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## SMYRNA TOMORROW: COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

This chapter provides an aspirational vision of how Smyrna will develop in the future. It offers tools in the form of goals, policies, maps that will aid city officials in guiding public and private investment to achieve that vision. It addresses the questions:

- *What kind of place should Smyrna be in 2040?*
- *What policy framework will help us reach that vision?*



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## 2. SMYRNA TOMORROW: COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

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*The community vision and goals identify the City of Smyrna's direction for the future and are intended to serve as a guide for city officials in day-to-day decision making. They are the product of an extensive public involvement effort and are comprised of several components:*

- *Vision statement (p. 45)*
- *Overarching community goals (p. 48)*
- *General policies (p. 48)*
- *Policy Map (p. 47)*
- *Future Land Use Map and defining narrative (p. 56)*

With the exception of the Policy Map, each of these components was already established as part of the City's *2030 Comprehensive Plan*. However, through the *Guide Smyrna* plan update process, community members were given the opportunity to revisit and update each component through a series of input activities. The results of these activities are presented here, and reflect the changing conditions and evolving vision for the community. In particular, the 2040 Future Land Use Map has been revised to provide guidance in making rezoning decisions at

the parcel level. The map illustrates the appropriate future land use patterns that would be in keeping with the overall vision and goals for the community. It works in concert with the Policy Map. While the Future Land Use Map provides guidance on specific future land uses that would be in keeping with the community vision, the Policy Map provides guidance on where to apply area-wide policies related to development trends, transportation corridors, and broad geographic locations.

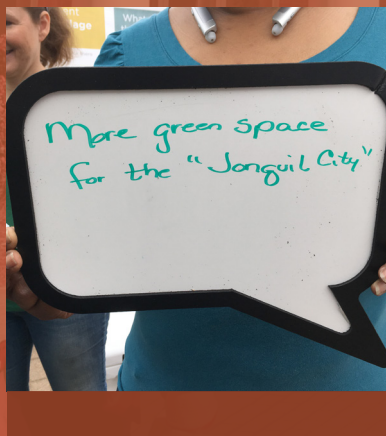


### 2014 SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN STATEMENT

“Smyrna will achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment by providing academic excellence for our children, fully involving our citizens in all aspects of the community, creating leadership opportunities for all residents, establishing high expectations for our quality of life and place, and creating strong identity and image.”

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION

“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods.”



# VISION

The community vision paints a picture of what the City of Smyrna desires to become in the long term, extending out to the year 2040. To arrive at this vision, the project team began with the community vision statement that was established as a part of *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* and refined it through the public input process. It was determined that the existing vision statement was reflective of the community’s vision, but did little to offer specific guidance in making land use, transportation, or housing decisions. To address this, the vision was translated into the language of place. The resultant vision statement was crafted by the project team, and refined through discussion with the Steering Committee and participants at the community workshops.

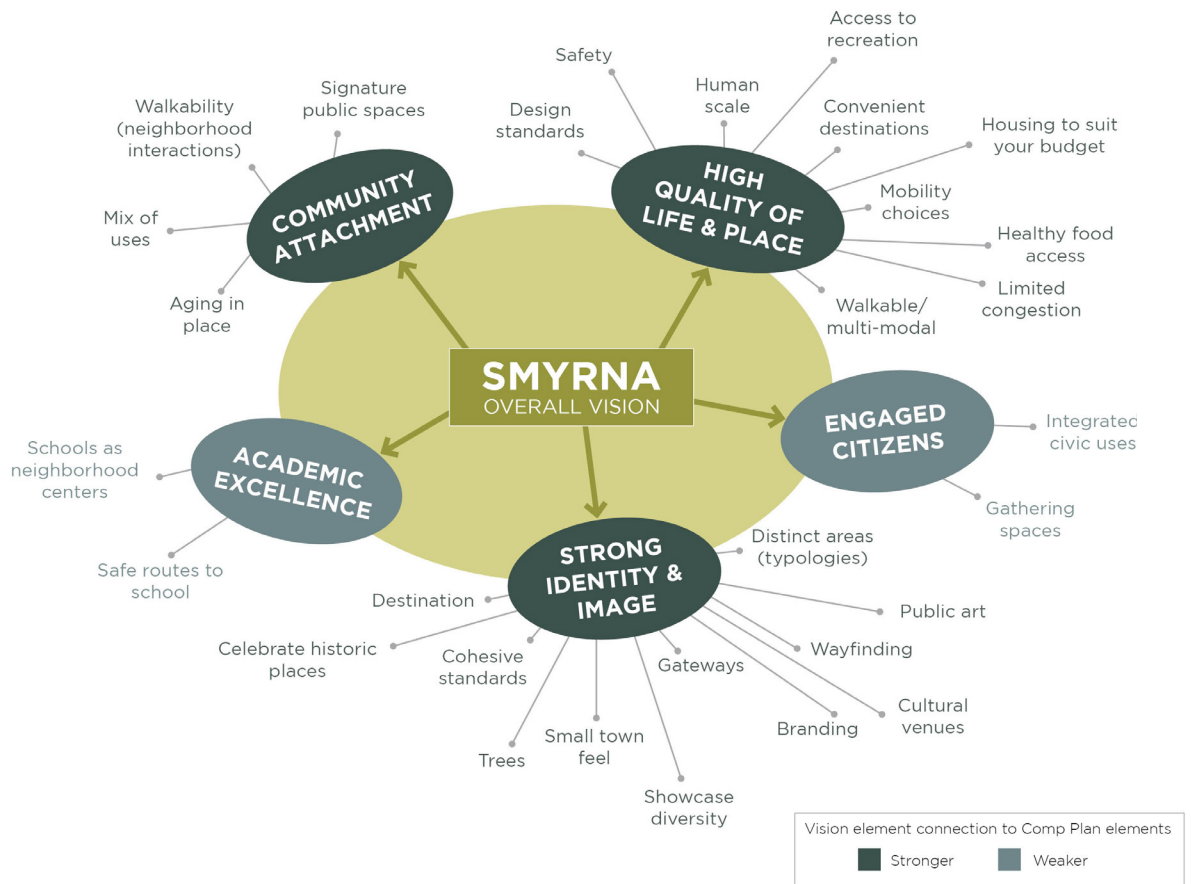
# TRANSLATING THE VISION INTO THE LANGUAGE OF PLACE

The vision statement at the core of *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* includes several key images or ideals that relate to different policies and actions that community can undertake to achieve that vision. That vision statement reads:

### 2014 SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN STATEMENT

*“Smyrna will achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment by providing academic excellence for our children, fully involving our citizens in all aspects of the community, creating leadership opportunities for all residents, establishing high expectations for our quality of life and place, and creating strong identity and image.”*

As part of the visioning effort, key ideas were pulled from the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Plan*. Potential action items related to the four major *Comprehensive Plan* elements— land use, transportation, housing, and economic development— were identified to brainstorm how the city’s overall vision could be translated into the language of place. ▶



These key ideals include community attachment, high quality of life and place, engaged citizens, strong identity and image, and academic excellence. The diagram below shows how those ideals could be translated into action items and land use based policies that are exemplary of a comprehensive plan. These ideals and action items were presented to the Steering Committee, who in turn came up with a complementary vision statement in land use terms. That statement was vetted by the public and revised as:

#### **2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT**

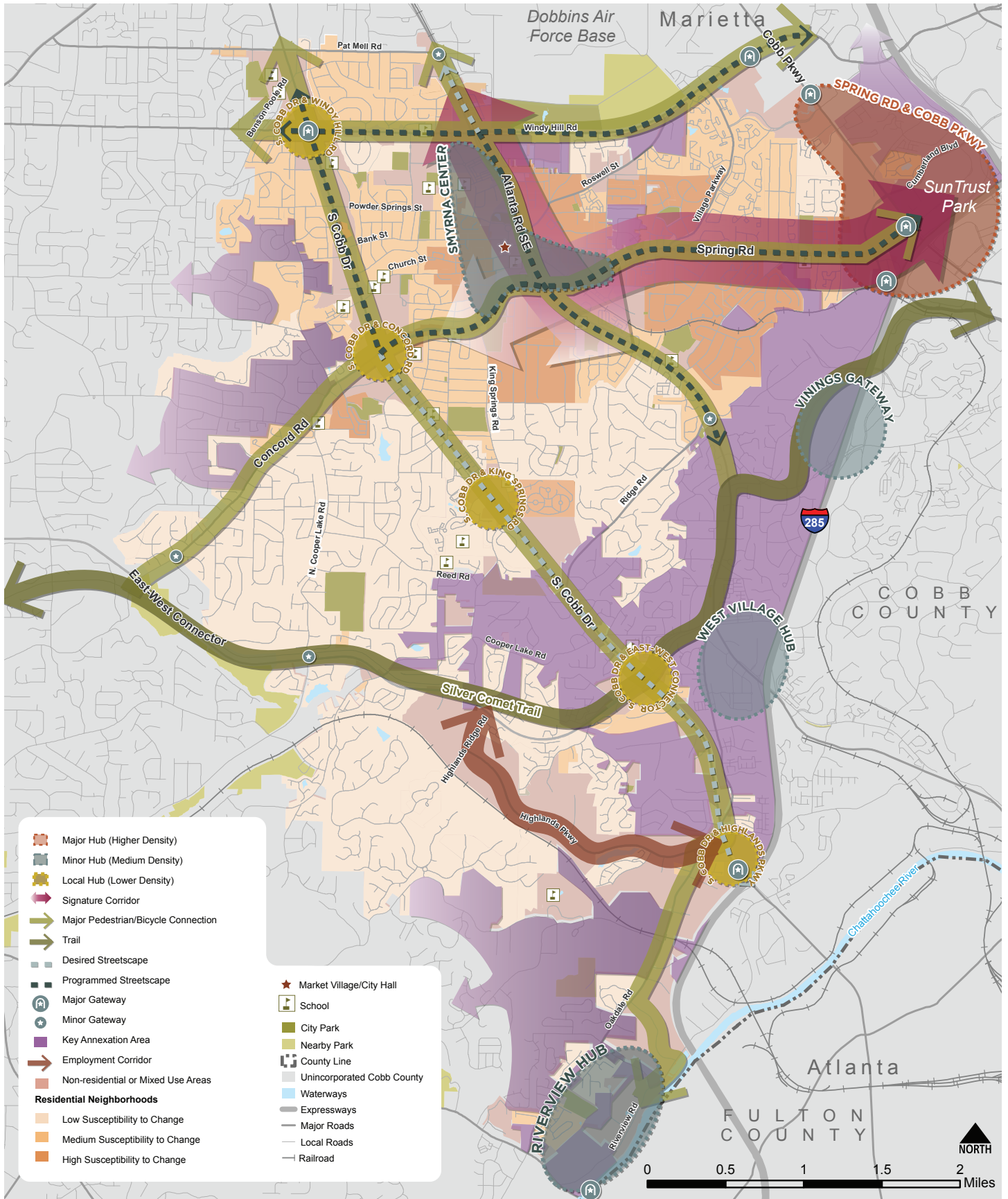
*“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods.”*

This vision statement was in turn then used as a sounding board in refining the goals and policies from the *Smyrna 2030 Comprehensive Plan*, as well as a guide in crafting a Policy Map to support their application.

## UNDERSTANDING THE POLICY MAP

*The Policy Map serves two purposes: (1) it provides a portrait of the overall development trends impacting the Smyrna community, and (2) it provides guidance on where to apply area-wide policies related to development characteristics, transportation corridors, and broad geographic locations. Like the goals and policies, the Policy Map was crafted from a reiterative process involving the project team, city staff, the Steering Committee, and participants in the public engagement process. The features of the map describe the character and function of activity hubs, major transportation routes, and residential neighborhoods. It also identifies potential annexation areas as well as desired features such as gateways, trails, and public facilities. For map feature definitions, see Appendix D: Definitions.*

Figure 2.1. Policy Map



## GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals represent the recurring, dominant themes expressed by participants in the *Guide Smyrna* planning effort, themes that the city needs to achieve in order to make this citywide vision a continuing reality. The majority of the goals were carried forward from the *Smyrna 2030 Comprehensive Plan*, but each underwent a reiterative vetting process involving the project team, city staff, the Steering Committee, and participants in the public engagement process. Under each goal are listed supportive policies that were also reviewed by participants in the *Guide Smyrna* planning effort, intended to offer ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials in making decisions consistent with achieving the community goals. These policies are organized by goal, though being comprehensive in nature, many individual policies likely will help to achieve multiple goals.

### HOUSING

#### **GOAL 1 Protect and preserve established residential neighborhoods.**

**Policy 1.1** Ensure adequate buffering and screening in order to protect residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of adjacent incompatible development.

**Policy 1.2** Ensure that infill housing development is compatible with surrounding established neighborhoods.

**Policy 1.3** Maintain a strict code inspection and compliance program to promote the maintenance and preservation of existing housing.

#### **GOAL 2 Encourage redevelopment of older declining neighborhoods and apartment communities.**

**Policy 2.1** Identify declining neighborhoods within planning studies and target these areas for revitalization efforts.

**Policy 2.2** Strictly enforce building code and property maintenance regulations in order to eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing.

**Policy 2.3** Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complexes into townhomes and condominiums in order to increase home ownership rates.

**Policy 2.4** Maintain an inventory of vacant properties, properties owned by the City or other government agencies, and tax delinquent properties suitable for infill development.

**Policy 2.5** Encourage adequate amounts, types, and densities of housing needed to support desired mixed use redevelopment.

#### **GOAL 3 Encourage the development of a range of housing choices in order to meet market demand and allow residents to remain in Smyrna across different life-cycle stages.**

**Policy 3.1** Encourage the construction of affordable and accessible housing in order to accommodate the growing senior population.

**Policy 3.2** Encourage housing opportunities for young families as well as “empty nester” households.

**Policy 3.3** Encourage housing opportunities to ensure that those who work within Smyrna have the option of living within the City.



**Policy 3.4** Support housing opportunities for special needs populations such as the disabled.

**Policy 3.5** Encourage opportunities for mixed-use, live/work housing.

**Policy 3.6** Assist nonprofit housing agencies to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing.

**Policy 3.7** Support equal housing opportunities for all persons.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL 4 Attract and retain a diverse variety of businesses in order to provide quality employment opportunities for residents and maintain a healthy tax base.**

**Policy 4.1** Promote opportunities for additional office professional development around the Cumberland/Galleria employment center.

**Policy 4.2** Encourage opportunities for light industrial employment that is compatible with the residential nature of the City.

**Policy 4.3** Pursue growth industries such as education, health care, and transportation to locate within the City.

**Policy 4.4** Continue to work with the Cobb Chamber of Commerce to conduct business recruitment, retention and expansion programs.

**Policy 4.5** Focus some economic development activities on retention, expansion and support of existing businesses (entrepreneur and small business assistance, business retention programs, etc.).

**Policy 4.6** Develop a mechanism to market the City and its assets. Network and coordinate with agencies which compile data and carry out promotional and marketing efforts, to assist in stimulating business location and development that serves the region.

**GOAL 5 Promote revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas.**

**Policy 5.1** Promote adaptive reuse and mixed-use redevelopment of declining strip commercial centers.

**Policy 5.2** Continue to utilize innovative economic development tools to revitalize declining commercial areas.

**Policy 5.3** Compile and maintain a database of key parcels with development and redevelopment potential.

**GOAL 6 Promote continued economic development within downtown Smyrna and other activity centers as vibrant mixed-use centers for residential, government, office, retail and entertainment activities.**

**Policy 6.1** Support higher-intensity housing within and adjacent to activity centers in conformity with the Future Land Use Map.

**Policy 6.2** Pursue cultural institutions, entertainment, and recreational businesses to locate in and around activity centers in order to draw people to the district after business hours.

**Policy 6.3** Maintain a strategy to promote special events in Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 6.4** Encourage new businesses to locate within Activity Centers, such as specialty retail, office, and services.

**Policy 6.5** Maintain architectural design standards in the Smyrna downtown area and along key gateway corridors.

**GOAL 7 Improve the job skills and educational attainment of residents in order to attract professional employment opportunities.**

**Policy 7.1** Encourage continued excellence in the public educational system, making sure we are providing training in the work skills needed by local businesses and industry.

**Policy 7.2** Explore possible job training programs and tax credits for company training.

**Policy 7.3** Collaborate with Cobb County through its Cobb Works job training program to enhance workforce skills and education.

## LAND USE

**GOAL 8 Protect natural resources and sensitive environmental features from encroachment by development.**

**Policy 8.1** Develop a greenspace plan as part of a comprehensive natural resources strategy.

**Policy 8.2** Target environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands for greenspace acquisition.

**Policy 8.3** Encourage use of conservation subdivision designation for the protection of sensitive natural resources and provision of community open space.

**Policy 8.4** Consider environmental sensitivity of steep slopes and ridgelines when making land use and site plan decisions.

**Policy 8.5** Develop and manage land use and transportation networks in order to promote air and water quality.

**Policy 8.6** Encourage opportunities for compact development supportive of open space preservation.

**Policy 8.7** Maintain development regulations that protect and preserve environmentally sensitive features.

**GOAL 9 Provide for community open space, parks, and recreational opportunities.**

**Policy 9.1** Continue development of bicycle/pedestrian trail network throughout Smyrna with linkages to parks, schools, and residential areas.

**Policy 9.2** Preserve scenic views and natural environment along the Silver Comet Trail and other multi-use paths in the City.

**Policy 9.3** Maintain the City's parks master plan in coordination with greenspace preservation efforts.

**Policy 9.4** Incorporate the connection, maintenance, and enhancement of greenspace in all new development.

**GOAL 10 Protect the unique historic and cultural assets of the City of Smyrna.**

**Policy 10.1** Identify historic resources and apply for designation of the National Register of Historic Places.

**Policy 10.2** Enlist the resources of a civic or community organization to perform an inventory of all historic structures in the City.

**Policy 10.3** Maintain certificate of approval process for historic structures in designated urban design districts.



### **GOAL 11 Maintain compliance with state environmental planning regulations.**

**Policy 11.1** Implement and enforce the City's stormwater management ordinance.

**Policy 11.2** Maintain a stormwater management plan.

**Policy 11.3** Implement and enforce the City's erosion and sedimentation control ordinance.

**Policy 11.4** Maintain a solid waste management plan.

**Policy 11.5** Support solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

**Policy 11.6** Work with state and federal agencies to identify and clean up brownfields and hazardous waste sites.

**Policy 11.7** Implement and enforce the City's Stream Buffer Ordinance.

### **GOAL 12 Expand on the success of Smyrna's Downtown Market Village**

**Policy 12.1** Promote mixed-use redevelopment of older strip commercial shopping centers and apartments at key intersections around Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 12.2** Encourage infill residential development and redevelopment surrounding the downtown area that is supportive of "Main Street" retail.

**Policy 12.3** Promote walkable, pedestrian-oriented development in and around Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 12.4** Encourage commercial buildings to be oriented toward the street with parking in the rear in order to enhance pedestrian appeal and mitigate the impact of automobiles.

### **GOAL 13 Encourage an efficient, equitable, and compatible distribution of land uses.**

**Policy 13.1** Support a broad range of land uses within the City.

**Policy 13.2** Encourage an appropriate transition of type and scale between established neighborhoods and activity centers.

**Policy 13.3** Designate areas for industrial, warehousing, distribution, and transportation uses with direct access to major transportation systems.

**Policy 13.4** Protect established single-family residential neighborhoods from the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

**Policy 13.5** Encourage the use of density bonuses to encourage greenspace creation or preservation.

**Policy 13.6** Coordinate land use planning with transportation improvement programs.

### **GOAL 14 Establish a visually attractive environment.**

**Policy 14.1** Update, implement and enforce the City's tree ordinance to preserve and re-establish the City's tree canopy.

**Policy 14.2** Update, implement and enforce the City's sign ordinance.

**Policy 14.3** Update, implement and enforce the City's design guidelines for development along major corridors.

**Policy 14.4** Screening of service yards and other places that tend to be unsightly should be encouraged by the use of walls, fencing, planting, or combinations of these. Screening should be equally effective year round.

**Policy 14.5** Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations should be placed under ground, where economically feasible.

**Policy 14.6** Monotony of design in single or multiple building projects should be avoided. Variations in detail, form, and siting should be used to promote visual interest. Harmony in texture, lines, and mass is encouraged.

**Policy 14.7** Reduce the visual impact of the automobile in both commercial and residential areas of Smyrna.

**Policy 14.8** Maintain and utilize gateway signage and landscaping in order to foster a sense of place within the community.

### **GOAL 15 Encourage infill development and redevelopment that has a positive impact on existing neighborhoods and activity centers.**

**Policy 15.1** Prioritize redevelopment and revitalization of existing underutilized commercial and industrial areas over development of new land for commercial purposes.

**Policy 15.2** Ensure that infill development is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers.

**Policy 15.3** Where appropriate, the City should assist in site assemblage for redevelopment initiatives, without the use of eminent domain.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **GOAL 16 Provide a safe, efficient, financially supportable transportation system**

**Policy 16.1** Concentrate development in areas with existing infrastructure to reduce congestion, encourage transit, and foster redevelopment.

**Policy 16.2** Protect the identity and unique character of Smyrna through context-sensitive design in all transportation projects.

**Policy 16.3** Refine and use the subdivision and development process in order to provide transportation improvements needed such as pedestrian facilities, safety improvements, interparcel access, and transit supportive street design within a specific timeframe as a condition of development approval.

**Policy 16.4** Require a Traffic Analysis as a condition of development to review the potential traffic impacts related to proposed developments, assign appropriate mitigation requirements as a condition of development approval, and discuss opportunities for multi-modal travel.

**Policy 16.5** Any development that generates more than 500 PM peak hour trips should prepare a traffic impact study and define how they plan to mitigate their impacts.

**Policy 16.6** Developments that generate more than 100 PM peak hour trips and have direct access to a roadway that currently operate at Level of Service (LOS) E or F, which reflects conditions where a roadway is operating at or above its design capacity, should prepare a traffic impact study and define actions to mitigate their impacts.

**Policy 16.7** Strive to achieve a minimum LOS D, which reflects conditions where roadways are functioning within their design capacity, for all roadway classifications.

**GOAL 17 Connect to the county and regional transport networks in a seamless manner, and coordinate with regional and local plans to support multiple goals wherever possible.**

**Policy 17.1** Continue the participation in and development of the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan to address congestion, pollution, transit, land use and redevelopment issues.

**Policy 17.2** Coordinate with Cobb County and GDOT to maximize the effectiveness of all transportation investments.

**Policy 17.3** Coordinate transit planning and services with CobbLinc and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to ensure existing bus routes and stops are appropriately planned for and incorporated into the transportation network and land use plan.

**Policy 17.4** Consider policies and recommendations from the Regional Freight Mobility Plan and Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

**GOAL 18 Promote the further development of a multi-modal transportation network to maximize access and connectivity for all residents.**

**Policy 18.1** Work to provide more transit service where cost effective in order to allow more residential areas direct access to transit.

**Policy 18.2** Design better pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, traffic calming measures, and crossings in high traffic areas, as recommended in the LCI study.

**Policy 18.3** Promote transportation alternatives such as transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian infrastructure, carpooling, and other forms of alternative modes of travel by mixing land uses and making more areas pedestrian accessible.

**Policy 18.4** Encourage a safe and efficient transportation network for all modes of travel.

**Policy 18.5** Work with the PATH Foundation, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, and PEDS to assist with the provision of safe and convenient bike and pedestrian facilities to and throughout the City.

**Policy 18.6** Consider opportunities for a Safe Routes to School Program.

**Policy 18.7** Encourage street connectivity and/or pedestrian connectivity between subdivisions for low density residential and moderate density residential.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

### **GOAL 19 Provide for efficient, high-quality, cost-effective public services.**

**Policy 19.1** Maximize the use of existing community facilities and services.

**Policy 19.2** Encourage infill development in areas with existing infrastructure capacity.

**Policy 19.3** Ensure that service levels are maintained whether to existing residents or new development.

**Policy 19.4** Use planned infrastructure investments and capital improvements to support desired development patterns.

**Policy 19.5** Coordinate public facilities and services with land use planning.

**Policy 19.6** Promote the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City in order to streamline and simplify the provision of public services.

**Policy 19.7** Consider impact fees in order to balance the need for new development and public services.

**Policy 19.8** Consider fiscal impacts of proposed new developments and annexations.

**Policy 19.9** Provide for vital public safety and emergency services within Smyrna.

**Policy 19.10** Encourage quality schools and diverse educational opportunities, such as charter schools.

### **GOAL 20 Provide lifestyle amenities that improve the “quality of life” in Smyrna.**

**Policy 20.1** Continue support for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development in and around Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 20.2** Provide pedestrian linkages from existing neighborhoods to the City’s multi-use trail system.

**Policy 20.3** Encourage outdoor gathering areas, such as plazas, public squares, and amphitheaters.

**Policy 20.4** Provide a variety of recreational opportunities including both active, organized recreation (e.g. sports fields), as well as areas for passive recreation (e.g. nature preserves, walking trails).

### **GOAL 21 Ensure that community facilities and services are adapted to meet the changing needs of Smyrna’s diverse population.**

**Policy 21.1** Provide facilities and services for the growing population of senior citizens.

**Policy 21.2** Adapt public services and facilities to meet the needs of growing minority communities in Smyrna.

**Policy 21.3** Adapt public services and facilities to serve special client groups such as the handicapped, homebound, and institutionalized.

**GOAL 22 Support mechanisms for the coordination of public services between different governmental entities.**

**Policy 22.1** Continue to work with Cobb County in providing vital emergency services such as fire protection and emergency medical service.

**Policy 22.2** Maintain the required Service Delivery Strategy document that formalizes intergovernmental service provision agreements.

**Policy 22.3** Work collaboratively with Cobb County and the Cobb County School Board in order to improve local schools.

**Policy 22.4** Support communication mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between adjacent local governments and Cobb County.

**GOAL 23 Coordinate planning efforts of the City with surrounding jurisdictions.**

**Policy 23.1** Continue to ensure that land use plans are consistent with surrounding jurisdictions and regional goals. Coordinate planning with bordering cities, Cobb County, and Cumberland CID.

**Policy 23.2** Continue to foster strong relationships with the surrounding county and regional agencies to ensure that infrastructure improvements within the City's surrounding area are supportive of local needs and compatible with the City's future development plans.

**Policy 23.3** Pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision making.

**Policy 23.4** Provide City representation on ARC task forces or committees and maintain close staff relationships with ARC in efforts to address regional issues.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Plan narrative provides a vision for development and land use patterns throughout the City's distinct character areas. The narrative provides a detailed description of each future development category found on the 2040 Future Land Use Map (See Figure 2.2). The Future Land Use Map replaces the existing 2030 Future Development Map as a guide for future growth and development in the City of Smyrna. The primary features of the Future Land Use Map are its character areas. Character areas represent a future land use pattern of distinct residential areas, activity centers, employment centers, and infrastructure and public spaces that support the community's future vision. Each character area description includes:



- An overview of the vision and intent,
- Design and transportation features,
- Appropriate land uses,
- Corresponding zoning categories,
- Implementation strategies, and
- Character images (examples of preferred land use patterns).

The recommended land uses listed for each character area represent the range of possible activities that are compatible with the intent of each area. While providing for a flexible list of potential uses, the Smyrna Community Development Department will review specific development proposals against the allowable appropriate range of uses. Elected officials have the authority to permit the least intensive uses listed within each area as deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis. As with the recommended land uses, implementation policies listed for each future character area represent a toolbox of possible strategies to achieve the desired vision.

The character areas are:

### Residential Character Areas

- Low Density Residential (3 dwelling units per acre and under) (LDR)
- Moderate Density Residential (4.5 dwelling units per acre and under) (MODR)
- Medium Density Residential (6 dwelling units per acre and under)(MEDR)
- Medium-High Density Residential (10 dwelling units per acre and under) (MHDR)
- High Density Residential (more than 10 dwelling units per acre) (HDR)

### Activity Center Character Areas

- Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC)
- Community Activity Center (CAC)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Regional Activity Center (RAC)

### Employment Center Character Areas

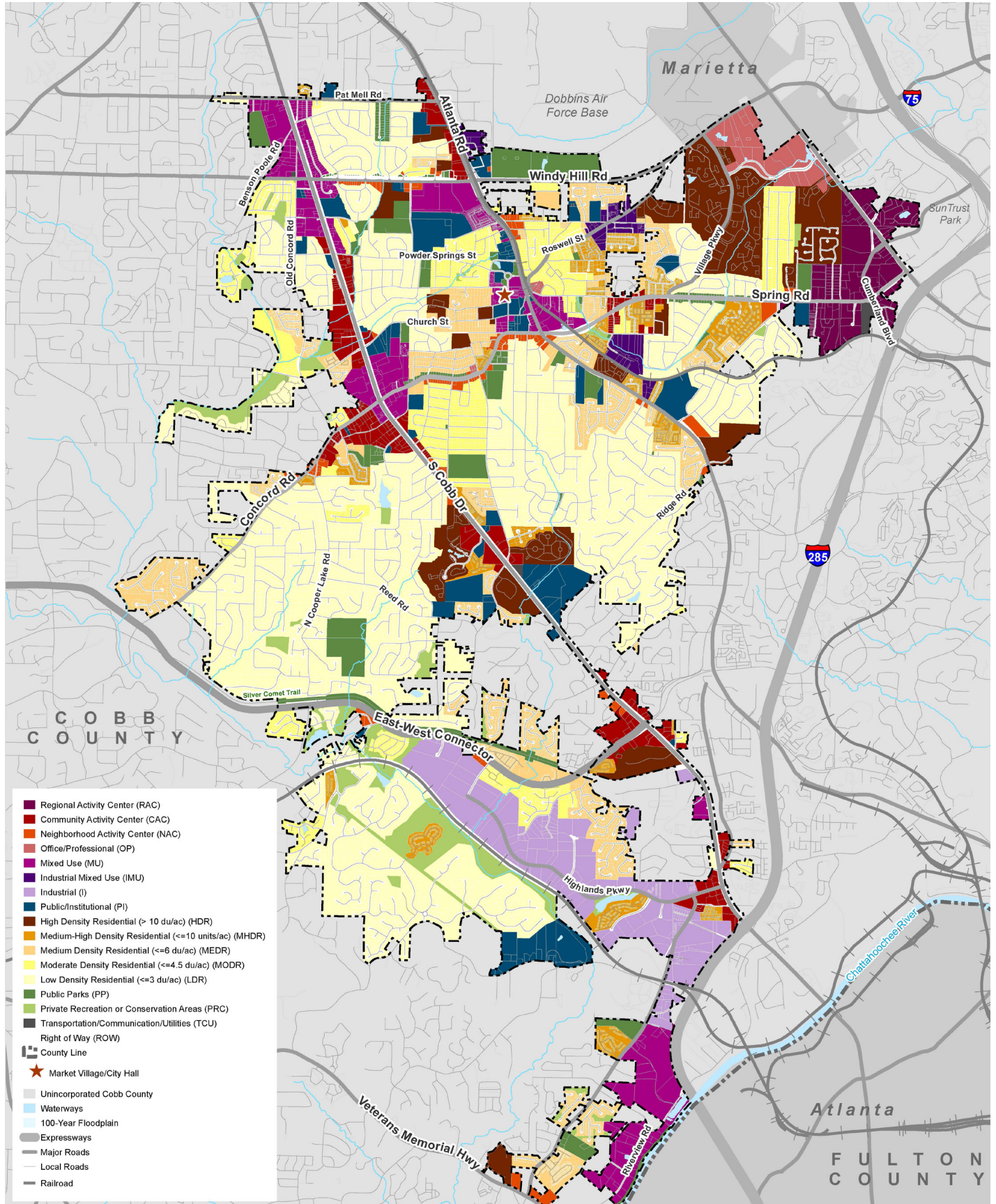
- Office/Professional (OP)
- Industrial (I)
- Industrial Mixed Use (IMU)

### Public Services and Quality of Life Character Areas

- Public/Institutional (PI)
- Public Parks (PP)
- Private Recreation and Conservation (PRC)
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities (TCU)
- Rights-of-way (ROW)



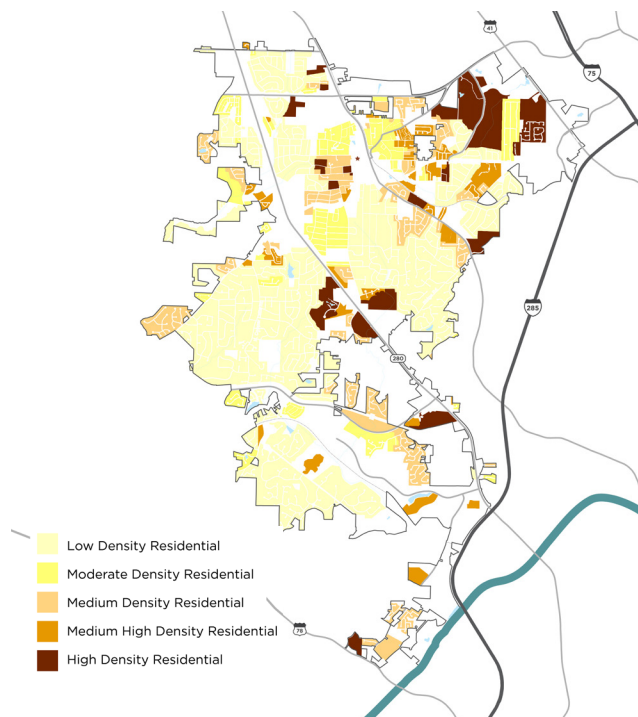
Figure 2.2. 2040 Future Land Use Map





Everyone’s housing needs are different. Depending on where they work, their lifestyle preference, and their household budget, they may prefer the retreat of a large lot, single-family home along the Silver Comet Trail or the low-maintenance lifestyle of a condo in Market Village. As these examples show, Smyrna already offers a wide diversity of housing products, but today’s housing supply may not meet future housing demands.

**Figure 2.3. Residential Character Areas**



## CHARACTER AREAS

The residential character areas represented on the 2040 Future Land Use Map encompass a wide range of future housing products, and they are characterized primarily by housing density represented by dwelling unit densities per acre (du/ac) of land. There are five residential character areas on the Future Land Use Map:

- **Low Density Residential (LDR)** - 3 du/ac or less
- **Moderate Density Residential (MODR)** - 4.5 du/ac or less,
- **Medium Density Residential (MEDR)** - 6 du/ac or less,
- **Medium-High Density Residential (MHDR)** - 10 du/ac or less, and
- **High Density Residential (HDR)** - more than 10 du/ac.

## SUPPORTING CITY GOALS

Together, the visions for these character areas support the city’s primary housing goals:

- **Goal 1:** Protect and preserve established residential neighborhoods



- **Goal 2:** Encourage the redevelopment of older, declining neighborhoods and apartment communities.
- **Goal 3:** Encourage the development of a range of housing choices in order to meet market demand and allow residents to remain in Smyrna across different life-cycle stages.
- Coordinated transportation improvements,
- A focus on walkable communities,
- Access to Activity Centers,
- Protection of natural resources, and
- Connecting residents to home ownership and maintenance programs.

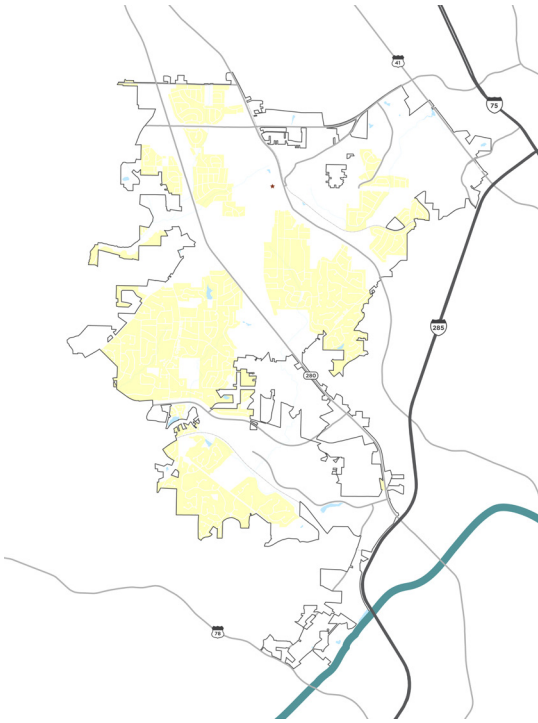
Housing is one component of a complete community. To support goals related to transportation, economic development, and sustainability, the following general policies should be encouraged across all residential character areas:

In addition, some supportive non-residential uses should be allowed within residential character areas to encourage active lifestyles and reduced vehicular dependency by locating everyday activities within walking distance of residences.

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

*The overall design of a neighborhood plays a major role in establishing its character and protecting the property values. Some communities establish design guidelines that dictate a particular architectural style, minimum building sizes, or maximum building heights to maintain or enhance neighborhood character. There was some limited interest expressed during the public participation process of this plan in establishing such neighborhood design guidelines in Smyrna. It was also recognized, however, that such guidelines maybe overly restrictive and difficult to administer. As a compromise, this plan recommends that the creation of voluntary neighborhood design guidelines be considered as part of a revision to the City Zoning Ordinance. The guidelines are described as voluntary in that individual subdivisions or neighborhoods could, by petition among their residents, self-impose such guidelines rather than have the City impose the guidelines on them.*

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)



### OVERVIEW

Most of the land in Smyrna today and in the future is occupied by low density residential neighborhoods. Density in these neighborhoods is limited to 3 dwelling units per acre. This land also includes some small, neighborhood-serving civic and recreational uses. Open space here is often privately held in the form of individual yards or community recreation facilities, collectively owned and managed by a homeowners association.

### DESIGN

Low Density Residential neighborhoods are characterized by single-family homes on large lots, with a high degree of building separation and deep setbacks. A generous tree canopy is typical of these neighborhoods and should be maintained. As infill development occurs, care should be taken to reflect the dimensions and character of the existing neighborhood.

### TRANSPORTATION

Low Density Residential neighborhoods are designed to provide a quiet, peaceful retreat for residents. Traffic calming devices-- such as speed humps, bulb-out curbs, and crosswalks-- may be implemented to reduce vehicle speeds and encourage careful driving. Road networks should be designed to provide connectivity to the surrounding area. Pedestrian facilities-- such as sidewalks, trails, and street lighting-- are encouraged to promote physical activity and decrease vehicular dependence.



Cooper Lake Park neighborhood

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District (*if built on lots greater than 1/3 of an acre*)

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Continuous sidewalks and pedestrian linkages to trail systems
- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- Historic preservation may be considered on a voluntary basis for homes and even neighborhoods built over 50 years ago that still maintain a strong historic character and context
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Discourage clear cutting
- Conservation subdivisions
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Strict code enforcement
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Buyer education and counseling

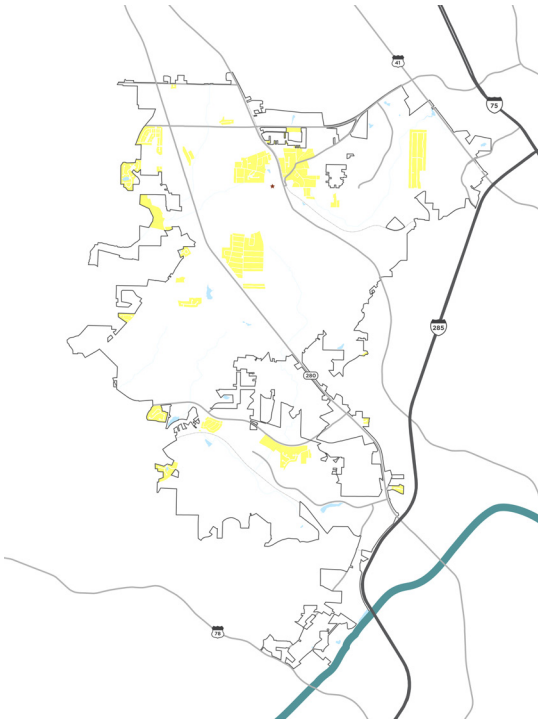


Vinings Glen neighborhood



Creatwood Trail neighborhood

## MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MODR)



### OVERVIEW

Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods are primarily single-family detached residential neighborhoods designed at a slightly higher density than Low Density Residential neighborhoods. Density is limited to 4.5 dwelling units per acre or less. They may include a wider variety of housing types—such as accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, duplexes, or quadraplexes—and small civic or recreational uses.

### DESIGN

Homes in Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods are characterized by smaller lots, some degree of building separation, and moderate setbacks. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) principles should be applied throughout to encourage walkability by orienting buildings toward the street, designing alleys, locating residences near other uses, integrating parks and public spaces, opting for compact designs, and providing safe and inviting alternative modes of transportation.

### TRANSPORTATION

Road networks in Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods are connected to the surrounding area. As in other residential areas, traffic calming devices-- such as speed humps, bulb-out curbs, and crosswalks-- may be implemented to reduce vehicle speeds and encourage careful driving. The proximity of many of these areas to mixed-use and commercial nodes makes walking and biking feasible modes for many trips, and excellent pedestrian facilities-- such as sidewalks, trails, street trees and lighting— should be provided to connect residents to nearby commercial and recreational amenities.



Single-family detached homes near Belmont

## MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached housing
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes
- Cottage courts
- Accessory dwelling units
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District (*if built on less than 1/3 of an acre*)
- R-12, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Residential Attached and/or Detached
- O-I, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- Continuous sidewalks and pedestrian linkages to trail systems
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Review the impact of stormwater regulations on potential lot configurations for infill development
- Discourage clear cutting
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Create additional zoning categories as alternatives to RAD
- Buyer education and counseling
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Strict code enforcement

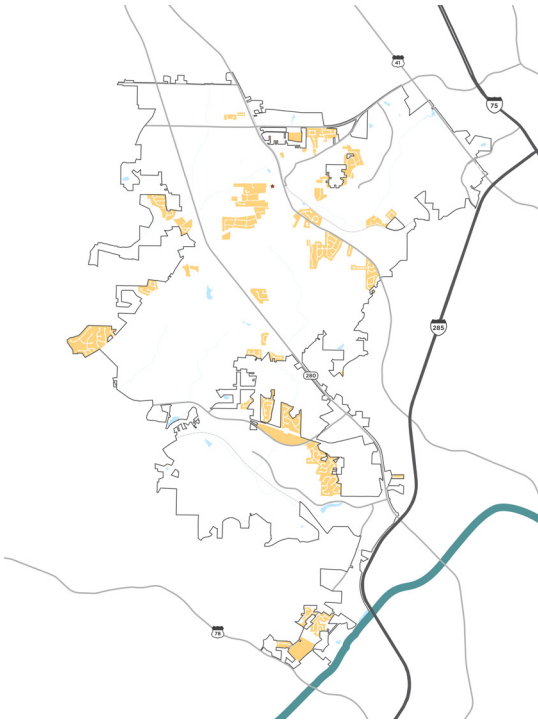


Williams Park neighborhood



Homes in the Stapleton neighborhood in Denver, CO

## MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MEDR)



### OVERVIEW

Medium Density Residential neighborhoods include a mix of detached and attached housing in a primarily residential context. Density is limited to 6 dwelling units per acre or less. Small civic and recreational uses may be incorporated into the neighborhood. These neighborhoods are often located near activity centers or mixed use areas.

### DESIGN

Medium Density Residential areas are relatively compact, walkable places. Homes are oriented to the street, sited on smaller lots with shallower setbacks, and have little or no building separation. Open space is a mix of small, private lawns and shared spaces, such as neighborhood parks or trails. Traditional Neighborhood Development principles are encouraged in Medium Density Residential areas.

In some cases, Medium Density Residential neighborhoods may take the form of master-planned communities, such as Planned-Unit Developments (PUDs). These planned communities are meant to allow for innovative designs that may not fit within the confines of established zoning districts, and approvals are tied to project site plans, allowing for both greater flexibility and administrative discretion. PUDs often integrate a mixture of housing types and sizes along with limited commercial uses, open space, and recreation facilities.

### TRANSPORTATION

The connected transportation network in Medium Density Residential neighborhoods offers residents direct access to nearby amenities by a variety of modes. Pedestrian amenities—such as continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and street trees—should be standard elements of neighborhood streets to encourage non-automotive trips to nearby destinations.



Single-family detached homes in Smyrna Heights



Townhomes in Smyrna Heights



## MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes
- Townhomes
- Cottage courts
- Accessory dwelling units
- Senior housing
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens
- Limited neighborhood commercial within a PUD

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District
- R-12, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Single-family Residential Attached and/or Detached District

- RD, Residential Duplex
- RD-4, Residential Triplexes or Quadraplexes
- PUD, Planned Unit Developments
- OI, Office-Institutional District

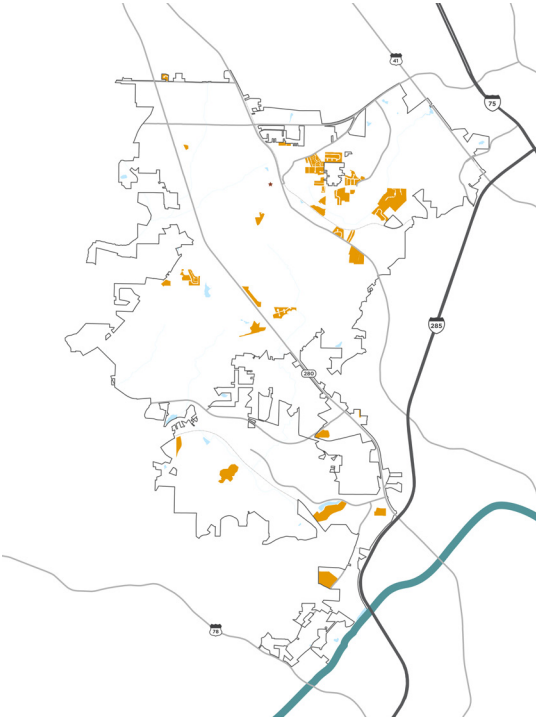
### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, and lighting
- Cluster development
- Planned-Unit Development
- Conservation subdivisions
- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- On-street parking
- Strict code enforcement
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Review the impact of stormwater regulations on potential lot configurations for infill development
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Create a new zoning district as an alternative to RAD
- Buyer education and counseling



Mix of single-family detached homes, townhomes, and small multi-family residential in the Ansley Park neighborhood in Atlanta

## MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MHDR)



### OVERVIEW

Medium-High Density Residential areas consist primarily of compact, low-maintenance housing, such as townhomes and small-scale, multi-family housing. Density is limited to 10 dwelling units per acre or less. They may include auxiliary uses, such as small civic buildings or recreational amenities. These neighborhoods are typically located along high-volume corridors near activity centers and mixed use nodes.

### DESIGN

Medium-High Density Residential neighborhoods have a pedestrian-oriented design. Buildings are oriented toward the street on small lots with shallow setbacks, in keeping with the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design. More often than not, buildings are attached. Roads are lined with street trees and open space and amenities are typically shared facilities, such as a neighborhood park or trail.

### TRANSPORTATION

The road network in Medium-High Density Residential neighborhoods should have a high degree of connectivity and provide facilities to easily access nearby commercial destinations by foot or bike. In many cases, they are located next to shared paths on major roads. Continuous sidewalks, lighting, and traffic calming measures should be implemented to create a safe and enjoyable walking environment.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes
- Townhomes



Detached townhomes at Belmont

## MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

- Cottage courts
- Accessory dwelling units
- Senior housing
- Multi-family residential
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

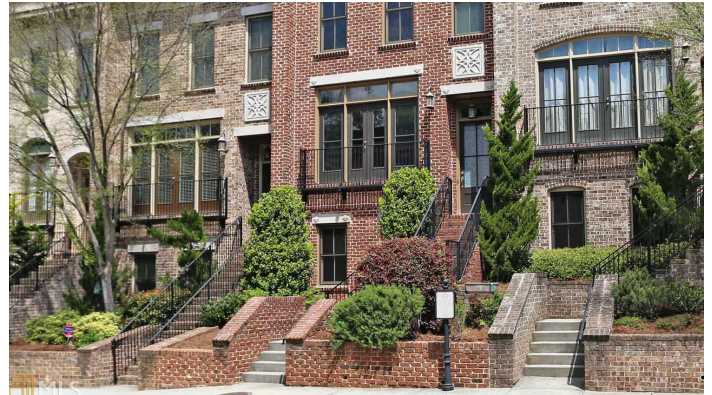
- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Residential Attached and/or Detached
- RD, Multi-family Residential District
- RD-4, Multi-family Residential District
- RMC-8, Multi-family Residential District
- RM-10, Multi-family Residential District
- TD, Multi-family Residential District
- OI, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, and lighting
- Cluster development
- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- On-street parking
- Strict code enforcement
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Review the impact of stormwater regulations on potential lot configurations for infill development
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Buyer education and counseling

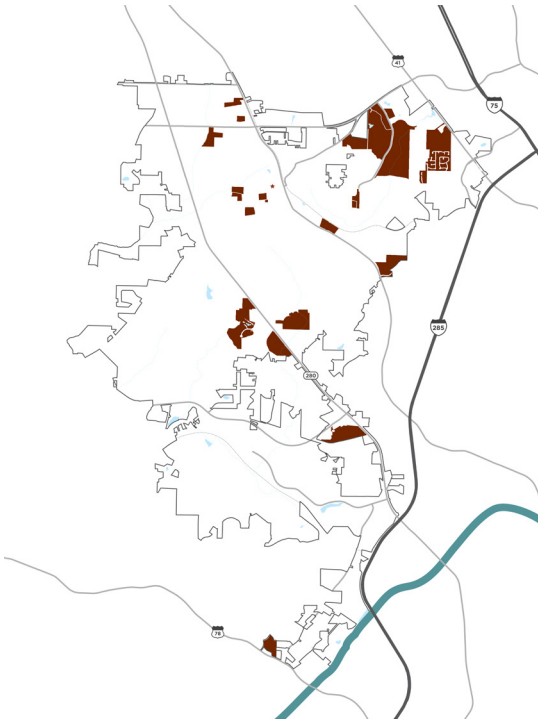


Multi-family residential in Old Fourth Ward in Atlanta



Townhomes in Decatur, GA

## HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (HDR)



### OVERVIEW

High Density Residential areas include multi-family housing ranging from small-scale condominiums to high-rise residential buildings. Residential developments with a density of more than 10 dwelling units per acre are included in this category. These areas are often located along high-volume corridors in close proximity to Activity Centers or Mixed Use nodes as part of a broader, mixed-use neighborhood.

### DESIGN

This category encompasses both multi-family buildings in integrated, neighborhood settings, as well as apartment or condominium complexes. The renovation of older multi-family complexes is encouraged. Open space in High Density Residential areas typically takes the form of a neighborhood park or plaza, as well as privately owned recreational amenities.

### TRANSPORTATION

High Density Residential areas should be part of a well-connected, multi-modal street network. New multi-family complexes and major renovations should be designed with multiple points of entry to avoid creating stressors on major roads; gated complexes are discouraged. Locations in close proximity to transit routes are preferred, and transit stops should be coordinated with multi-family residential locations. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities within developments and connecting to the surrounding area should include lighting, street trees, and other features to encourage non-automotive trips.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes



Condominiums in Asheville, NC



Multi-family residential at Belmont

## HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

- Townhomes
- Multi-family residential
- Senior housing
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Supportive limited commercial
- Traffic calming
- Access management and interparcel connectivity
- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks, shared paths, crosswalks, street trees, lighting, and bicycle parking
- Access to convenient and efficient transit routes with high quality, nearby shelters and pedestrian connections

## CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District
- R-12, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Residential Attached and/or Detached
- RD, Residential Duplex
- RD-4, Residential Triplexes or Quadraplexes
- TD, Multi-family Residential District
- RMC-8, Multi-family Residential Condominium Ownership
- RM-10, Multi-family Residential District
- RM-12, Multi-family Residential District
- RM-15, Multi-family Residential District
- RHR, Residential High-rise District
- OI, Office-Institutional District
- On-street, hidden surface parking, and structured parking encouraged
- Shared private or public amenities
- Redevelopment incentives for older multi-family complexes
- Strict code enforcement
- Incentives for the provision of affordable units and workforce housing
- Buyer education and counseling
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Locate highest density buildings furthest from adjacent single-family neighborhoods

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Urban design standards when located within an overlay zoning district
- Roadway safety improvements

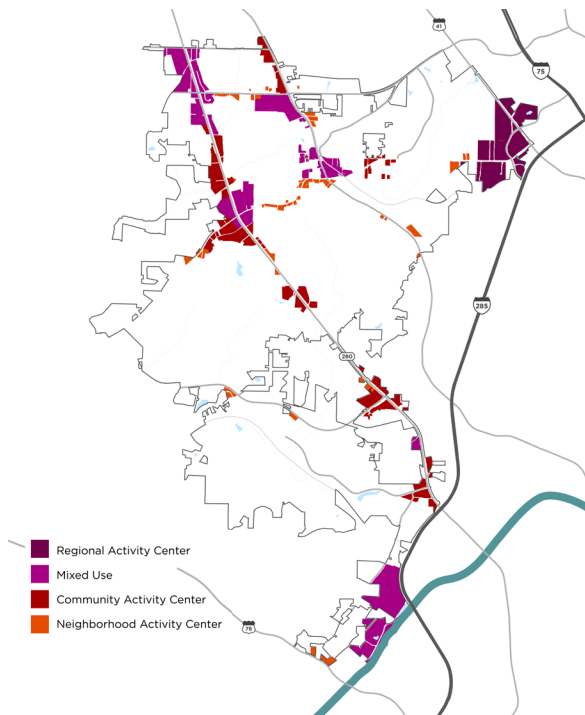


Senior living facility in Colorado



Located along the major transportation corridors of the city, activity centers contribute greatly to setting the overall character and image of the city. They include the commercial centers, which based on overall economic trends and the city's small supply of vacant and undeveloped land, represent the best opportunity for redevelopment and growth. With the rise of online shopping and the “gig” economy, the demand for retail space is declining, so the overall development trend is for aging strip commercial centers to be transformed into vibrant

**Figure 2.4. Activity Center Character Areas**



mixed use centers. A prime example of this trend within Smyrna is the Belmont development, which replaced one of the largest strip shopping centers in region with a mix of over 485 residential units, 28,000 sf of retail, and a 30,000 sf office.

## CHARACTER AREAS

This transition of commercial to mixed use is at the heart of the community's future vision, and its promotion will be the key to successful implementation of this plan. As a general category activity centers include 4 character areas:

- **Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC)**
- **Community Activity Centers (CAC)**
- **Mixed Use (MU), and**
- **Regional Activity Centers (RAC)**

These areas share a history of commercial use, and a generally high real estate market demand for redevelopment due to their visibility and access. Because they often present opportunities for the adaptive reuse of aging and possibly historic structures, general policies applicable to each of these categories must consider the design challenges that such reuse or redevelopment presents, as well as the possibility of starting with a completely cleared and graded site. Since most of these sites are aging commercial centers, the



redesign of surface parking lots to allow for outdoor dining areas, multi-use paths, passive storm water detention, landscaped parking islands, or even small public parks should be encouraged where appropriate.

In addition to real estate trends pushing for the redevelopment of aging commercial sites, trends in transportation are also playing a major role in design of activity centers. Throughout the public engagement process for this plan, participants supported a future lifestyle that is less dependent on the traditional automobile and more supportive of the use of a wide variety of transportation modes, including walking, bicycling, on-demand ride sharing, and transit. Participants even realized that through

technological advances the form and function of automobiles themselves are changing. Though no one can yet accurately predict when self-driving or autonomous vehicles will dominate the auto market and subsequently our public streets, the reality that it is coming and very likely within the time frame of this plan, or by the year 2040, is generally accepted. As a result, activity centers must be designed to accommodate a wide range of transportation options, and include such features as drop off and queue lanes, pedestrian and bicycle access to front doorways, wayfinding, and a general orientation of the building toward the street, rather than toward parking areas.

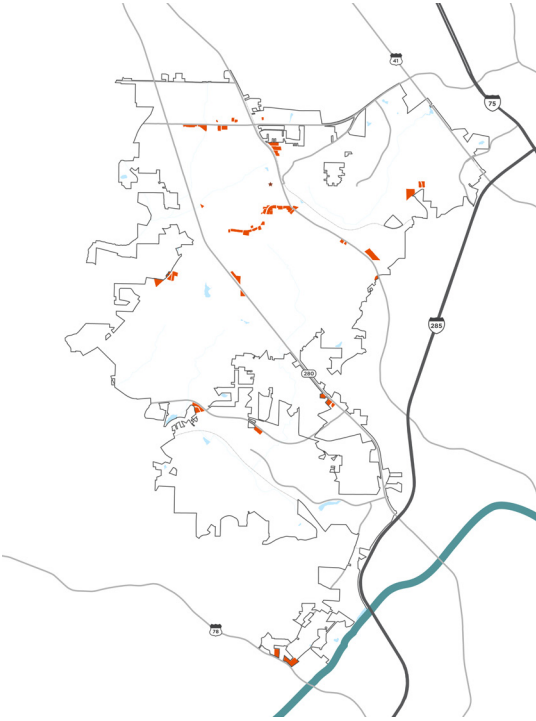
## TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

*Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a “pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use community near a transit station that provides relief from automobile-dependent lifestyles for residents and workers, enabling them to drive less and ride transit more,” typically encompassing the area within a 10-minute walk (half mile) of a transit station. Activity Centers are natural transit service locations and should be designed to encourage the use of buses, shuttles, and potential future rail, integrating transit facilities seamlessly into the community. Effective TODs feature a connected grid network with small block sizes; a compact, vertical land use pattern with a mix of uses; buildings oriented toward the street; continuous sidewalks and bicycle facilities; lighting, street trees, furniture, public art, and other pedestrian amenities; clear wayfinding signage; and alleys and other design features to reduce the curb cuts in sidewalks.*

<sup>1</sup>Atlanta Regional Commission - Transit Oriented Development



## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER (NAC)



### OVERVIEW

Neighborhood Activity Centers are neighborhood focal points with a concentration of small commercial, civic, and public activities. Retail and services within Neighborhood Activity Centers are intended to be local-serving. Development within these areas is encouraged to be pedestrian and bicycle-oriented and compatible with surrounding single-family residential areas.

Neighborhood Activity Centers are of limited scale in order to control adverse impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood Activity Centers typically feature small-scale commercial establishments each less than 5,000 square feet in size. Office and retail uses within Neighborhood Activity Centers should be limited to a maximum of two stories. Auto-oriented land uses, such as gas stations, car washes, and drive-through windows should be discouraged within Neighborhood Activity Centers.

### DESIGN

Commercial buildings within Neighborhood Activity Centers should be oriented to streets that are easily accessible from adjacent neighborhoods. To accomplish this, the following design consideration should be implemented were deemed appropriate:

- Buildings should have minimal front setbacks for easy pedestrian access.
- Building entrances should be oriented toward streets; corner buildings should have corner entrances whenever possible.
- When it is not practical or reasonable to orient building entrances toward existing streets, a new “shopping street” with sidewalks and pedestrian amenities can be created within the retail center.



Home converted to business in Nashville, TN



Virginia Highlands neighborhood in Atlanta



## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)

- Developments should include sidewalks with a street furniture zone.
- Parking and vehicle drives should be located away from building entrances, and not be allowed between a building entrance and the street.
- Surface parking should be oriented behind or to the side of buildings for new construction. In redevelopment situations, where an excess of parking is provided under the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, pedestrian walkways, landscaping, or outdoor serving areas should be required.
- If the site is large enough, landscaping should be provided within parking lots, adjacent to sidewalks, and adjacent residential land uses.

Small offices will also play an important role in the city's future development. Residential houses located along busy corridors may benefit from adaptive reuse as small offices or neighborhood commercial.

### TRANSPORTATION

Neighborhood Activity Centers are normally found at the intersection of collector streets that serve residential areas. Limiting such uses to collectors minimizes traffic on local streets. Pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods are encouraged to facilitate trips by foot or bike.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Neighborhood commercial (not automobile-oriented)
- Small mixed-use development

- Live-work units
- Low-rise office/professional
- Civic / public / places of worship
- Parks / plazas

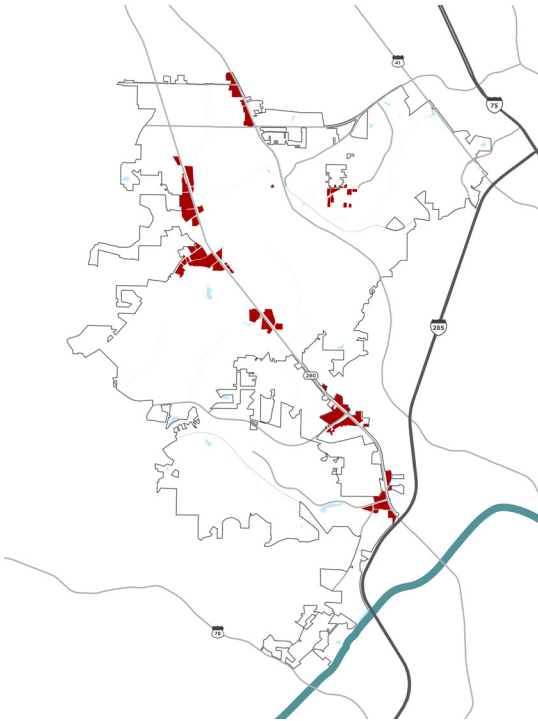
### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- LC, Limited Commercial District
- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District
- FC, Future Commercial District
- OI, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Implementation of Corridor Design Guidelines, (See recommended changes to the zoning ordinance in the Implementation Plan.)
- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Require pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented wayfinding
- Encourage streetscaping, street furniture, and lighting
- Redesign off-street parking facilities for inter-parcel connectivity
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Orient new buildings toward primary streets
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Market available commercial space and work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify potential tenants

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)



### OVERVIEW

Community Activity Centers contain a mix of commercial, professional, civic, and public uses, and are intended to accommodate commercial uses serving several adjacent neighborhoods. Compared to the other character areas, CAC is more commercial and auto-oriented. Most of the locations within this designation are currently traditional commercial uses within strip commercial centers or standalone buildings supported by large surface parking lots. Though there is still a market demand for such development, current real estate market trends indicate that that demand is waning and the future vision for these areas is not strictly commercial in character, but rather centers of local activity that support a mix of uses that support the surrounding community with variety of activities and services.

### DESIGN

A transition in building scale and land use type should be provided between higher intensity uses and adjacent residential areas. Within a site, more intense uses should be located further from existing residential development. Community Activity Centers should also reflect the character and aesthetic of the surrounding neighborhoods. The installation of public art and good wayfinding should also be encouraged.

### TRANSPORTATION

Community Activity Centers have been established along major arterials and at key intersections where development nodes can be supported by the regional transportation network. While Community Activity Centers are more automobile-oriented than Neighborhood Activity Centers, basic access and safety should be provided for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.



Street-oriented retail at Edgewood Shopping Center in Atlanta



Redeveloped retail center in Orlando with added street-facing buildings and a trail connection

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Mixed use development
- General commercial
- Office / professional
- Civic / public / places of worship
- Plaza / park / gathering space

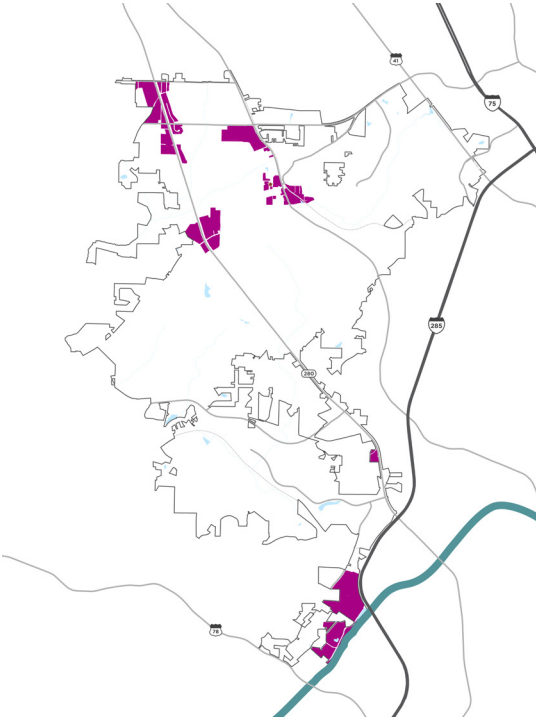
### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- GC, General Commercial District
- MU, Mixed Use District
- LC, Limited Commercial
- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District
- TS, Tourist Services District
- OI, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Encourage alternatives to or reuse of big box retail development
- Implement corridor design guidelines where applicable
- Buffering between commercial uses and surrounding neighborhoods where appropriate
- Improve parking design standards to better support other modes of transportation, such as on-demand ride sharing, transit, pedestrian, and bicycling. (See recommended changes to the City Zoning Ordinance in the Implementation Plan.)
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Redesign off-street parking facilities for inter-parcel connectivity, where applicable
- Require pedestrian safety improvements and connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- Bicycle safety improvements, connections, parking, and bike share stations
- Provide high quality transit infrastructure, shelters, and connections

## MIXED USE (MU)



Market Village

### OVERVIEW

Mixed Use areas provide a unique sense of place and identity, and include several landmark developments that many identify with the city, such as the Market Village, Belmont, and Jonquil. They provide a vibrant combination of residential and commercial uses, and a venue for gatherings, events, and civic activities within a “village center.” The redevelopment of existing automobile-oriented commercial centers to Mixed Use nodes is encouraged, particularly at key intersections, such as South Cobb Drive at its intersections with Windy Hill Road and Concord Road.

### DESIGN

Each mixed use development should also be supportive of pedestrian and bicycle access through use of a compact site plan that includes a mix of uses within close proximity to one another. Buildings should be oriented to the street and feature human-scale design elements, using best practices in Traditional Neighborhood Development. Open space—such as parks, pocket parks, plazas, and trails—provide everyday gathering spaces and a place to hold community events. These areas should be designed to integrate seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhoods through a transition in building scale and a connected road network.

### TRANSPORTATION

Mixed Use areas should be designed as pedestrian oriented nodes, rather than auto-oriented strip corridors. The road network should consist of connected streets with small, walkable blocks. Streets should feature generous sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and traffic calming elements to create an enjoyable walking experience. To encourage locals to bike to these areas, bike lanes, bike share stations, and trail connections should be provided. Coordination with transit stops and the creation of a potential shuttle system should be considered. Parallel road networks, access management, and coordinated signal timing will help reduce vehicle congestion in the surrounding area.

## MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- “Main Street” retail
- Office/Professional
- Detached single-family residential
- Townhomes
- Multi-family residential
- Live-Work units
- Civic / government / places of worship
- Parks / plazas / gathering spaces

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- CBD, Central Business District
- MU, Mixed Use District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Redevelopment Overlay Districts

- Design guidelines
- Internal pedestrian connectivity and linkages to parks, neighborhoods, Silver Comet Trail, and activity centers
- Bicycle lanes and bike share stations
- Provide high quality transit infrastructure, shelters, and connections
- Wayfinding and gateway signage
- Streetscaping features including lighting, street trees, furniture, and public art
- Integrate public open space
- Maximize use of existing parking
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Locate parking in the rear or to the side of new buildings
- Marketing publication promoting existing businesses
- Downtown Business Improvement District
- Zoning incentives for mixed-use development.
- Provision of housing at a range of price points
- Festival events

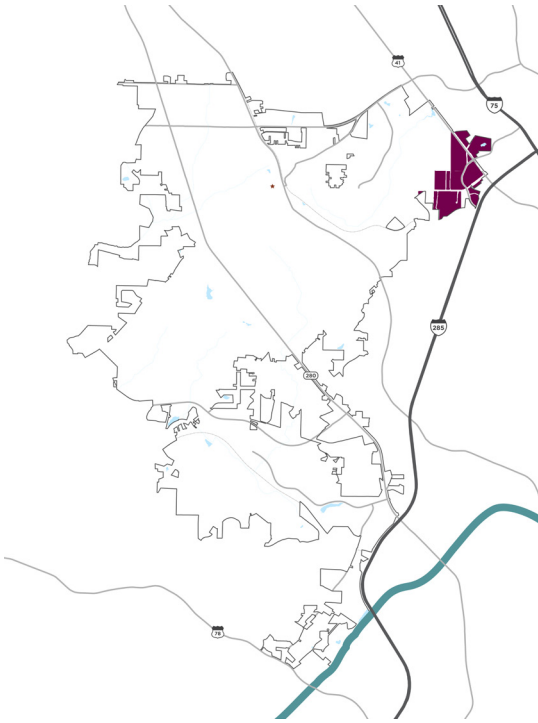


Harbor Town in Memphis, TN



Pearl Brewery Redevelopment in San Antonio, TX

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (RAC)



### OVERVIEW

The recent construction of SunTrust Park and the Battery has served as a catalyst for development interest around the intersection of the Spring Road and Cobb Parkway. Throughout the public involvement process of the plan, participants recognized the Spring Road area is becoming urbanized and more regionally focused, drawing in visitors from all over the Metro Atlanta area, and saw it as an appropriate location for future growth. To plan for this, the City recently undertook and adopted the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study, and the purpose of this character area is to support the implementation of that study. The boundaries of the RAC do not directly match the boundaries of the study, but do focus on the core area of the study where a more urbanized land form was recommended than is currently supported by the Zoning Ordinance. The vision for the area is one that contains a mix of mid- to high-rise commercial, professional, residential and public uses.

### DESIGN

The Regional Activity Center is positioned to become the gateway to Smyrna for much of the Metro Atlanta community. Its design should represent the community's vision for a walkable, mixed-use area with good access and integrated park space. New plazas, pocket parks, and stronger connections to Jonquil Park will provide community gathering spaces and opportunities for recreation. Development patterns should reflect best practices in transit-oriented development (TOD), with many uses within convenient walking distance and buildings oriented to the street. As in Community Activity Centers, a transition in building scale and land use type should be provided between higher intensity uses and adjacent residential areas. As called for in the LCI plan, the building scale will be highest around SunTrust Park and Cobb Parkway and scale down in intensity the further away from the park.



RiverPlace in Greenville, SC



Townhomes in the Ansley Park neighborhood of Atlanta

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)

### TRANSPORTATION

The Regional Activity Center will be the multi-modal hub of Smyrna. Premium transit service should be a core component of the future development of this area in order to effectively and efficiently connect users from throughout the region to the site. Within the area, most trips will be by foot or by bike. The road network will be a walkable, connected network with smaller blocks to create a pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly environment. Excellent pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities—including generous sidewalks, signalized crosswalks, bike lanes, bike share stations, lighting, street trees, landscaping, wayfinding, public art, and a pedestrian bridge over Cobb Parkway—will be essential to creating a high quality of life and reducing the impact of local trips on roadway congestion. When possible, alleys should be provided and utility poles should be located in the rear of buildings or underground to minimize curb cuts and sidewalk interruptions. The creation of parallel roads, access management, signal optimization, and innovative roadway design solutions should be implemented to reduce the traffic impact of the stadium and future development on the surrounding area.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Mixed use
- Office/professional
- Townhomes
- Multi-family residential
- Hotels
- Civic / government / places of worship
- Parks / plazas / gathering spaces

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- MU, Mixed Use District
- GC, General Commercial District
- OI, Office Institutional District
- New zoning categories will need to be created to support the higher densities of development recommended by the Spring Road LCI Study

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Create an efficient, walkable road network by extending existing roads to form a more connected grid pattern.
- Build on existing and under-construction bridge projects to create a seamless pedestrian/bicycle connection, and potentially a transit loop, grade separated from vehicular traffic.
- Build a multi-modal boulevard, referred to as Baseball Boulevard in the Spring Road LCI study, between Jonquil Park and the Battery that provides ample sidewalks for pedestrians, a bike boulevard for cyclists, and greenspace/pocket parks along the way
- Amend the Corridor Design District Overlay and Mixed Use Zoning District, as described in Section 4.4 of the Spring Road LCI Study
- Create a Special Use District in the area to allow the city to invest in significant infrastructure for sites and adjacent roads in exchange for higher development intensities and greater development flexibility.
- Consider the creation of a Community Improvement District.
- Pursue grants to help offset up-front infrastructure development costs, focusing on underground utilities, streetscape improvements and parking for key redevelopment sites in the area.
- Consider the development of a parking structure near the proposed location of the transit transfer hub that could accommodate commuter transit parking as well as apartment and retail parking.
- Pursue green SPLOST to improve and expand Jonquil Park.
- Consider inclusionary zoning, housing that requires a given share of new construction to be workforce housing.
- Consider allowance of smaller lot sizes, smaller minimum building footprints, and accessory dwelling units in making revisions to the current Zoning Ordinance.
- Consider the acquisition and conversion of existing single-family homes south of the existing linear parkway along Spring Road into greenspace.



## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)



The Green in Uptown, Charlotte, NC



Bicycle boulevard, as recommended in the Spring Road LCI Study



Fifth Street bridge at Georgia Tech, designed to enhance connectivity and minimize highway impact on the pedestrian experience



Activated, transit-integrated community plaza in Decatur, GA



Bethesda Row in Bethesda, MD

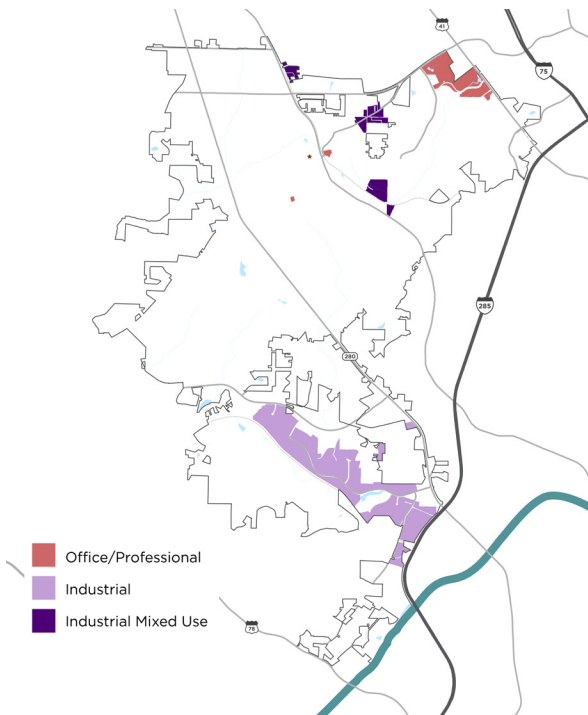


The Gulch in Nashville, TN

# EMPLOYMENT CENTER CHARACTER AREAS

A well balanced community not only offers a diverse supply of housing choices, but also a diverse supply of employment opportunities. Smyrna is fortunate to have easy access to all that the metropolitan Atlanta area has to offer, but to maintain and foster a strong tax base, reduce traffic congestion, and minimize the strain on local transportation systems, it must also provide good locations for employment centers.

**Figure 2.5. Employment Center Character Areas**



## CHARACTER AREAS

The 2040 Future Land Use Map includes three character areas that support employment based land uses:

- **Office Professional (O/P)**
- **Industrial (I), and**
- **Industrial Mixed-Use (IMU)**

Though other areas of the map also support home-based businesses, government services, and commercial service sector employment, these three categories provide the primary locations for employment within the city, and are often comprised of aging office parks and industrial areas. As in the case of the activity centers, employment centers also offer redevelopment opportunities to accommodate the anticipated growth of the community.



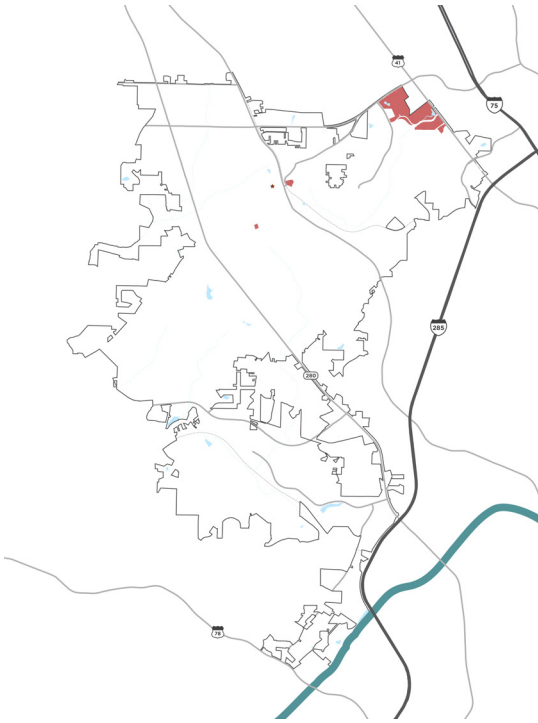
## SUPPORTING CITY GOALS

Together, the visions for these character areas support the city’s primary economic development goals:

- **Goal 4:** Attract and retain a diverse variety of businesses in order to provide quality employment opportunities for residents and maintain a healthy tax base.
- **Goal 5:** Promote revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas.
- **Goal 6:** Promote continued economic development within downtown Smyrna and other activity centers as vibrant mixed-use centers for residential, government, office, retail and entertainment activities.

Like housing, employment centers are just one component of a complete community, and as the economic development goals suggest, the activity centers play as much of a role in the future employment growth of the city as do the employment centers themselves. One way in which the employment centers are different from other land uses in the city, however, is their reliance on and accommodation of both rail- and highway-oriented freight traffic. Such uses tend to be less compatible with residential uses, so adequate buffering, proper orientation and screening of loading areas, and adequate turning radii for large vehicles are essential to mitigate negative impacts of freight traffic.

## OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL (O/P)



### OVERVIEW

Office/Professional areas, along with Activity Centers and Mixed Use areas, are centers of professional employment within the city. Office uses are the primary focus of these areas, though they may include some limited supportive retail or service uses, such as restaurants or daycares.

### DESIGN

Office/Professional areas may take the form of freestanding office buildings or professional campuses. Along primary streets, new building frontages and entrances should be oriented toward the road to contribute to the walkability and sense of place in the surrounding area.

### TRANSPORTATION

Historically, these areas have typically taken the form of office parks with limited connectivity to the surrounding area and ample parking. New construction and renovations should seek to increase connectivity and ensure the availability of alternative modes of transportation, such as by improving connections to nearby bus shelters or providing sidewalks for employees to walk within the campus.



Office building on Atlanta Road



Office park campus on S. Cobb Parkway

## OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

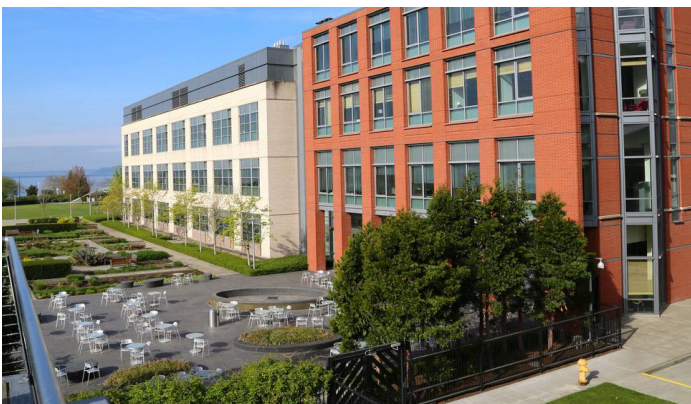
- Office
- Research and development
- Limited supportive commercial
- Civic/government

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- OI, Office-Institutional District
- OD, Office-Distribution District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Market available office space and work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify potential tenants
- Expand the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Urban design standards when located within an overlay zoning district
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Pedestrian and bicycle facility connectivity within the parcel and to the surrounding area
- Provide high quality transit routes, shelters, and connections
- Orient new buildings toward primary streets
- Screening and buffering between office uses and adjacent neighborhoods

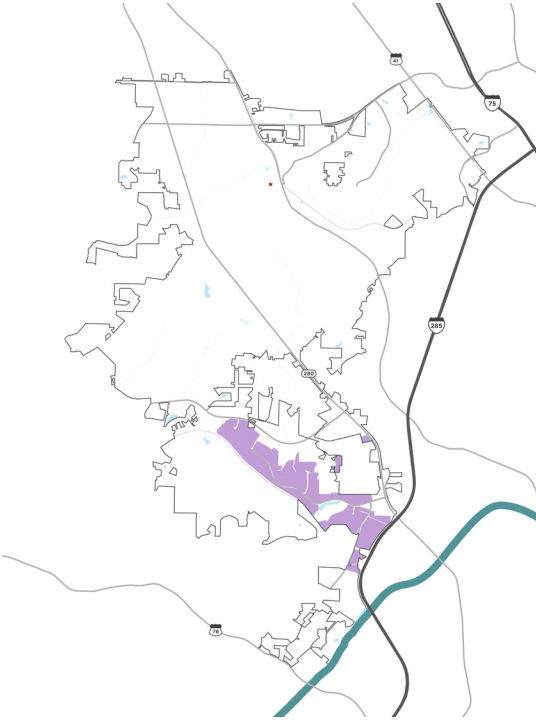


Office park with outdoor amenities



Office building on Concord Road

## INDUSTRIAL (I)



### OVERVIEW

Clean, light industrial uses compatible with the residential nature of Smyrna support the city's economic base and are encouraged. These may include light and artisanal manufacturing, distribution, construction, and warehousing facilities, as well as offices or flex space. Heavy industrial uses, which generate significant external impacts, are not permitted.

### DESIGN

Sufficient screening and buffers—such as appropriate setbacks, fences, walls, and landscaping—should be provided to minimize disturbances from industrial uses and designed to avoid creating a harsh environment. Along primary streets, building frontages and entrances should be oriented toward the road.

### TRANSPORTATION

By nature of their function, these areas are primarily auto-oriented. Industrial, warehousing, and distribution facilities can produce major freight traffic and must be carefully planned to avoid freight traffic impacts on residential areas. These uses should be located with direct access to designated oversize vehicle routes or rail lines. Clearly defined, safe pedestrian paths should be provided, using markings and features like pedestrian crossing signals to increase pedestrian visibility and minimize conflicts. Transit stops should be coordinated with major employment centers.



Warehouse on Martin Court

## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Light industrial
- Office
- Research and development
- Distribution centers
- Transportation and warehousing
- Utilities
- Commercial

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- LI, Light Industrial District
- OD, Office-Distribution District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Market available industrial space and work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify potential tenants
- Expand the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Provide sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and street trees along major corridors
- Screening outdoor storage and loading areas
- Screening and buffering between industrial and commercial uses and nearby neighborhoods

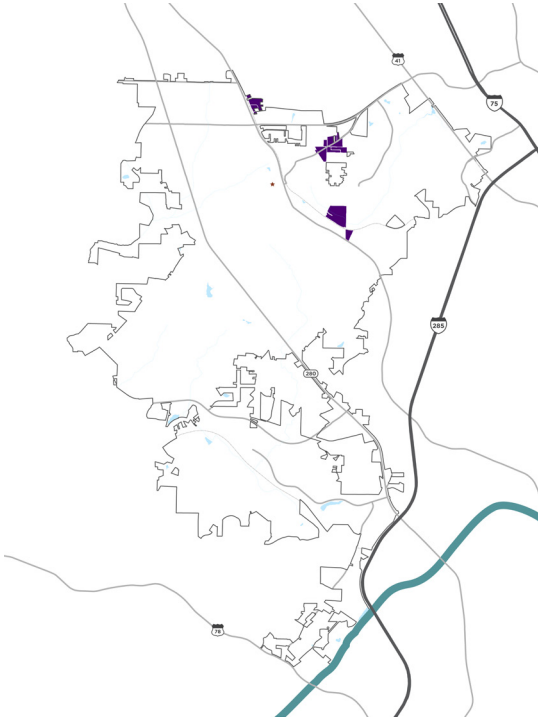


Sustainably designed light manufacturing facility



Renovated warehouse

## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE (IMU)



### OVERVIEW

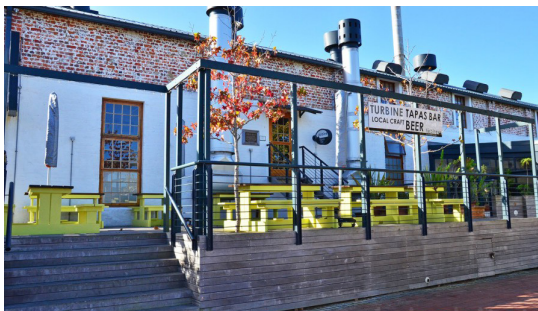
Industrial Mixed Use areas are legacy light industrial areas located near Activity Centers and residential neighborhoods. The continuation of light industrial uses in these areas is encouraged. To expand opportunities for relatively affordable commercial space and encourage innovative design, a broader range of uses is also allowed, including small commercial, makers' spaces, offices, event spaces, breweries, and multi-family residential.

### DESIGN

Many existing industrial sites are inwardly oriented and separated from their surroundings by physical barriers. These screening and buffering techniques should be used as necessary to mitigate negative impacts of some industrial uses, but should be designed to avoid creating a harsh environment. As these areas evolve and begin to incorporate more non-industrial uses, industrial properties will become one element of an eclectic area character, along with infill development and adaptive reuse projects. Open space, such as pocket parks or trails, may be incorporated into these areas.

### TRANSPORTATION

The existing transportation system in Industrial Mixed Use areas is auto-oriented and impacted by freight traffic. Sidewalks are generally inadequate in size or condition, discontinuous, or nonexistent. As property renovations and road improvements are made, provisions for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be made with particular consideration for opportunities to mitigate conflict with truck traffic. Increased interparcel connectivity for non-industrial uses and road network connectivity throughout will improve the functionality of the area for a broader set of uses.



Industrial adaptive reuse project



Combined studio and warehouse facility



## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Light industrial
- Office
- Limited commercial
- Research and development
- Event space
- Breweries
- Flex space
- Multi-family residential
- Live-work units
- Townhomes
- Post-secondary education

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- LI, Light Industrial District
- OI, Office-Institutional District
- OD, Office Distribution District
- LC, Limited Commercial District
- MU, Mixed Use District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Respect and encourage the continued use of light industrial facilities
- Market brownfield sites and vacant industrial buildings for redevelopment opportunities
- Identify funding sources for brownfield remediation

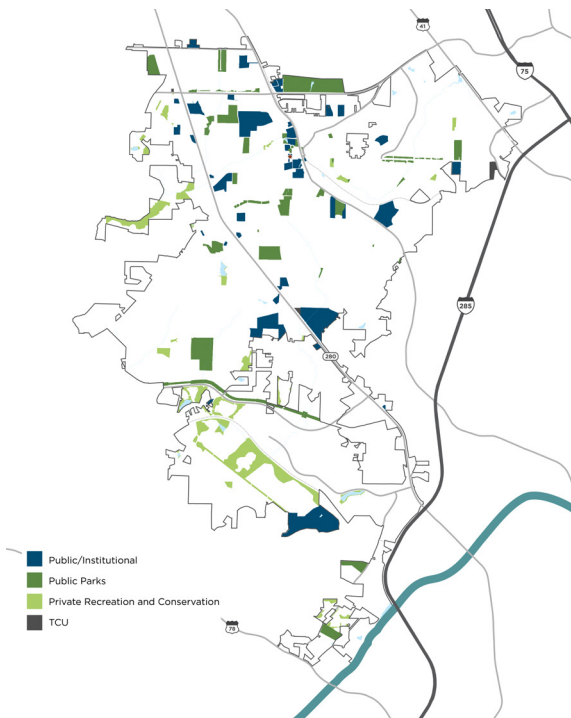
- Encourage the renovation and adaptive reuse of vacant, underutilized, or obsolete industrial facilities
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Create a small-scale business incubator and mentorship program through public-private partnership
- Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure plans with freight routes and loading logistics to minimize conflicts
- Monitor roads for wear from freight traffic and identify road resurfacing projects
- New buildings should locate parking and loading facilities in the rear or to the side
- Screening outdoor storage and loading areas
- Screening and buffering between industrial and commercial uses and nearby neighborhoods
- Discourage fencing and encourage interparcel connectivity for non-industrial uses
- Create a new zoning category or revision to allow makers spaces, breweries, small retailers and services, and other uses appropriate to this area
- Conduct small area studies for priority redevelopment areas, such as the Jonquil Drive Industrial Area
- Promote the installation of temporary and permanent public art
- Code enforcement



# PUBLIC SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE CHARACTER AREAS

Several character areas shown on the Future Land Use Map represent the locations of essential public services as well as lands reserved and dedicated to recreation and conservation uses. These areas more than any other influence the overall quality of life offered by the city. In some respects, they are so ubiquitous that they are often taken for granted, and so to some extent, some would view these as features of the map rather than distinct character areas; however, most of these areas are directly owned and controlled by the city or other

**Figure 2.6. Public Services and Quality of Life Character Areas**



government or institutional bodies, and so the city has a strong influence on their function and aesthetics.

## CHARACTER AREAS

As a general category public services and quality of life include five character areas:

- **Public/Institutional** (PI)
- **Public Parks** (PP)
- **Private Recreation and Conservation** (PRC)
- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities** (TCU), and
- **Rights-of-way** (ROW)

## SUPPORTING CITY GOALS

Core to the proper functioning of the city, the Public Services and Quality of Life character areas support the vast majority of the goals outlined in this plan, but in particular the, land use and public services and quality of life goals themselves. Following are a sampling of the goals most directly related to these areas:

- **Goal 8:** Protect natural resources and sensitive environmental features from encroachment by development.
- **Goal 9:** Provide for community open space, parks, and recreational opportunities.

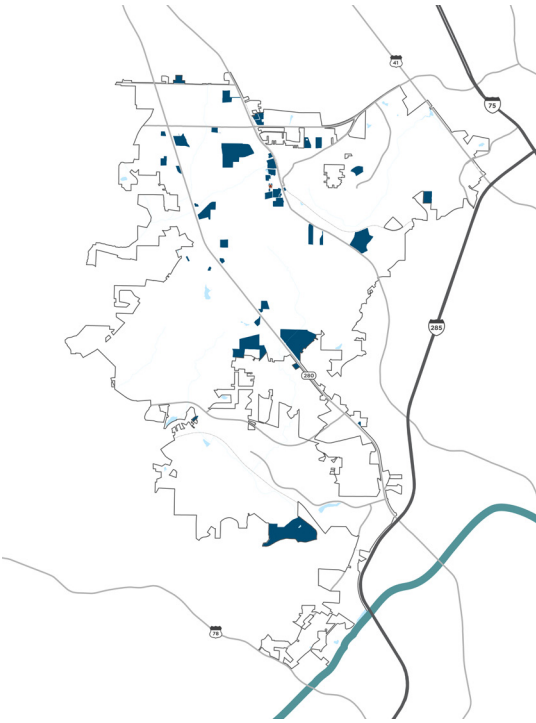


- **Goal 10:** Protect the unique historic and cultural assets of the City of Smyrna.
- **Goal 14:** Establish a visually attractive environment.
- **Goal 19:** Provide for efficient, high-quality, cost-effective public services.
- **Goal 20:** Provide for lifestyle amenities that improve the “quality of life” in Smyrna.
- **Goal 21:** Ensure that community facilities and services are adapted to meet the changing needs of Smyrna’s diverse population.
- Newly installed utility services and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations should be placed underground, where economically feasible.
- Maintain and utilize gateway signage and landscaping in order to foster a sense of place within the community.
- Maximize the use of existing community facilities and services.
- Provide pedestrian linkages from existing neighborhoods to the city’s multi-use trail system.

To support these goals, the following general policies should be encouraged:

- Target environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands for greenspace acquisition.
- Maintain development regulations that protect and preserve environmentally sensitive features.
- Continue development of bicycle/pedestrian trail network throughout Smyrna with linkages to parks, schools, and residential areas.
- Preserve scenic views and natural environment along the Silver Comet Trail and other multi-use paths in the city.
- Incorporate the connection, maintenance, and enhancement of greenspace in all new development.
- Provide for outdoor gathering areas, such as plazas, public squares, and amphitheaters.
- Provide a variety of recreational opportunities including both active, organized recreation (e.g. sports fields), as well as areas for passive recreation (e.g. nature preserves, walking trails).
- Provide facilities and services for the growing population of senior citizens.
- Adapt public services and facilities to meet the needs of growing immigrant and Hispanic communities in Smyrna.
- Adapt public services and facilities to serve special client groups such as the handicapped, homebound, and institutionalized.

## PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL (PI)



### OVERVIEW

Public/Institutional areas consist of government and civic nodes that provide services to surrounding neighborhoods. Providing the basic supportive infrastructure and government services, these areas are compatible with all land uses. Public/Institutional areas should encourage shared use of recreation facilities and gathering spaces with the surrounding community in order to maximize the utility of vibrant community spaces. While Public/Institutional areas provide spaces for necessary educational and civic services, those Public/Institutional uses which will likely generate higher volumes of traffic should be alternately located within Activity Centers and Mixed Use districts.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Medical facilities
- Educational facilities
- Civic/Government buildings
- Places of worship
- Public safety facilities
- Other institutional uses

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- All zoning categories

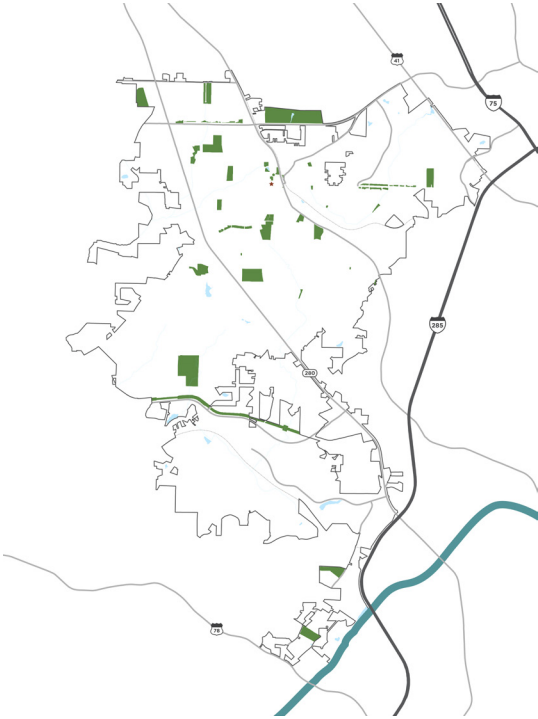


Smyrna City Hall



Smyrna Elementary School

## PUBLIC PARKS (PP)



### OVERVIEW

Public Parks include a variety of open space facilities including neighborhood parks, trails, regional parks, preserves, playgrounds, and conservation areas. These spaces are essential to preserving natural resources-- such as streams and floodplains-- from development, and when possible these spaces should be designed to incorporate light imprint storm water management and other green infrastructure. The City will continue to explore possible greenspace acquisition opportunities along these corridors to jointly address environmental preservation and recreational needs.

Public parks should be designed with excellent pedestrian and bicycle access to increase connectivity and minimize the need for parking. Lighting, wayfinding, and outdoor furniture should support user experience and safety.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Parks
- Recreational facilities
- Bicycle/pedestrian pathways
- Conservation areas

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- All zoning categories

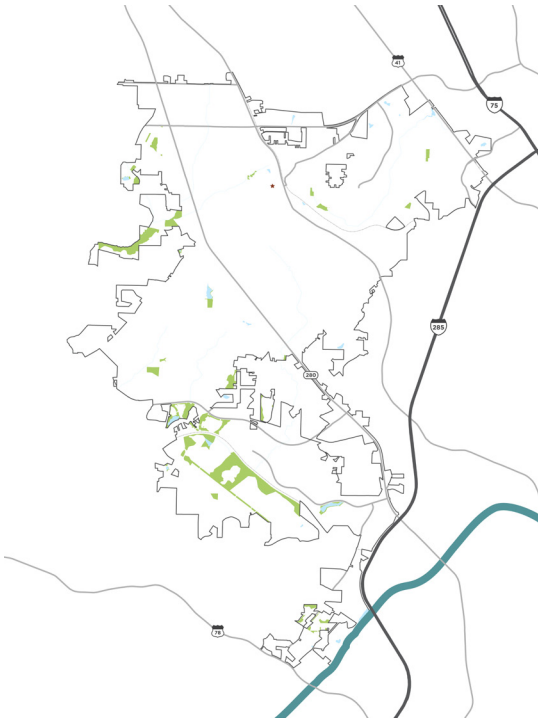


Village Green



Silver Comet Trail

## PRIVATE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION (PRC)



### OVERVIEW

Private Recreation and Conservation areas are spaces held in common ownership. These spaces are typically a part of subdivisions, providing legally-protected spaces for neighborhood residents. Private Recreation and Conservation areas may be parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, clubhouses, or other amenities.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Parks
- Recreational facilities
- Conservation areas
- Clubhouses and other gathering spaces
- Other subdivision amenities

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- All residential zoning categories

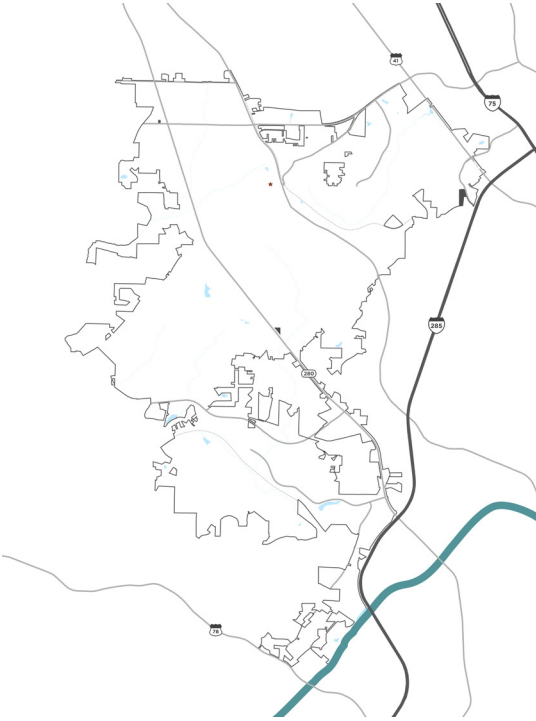


The Cove at Vinings Estate Clubhouse



Nickajack Creek

## TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATIONS/UTILITIES (TCU)



### OVERVIEW

TCU areas include roads, railroads, transit infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure, and water and sewer facilities. TCU areas can be owned either privately or publicly, and they account for a considerable amount of land. These areas generally cover substantial impervious surfaces, and so consideration must be made for mitigating storm water runoff.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Power stations
- Airports
- Public utility facilities
- Communication towers
- Private roads

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

All zoning categories

## RIGHTS-OF-WAY (ROW)

### OVERVIEW

Rights-of-way areas consist of land reserved for public transportation purposes, and should be considered a subcategory of TCU. The use of Rights-of-way areas can include a variety of transportation purposes such as railroads, highways, sidewalks, or bike trails, as well power, gas, and cable transmission lines.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Rail lines
- Bike trails
- Roads/highways
- Utilities pipelines
- Other public transportation uses

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

All zoning categories



**Table 2.1. Future Land Use Categories and Zoning Districts Matrix**

		Future Land Use Categories															
		Low Density Residential	Moderate Density Residential	Medium Density Residential	Medium-High Density Residential	High Density Residential	Neighborhood Activity Center	Community Activity Center	Mixed Use	Regional Activity Center	Office/Professional	Industrial	Industrial Mixed Use	Public/Institutional	Public Parks	Private Recreation & Conservation	Transportation/Communication/Utilities
Corresponding Zoning Districts	R-30	●	●										●	●	●	●	●
	R-20	●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	R-15	●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	R-12		●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	RAD		●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	RMC-8				●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	RM-10				●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	RM-12					●							●	●	●	●	●
	RD			●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	RD-4			●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	TD				●	●							●	●	●	●	●
	RM-15					●							●	●	●	●	●
	FC						●						●	●		●	●
	RHR					●							●	●	●	●	●
	LC						●	●					●	●	●		●
	OI		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●		●
	NS						●	●					●	●			●
	CBD								●				●	●			●
	GC							●		●			●	●			●
	OD										●	●	●	●	●		●
	LI											●	●	●	●		●
	PUD			●									●	●			●
MU							●	●	●			●	●	●		●	
TS							●					●	●			●	