for uses in existing centers, consult the Future Land Use Plan map. Existing centers within focus areas may also have specific recommendations in the Focus Areas section of the plan.

Rural Crossroads

Rural crossroads are intended to provide limited commercial services to low-density rural areas. They should be located at the intersection of collectors or arterials.

Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood centers are small, compact, clustered, low-intensity and low-traffic generating developments that support the common day-to-day demands of surrounding neighborhoods for goods and services. The core of the neighborhood center should contain a diverse mix of land uses

and intensity levels. Neighborhood centers should balance pedestrian and automobile needs with pedestrian access being an integral element of the commercial core and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. A continuous network of sidewalks in the commercial and residential areas encourages people to walk from their homes to retail shops, parks, and open spaces. To make the commercial core more attractive for pedestrians, landscape amenities and public open spaces should be provided.

Neighborhood centers are encouraged to develop as mixed-use or multi-use centers that are generally within a five-minute walk of the surrounding neighborhoods they serve. The core of the activity center should radiate one quarter mile, or an area equivalent to a 5-minute walk from the core to the edge. Neighborhood centers generally serve a few neighborhoods within a several mile radius. Land uses within neighborhood centers typically include uses found in a grocery store anchored shopping center, even though they front on a pedestrian-friendly grid of streets rather than a parking lot. They may also contain a variety of small-scale retail shops, small drug store, convenience stores, eating establishments, offices, and personal and business service establishments. Civic and institutional uses, as well as open spaces, neighborhood parks, greens, and squares should also be included within the core. Medium to high-density housing is also appropriate within the core, either in mixed-use structures, or in single-use developments. Housing densities generally should be the highest within the core, transitioning to progressively lower densities moving outward from the core to the edge.

The actual amount and types of land uses within the core will likely vary according to different circumstances such as physical constraints of the site and the free market. Generally, as a guide, the core of the neighborhood center should be between 3 and 10 acres in size. Building heights in the core of the neighborhood center should be the highest and transitioning to lower heights moving outward from the core to the edge. Buildings at the edge of the activity center should be comparable in height and mass to adjacent and nearby properties, as well as surrounding neighborhoods. The maximum height of any structure located within the core of the neighborhood center is typically two stories.

Neighborhood centers are appropriate for those areas divided into four quadrants by the intersection of two arterial classified streets, or the intersection of an arterial and a collector classified street.

Neighborhood centers should include the following features:

- Predominantly horizontal mixed-uses
- Well-defined neighborhood edges
- Moderate to high residential densities, with higher-densities concentrated toward the core
- Wide range and mix of housing styles, types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
- Convenience retail uses(typically found in a grocery store-anchored center)
- Neighborhood-serving office and service uses
- Civic and institutional uses
- Compact development patterns
- Include public spaces well-integrated into the development pattern
- Pedestrian-oriented

- Accessible via public transit
- Interconnected street grid or network of streets, sidewalks, alleys, and paths that facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- Streets and rights-of-way are shared between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- On-street parking.
- Surface parking placed behind or to the side of buildings.

Design Features:

- Buildings in core built to street
- Streetscaping provided
- Buildings no taller than two stories
- Parking at rear or side
- Civic uses or park space as focal point of development

Community Center

Community centers are dense, compact, medium-scale and medium-intensity areas designed to provide convenient goods and services for a number of surrounding neighborhoods. The core of the community center should contain a diverse mix of land uses and intensity levels. Community centers should balance pedestrian and automobile needs with pedestrian access being an integral element of the commercial core and the surrounding residential neighborhood. A continuous network of sidewalks in the commercial and residential areas encourages people to walk from their homes to retail shops, parks, and open spaces.

To make the commercial core more attractive for pedestrians, landscape amenities and public open spaces should be provided. Community centers are encouraged to develop as mixed-use or multi-use centers with the core of the center generally radiating a 1/2 mile, or an area equivalent to a 10-minute walk from the core to the edge. They generally serve several neighborhoods within a 10-mile radius.

Land uses within community centers typically include large-scale supermarkets, community-sized drug stores, smaller discount retail stores (big-box), convenience stores, eating establishments, and entertainment uses (movie theaters, bowling alleys). Employment intensive offices and personal service establishments such as beauty/barbershops, financial services, and dry cleaners are appropriate uses. Parks, open spaces, greens, plazas and squares, civic, and institutional uses are appropriate land uses within the core. Medium and high-density housing should also be located within the core , primary in mixed-use structures. Housing densities should be highest within the core, transitioning to progressively lower densities moving outward from the core to the edge.

The actual amount and types of land uses in the core will likely vary according to different circumstances, such as physical constraints and the free market. Generally, as a guide, the core of the community center is typically between 10 and 30 acres in size. Building heights should be greatest in the core and should transition to lower heights moving outward from the core to the edge.

Buildings at the edge of the activity center should be comparable in height and mass to adjacent and nearby properties as well as surrounding neighborhoods. The maximum height of any structure located within the core of the community center is typically 3-4 stories.

Generally, community centers are appropriate for those areas divided into four quadrants by the intersection of two arterial classified streets. These centers also benefit from being located along major public transportation routes.

Community centers should include the following features:

- Vertical and horizontal mixed-uses
- Well-defined neighborhood edges
- Moderate to high residential densities, with higher-densities concentrated toward the core
- Wide range and mix of housing styles, types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
- Full range of retail, office, and service uses
- Civic and institutional uses
- Compact development patterns
- Include public spaces well-integrated into the development pattern
- Access to external arterial streets
- Access management via network of internal arterial streets
- Pedestrian-oriented where feasible
- Accessible via public transit
- Interconnected street grid or network of streets, sidewalks, alleys, and paths that facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- Bicycle and pedestrian uses are separated from arterial street right-of-way
- Surface parking placed behind or to the side of buildings where feasible.
- Shared parking

Design Features:

- Buildings in core built to street
- Streetscaping provided
- Buildings no taller than four stories
- Parking at rear or side
- Civic uses or park space as focal point of development

Regional Center

Regional centers are existing and planned large concentrated centers of mixed-use or multi-use areas that are generally anchored by a regional shopping center. Regional centers provide goods and services citywide and regionally. Regional centers contain a diverse collection of retail uses such as general retail uses, large big-box retailers, convenience stores, eating establishments, offices, institutional and civic uses, entertainment uses, high-density residential, and automotive related uses. A regional center has the potential for a more diverse mixture of land uses and intensity levels than either community or neighborhood centers.

The actual amount and types of land uses in a regional center will likely vary according to different circumstances such as physical constraints of the site and the free market. However, as a guide, regional centers will likely be 30 or *more* acres in size, and contain big-box centers, strip shopping centers, and freestanding stores. They generally serve many communities within a 30-mile radius or greater.

Due to the overall size of these centers, regional orientation, and traffic generating characteristics, regional centers should have a high level of accessibility to and within the center, including public transportation. Regional centers should be located with easy accessibility from interstate/freeway interchanges. Ideally, regional centers should be close to or directly served by a major radial and/or circumferential arterial street (such as East University Drive) and should be ringed by an arterial street network. They should be served by a high level of public transportation service.

Regional centers were originally designed for automobile access and circulation. Existing centers should redevelop over time to give equal attention to pedestrian access and circulation so they can evolve into truly integrated mixed-use or multi-use centers. Intensification should take place within the current boundaries of the regional center rather than spread outward.

Regional centers should include the following features:

- Vertical and horizontal mixed-uses
- Well-defined neighborhood edges
- Moderate to high residential densities, with higher-densities concentrated toward the core
- Wide range and mix of housing styles, types and sizes to accommodate households of all ages, sizes and incomes.
- Grocery stores and smaller big-box retailers
- Community-serving office and service uses
- Entertainment and hospitality uses
- Civic and institutional uses
- Compact development patterns
- Include public spaces well-integrated into the development pattern
- Portions of core pedestrian-oriented
- Accessible via public transit
- Interconnected street grid or network of streets, sidewalks, alleys, and paths that facilitate walking, bicycling and driving.
- Streets and rights-of-way are shared between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- On-street parking.
- Surface parking placed behind or to the side of buildings where feasible.
- Shared parking

Design Features:

- Where feasible, building built to street
- Streetscaping provided
- Buildings no taller than six stories
- Where feasible, parking at rear or side
- Civic uses or park space as focal point of development

3.3.5 Node Locations

Node locations are set in part by the Auburn Interactive Growth Model, and are subject to change. Future nodes are intended to meet a significant proportion of Auburn's future commercial and office space needs. Node sizes and locations (except for rural crossroads) are linked to the sizes of

centers in the AIGM commercial submodel. Node locations may move as the AIGM is updated. If mixed-use zoning already exists at a node location, the node is a development **option**. If existing zoning is not mixed-use and the desire is to build a mixed-use development, the node is a **requirement.** The **conditional nodes** shown on the Future Land Use Map and the map below are intended to be constructed only if the Outer Loop is funded and constructed, and their final locations are subject to the final alignment of the Outer Loop.

3.4 Analysis

3.41 Infill Development

As was noted earlier, a major focus of the Future Land Use Plan is a strategy of focusing on infill development. Infill development is development or redevelopment in established areas of the City. This might be developing a vacant lot or redeveloping an area with more intense or dense uses. The benefits of infill development are many. The infrastructure that must be constructed with greenfield development is typically already in place, saving the City and developer money. Infill development often results in increased density, which is needed to support the types of businesses and transportation modes (such as transit) that are needed for successful compact, walkable communities. It also discourages urban sprawl, thus protecting outlying areas from overdevelopment and limiting the inevitable strain placed on City services when it becomes necessary to serve far-flung developments.

Infill development is typically more expensive than greenfield development. It is therefore imperative to reduce regulatory barriers to infill development and redevelopment. This can include providing density and intensity bonuses, expedited permitting, and other measures to help promote infill development. It should also include a review of the zoning in areas that are likely candidates for infill development, such as along Opelika Road, where existing zoning is likely to impede infill development and redevelopment. Finally, it will be imperative to review the City's zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as the Public Works and Water Resource Management Design and Construction manuals, for provisions that conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. A major focus of the CompPlan 2030 implementation effort will be completing that review and adopting recommended changes.

3.42 Mix of Housing Types

Residential uses make up 74% of Auburn's land use, so it is no exaggeration to say that residential development has an immense influence on the type of place Auburn is and will become. Auburn's diverse population requires a diverse mix of housing types. This can already be seen in Auburn today, with approximately half of Auburn's housing units made up of multi-family units. The large supply of multi-family units has traditionally served the City's large student population. At the time of this writing, however, Auburn University has decided to cap student enrollment at 25,000. This means that, as the City's population continues to increase, Auburn's demographics will begin to transition, with older residents and families with children making up a larger proportion of the population. This will both slow the need for additional multi-family units (though many existing units are aging and increasingly suitable for redevelopment) as well as increase demand for various other housing types, such as detached single-family homes and townhouses. The decreased demand will not necessarily result, however, in decreased multi-family construction. The City should restrict future multi-family development to those locations recommended in the Future Land Use Plan, both to promote multi-family development where services exist and to encourage density to support future mixed-use centers and alternate transportation choices. The United States is also experiencing

the aging of the baby boomer population. This generation has entered retirement age, and as a result the demand for housing that allows seniors to "age-in-place" (that is, to remain in their homes for as long as possible) will significantly increase. Auburn can plan ahead for this demand by encouraging the development of housing that has features designed to accommodate seniors.

3.43 Expansion of the Urban Core

As noted in the guiding principles for the Future Land Use Plan, downtown Auburn is the heart of the City, and is well-loved by both residents and visitors. The growth of Auburn's population, though, has out-paced the growth of downtown, so opportunities exist to expand downtown to meet the needs of Auburn's growing population. The plan encourages expansion of the urban core to the west and to the south of the existing Urban Core zoning designation, which it should be noted is significantly larger than the area generally acknowledged as downtown Auburn. Specific details are provided in the various Urban Core focus area sections, but of particular note is that the expansion to the west recognizes that a significant opportunity exists to redevelop the aging and fragmented multi-family neighborhoods directly north of campus into a more coherent, mixed-use neighborhood that functions as a westward expansion of downtown. Any intensification of downtown will likely require investment in downtown sewers, which are aging and may need additional capacity to handle additional development. A downtown master plan is also a desirable and important component of any future urban core expansion.

3.44 AU/City Cooperation

The City of Auburn/Auburn University town-gown relationship is of vital importance. Both entities have a track record of cooperation on various projects and programs, such as the Yarbrough Tennis Center, the Auburn Research Park, and in providing public safety services to campus. Both entities are or will be guided by long-range plans for future development. Where possible, coordination on long-range planning issues should take place. It is also important for the City to be aware of future changes to the enrollment cap, as such changes will influence City land use policies.

3.45 Mixed-Use Centers

Mixed-use centers (nodes) are discussed in Section 3.3.

3.46 Form-Based Codes

One key implementation tool for building nodes as well as other mixed-use neighborhoods indicated in the Future Land Use Plan is the use of form-based codes. Form-based codes are a form of zoning that "address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a *regulating plan* that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types."[3]

"This approach contrasts with conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS), to

[3] From http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes

the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes depends on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements."[4]

3.47 Annexation Policy and the Optimal Boundary

As discussed in Section 3.2.2, the development of the optimal boundary was necessary to determine areas the City might logically make part of the corporate boundary in the future, for modeling purposes and for inclusion into the Future Land Use Plan. Because the methodology for developing the boundary included review of many factors for determining the desirability of annexation for each parcel, the optimal boundary could also serve as a reference point for revisions to the City's current annexation policy. Currently, the City's annexation policy is not strategic in nature, but rather provides guidelines for determining whether individual annexations are permissible, such as requirements for contiguity and minimum acreage of individual lots to be annexed. Applicants are also not guaranteed that City services will be provided to them. The optimal boundary could serve as a useful guide for whether or not an area should be eligible for annexation based on the City's plan for future growth. A strategic-level annexation policy should be drafted, with emphasis placed on annexing those areas that are enclaves, surrounded by existing City limits and thus able to receive City services at little or no additional cost to the City. The City should also implement a level-of-services review for future annexations, both to determine the true cost of annexations as well as to ensure that annexed properties receive services equal to that provided to properties already inside the corporate boundary.

The City also faces a challenge in designating large areas of the optimal boundary as Rural. Though this designation is important to pursuing a strategy of infill development, it does present challenges. The minimum lot size in Rural is three (3) acres, which differs from the county's minimum lot size of one (1) acre. A study to determine the most effective method for rectifying this disparity to prevent this designation from serving as a disincentive to annexation will be necessary.

[4] From http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes

3.5 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

LU 1: Develop and maintain a Future Land Use Map guiding the distribution, location and extent of future land uses by type, density and intensity. The Future Land Use Map should promote protecting natural and man-made resources and the City's unique character, providing essential services in a cost-effective manner, discouraging urban sprawl and providing for the expansion of the City's population growth and its physical boundaries commensurate with the highest quality standards that define the City's character.

LU 1.1: Designate on the Future Land Use Map categories of land uses of varying densities and intensities in order to provide for the full range of activities.

LU 1.2: Encourage infill development and provide appropriate incentives as a means to efficiently utilize existing infrastructure, discourage urban sprawl, and promote walkable neighborhoods and alternative transportation choices.

LU 1.2.1: Provide for density and intensity bonuses, expedited permitting, and possible fee waivers, where such measures can be effectively used to promote infill development. Evaluate those uses that may require additional parking (such as multi-family) as part of this process.

LU 1.2.2: Along older commercial corridors such as Opelika Road, review existing zoning provisions that serve to impair redevelopment/infill objectives.

LU 1.2.3: Recognizing that the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are the principal regulatory implementation tools of CompPlan 2030, their current provisions will be analyzed for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan. Where significant conflicts exist, the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations will be recommended for amendment.

LU 1.2.4: The non-conforming use provisions of the Zoning Ordinance will be reviewed to determine whether specific provisions impede infill development.

LU 1.2.5: Recognizing that the City's Public Works and Water Resource Management Design and Construction Manuals have a significant influence on the built environment, their current provisions will be analyzed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and will be amended where significant conflicts exist.

LU 1.3: Provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of Auburn's changing population.

LU 1.3.1: Encourage future housing designed to meet the needs of the elderly. These could include wider door portals or locating the unit on the first floor when elevators are not provided.

LU 1.3.2: The City will conduct an in-depth inventory of existing housing stock as to its condition, affordability and occupancy in an effort to determine a baseline of housing conditions and needs.

LU 1.3.3: Traditional neighborhood developments of detached/attached single family homes in such configurations as zero lot line, duplex and small lot (approximately 5,000 square feet) subdivisions will be encouraged to provide for greater diversity of the housing stock and for the growing demographic of young families and the aging population, especially to promote infill and nodal development.

LU 1.3.4: Recognizing the ample supply of units in existing multi-family housing, future multiple unit developments in areas not recommended by the future land use plan will require a market analysis justifying need.

LU 1.3.5: Conduct a detailed study of multi-family developments in the City to inventory the current supply and determine the future demand for additional development with recommendations for action based on the study's analysis.

LU 2: Provide for the expansion, infill, redevelopment, open space, parking, increased densities and commercial intensification of downtown Auburn consistent with forecasted population growth to the year 2030.

LU 2.1: Provide for downtown infill, redevelopment, increased densities and commercial intensification to accommodate the City's growth over time and the need for additional downtown land uses that serve the general public and the University.

LU 2.1.1: Evaluate the downtown sewer system and develop a program to upgrade the system to support downtown development, while encouraging close coordination between the Water Resource Management Department and the Planning Department as to budgetary priorities or adjustments to budgetary priorities or land use designations as needed.

LU 2.1.2: A Downtown Master Plan will be created in collaboration with the City government, Auburn University, downtown merchants and property owners, and other stakeholders to identify an agreeable optimal scenario for the future of downtown. The plan should embody and promote an atmosphere of vibrancy, green areas and gathering spaces, public parking and a mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses oriented toward pedestrians.

LU 3: Encourage continued cooperation and coordination between the City and Auburn University with regard to land use issues and opportunities.

LU 3.1: Coordinate with Auburn University to integrate and absorb growth of campus while increasing coordination between the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Auburn University Master Plan.

LU 3.1.1: Encourage coordination between the City and Auburn University regarding any future proposed changes to the enrollment cap, to allow ample consideration of the impact of such an increase on the City's long-range plans.

LU 3.1.2: Determine opportunities for cooperation or areas of concern regarding the impact of the Auburn University Master Plan and Strategic Plan on the City of Auburn and the impact of Comprehensive Plan 2030 on Auburn University.

LU 4: Promote mixed-use development expansion and redevelopment within designated nodes for neighborhood, community and regional centers and infill along existing commercial corridors.

LU 4.1: Provide for commercial development at various levels of intensity and scale to accommodate population growth over time, located and designed to reduce traffic trips and to maximize the use of current public services and infrastructure.

LU 4.1.1: Significant future commercial growth will be encouraged to locate within the commercial nodes depicted on the Future Land Use Map, recognizing that additional commercial uses will be located outside nodes in downtown and along existing corridors where infill development will be encouraged.

LU 4.1.2: Where residential use is a component of a mixed use development, consider calculating the allowable number of dwelling units on the gross acreage of the property without consideration of the land used for commercial purposes, or eliminating the existing mixed-use "penalty."

LU 4.1.3: Densities within each node will be highest within the core, and step down in density within transition areas to ultimately blend into abutting or nearby edge residential neighborhoods at the same approximate density and building mass.

LU 4.1.4: Residential development proposals within nodes will be reviewed as to their qualities, including, but not limited to, open space, connectivity to public transit, walkability, ease of accessibility to other uses within the node and on–street parking.

LU 4.1.5: Consider use of a form-based code overlay zone to implement mixed-use development at appropriate locations, including nodes.

LU 4.1.6: Parking requirements may be reduced when it can be shown that some of the commercial land uses occur at different times of the day or night (such as church and office uses located adjacent to each other).

LU 4.1.7: New commercial centers will provide sidewalks or multi-use paths on their property to allow access to adjacent properties.

LU 4.1.8: Small commercial centers that provide for basic commercial services will be strategically located to provide reduced traffic trips to residents in West Auburn. Preference will be given to those locations well served by public infrastructure and at intersections.

LU 5: Encourage the annexation of land that lies within the City's optimal boundary, with an emphasis on enclaves created between the city limits as they were in 1984 and land annexed thereafter, and after analysis of criteria and impacts of the true costs and benefits of individual annexation proposals has been performed.

LU 5.1: Provide incentives related to future annexations within the optimal boundary.

LU 5.1.1: Enclaves created between the city limits as they appeared in 1984 and land annexed thereafter will receive expedited review of annexation proposals and possible filing fee waivers or reductions.

LU 5.1.2: Implement a level-of-services review for all requested annexations, with the goal of ensuring that services will be provided at a level equal to that provided to properties already in the City of Auburn.

LU 5.1.3: Conduct a study to determine the most effective method for rectifying the disparity between the one dwelling unit per acre permitted in the County within the City's Planning Jurisdiction, and the one dwelling unit per three acres permitted in the City's Rural zoning district.